INTEGRATION OF A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND A LEARNING PROCESS IN A NEWLY FORMED LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Marilyn, who followed me halfway around the world in the pursuit of a dream.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my children, Matt and Katie, who are the best argument for good education that I know.

I further dedicate this dissertation to my mentor, Dr. Charles Reigeluth, without whom I would have never known the right questions to ask.

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I thank my wife, Marilyn, for keeping me sane.

Abstract

Kurt B. Richter

INTEGRATION OF A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND A LEARNING PROCESS IN A NEWLY FORMED LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Guidance System for Transforming Education (GSTE) is a design theory used to facilitate systemic transformation in public school districts. This study sought to improve some of the process guidelines described in the GSTE by using the qualitative research methodology described as formative research (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999). This methodology asked what worked well, what did not work as well as it could have, and what could be done to improve the process. The current study examined the application of the GSTE in the middle stages of the systemic transformation process with a Leadership Team of 20-25 stakeholders in a public school district that consists of 5,954 students in a semi-urban, Midwestern setting. The researcher, working as a co-facilitator in the systemic transformation process, studied the processes of team learning and of decision making while creating a Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs to guide a transformation effort.

Specifically, the researcher investigated critical learnings, decisions, and observations made by Leadership Team members between the time of the team's creation through the completion of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. In critical learnings, the researcher described the learning activities in which the Leadership Team engaged, including a description of reading selections, discussion techniques, comprehension strategies, stakeholder involvement, article dissemination, and the use of

worksheet activities. In critical decisions, the researcher described decisions such as the rejection of an organizing retreat, holding a Vision-Mission-Beliefs retreat, organizing community presentations, and editing the Framework. In additional findings, the researcher described a variety of observations, including a description of the process of building and maintaining strong stakeholder representation, a proposed contract to guide facilitators, timeline issues, transformative leadership, and financial commitment to the transformation process by the participating school district.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Need for Systemic Change in Public School Systems

There is a strong need for systemic change in public school systems in the United States. This chapter will discuss why such a strong need exists, what alternative approaches can be used to foster systemic change, and what models currently exist to guide the most promising approach. The chapter concludes by identifying an important gap in the knowledge: how to integrate a Leadership Team's learning process with its decision-making process, and the research questions that this study addresses are presented.

Changes in Society Make the Current System Obsolete

As the United States evolves deeper into the information age, our educational needs and problems are changing dramatically. During the industrial age, most jobs were manual labor; now the majority of jobs require knowledge work. During the industrial age, a comfortable middle-class life was possible without much education, whereas in this age of global competition and digital technologies, considerably higher levels of education are needed to have a comfortable life. Workplace skills required to do entry level jobs, identified by the U.S. Department of Labor's Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), include the following skills that fall into three domains:

- Basic skills – reading, writing, speaking, listening, and knowing arithmetic and mathematical concepts;
- Thinking skills – reasoning, making decisions, thinking creatively, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, and knowing how to learn; and
- Personal qualities – responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty" (Wetzel, 1992, p. 1).

As we evolve deeper into the information age, societal systems, jobs, and even personal lives are becoming more complex. The information age is developing increasingly powerful computer-based tools for dealing with such complexity, but according to Spiro (2006) these “Post-Gutenberg” technologies require the development of a different style of thinking, through “prefigurative schemas” (schemas for the development of schemas). Prefigurative schemas:

> …constrain, at the most fundamental level, an individual’s understanding of what knowledge consists of and how it should be acquired. These world-views are like lenses that determine qualitative differences in the kinds of schemas an individual is likely to construct. For example, if a learner strongly believes (reinforced by teachers, textbook writers and son on, who are likely to share similarly reductive world-views) that complex ideas can be understood best by decomposing them and studying the parts separately (later additively reassembling them to understand the whole), a learner in that environment is unlikely to achieve a fully successful understanding of a concept or phenomenon whose components interact or co-determine each other in nontrivial ways. (Spiro, Feltovich & Coulson, 1996, p. 3)

These require dramatic changes in both the goals and means of education.

The typical response to this growing educational crisis is piecemeal change. A reading program does not work well, so remediation is offered. Falling test scores are evident so yearly statewide testing for everyone is introduced. Rising rates of obesity result in the removal of soda machines from schools. These changes are made by schools to adjust to immediate challenges that arise during the normal course of school.

What is seldom recognized is that dramatic changes in educational needs require changes in the fundamental structure and organization of school systems. Reigeluth talks persuasively about the need to rethink what Schlechty calls “rules, roles, and relationships” for the ways we use “time, talent, and technology” (Reigeluth, 1997, p. 205) in schools. For example, regarding time it is known that different students learn at different rates (Mayer, 1999), yet we require all students to learn the same amount of content in the same amount of time. By holding time constant, we force achievement to vary. Our current educational system was designed for sorting students, more than for learning – which was appropriate in the industrial age, because we did not need to, and could not afford to, educate large numbers of students to high levels. But the information age, with its predominance of knowledge work and global competition, has dramatically changed that, making learning a much higher priority than sorting.

In the information age paradigm, it is no longer satisfactory to promote learners to the next level simply because they have spent a year in the previous level. It is no longer acceptable to emulate the factory model and to teach all children at the same rate. In the information age paradigm we need to educate more children to their potential. Faster learners must no longer be forced to waste time until the class is ready to move on, and slow learners must no longer be forced to move on before they have mastered the content, condemning them to accumulate learning deficits that make it even more difficult to learn material that builds on that content. Time must become flexible and customized to each learner's needs. Imagine schools without class periods and grade levels. This change in the use of time would require fundamental changes in the use of talent (teachers and students) and technology (Schlechty, 2002). It would require fundamental changes from standardization to customization, from control to empowerment, from compliance to initiative, and from uniformity to diversity (Reigeluth, 1999b).

Key Markers of Industrial Age and Information Age Compared

Co-evolution is a system evolving in harmony with its environment. Modern day society has evolved from the agrarian age, in which agricultural activities formed the backbone of society, to the industrial age, in which the assembly line and mass production created products and goods for consumption by the public, and most recently, to an the information age, in which knowledge work has replaced manual labor as the predominant form of work. Key markers of the industrial age compared to the information age are listed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Key markers of the Industrial Age and the Information Age

Industrial Age	Information Age
Standardization	Customization
Bureaucratic organization	Team-based organization
Centralized control	Autonomy with accountability
Adversarial relationships	Cooperative relationships
Autocratic decision making	Shared decision making
Compliance	Initiative
Conformity	Diversity
One-way communications	Networking
Compartmentalization	Holism
Parts oriented	Process oriented
Planned obsolescence	Total quality
CEO or boss as “king”	Customer as “king”

Note. From Reigeluth (1999b, p. 17).

As can be seen in Table 1.1, the key markers of the information age are descriptors of a paradigm that puts emphasis on the team over the bureaucracy, on autonomy over control and command, on initiative over compliance. At every level of the educational system, the needs of society now require different criteria for success, criteria that correspond closely with the information-age key markers. To be relevant and meet the needs of society and its members, education must seek to evolve in ways that express the fulfillment of information-age needs and expectations.

What is Systemic Change?

In the evolving discipline of systemic change in educational transformation, there is little agreement as to the meaning and concept of the word systemic. It often seems as though the word "systemic" is being used to describe "almost any large scale project" (Carr-Chellman, 1999, p. 369). If one examines the programs making up the reform efforts included in the New American Schools Development Corporation (Stringfield, Ross, & Smith, 1996), this is often the case. Here, programs as diverse as "The Modern Red Schoolhouse," "Roots and Wings: Universal Excellence in Elementary Education," and "Los Angeles Learning Centers: An Initiative of Los Angeles Unified School District, United Teachers Los Angeles" are all described by Stringfield and colleagues (Stringfield et al., 1996) as systemic efforts. Upon closer inspection, these programs are actually adopted by clients for the purpose of initiating school-based transformation without paradigm change. The programs provide a structure which can be adopted and implemented, to which teachers and students must adapt without substantial alteration of the existing paradigm. They all share the quality of being systematic, but they demonstrate widely varying definitions of systemic change.

To clarify and focus the definition of systemic change, we first describe what systemic change is not, followed by a working definition of what it is. Systemic change is not piecemeal change. If only one element in a system is changed, no matter where in that system the element resides, it is still piecemeal change. The key indicator of systemic change is paradigm change (Reigeluth, 1999b), which means that a significant change in one part of the system is accompanied by significant changes in practically all other parts, due to interrelationships and interdependence among parts.

Banathy (1991) addresses piecemeal change when he describes how the Carnegie Corporation "labeled the existing system an outdated assembly line and made 58 specific unintegrated proposals to 'radically transform' schools" (p. 11). He describes most of the improvement techniques that have been used as failure

> to recognize the complexity of current issues surrounding education and [they] have not grappled with the essential nature of education as a societal system; a system interacting with other societal systems, a system which is embedded in the rapidly and dynamically changing larger society (p. 12).

Systemic change must encompass a broad scope and be large in scale within the system of interest. A fundamental change in curriculum would not constitute systemic change in a school district. Such a change could affect individual classrooms in all schools in the district, but because other elements in the system's structure have not changed, the effect on the greater system would not be systemic, but piecemeal. To become a systemic change, there would have to be changes throughout all aspects of the system related to the new curriculum. Piecemeal changes can "produce the appearance of change but not much real improvement in outcomes" (Harman, 1984, p. 3).

Squire and Reigeluth (2000) discuss four types of systemic change, which they refer to as statewide, district wide, school wide, and ecological systemic change. They have found that a user's conception of systemic change depends on their experience and the type of system with which he or she is familiar. Ecological systemic change matches the definition for systemic change used in this study.

Ecological systemic change is an approach that focuses on the systemic nature of the educational system and requires understanding of the system. This approach encompasses and contains the relationships among all stakeholders: community members, parents, school and district staff, students, teachers, principals, administrators, and state-level educational personnel. These multiple stakeholders are included and embraced at the earliest stages of the reform effort and are involved in democratic participation in the change process. Experts may be brought into the process as support, but their main job is to act as support in the process and "not to shape the product of design" (Squire & Reigeluth, 2000, p. 6). Mindset changes, which are "mental positions or outlooks from which people approach problems" (La Piana Associates, 2006) are critical to systemic change. Such mindset change is brought about through dialogue, or the process by which a group "becomes open to the flow of a larger intelligence" (Senge, 1990, p. 239) and self examination. These are the keys to systemic – or paradigm – change.

The definition of systemic change used in this study – one that is compatible with the concept of ecological systemic change – is described by Jenlink, Reigeluth, Carr, and Nelson (1998):

> We define systemic change as an approach to change that:
>
> - recognizes the interrelationships and interdependencies among the parts of the educational system, with the consequence that desired changes in one part of the system must be accompanied by changes in other parts that are necessary to support those desired changes; and

- recognizes the interrelationships and interdependencies between the educational system and its community, including parents, employers, social service agencies, religious organizations and much more, with the consequence that all those stakeholders are given active ownership over the change effort (p. 219).

Approaches to Systemic Change

External Design Implementation Versus Internal Design Process

There are two approaches available to school districts that decide to implement systemic change: implement a standard design that was invented elsewhere, or engage in a process that helps stakeholders to design their own new system. The first, standard designs that were invented elsewhere, are typified by efforts such as the school designs of the New American Schools Development Corporation. These kinds of efforts are not truly systemic, but are combinations of piecemeal changes that have been applied in a systematic manner. Such shortsighted efforts have led to minimal educational returns in places like Washington D.C. and Memphis, Tennessee (Mirel, 2001; Pogrow, 2000a, 2000b, 2002). Chief complaints about externally designed efforts include teacher and union resistance, a general feeling of dissatisfaction, and isolation. Other examples of the expert design are found in such programs as Roots and Wings (Slavin, Madden, & Wasik, 1996), The Modern Red Schoolhouse (Heady, Sally, & Hudson Institute, 1996), Success for All (Hurley, Chamberlain, Slavin, & Madden, 1998; Pogrow, 2000a, 2000b, 2002), the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Design (Goldberg, Richards, & BBN Corporation, 1996), and others. The expert design fails to address specific needs of most school districts. Experience tells us that this externally designed approach to change is ineffective and, over time, often detrimental.

In an internal design approach, the focus is on a process that will help participants learn and work together, and stimulate each other to evolve their individual and collective mindsets about education. From the consensus-building process, values that will govern the process emerge and drive the process forward. From these process values, approaches to instruction and education emerge that are used to guide the design of the new paradigm of education. As long as stakeholders develop ownership of the process and are willing to engage in mindset change, the internal process is far more likely to yield a positive and long-lasting change in the fundamental structure of education. Instead of selecting an externally designed product for implementation, schools can choose to engage in an internal design process.

The internal design approach relies heavily on the user-designer model. For a successful user-design to emerge, many stakeholders from all stakeholder groups must become a part of the process. As they engage in the process, stakeholders come to consensus on values, the mission of education, and beliefs that support the culture of education. Through the process, stakeholders come to understand the real needs of the schools and learn how to work together to address those needs. Well-facilitated engagement in the process by all users will eventually result in a user-designed plan for systemic change.

The internal design process is done neither quickly nor easily. First, it requires that representatives from every stakeholder group served by the school district meet in a Leadership Team over an extended period of time. Members on the Leadership Team must include district and school administrators, the teachers' union(s), district and school staff, and parents meeting in an atmosphere of equality and consensus building. Second, because of the need to find common ground in an information-age environment, all stakeholders must be open to evolving their thinking (mindset change) about education, often considered to be one of the most difficult tasks that they will face. Third, the traditional model of top-down leadership must be abandoned in favor of a developmental leadership model that shares responsibility and develops leadership among all stakeholders. Finally, systemic change occurs most realistically and effectively when approached as a process of engagement that entails a long-term commitment for improving the system of interest. With these elements in place, stakeholders are ready to engage in the internal design process approach to systemic change.

Given these general characteristics, the following is a review of the current knowledge about the internal design process.

Overview of Internal Design Process Models

Step-Up-To-Excellence

Step-Up-To-Excellence (SUTE) (Duffy, 2006, p. 3) was developed as a response to the need of change leaders as they attempt to seek ways in which entire school systems can be transformed. It is described as a "whole-system transformation protocol especially constructed to help educators navigate the three paths toward whole-district transformation" (Duffy, 2006, p. 3). In this summary of SUTE I will first summarize the three paths that occur at each of the levels. I will discuss the personnel and groups who are charged with initiating, implementing, and maintaining change. I will then discuss the conferences that occur among each group participating in each step of the process. I will conclude with a description of each of steps in the SUTE Change Protocol.

There are three sets of organizational variables that require concurrent improvement if whole system change is to be transformed. Within the context of SUTE these sets are called change paths, and they recur at every level throughout SUTE.

Path 1: Transform a district's relationship with its external environment. Change leaders must ensure that relationships between key external stakeholders in the community and the school system are strong before engaging in a systemic transformation, and then these relationships must be maintained throughout the transformation journey.

Path 2: Transform a district's core and supporting work processes. The core work of contemporary school districts is accomplished within a "sequenced instructional program conjoined with classroom teaching and learning" (Duffy, 2006, p. 3). Core work is supported by two kinds of support work: Academic support that includes those in administrative, supervisory, and curriculum development positions and nonacademic support that includes transportation, cafeteria, and janitorial positions, as well as others in similar positions. All work processes must be improved for a systemic transformation to be successful.

Path 3: Transform a district's internal social infrastructure. Variables along this path include "organization culture, organization design, communication patterns, power and political dynamics, reward systems, and so on" (Duffy, 2006, p. 4).

Change Leadership Within SUTE

The individual responsible for initiating transformational change in a school district is the superintendent in collaboration with a small team of colleagues. The superintendent forms a pre-launch team to prepare the system for transformation. Later in the process, a Strategic Leadership Team is formed that includes educators from each level of the school system. A Change Navigation Coordinator is also appointed or hired to provide tactical leadership for the transformation. Various change leadership teams are also formed—one for each cluster of schools in the district, one for the central administration office, and one for a cluster of non-academic supporting work units (e.g., cafeteria services, transportation services, and building and grounds maintenance services). As the SUTE process continues, Site Improvement Teams are also formed for each school building and non-academic supporting work unit. All of these teams comprise a change management structure for the district.

The Structure of SUTE

SUTE is organized using a Pre-Launch Preparation Phase and three steps. Each one is briefly described below.

Pre-Launch Preparation. Prior to launching a transformation journey, the readiness of the district to participate in transformational change is assessed by the superintendent of schools and the small Pre-Launch Team. During this phase, an abbreviated environmental scan is conducted to identify threats that face the district and opportunities that can be seized if they engage in transformational change. Additional internal assessments are made to determine the district's readiness to participate in transformational change.

Additional considerations that determine readiness to proceed are described as the "hard factors of change" (Duffy, 2006, p. 10):

- Duration: the amount of time needed to complete the transformation initiative;
- Integrity: the ability of the change leadership teams to complete the transformation activities as planned and on time; which is directly affected

by the team members' knowledge and skills for leading a transformation journey;

- Commitment: the level of unequivocal support for the transformation demonstrated by senior leadership as well as by employees;
- Effort: the amount of effort above and beyond normal work activities that is needed to complete the transformation" (p. 10).

At some point early in the pre-launch phase of SUTE, the Pre-Launch Team will make a "launch/don't launch" decision. If the decision is to launch a transformation journey for the district, then a new leadership team is formed and trained. That team is called a Strategic Leadership Team. This team is composed of the superintendent, one or two of his or her immediate subordinates, and school-based administrators and teachers from each level of schooling in a district. It might also include a school board member, a teacher union representative, parents, and students.

The school-based members of this team are not selected by the superintendent, instead, they are appointed to the team by their peers in the schools. This appointment process prevents the impression that the Strategic Leadership Team was hand-picked by the superintendent.

Transformational change requires leadership from all quarters of a school district. Distributed leadership will only be as effective as the people who provide this leadership. Leadership for transformational change should also be in the hands of people who are allies in the change process. Allies are trusted colleagues who are in high agreement with the transformation goals.

One individual is chosen to coordinate the efforts of the Strategic Leadership Team and that individual is known as the Change Navigation Coordinator (Duffy, 2006, p. 9). Ideally, this coordinator should be an assistant or associate superintendent. This person will probably need training to become a master of transformational change. In large districts, the coordinator may form a change leadership team that will collaborate with him to lead their district's transformation journey.

The Strategic Leadership Team oversees the work of the Change Navigation Coordinator and his or her change leadership team. The coordinator starts to create a change management structure to support the transformation journey. This structure requires that the district be organized into academic clusters, a central administration cluster, and a non-academic support work cluster.

The academic clusters contain individual school buildings and classrooms. To conform to principles of systemic change, the academic clusters must contain the entire instructional program of the district; for example, in a district that is organized pK-12th grade the academic clusters will contain a high school and all the middle and elementary schools that feed into it. This is very important because of systemic change principle called "upstream errors flow downstream." This means that errors made early in the teaching and learning process, if they are not identified and corrected, will flow downstream and cause significant problems downstream in the instructional program.

Another principle of systemic change is that the central administration office must be transformed into a central service center that serves educators and support staff working in the district. To facilitate this transformation, the central administration office is conceived of as a cluster that will undergo transformational change.

Non-academic support work includes cafeteria services, transportation services, and building and grounds maintenance services. These support services must be transformed too; for example, the New York City School System transformed its cafeteria services by hiring an executive chef from the private sector who created brand new food selections for all the schools in the system.

Another element of the change management structure that is being created is the formation of “scouting parties.” These small groups of educators from the district will start looking for really great ideas that might be used to transform their district; for example, they might seek out school systems that provide customized, personalized education to students.

Also, the Change Navigation Coordinator and his or her team start looking for sources of money to fund their transformation journey. They don’t request the money right now because they have no idea how much they will need, but they need to identify where they can submit their requests later on in the SUTE process.

Near the end of the Pre-Launch Phase two important conferences are organized and conducted. The first is called a Community Engagement Conference. This three-day conference is designed to invite hundreds of community members into one room where they will then self-organize into discussion groups to talk about their dreams, expectations, and concerns for their school district. Notes are taken at each discussion table and submitted to secretarial staff who enter them into a word processing program. These data from external stakeholders will be used to plan the district’s transformation.

The next conference that is conducted is for the faculty and staff working in the district. It is called a System Engagement Conference. The System Engagement Conference is designed using principles expressed of Future Search as described in Schweitz and Martens with Aronson (2005) or principles of Search Conferencing as described in Emery (2006). Either set of design principles will work for this conference.

One of the key principles for designing this conference is that the whole-system must be in the room. What this means is that at least one person from every school and every support work unit must be invited to participate. The purpose of this three-day event is to create a new vision for the district, as well as a new strategic framework that reflects the district and community's core beliefs and values. Data from the Community Engagement Conference are carefully considered during this conference.

One outcome of the System Engagement Conference is a strategic framework for the district that includes new mission and vision statements and a strategic framework for guiding the transformation of the school system. Following the System Engagement Conference, the Strategic Leadership Team and Change Navigation Coordinator organize the district into clusters: academic, central office, and non-academic support work units. Each cluster is led by a Cluster Design Team that engages in training designed to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills for leading transformational change.

The conclusion of the System Engagement Conference marks the beginning of a design process that will lead to proposals to transform the district's academic clusters, central administration office, and support work units. The design work happens in Step 1: Redesign the Entire School District.

Step 1: Redesign the entire school district. During the Pre-Launch Phase the district was organized into three kinds of clusters: academic, central office, and non-academic support work units. Step 1 begins with one of the academic clusters—the one that is judged to have the most capacity to engage successfully in transformational change.

The first academic cluster creates a Cluster Improvement Team to guide their cluster's change journey. The Change Navigation Coordinator works closely with this team. The Cluster Improvement Team then creates school-based improvement teams for each school in the cluster. These teams are called Site Improvement Teams.

The Cluster Improvement Team, with help from the Change Navigation Coordinator, plans and conducts a Cluster Engagement Conference. All educators from all the schools in the cluster are invited to participate in this conference. Parents and other community members may also be invited to this conference. The purpose of this conference is to determine how the cluster and the schools can be designed to support the district's new vision and strategic framework.

Following the Cluster Engagement Conference, Site Improvement Teams are formed for each school in the cluster. Each Site Improvement Team then engages in highly structured Redesign Workshops that will lead them through a process to identify how they can transform their individual schools to align with their cluster's improvement goals and with the district's vision and strategic framework. The redesign workshops ask educators to create ideas to 1) improve their relationship with the external environment, 2) improve their core work processes, and 3) improve their internal social infrastructure. It is the responsibility of the members of the Site Improvement Teams to work on making progress along the three change paths mentioned above. The primary outcome of the redesign workshops are proposals "…for transforming each cluster and every school within each cluster" (Duffy, 2006, p. 10).

As plans are made and support requirements begin to change, the responsibility for engaging in the redesign process moves to the central office and non-academic supporting work units. They, too, engage in a Cluster Engagement Conference and Redesign Workshops to more transform their environmental relationships, work processes, and internal social infrastructure.

During Phase 1 as the change proposals are developed and organized into a master proposal to transform the entire district, the Strategic Leadership Team and Change Navigation Coordinator are charged with the task of finding money to support the proposed changes. Initially, the effort can seek money from grants by public or private entities and foundations, but in the long run, it is necessary to re-allocate district money to support the ongoing re-design efforts.

As the change proposals are implemented, On-Track Seminars enable participants to engage in formative evaluation to ensure that the transformation work continues to adhere to district vision and goals. The seminars also:

- Facilitate individual, team and district-wide learning;
- Educate and train faculty and staff to use inquiry skills;
- Create opportunities to model collaboration, cooperation and participation behaviors;
- Establish linkages between learning and performance;
- Facilitate the search for ways to create greater understanding of what affects the district's success and failure; and,
- Rely on diverse perspectives to develop understanding of the district's performance (Duffy, 2006, p. 12).

Step 2: Create strategic alignment. In step 2, individuals work to align their work with the goals of teams, the work of teams with the goals of schools, and the work of schools with the goals of their clusters, and the work of the clusters with the new mission, vision, and strategic framework of the district.

Step 3: Evaluate whole-district performance. In previous steps, formative evaluation is conducted to keep the transformation journey on course toward desirable vision for the district. In this step, summative evaluation is conducted to "measure the success of everyone's efforts to educate children with the framework of the newly transformed school system" (Duffy, 2006, p. 13). Though step three measures success, it is not the end of the cycle because the district must recycle the change process to the Pre-launch Preparation Phase. This is an essential characteristic of SUTE because it is built on the philosophy that transformation is not an event—it is a journey that spirals a district continuously upwards toward higher and higher levels of performance. Achieving high-performance is a lifelong journey for a school district.

Schlechty's Process

Phillip Schlechty has written extensively on school reform since the late 1960's. Many of his ideas are summarized in *Schools for the 21st Century: Leadership Imperatives for Educational Reform* (Schlechty, 1990). He discusses qualities that schools must have if they are to be prepared for the increasing expectations in the new century. The work of the school is knowledge work, defined as "putting to use ideas and symbols to produce some purposeful result" (Schlechty, 1990, p. 35), and it emphasizes mental effort. Schools engage in knowledge work and must engage in reform if they are to remain relevant as an institution (Schlechty, 1997).

Schlechty (2002) discusses the importance of the kind of work that is provided to students in the course of instruction. In contrast to manual work, which involves the completion of physical tasks, knowledge work emphasizes "management and control of symbols, propositions, and other forms of knowledge; and the use of these intellectual products in the achievement of goals" (Schlechty, 2002, p. xv). Schoolwork should consist of knowledge work that promotes the intellectual and moral development of the student. This supportive framework is called “Working on the Work” (WOW) and is displayed in Table 1.2.

Schlechty’s WOW framework addresses the types of work that must be done to “improve student performance in school” (Schlechty, 2002, p. xiv), but this most recent work is part of a larger body of work that provides process knowledge about how schools should proceed to enact systemic change. Also discussed by Schlechty (1997) are the powerful values and assumptions which should be used in any re-design or systemic change effort. Schlechty’s work explores the importance of leadership and clear vision by saying that “ideas begin with individual women and men: they do not begin with groups” (Schlechty, 1990, p. 60).

Table 1.2

Basic Assumptions of the WOW framework

1. One of the primary tasks of teachers is to provide work for students: work that students engage in and from which students learn that which it is intended that they learn.
2. A second task of teachers is to lead students to do well and successfully the work they undertake.
3. Therefore, teachers are leaders and inventors, and students are volunteers.
4. What students have to volunteer is their attention and commitment.
5. Differences in commitment and attention produce differences in student engagement.
6. Differences in the level and type of engagement affect directly the effort that students expend on school-related tasks.
7. Effort affects learning outcomes at least as much as does intellectual ability.
8. The level and type of engagement will vary depending on the qualities teachers build into the work they provide students.
9. Therefore, teachers can directly affect student learning through the invention of work that has those qualities that are most engaging to students.

Note. From Schlechty (2002, p. xviii). Reprinted with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Effective leaders begin by working with educators and educational personnel at every level in the schools to create a clear vision that extends to all members of the system through "participatory leadership" (Schlechty, 1990, p. 60). Once that vision has been created, it must be marketed to those who will be affected by it. A distinction is made between a sales approach, in which those who offer the product (change) try to overcome resistance to the product, and the market approach, in which the "needs and values of those whose support is essential" (Schlechty, 1990, p. 64) are met.

For implementation of changes, Schlechty lists five functions that require fulfillment: 1) Intellectual leaders must emerge and be able to conceptualize the idea and the structure of the change effort; 2) Those who will be involved in the change must be recruited and informed of the nature of plans for change; 3) Feedback about the change must be solicited from those who will be called upon to support the change; 4) Implementation activities must be implemented; and 5) Ongoing support and training must be made available to all concerned. Schlechty (1990) refers to these functions "as the conceptualizing function, the marketing function, the developmental function, the implementation function, and the service and support function" (p. 98), respectively.

Any system of change requires strong transformational leadership as a guiding force. Schlechty describes such a leader in the superintendent. Qualities of the superintendent include being a non-authoritarian leader who believes in participatory leadership. The superintendent is seen not as a democratic leader but as one who is "strong enough to trust others with his or her fate, just as he or she expects their trust in return" (Schlechty, 1990, p. 129).

The Guidance System for Transforming Education (GSTE)

The GSTE is a set of guidelines for facilitating systemic change in school districts (Jenlink et al., 1998). The guidelines offered by the GSTE outline an internal design process approach to systemic educational change that relies upon the premise that real systemic change can only occur if the demand for change is supported by all who are affected by the change. Because of the increased involvement of community stakeholders, the GSTE appears to have greater potential for successful implementation than most other models. The GSTE provides flexible and detailed process guidelines to a facilitator who chooses to engage in a district-wide systemic change effort.

The following description of the GSTE is based upon *Guidelines for Facilitating Systemic Change in School Districts* (Jenlink et al., 1998). The GSTE is divided into three parts: guiding beliefs, discrete events, and continuous events. Jenlink et al. describe 22 guiding beliefs and values that are proposed as being important to a successful systemic change effort. These beliefs guide the actions of the facilitator and stakeholders, for the values should be incorporated in each of the discrete and continuous events that will occur in the course of the change process as noted in Table 1.3.

The discrete events of the Guidance System for Transforming Education (GSTE) are organized into five phases, each of which contains specific activities and steps.

Phase I: Assess readiness and negotiate an agreement. During this phase, the outside facilitator(s) first assess their readiness and interest in becoming a facilitator of a systemic change effort. Next, the facilitators must either contact a school district or engage in discussions about the parameters of such a change effort. Then the facilitators engage with the district to determine the readiness for change.

Table 1.3

Guiding Beliefs and Implied Values in the Guidance System for Transforming Education

Caring for children and their future.	Systemic thinking.
Inclusivity	Stakeholder ownership
Co-evolution	Facilitator
Process orientation	Context
Time	Space
Participant commitment	Respect
Responsibility	Readiness
Collaboration	Community
Vision	Wholeness
Language	Conversation
Democracy	Culture

Note. From Jenlink et al. (1998). Adapted with permission.

This phase culminates in a formal agreement that is signed between the governing body (the school board) and the change team that specifies the nature of the change process. Finally in this stage the facilitators must assess the district's ability, or "capacity for change" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 225). The four distinct events in this phase are shown in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4

Distinct Events in Phase I: Assess Readiness and Capacity

1. **Assess and enhance your readiness to be a facilitator.** Prepare the facilitator for facilitating the change effort through self-assessment.
2. **Establish or redefine your relationship with a school district.** This step helps to identify a school district with which to work and then making site visits to determine whether or not to proceed on the basis of the district's readiness for change.
3. **Assess the district's readiness for change and negotiate a formal agreement.** This event involves assessing the district's readiness for systemic change by looking at documents and interviewing key people. A decision is made whether or not to enter into a formal relationship at this stage.
4. **Assess the district's capacity for change.** Facilitator meets with stakeholders with the district and identifies existing and lacking capacities for systemic change.

Note. From Jenlink et al (1998).

Phase II: Prepare a core team for the change process. A small Core Team of 5-7 individuals is created and charged with the responsibility to explore and evaluate the current system with respect to systemic change. The newly formed team must generate a team culture and dynamic in which systemic change is carried out. The facilitators must help the Core Team to develop skills and understandings in systems design and group process. In event eight of this phase, the Core Team utilizes their knowledge of systems design to re-design and customize the next three events and to tailor them to meet the specific needs of the district. Event nine asks the Core Team to identify any other change events that might compete for time or resources. In event 10, they evaluate the openness to change within the district and community. In event 11, the "existing beliefs, assumptions, and mindsets about educational change" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 226) are evaluated. This phase ends with the core team redesigning the process in events 12 through 15 as they prepare to expand into a Decisioning Team and a Design Support Team. The eight distinct events in this phase are shown in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5

Distinct Events in Phase II: Prepare the Initial Core Team

5. **Select the participants for the Core Team.** Key district leaders should assist you in selecting the types of people who should be included on the Core Team. This selection is announced publicly and should help to create public awareness of the event.

6. **Create the Core Team dynamic.** The Core Team attends a two-day retreat. They work together to develop a team culture, teaming skills and group knowledge. This becomes an experience base to design team-building experiences for newly developed teams later in the process.

7. **Train the initial Core Team in systems design.** Included in this training is systems theory, practice, and systems design. Emphasis is on deep understanding and appreciation for user-designer approach to systems design.

8. **Design events 9-11.** Events 9-11 are *just-in-time* activities requiring Core Team selection and redesign.

9. **Identify competing change efforts.** The Core Team identifies change efforts in the district that are currently under way that may compete for time or resources

10. **Evaluate openness to change.** In addition to evaluating the district's openness to change, the Core Team must also identify why the district is open or closed to change.

11. **Evaluate the existing culture for change.** The Core Team must evaluate the existing beliefs, assumptions, and mindsets about educational change. This involves fostering an understanding of what a culture of change is along with understanding the language of change.

12. **Redesign Events 13-15.** This consists of designing the steps that will be used to expand the Core Team into a Decisioning team (20-25 people) and a Design Team (8-12 people) whose jobs include making the decisions that will affect the changed system or to design the new educational system. The order in which these two events occur determines whether event thirteen or fourteen will come next.

Note. From Jenlink et al (1998).

Phase III: Prepare expanded teams for the process. The Core Team is responsible for preparing to expand into the Decisioning Team and the Design Team. These two groups work interactively. In event 13, the Core Team expands into a team of approximately twenty members, including representative members from every stakeholder group. Event 14 can be done either before or after event 15 and consists of building the Design Support Team, a group that includes five members from the original

Decisioning Team and an additional five members. Event 15 provides for training the Design Support Team “with respect to applications of the systems theory, systems practice, and various model of systems design” (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 228). As in phase two, event 16 asks the participants to redesign events 17 through 24 in preparation for the next phase. The four distinct events in this phase are shown in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6

Distinct Events in Phase III: Prepare the Expanded Teams

13. Expand and build the Decisioning Team. The Core Team expands to approximately twenty members broadly representing all stakeholder groups. This event includes a two-day retreat similar to that used to build the Core Team with the responsibility of identifying personality profiles and identifying common beliefs (Event 6). The Core Team shares results of prior evaluations, and the Decisioning Team designs its mode of operation.

14. Select and build the Design Support Team. If done after Event 13, five members of the Decisioning Team spin off to serve on the Design Team as well. These five form the nucleus of approximately 10 people. They must foster understanding of the role of the Design Team in the systemic change effort. They must plan a two-day retreat similar to that described in Event 13 with similar expectations for planning the mode of operation.

15. **Train and enculturate the Design Support Team.** Facilitation of additional training for the Design team with respect to applications of systems theory and practice, and various models of systems design are learned in Event 14 (see Event 7). Explore alternative views and approaches to the change process.
16. **Redesign the change process.** The Design Support Team redesigns its own design process using what was learned in Event 15 and what is provided in the guidebook for Events 17-24. Foster understanding of evaluation as an important part of learning within the systemic change effort.

Note. From Jenlink et al (1998)**.**

Phase IV: Engage in design of the new educational system. With the groundwork for change laid, the community is now engaged in the design process. Event 17 asks participants to identify their own mindset and to understand "how mindsets contribute to our perceptions of education" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 229). Event 18 asks participants to explore idealized beliefs and assumptions about education to help participants create a foundation for expectations about coming steps in the design process. Event 19 gives the Design Support Team guidance in implementing the "self-selection of small design teams based on individuals' beliefs within the framework of the district-wide beliefs" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 229). In event 20, the facilitator works with Design Support Team members "in the process of reaching consensus on the particular beliefs about learning and education that they would like their school to reflect with the framework of the district-wide beliefs" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 229).

In event 21, Design Team members develop a system for evaluating the results of the change process. In event 22, the Design Team designs a system of functions to enable it to attain it vision of a new educational system. In event 23, the components for accomplishing the functions identified in event 22 are designed. Finally, in event 24, all design teams join together to design both site- and district-wide "administrative and governance systems" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 230). The eight distinct events in this phase are shown in Table 1.7.

Table 1.7

Distinct Events in Phase IV: Design a New System

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17. Evolve mindsets about education. The facilitator must foster an understanding of what a mindset is and how they contribute to our perceptions of education. You must help the Design and Decisioning Teams clarify the basis of their mindsets and to move beyond their current mindsets.

18. Explore ideal beliefs and assumptions about education. The facilitator must assist the Design and Decisioning Teams to develop a core set of ideal beliefs and assumptions about education that they want to see throughout the new system. This new system must incorporate an understanding of and appreciation for ideal design**.**

19. Select and build multiple design teams. The facilitator assists the Design Team to plan and implement the self-selection of small design teams based on individuals' beliefs within the framework of district-wide beliefs. Each new team engages in a two day retreat at which the work on team-building and development of appropriate skills and knowledge (see Event 14). Results of prior evaluations are shared with the teams and they determine their own mode of operations and communication with the district-wide Design Team.

20. **Explore ideal visions based on the common beliefs.** The facilitator assists and co-facilitates the district-wide Design Team members to facilitate each design team in the process of reaching consensus on learning and education. This consensus along with an ideal vision based on common beliefs and assumptions, will be incorporated into the new "school" design that they will create. Further, this vision shall incorporate an instructional system to support these kinds of learning experiences. The importance of ideal visions and the place they play in bringing about systemic change through stakeholder participation is key to create commitment to the ideal vision.

21. **Develop a system for evaluating the results of the change process.** The facilitator will assist the district-wide Design Team members to help each design team to develop an evaluation system for its design. This evaluation system will reflect the development of an understanding of the role of critical examination, reflection, positive feedback systems, and self-renewal in the evaluation process. All stakeholders must have clear agreement as to that which is important to evaluate and what is not important to evaluate.

22. **Design a system of functions for each ideal vision.** Each design team now identifies and designs a set of functions that will enable it to attain its vision of a new educational system. The district-wide Design Team members facilitate an understanding of a function, and guide the design team members into increasingly specific and detailed levels of sub functions.

23. Design the components for accomplishing each function. Every design team designs each necessary component to accomplish each function of the new system. The progression of vision to functions to components is a gradual process in which greater detail is continually developed;

24. Evolve, evaluate, and revise the new system. The process is implemented, while engaging in evaluation and revision of the new system as it evolves. The system designed in Event 21 can be used for this purpose. Explore new possibilities and problems of the design as it evolves.

Note. From Jenlink et al (1998).

Phase V: Implement and evolve the new system. Ideal designs having been generated and approved, the community develops and uses an implementation process to transition into the new system in event 25. In event 26, the process is implemented, evaluated, and revised while implemented, along with implementation, evaluation, and revision of the new system as it evolves. The two distinct events in this phase are shown in Table 1.8.

Table1.8

Distinct Events in Phase V: Implement and Evolve the New System

25. Develop a process for evolving to the new system. Because it is likely many aspects of the ideal system will not be immediately attainable, each design team should determine how to evolve ever closer to the ideal over time. They should attempt to minimize incompatibilities between the early elements of the new system and the remaining elements of the old system.

26. Evolve, Evaluate, and revise the new system. Through a constant process of evaluation and revision in the course of implementation, it is possible to evolve the new system even as it is being implemented. The object is to evolve closer to the idealized vision.

Note. From Jenlink et al (1998).

Continuous Events

Finally, the GSTE outlines a series of 18 continuous events that require attention throughout the course of the change effort. These address such things as sustaining the motivation of the various groups involved in the effort, building and maintaining trust within and among the different groups, and monitoring and dealing with various elements occurring in the environment that can affect the change effort. Attention to these issues is equal in importance to the other elements, but they must be constantly monitored and addressed throughout the change process. The 18 continuous events are listed in Table 1.9.

Table 1.9

Continuous events of the GSTE

A. Evaluate and improve the change process
B. Build and maintain political support
C. Sustain motivation
D. Develop and sustain appropriate leadership
E. Build and maintain trust
F. Evolve mindset and culture
G. Periodically secure necessary resources
H. Develop skills in systems thinking
I. Periodically and appropriately allocate necessary resources
J. Develop group-process and team-building skills
K. Build team spirit
I. Engage in self-disclosure
M. Engage in reflection
N. Develop design skills
O. Communicate with stakeholders (two-way)
P. Build and evolve community
Q. Foster organizational learning
R. Build an organizational memory

Note. From Jenlink et al (1998).

Since January, 2001, the GSTE has been undergoing testing, refinement, and elaboration through field trial in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District, and I was able to join the reform effort as a co-facilitator in 2003. In that field trial, it has become apparent that the development and activities of the Decisioning Team (which they called the Leadership Team) in Phase III are particularly difficult yet crucial to the success of the systemic change effort.

A Decisioning Team is asked to engage in mindset change that may challenge their notions of culture, education, and the purpose of schools. This kind of change is especially difficult since it may run contrary to the professional training and experience the individuals have received.

They are asked to engage in idealized design, explore ideal visions, and evaluate the results of the change process in which they are engaged. Finally, they are asked to implement these new visions and beliefs in a new educational system that will affect the lives of all who are so engaged. The Decisioning Team's actions and decisions, especially in the early stages of their formation, will affect greatly the remaining course of the change effort, and it is important both to describe these actions as well as their consequences and to explore alternatives that might be offered in future implementations of the GSTE. Since the Decisioning Team needs to become effective in the shortest amount of time possible, there is a strong need for improving the guidance for Events 12 and 18 by integrating the team's learning activities with their decision-making activities in such a way that the team is able to begin making important decisions sooner. The purpose of this study is to address this need.

Current Knowledge about Integration of Decision Making and Team Learning: Just-In-Time Learning

Just-In-Time learning has its roots in Japanese management theory from the 1970's and was used to create the production system used by Toyota Motor Corporation® (Jones, 2001). The concept stems from a desire to provide limited production resources to the system when and where they are required, reducing the need for stockpiling redundant resources. Driving the Just-In-Time production model are the following principles:

1. Each process is a supplier to another process, and each process is a customer to another process.
2. Use a pull production approach, not a push approach.
3. Visible display of performance, production, and inventory state.
4. Deliver to factories only what is needed, when it is needed, exactly where it is needed.
5. Shipments of raw materials are unloaded directly onto the production lines.
6. U-shaped production design is staffed by multi-skilled workers.
7. Ship orders immediately without warehousing.
8. The kanban card is the sole inventory tracker, invoice, and reorder form between companies.
9. Creative use of tools and technology to help eliminate worker motion, strain, and error (Jones, 2001, p. 481).

The kanban cards are at the heart of the system's efficiency. They are used to track both the production and flow of materials used to create a product. This simple and unifying concept not only governs the production process, but also serves to streamline the process by simplifying the flow of information required to bring resources together for creating and distributing the product.

Following the success of companies like Toyota® that used the Just-In-Time model with visible success, corporate trainers and developers began incorporating this concept into training. Kutzin (2005) distinguishes two types of training: ongoing and

Just-In-Time. Ongoing training is incorporated "primarily for new employees or staff who have transferred into a different position without a complete skill set" (Kutzik, 2005, p. 8). This is distinguished from Just-In-Time training, which is incorporated in any situation that exhibits "an emerging situation." Rather than a set body of knowledge in "one size fits all," the Just-In-Time model creates a learning environment where the "learner is in full control and the knowledge is selected – not by a teacher – but by the learner herself on the basis of the need at the moment" (Kutzik, 2005, p. 8).

In schools, Just-In-Time practices are often undertaken by learning communities formed by content-specific or grade-level teachers (Redding & Kamm, 2999). Often a facilitator who has expertise in staff development will help a learning organization to choose the type of training that will be used, and this is typical of Just-In-Time practices.

This concept can be applied to integrate the learning and decision making activities in systemic change efforts. By examining both sets of activities in the GSTE, it is possible to identify the learning activities that should be used "just in time" during the decision making process. Over the course of many systemic reform efforts, it should be possible to identify the learning activities that are most effective in helping participants to make sound decisions during an internal design process.

Conclusion (Gaps in the Knowledge)

Although there is much literature on change projects, none was found that addresses guidance for integrating team learning with decision-making in a just-in-time manner for an internal design process such as the systemic change project being conducted in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District, partly because internal design processes in public schools are rare, if not nonexistent. Finally, though many instances of

Just In Time (JIT) processes can be found in corporate literature, I was unable to find any instances of it in literature or research about public schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the integration of the team learning process (Event 12 in the GSTE) with the team decision-making process (Event 18), and to develop guidance as to the most preferable means of integrating the two processes for an internal design process.

Research Questions

The following research questions will serve as a guide for this study:

1. How can the decision making process and the learning process best be integrated so that both are accomplished most effectively and efficiently in the early stages of a Leadership Team (or Decisioning Team)?
    a. What is a good sequence of decisions for a leadership team to make?
    b. What learning activities are most helpful for each of the decisions to be made by a Leadership Team?
2. What elements of the observed process used by the Leadership Team worked well?
3. What elements of the observed process used by the Leadership Team did not work well?
4. What changes should have been made in the observed process used by the Leadership Team?
5. What guidelines should be added to the GSTE to improve the process?

Chapter 2: Methodology

Introduction

In this study, the researcher utilized a qualitative research methodology known as formative research to improve upon an existing design theory for facilitating systemic change in public school districts (the GSTE). In this chapter, first I examine the philosophical foundations of inquiry and some assumptions for using qualitative research methodology. I then provide a detailed view of a specific form of qualitative research methodology known as the formative research methodology and describe the study design. The formative research methodology is chosen for this study for its utility in informing and improving a design theory, such as the GSTE. Finally, I discuss issues of methodology that relate to the formative research methodology.

Philosophical Foundations of Inquiry

The methodology that a researcher chooses in the study of a question is based upon the way that he or she views the world. In turn, the view of the world is formed by how one addresses the beliefs and assumptions of a given inquiry paradigm (Creswell, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (2000a) have listed the beliefs that define established and emergent paradigms under three categories:

1. Ontology: What is the nature of being and what is known about it?
2. Epistemology: What is the origin, nature, method, and validity of human knowledge?
3. Methodology: What is the most orderly system of principles or methods of inquiry that can be applied to a particular body of knowledge?

Quantitative inquiry is characterized by a Positivist paradigm. The ontology of the positivist is that there is a reality “out there” that can be apprehended. Epistemologically, the researcher strives for non-involvement so as to maintain the validity of collected data. Methodologically, data is gathered through experimentation, manipulation of variables, and testing hypotheses.

Contrasting with the Positivist paradigm is the Constructivist paradigm, which ontologically describes reality as being constructed through interaction. Epistemologically, the researcher joins readily in a transactional environment with the subjects. Methodologically, data is gathered through interaction, dialogue, and shared experience.

It should be noted that qualitative inquiry has many paradigms that can be chosen (Post Positivism, Critical Theory, Constructivism, Participatory, etc.), but that the nature of the field of interest influences the selection of the genre. The line between genres becomes increasingly blurred (Geertz, 1993), and methodology is “inevitably interwoven with and emerges from the nature of particular disciplines” (p. 164).

Qualitative Assumptions

Qualitative research is characterized by the extended immersion of the researcher in the process of exploring social phenomena (Slavin, 1992). It is warranted whenever the program of study is based on humanistic values and when quantitative measurement cannot yield acceptable, valid, or reliable information (Mertens, 1998). Savenye and Robinson (1996) also characterize qualitative research by the following assumptions, which are also applicable to naturalistic research:

- Qualitative research is done in a natural setting

- Qualitative methods are generally used, though quantitative methods are not excluded
- Tacit knowledge is used in addition to explicit knowledge
- Sampling can be purposive rather than random or representative
- Analysis of data is weighted toward inductive reasoning as opposed to deductive reasoning
- The design emerges as research progresses and the focus of the study is what determines the data that are collected
- Boundaries of the study may change as new issues and questions emerge
- Multiple realities are always present
- Rigor is not tossed out just because a study is qualitative in nature.

Formative Research Methodology

Benefits of Formative Research Methodology

Formative research is a kind of action research that utilizes formative evaluation techniques. Formative evaluation is a method of field or usability testing initially developed to improve instructional resources and curricula (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971; Cronbach, 1963; NASDC, 1997; New American Schools Development Corporation, 1997; Reigeluth, 1999a; Scriven, 1967; Thiagarajan, Semmel, & Semmel, 1974). Formative research is in the same family as Design-Based Research and Design Experiments, which are used to perfect a particular product (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003).

Design-based research:

> … goes beyond perfecting a particular product. The intention of design-based research in education is to inquire more broadly into the nature of learning in a complex system and to refine generative or predictive theories of learning. Models of successful innovation can be generated through such work – models, rather than particular artifacts or programs, are the goal (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003, p. 7).

Reigeluth and Frick describe formative research as a tool for improving "design theory for designing instructional practices or processes." (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999, p. 633) A formative research study should be selected to develop guidance for integrating the Leadership Team's learning process and decision-making process in the GSTE.

Designed Case Versus Naturalistic Case

Two classifications of cases are identified by Reigeluth and Frick (1999) for formative research: designed or naturalistic cases:

> Formative research is a designed case if the researcher instantiates the theory (or model) and then formatively evaluates the instantiation. Alternatively, it is a naturalistic case if the researcher (a) picks an instance (or case) that was not specifically designed according to the theory but serves the same goals and contexts as the theory, (b) analyzes the instance to see in what ways it is consistent with the theory, what guidelines it fails to implement, and what valuable elements it has that are not present in the theory, and (c) formatively evaluates that instance to identify how each consistent element might be improved, whether each absent element might represent an improvement in the instance, and whether removing the elements unique to the instance might be detrimental (p. 637).

The kind of formative research methodology I used was a designed case, "in which the theory is intentionally instantiated (usually by the researchers) for the research." It included the following steps taken from Reigeluth and Frick (1999):

1. *Select a design theory.*
2. *Design an instance of the theory.*
3. *Collect and analyze formative data on the instance.*
4. *Revise the instance.*
5. *Repeat the data collection and revision cycle.*

6. *Offer tentative revisions for the theory* (p. 638).

In the next section, greater detail is offered for each of the six steps of the formative research design used in this study.

Formative Research Design

Select a Design Theory

Reigeluth and Frick (1999) recommend that to begin the process, you must select "an existing design theory (or model) that you want to improve (p. 639). The researcher was able to join an ongoing effort in its third year of instantiation using the GSTE (see chapter two for a full review of the GSTE). Although still under development, the GSTE is a design theory that informs educators on procedures and principles that have proven useful in guiding the transformation from an industrial-age paradigm to an information-age paradigm of schooling. The GSTE was selected because it was believed to be the best available guidance for a systemic change effort. This dissertation is one in a series of studies being conducted to improve all aspects and phases of the GSTE (see also Joseph, 2003b). The scope of this dissertation study addressed three discrete events of Phase 3: Events 12, 13, and 18, shown in Table 2.1.

The school district consists of one administrative building, one high school, one middle school, four elementary schools, a Challenger Learning Center, and one early childhood center. New construction is underway, and during the 2005-2006 school year, the district opened an alternative high school as well as a new intermediate school.

Table 2.1

Events 12, 13, and 19 of the Guidance System for Transforming Education

Event 12. Hold a one-day retreat to develop the Leadership Team dynamic (Old 13) (Begin by redesigning the event)

Event 13. Facilitators develop Leadership Team understanding of systems, design, mental models, the systemic change process, dialogue, and small-group facilitation (Address throughout Events 13-17, and hold several one-day retreats) (Old 13)

Event 18. Facilitators assist the Leadership Team in exploring ideal beliefs and assumptions about education.

Note. From Jenlink et al (1998).

Design an Instance of the Theory

Schools of the Midwestern Metropolitan School district, having shown a high level of readiness for systemic change in the school district, began working with Indiana University in January, 2001. The school district is relatively small and located just off the expressway that circumscribes a large Midwestern metropolitan area. This gives the district one foot in an urban environment and one foot in a rural environment. It consists of the demographics shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Midwestern Metropolitan School District Demographics.

	2001-2002	2006-2007
Enrollment	5,824	5,954
Attendance Rate	95.4%	95.6%
Graduation Rate	91.3%	79.6%
ISTEP English/Language Arts (All Tested Grades)	59.4%	66.3%
SAT scores	952	944
Percent of Minority Students, 2001-02:	13.0%	16.0%
Percent of Pupils Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunches	40%	51%
Percent of Pupils in Special Education Program	19.1%	19.6%
Average Total Expense per Pupil	$8356	$10,025 2005 (Last available year)
Average Teacher Salary	$48,211	$53,183
Pupils Per Teacher	17.1	17.9
Area in Square Miles:	32	
Round Trip Bus Miles, 2002:	3,107	

Note. To ensure anynomity, the website from which this data was taken will not be disclosed.

Facilitators involved in the implementation of the GSTE are advised to use a three-step process as they facilitate the implementation of the GSTE in the school district. These steps are described by Joseph (2003b) thusly:

> 1. Present the district with the GSTE's advice for conducting each event (i.e., meet with district personnel to plan each event, and provide the district personnel with hard copies of the event for their review).
> 2. Guide the district in redesigning the entire event or parts of the event to suit the needs of their district, as called for by the GSTE.
> 3. Support the district personnel in the process of implementing the redesigned event (p. 78).

Collect and Analyze Formative Data on the Instance

Data collection. Two types of data were collected in the course of this investigation: descriptive and evaluative. Descriptive data included notes that were kept by the researcher as a participant in the course of deliberations, field notes, audio and video recordings, interviews with stakeholder participants about the process, and broad-level summaries of the process. Evaluative data was gathered using formative evaluation methodologies (Bloom et al., 1971; Cronbach, 1963; NASDC, 1997; New American Schools Development Corporation, 1997; Reigeluth, 1999a; Scriven, 1967; Thiagarajan et al., 1974), including field notes and interpretations of observations, forms for participant feedback, focus group interviews, and individual interviews with all stakeholders to identify strengths, weaknesses, and ways the process could have been improved in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District.

Initial data analysis process. As a participant-facilitator, I kept a record of meeting notes that were taken throughout each of 31 meetings included in this event as the meetings occurred. Using the meeting notes, discussions with the co-facilitator, and review of video recordings, I created a timeline that displayed all of the activities that occurred during the creation of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. The timeline of events was created to aid study participants as they considered the activities in which they engaged. Activities that illustrated important learning or decision making events were identified and noted on the timeline. Video of the most important events was viewed to verify observations. Observations on the sequence, effectiveness, variations from facilitator's advice, and consequence of the event were made and added to the timeline. From this record of events, I created formative questions to ask the participants that would address the research questions noted in Chapter 1.

Focus group interviews. Participant members of the Leadership Team who were engaged in the conversations to create the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs were included in the interviews conducted by the researcher. These individuals were active members of the Leadership Team from January, 2003, to January, 2005, and 16 individuals were interviewed in three groups of three participants each, three groups of two participants each, and one individual interview, as described in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Focus Group Participant Description.

Groups of 3	**Groups of 2**	**Groups of 1**
3	3	1

Of the twenty-four potential members, there were four who had moved from the state and were unreachable, two who were scheduled to meet but who were not able to attend the interview, and two who asked not to be interviewed for personal reasons not related to the study. Thus, a total of sixteen leadership team members were interviewed for this study as outlined in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Distribution of Interview Subjects.

Administrator	Principal	Teacher	Parent	Support Staff	Board Member	IUB Facilitator
5	2	5	1	3	2	1

The superintendent was interviewed by himself as it was felt that he might overly influence the responses of focus groups. Focus group interviews were conducted at a facility in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District. The Researcher recorded each interview and noted helpful participant comments.

The materials used in the focus group interviews included a list of decisions created by the Leadership Team, a timeline of decisions and learnings that placed all elements into context, sticky notes used by participants to record comments on the scrolled timeline, the reading activities in which participants engaged, and descriptions of the decisions made by participants

In each focus group interview, I first thanked the participants for agreeing to work with me and directed their attention to the Human Subjects information sheet, for which I asked them to indicate that they had received a copy. I reminded participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could refuse to participate without penalty.

The first task to be addressed by participants was to verify their participation in the Leadership Team. This was done to ensure that participants were not asked to comment on events of which they have no knowledge. The second task was to acquaint them with the subject of the study, and they were told that the work in question concerns the learning and the decisions that were made in the course of creating the Midwestern Metropolitan School District Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs.

Participants were then asked to look at the decisions made by the Leadership Team in creating the Framework document. They were given an example of the type of decision under consideration and looked at Decision Number 7, which was to hold a two day workshop during the summer of 2004 to complete the framework. They were asked to examine the decision and to comment on its appropriateness in the context of the overall process. They were asked if the decision was a good decision, a decision that should have been modified in some way, or a decision that should have not been made. I recorded their answers and eventually created a transcript of those responses. After completing the example, I asked the interviewees to examine each decision made in the same manner and to record their responses.

The second task was more complex. Interview subjects were asked to look at a timeline laid out in a horizontal format with learning events on the top and decision-making events listed on the bottom, subdivided into meetings when the events occurred. They were informed that we wanted to examine the connection between the learning activities and the decision-making activities. They were asked to look at the first 5 meetings, A through E, and were told that only one decision-making event occurred during this time. They were asked to note the large red boxes that indicate critical decisions or learning activities. Their attention was directed to each of the boxes throughout the event as it proceeded. Interviewees were directed to look especially at the decisions that were made and to comment on the connection between the decisions and the learning that preceded each decision. They were asked if there were any learning events that were not matched with subsequent decisions, and responses were noted. They were asked if there are learning events that should have been matched with subsequent decisions closer in time. They were asked to examine the readings, particularly, and to identify which decisions the readings supported the best and the least. They were finally asked if there are any topics that are missing or redundant.

Categorizing focus group responses. When all focus group interviews were concluded, data from the interviews were transcribed and grouped into subject areas based on the emergent data that were collected. Summary statements were made for each emergent category and were later shared with follow-up interview participants to enable validity checking. All statements were coded with a numerical identification for the purpose of linking all statements with the original audio recordings.

Conducting individual validity interviews. Individual interviews were conducted using a fact sheet that contained groups' responses from the focus groups. Participants were first asked, given the findings of the focus groups displayed in the document, what types of changes they would like to see implemented in this stage of a similar reform effort. Participants were then asked how they would direct a similar process and what types of large-scale changes they would recommend in the new process. Finally, they were asked if the process that they were engaged in took too little time, just the right amount of time, or too much time. Interviewees were given encouragement to elaborate on all of the initial findings, and the interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes. All follow-up interviews were recorded and additional findings were added to the original findings. Distribution of the participants in this second round of interviews is described in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5

Distribution of individual interview subjects

Administrator	Principal	Teacher	Parent	Support Staff	Board Member	IUB Facilitator
5	1	3	1	1	1	0

Individual validity checks. Upon completion of the manuscript, all interviewees were provided with a copy of the dissertation in which their contributions were highlighted electronically. This was accomplished by sending the dissertation in an email attachment. The email itself listed the page number location of quotes that were attributed anonymously to participant interviewees. Six individuals responded that the quotes accurately represented their views and that they required no modification. The distribution of those positive responses is outlined in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6

Positive response affirming accuracy of quoted material.

Administrator	Principal	Teacher	Parent	Support Staff	Board Member	IUB Facilitator
3	1	1	1	0	0	0

Rigor. For the collected data to be trustworthy and credible, the following precautions were followed. While it is important to recognize that the data collected was subject to researcher interpretation, it is important to conduct member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985a, 2000b) and to ensure freedom from bias. The university-based Research and Theory Development (RTD) Team, also known as the Support Team, consists of about 10 researchers. This team included both faculty and graduate students specializing in aspects of school change. The RTD Team serves to conduct research and to support the facilitator and school district in making good decisions about the organizational change process. The RTD Team conducted peer review on this and other studies in order to discuss and reach consensus on different interpretations of the data. The researcher explored conditions that may affect generalizability of the findings and recommended further studies to investigate such apparently conditional findings.

Revise the Instance

Throughout the course of the project, it was important for the researcher to apply the findings to revision of the activity. Revisions should be made whenever you have gathered enough data to revise the instance and should not be delayed until all data have been collected and analyzed (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999). Using this procedure, it was possible to compare revisions to the original conditions and to make ad hoc adjustments to better the application of the theory. It was also possible to test the revised instance and to verify or qualify revisions to the instance.

Repeat the Data Collection and Revision Cycle

Whenever possible, the researcher needs to repeat the data collection and revision cycle, "systematically varying the situation (people and conditions) as much as you can from round to round, within the boundaries of the theory (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999, p. 643). This quasi-experimental process enabled the researcher to confirm the data that had been collected and analyzed. It also allowed the researcher to check on external validity and generalizability throughout the course of the project.

Offer Tentative Revisions for the Theory

Revisions in the instance of the design theory can often be made throughout the course of the event, based on collected data. Reigeluth and Frick advise the researcher to "…make the revisions as soon as you feel fairly confident in their value…" (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999, p. 643). The nature of the revisions is important, as it might suggest new ways to improve the theory. Revisions may be applied to the ongoing project as soon as they have been made.

Revisions to the GSTE are recommended based on the following:

- Revisions that were made to the process that worked well
- Revisions that were not made but would have likely improved the process
- Successful "inventions" that were not revisions but were not in the GSTE.

Recommendations will include descriptive and prescriptive principles about the process, as well as activities that appear to be most useful.

Methodological Issues

The criticism leveled most often toward case studies is that they lack rigor in the methods that have been used to gather and report data (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999). It is possible to refute this criticism by paying close attention to “three classes of methodological issues: a) construct validity, b) sound data collection and analysis procedures, and c) attention to generalizability to the theory” (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999, p. 643). In the area of construct validity, eight standards that apply to any study that depends upon emerging criteria are listed and discussed. In the discussion of sound data collection and analysis procedures, five major techniques recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985b) are discussed. And in the section on attention to generalizability to the theory, two techniques proposed by Reigeluth and Frick (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999) are discussed.

A. Construct Validity

Construct validity is the process of “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (Yin, 1984, p. 40). In this current study, the concepts of interest included 1) methods suggested by the GSTE, 2) the situation in which the GSTE is used, and 3), indicators of strength and weakness that are manifested through the application of the GSTE (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999).

Reigeluth and Frick (1999) offer the following advice about construct validity, saying “there are two ways in which construct validity can be weakened: omission (not faithfully including an element of the theory) and commission (including an element that is not called for by the theory)" (p. 647). In this research study, dialogue was conducted with both the Leadership Team and the university-based Support Team that addressed the issues of omission and commission of elements of the design theory (GSTE). Within the confines of this study, decisions made about omission or commission of elements made by either of the above groups and the rationale for the action will be documented.

In addition, the following eight standards suggested by Lincoln (1995) and further refined by Cresswell (1998) apply to any study that depends upon emerging criteria.

Standards of the inquiry community. Standards set in the inquiry community are those traditions of rigor, communication, and methods that allow interested persons to share in the research findings. These standards include publication guidelines used for broad communication to those interested in the topic. Results from this study will be shared in professional journals as well as through conference proceedings and professional gatherings and discussions

Standards of positionality. Positions held by the author should be displayed honestly with authenticity in the text. Such honesty is also addressed previously in this section under rigor. As noted there, member checking and triangulation will address this standard.

Standards of community. The purpose of the community in which the research takes place should be served by the research. This is true whether the community is defined by place, as in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District, by thought, as in a political arena, or by common attitude, as in Native American studies or Black scholarship (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln, 1995).

Giving voice to participants. It is the responsibility of research to give voice to its participants. To this end, the researcher must seek out all parties to the research or, in this case, to all stakeholders involved in education in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District. If this research is to be of value, this standard must be set high, and all voices must be heard to avoid marginalization of any part of the community.

Critical subjectivity. The researcher must be sensitive to his or her own awareness in the research process. It is important to "create personal and social transformation" (Creswell, 1998, p. 196). This awareness is important as it provides the means for the researcher to understand his or her emotional reactions as the research proceeds. In this study, the researcher has had, and will continue to have, frequent contact with his mentor during weekly consultations that address this question, along with other questions, about the research.

Reciprocity. It is important for the relationship between the researcher and the participants of the study to create a sharing relationship that is characterized by trust and mutuality. The researcher in this study has developed an extensive reciprocity by tabulating data used by the Leadership Team, advising the Leadership Team on selections to facilitate their actions, and helping them to consider a broader range of literature to which they expose their members than the team would have been capable of selecting on their own.

Sacredness of relationships. The researcher must respect the sacred nature of relationships made within the research study environment. Due to the length of time required by the change process, participants' enthusiasm as well as their ability to commit time, energy, and resources can be challenged. Individuals must be given space to go on with their lives outside the study, and overly optimistic schedules must be adjusted to meet participants' needs.

Sharing of the privileges. The researcher should share the rewards of research with the people who participate in the study. This reward-sharing includes personal recognition, when appropriate, royalty sharing, or the sharing of publication rights. With the close relationships over a period of years that have developed in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District project, recognition of the devoted participants is just the beginning of privilege sharing.

B. Sound Data Collection and Analysis Features

To ensure that the data collection and analysis procedures are sound, the researcher employed five major techniques suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985b). These techniques, discussed below, include:

> [1] activities that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced ([a] prolonged engagement, [b] persistent observation, [c] triangulation), [2]activities that provide an external check on the process ([d] peer debriefing), [3] an activity aimed at refining working hypotheses as more and more information becomes available ([e] negative case analysis), [4] an activity that makes possible checking preliminary findings and interpretations against archived 'raw data' ([f] referential adequacy), and [5] an activity providing for the direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they have come – the constructors of the multiple realities being studied ([g] member checking) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985b, p. 301)".

Each of these is discussed next.

1. Activities that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced. There are three activities that made it more likely that credible findings and interpretations would be produced. These included: a) prolonged engagement, b) persistent observation, and c) triangulation.

a. Prolonged engagement. The researcher must be prepared to invest sufficient time with the project in order to learn the culture, to test for consistency and distortions in the data that have been gathered, and to build a sense of trust with the participants. The researcher had been engaged with the Midwestern Metropolitan School District project for over three years. In that time, he worked closely with the participants, and has worked with numerous groups there to assist them in their endeavors. Lincoln and Guba (1981) also mention the importance of maintaining a sense of detached wonder to avoid the problem of inquirer identification that results in over identifying with those being observed. Such over-identification can result in the researcher failing to discover phenomena that a relatively uninvolved researcher might be able to discover.

b. Persistent observation. While prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth to counteract simple immersion or over-immersion in the research topic. Identification of the elements of observation that are most relevant to the problem and the ability to focus on those elements are critical to the researcher's ability to understand the depth of the reasoning behind the observations. The researcher accomplished this in the Midwestern Metropolitan School Districtproject by discussing focus points with his co-facilitator, Dr. Charles Reigeluth, and by focused observations in which field notes were written and discussed.

c. Triangulation. The technique of triangulation as it pertains to qualitative research can be subdivided into three different modes: the use of multiple and different 1) sources, 2) methods, and 3) investigators (Denzin, 1978). Use of multiple and different sources as a mode of triangulation implies that the same information can be verified by either multiple copies of one type of source or that there are different sources for the same information. In the Midwestern Metropolitan School District, few tasks were accomplished by individuals, while most of the work was done by teams of people acting in concert. Triangulation was accomplished in this sense by interviewing additional participants until the researcher felt that a good understanding of the findings was obtained. The second type, triangulation by methods, is accomplished by the use of multiple sources of information. In the case of the Midwestern Metropolitan School District, this was often accomplished by comparing direct observations with field notes, video recordings, transcriptions, audio recordings, and conversations between co-facilitators. The third type, investigators, is a triangulation method whereby more than one investigator observed the same event. In the Midwestern Metropolitan School District, it is common practice for the co-investigators to attend all meetings together. Following every meeting, the co-investigators shared their observations and field notes and discussed the activities and decisions that came out of the meeting. Lincoln (1995) notes that in a naturalistic design, the emergent nature of the study can present problems of inter-researcher interpretation. The fourth type, theories, did not apply to the Midwestern Metropolitan School District project as this project was an instantiation of a single theory.

2. Activities that provide an external check on the process. There is one activity, peer debriefing, that allowed an external check on the process.

d. Peer debriefing. This is a process “of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of explicating aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind (Lincoln & Guba, 1985a). It is a process that is designed to ensure that the researcher examines carefully the assumptions and observations that have been made. Peer debriefing additionally gave the researcher the opportunity to discuss frustrations. The Midwestern Metropolitan School District project's researchers worked with a university-based Support Team that met either weekly or after each visit made by the researchers to the Midwestern Metropolitan School District. The Support Team consisted of graduate students who specialize in different aspects of school change. They acted to challenge interpretations of the researchers so that interpretations made were valid (Reigeluth, 2005).

3. An activity aimed at refining working hypotheses as more and more information becomes available. The activity that accomplishes this was a negative case analysis.

e. Negative case analysis. The process of negative case analysis is an effort in hindsight whereby the researcher attempts to revise the hypothesis after the fact to take into account all of the results that have been observed (Lincoln & Guba, 1981). In the Formative Research methodology, this was attempted in the final step in which the researcher "offer(ed) tentative revisions for the theory" (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999, p. 646). This process was at the heart of the Formative Research methodology in its attempt to provide guidance for future efforts.

4. An activity that makes possible checking preliminary findings and interpretations against archived raw data. There is one activity that accomplished this, and that is referential adequacy.

f. Referential adequacy. Referential adequacy was originally suggested as "a means for establishing the adequacy of critiques written for evaluation purposes under the connoisseurship model" (Lincoln & Guba, 1981, p. 313). The use of videotape recordings and cinematography could capture events and provide a later examination for comparison to critiques developed from the data. Lincoln and Guba expressed concerns about the electronic recording of data segments, stating that many researchers would not have the resources or skill to accomplish such recordings. With the advancement of technology and a research subject willing to allow such recordings, the recordings have become ubiquitous in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District project and provide the source of such comparison or the raw data for further study in other areas aspects of the Midwestern Metropolitan School Districtsystemic change process. Still, the concern was expressed that "the referential adequacy approach does not recommend itself well to the more practical-minded or resource poor" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985a, p. 314).

5. An activity providing for the direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they have come – the constructors of the multiple realities being studied. The activity that accomplished this was the process of conducting member checks.

g. Member checks. The member check is a process whereby "data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985a, p. 314). This process is recognized by most qualitative researchers as a means of establishing credibility in research. In the Midwestern Metropolitan School District project, member checking was done formally and informally, and often continuously. Prior to publication, all materials were shared with participants who were given the opportunity to react and respond to all materials.

C. Attention to Generalizability to the Theory

Reigeluth and Frick (1999) discuss the best ways to increase the rigor of formative research, and describe the two most important tools for increasing that rigor: situationality and replication of the study.

Situationality. This tool was used to consider the effect of the situation where the study is being conducted. The effect that the situation exercises upon the result can be observed by finding "different results in different iterations" (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999, p. 649) or by "purposely vary(ing) elements of the situation in your rounds of data collection to see if the results differ" (Reigeluth & Frick, 1999, p. 649). Situational differences, when included in the theory being tested, can aid the researcher or practitioner in applying the theory in new instances. In this Midwestern Metropolitan School District study, elements of the situation were noted throughout in an effort to provide this kind of information.

Replication. To confirm and strengthen the findings of any Formative Research project, future replication must be conducted and findings added to the record. The Midwestern Metropolitan School District project has been conducted in a small-to-mid-size school district, and the findings in such a school district are likely to be differentiated from future iterations in small , large, rural, and other kinds of districts. Replication in other school districts will make it possible to apply this model with greater confidence in new situations.

Researcher Bias

The consideration of methodological issues would not be complete without a description of researcher bias. When the researcher acts as both outside facilitator and as a member of the group being studied, it is possible to lose perspective on his own biases. Janesick (2000) describes the researcher's duties thusly:

> The researcher must describe and explain his or her social, philosophical and physical location in the study. The qualitative researcher must honestly probe his or her own biases at the onset of the study, during the study, and at the end of the study by clearly describing and explaining the precise role of the researcher in the study (p. 389).

As a retired teacher who has been committed to positive change throughout my career, I have a bias towards creating an educational atmosphere that is conducive to information-age instructional techniques. It is somewhat difficult for me to work with individuals who are not as committed to the pursuit of these same goals, and in my personal life, I will try first to work with them. For individuals who take a position in opposition to my own, I will either try to find some degree of consensus with them or to enlist others who might be more persuasive. My perception of the members of the Leadership Team was that they entered into the reform effort promising to keep an open mind, but there were times when they had difficulty accepting that they needed to change their practices and mindsets to engage fully with the reform project. At those times, it was challenging to explore new ways to present the ideas, and more challenging still to remember the importance of capturing their thinking. Aware of my personal biases, I worked hard to distinguish my facilitation and research-oriented responsibilities from my emotional reactions.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the formative research methodology used in this case study to improve the integration of the decision-making process and a learning process in a newly formed Leadership Team for Systemic Transformation of a public school district. In the next few chapters, I will describe first "what happened" and how what happened differed from the guidance offered by the GSTE as this event was conducted. Second, I will describe what did and did not work well. Third, I will present tentative recommendations for improving the GSTE. All findings will be based in the data that emerged from the case.

Chapter 3: Learning Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by describing the context of the situation that resulted in the need for this study. I then describe the organization of the emergent data that resulted from interviews of the participants. The reader is reminded that the purpose of this study is to test and improve the process guidelines that are described in Events 12, 13, and 18 of the GSTE. Chapter 3 describes the learning results addressed by Leadership Team members. Chapter 4 describes the decision making results addressed by Leadership Team members. Chapter 5 describes the process results addressed by Leadership Team members. It also makes recommendations for changes to be made to the GSTE, overall conclusions, and recommendations for follow up studies that can add to this body of knowledge in the future. Each section provides the reader with a description of what happened to evoke such responses and an analysis of what worked well and did not work well. Each section includes tentative recommendations for improving the process within the context of this study and a discussion of the findings for that particular section.

Context of this Study

Leadership Team Phase of the GSTE Selected for Study

Events 12, 13, and 18 were implemented in Midwestern Metropolitan School District through the cooperation and participation of three important groups. The first group was the co-facilitators, who attempted to serve as neutral guides charged with sharing their "skills, understandings, and experience for all aspects of systemic change in education" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 5). The lead facilitator, Dr. Charles Reigeluth, is a professor at Indiana University and has experience facilitating school-based change, conducting research on systemic change, and teaching about systemic change. The author, a co-facilitator, was an advanced doctoral student at the same university. The co-facilitators had built up a strong relationship with the Midwestern Metropolitan School District schools through two previous years of work when these events were implemented.

The second principal group was the Facilitation Team. Membership in this team consisted of the original Core Team members (noted in Phase II) along with the addition of 5 members through the course of the events. Original membership in the Core Team consisted of the Superintendent, a school board member, a community member, the president of the teacher's association, and a veteran building principal. In the Facilitation Team expansion, additional members were added on an "as-needed" basis. They planned the short-term monthly meetings, set the time for meetings, and created the agenda. The Facilitation Team also assisted in planning retreats, community forums, training sessions, and other public meetings to share findings with the public.

The third principal group was the Leadership Team, consisting of up to 25 members. In the GSTE process, the co-facilitators work with the Leadership Team to generate an understanding of systemic change and an appropriate culture within which the change process will occur (Fullan, 1993). They engage in developing "skills and understandings in systems design and group process, and exploring and evaluating the current situation in the district with respect to change" (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 5). It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team to explore ideal beliefs and assumptions about education.

Rationale for Selection. The Leadership Team met for one-and-one-half- to two-hour sessions that occurred every two or four weeks (during the school year) and monthly (during the summer). In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, the GSTE calls for the Leadership Team to redesign each event before implementation. The Core Team redesigned events prior to implementation under the guidance of the co-facilitators and implemented the events (what I call the instance of the theory) with assistance in some cases from other members of the school corporation.

In December, 2003, the Core Team engaged in Event 12 and prepared for expanding into the Leadership Team. Event 13 addresses ways to smooth the transition from a Core Team to a Leadership Team and suggests that Leadership Team members engage in a two-day retreat similar to the retreat that the Core Team had held. The retreat would include activities that engage participants in identifying personality profiles and identifying common beliefs. Most individuals contacted to join the Leadership Team replied that they were willing to engage in such a Leadership Team, but that they would not engage in a retreat. Together with the facilitators, it was agreed that the Leadership Team would begin to meet without first engaging in a retreat, and the first Leadership Team meeting was held in the School Board room at the central office on February 13, 2003.

The Leadership Team was chosen for study in this dissertation when they rejected the existing guidance of the GSTE and decided to move forward in the systemic change process using a different path – emphasizing decision making over learning. It is important to examine the decisions the Leadership Team made in its efforts to understand the consequences of choosing that path.

The GSTE exists to provide guidance for facilitators to use when advising school districts that wish to engage in systemic change. Because this is the first project in which the GSTE has been applied in a real-world situation, it is important to observe both the events and the results of the events and to report these out to the public. In addition, the GSTE will be improved by analyzing the real world results that occur during the implementation phase. The Leadership Team's decisions, especially in the early stages of their formation, will affect greatly the remaining course of the change effort, and it is important to both describe these decisions as well as their consequences and to explore alternative guidance that may be offered in future projects.

Problems Encountered in the School System During Implementation

The Leadership Team engaged in learning activities that were designed to fill the gaps in knowledge created by the decision not to hold a retreat. Attendance at the Leadership Team meetings dropped off precipitously by the April meeting. The Facilitation Team decided that the reason for the decline in attendance was due to the emphasis on engagement in learning activities as opposed to making decisions that would move the Leadership Team forward. As plans were made for the Leadership Team in the fall of 2004, the Facilitation Team turned their attention towards a new approach to the process placing greater attention on decision making.

Critical Decisions in the Leadership Team Phase of the GSTE

From the first of the Leadership Team's original meetings, to the re-formation of the Leadership Team, and through School Board acceptance of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs, the Leadership Team engaged in 31 meetings over the course of two years. During this time, they engaged in a total of 61 activities that were judged to be learning activities that met the following definition of learning:

> Learning...refers to the concerted activity that increases the capacity and willingness of individuals, groups, organizations and communities to acquire and productively apply new knowledge and skills, to grow and mature and to adapt successfully to changes and challenges. Such learning empowers individuals and organizations to make wise choices, solve problems and break new ground. In particular, it is sustainable; it is a lifelong, renewable process for people and for the institutions that serve people. Learning certainly includes academic studies and occupational training through high school and beyond. ... Learning includes the capacity of organizations to anticipate and adapt to evolving values, technologies, performance standards and constituent expectations. (PacifiCorp Foundation, 2004)

During the same period of time, the Leadership Team engaged in 28 activities of decision making as judged by the following definition of that term:

> Decision making is the cognitive process leading to the selection of a course of action among variations. Every decision making process produces a final choice. It can be an action or an opinion. It begins when we need to do something but we do not know what. Therefore, decision making is a reasoning process which can be rational or irrational, and can be based on explicit assumptions or tacit assumptions. (Wikimedia Foundation, 2007)

For the purposes of this dissertation, each activity was assigned either a learning activity number (1-61) or a decision making activity (1-28), depending on whether the Leadership Team engaged in learning or decision making.

By examining the learning and decision making activities, I found that certain learning activities and decision making activities affected progress toward completing the framework more than others. I described these activities as being critical to the Leadership Team’s progress. The Critical Decisions are shown in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1

Critical Decisions made by the Leadership Team.

Critical Decision 1:	Facilitation Team decided to omit the planned retreat for the Midwestern Metropolitan School District Leadership Team. They rejected the idea of having a 2-day retreat, deciding to do training through and during meetings of the Leadership Team.
Critical Decision 2:	Decision 5: **What was decided:** LT begins work on a Framework of Beliefs by writing 3-5 statements that were representative of their beliefs about education. (Question 1: Should the focus be on presenting all the material or learning all the material). **How decided**: Activity and Discussion
Critical Decision 3:	Decision 7: **What was decided**: LT discusses the need and adopts a decision to hold a 2-day workshop to finalize the Vision-Mission-Beliefs. **How decided**: Large group discussion
Critical Decision 4:	Decision 22: **What was decided**: Large group made revisions to the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. **How Decided:** Small and large group discussion
Critical Decision 5:	Decision: 26: **What was decided**: The Leadership Team agreed on the final revision of the Vision-Mission-Beliefs framework plans the presentation of this document at the next school board meeting. **How decided**: Large group discussion

Critical Learnings are displayed in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2

Critical Learnings of the Leadership Team.

Critical Learning #1:	**Activity 28**: "We Are or We Are Not Like This" worksheet. Participants responded to statements describing the status of the Midwestern Metropolitan School District system: **How learned**: Large group discussion followed by small group discussion.
Critical Learning #2:	**Activity 34**: Civic Council. LT was dismissed early and urged to attend the monthly meeting of the Midwestern Metropolitan School District Civic Council.
Critical Learning #3:	**Activity 35**: Explanation of materials included in the 3-ring binder. **How Learned**: Large group discussion
Critical Learning #4:	Sample Beliefs Document: Not used
Critical Learning #5:	**Activity 41**: Jigsaw reading in Reading Packet I – Schools that Learn, pp. 9-42 Group is divided into groups, breaks the reading into 5 sections. Each table member agrees to read one section…and give synopsis of each section to the group. This is followed by large group sharing (aha's, conclusions, and so on). **How learned:** Jigsaw activity (read, discuss, collaborate)

Critical Learning #6: **Activity 43**: 12:45-1:15 The LT views the DuFour Learning Communities video (at VMB retreat) and discussed ways to incorporate learning communities into the systemic transformation process

Critical Learning #7: **Activity 46**: Presentation on Learning Communities by principal of high school who was in the process of implementing this concept during the coming year. **How Learned**: Lecture

Critical Learning #8: **Activity 47**: Read "Education on the Edge of Possibility" (Packet 2). **How learned:** Participants were asked to read this article independently at home.

Critical Learning #9: **Activity 50**: Read Senge, "Schools that Learn," Chapter 1: 43-58. All LT members read the selection and respond to questions written on the notes sheet of the guide. Questions spark discussion. **How Learned:** Large group discussion.

Critical Learning #10: **Activity 54**: Read Duffy, Rogerson, and Blick, "Redesigning America's Schools," xv-xvi, 4-12. Facilitator asks questions and uses group responses to lead the discussion on knowledge work supervision). **How Learned:** Activity and discussion

Critical Learning #11: **Activity 55**: Reading of McCombs and Whisler, "Learner-Centered Classroom and School," pp.9-19. **How Learned**: Reading followed by group discussion.

Critical Learning #12: **Activity 59**: Reading. Duffy, Rogerson and Blick, "Redesigning America's Schools," 118-133. **How Learned:** Read entire document with highlighting of the important sections and ongoing discussion throughout the selection.

The remainder of Chapter Three is devoted to a presentation of the learning results followed by a discussion of the conclusions drawn from these results. First, I will present Leadership Team reading and discussion findings. Second, I will explore preferences regarding how the presentation of materials affected the Leadership Team's learning preferences, specifically mentioning the involvement of all stakeholders and the amount of time that the members spent as a group reading and discussing. Following a summary of reading and discussion results, I will examine three worksheets used to explore sample beliefs, and each sub-section will be summarized. Lastly in Chapter Three, I will share my conclusions about learning results. Decision-making results will be addressed in Chapter Four.

In both focus group interviews and individual follow-up interviews, I discovered that participants agreed with my findings and the quoted material used in this chapter. Where individuals differed from my interpretations and where quotations represent less than unanimous consent, I have noted the exceptions in the introductory statements just before the quotations.

Leadership Team Reading and Discussion Findings

In this section, I will first discuss what happened with regard to learning that occurred among Leadership Team participants, specifically related to literature read and discussed in the Leadership Team. Next, I will discuss what did and did not work well in relation to the literature offerings and provide a summary of the recommendations offered by Leadership Team members. Finally, I will discuss the findings and make recommendations for improving the relevant parts of the GSTE.

What Happened

Jenlink et al. (1998) discusses the need for a reform effort to engage

> … in a collective and recursive process of reading, editing, and checking the integrity of design for the guidance system. The recursive nature of the process is comparable with team member experiences in educational systems design and systemic change (p. 233).

Selected readings were chosen from systemic change literature by the facilitators in conjunction with the Facilitation Team for use with the Leadership Team. These readings were, with the exception of DuFour and Eaker (1998), recommended by the facilitators for use. The DuFour and Eaker (1998) selection was made by the Facilitation Team. All reading selections were approved by either the Facilitation Team or by representatives of the Leadership Team prior to use. The selections and techniques used with each of the readings are described below:

Activity 12 was first conducted during Meeting D (LT_2003-04-17). This reading covered chapter two of DuFour and Eaker (1998). Concepts presented in this reading include a description of the characteristics of a professional learning community and the steps required by the Leadership Team to create such a community. In this reading activity, facilitated by Principal A[1], participants were asked to form groups of four. Within each group, each individual chose a section to read from a chapter divided into four sections. Individuals read their assigned sections, and when finished, the person reading each part gave a synopsis of that section. Each individual was asked to describe

[1] Human Subjects requires the use of anonymous participants.

to the group the importance and important parts of the reading selection. Following the small group discussions, the participants considered questions that the leader of the larger group had posted.

The second reading activity was Activity 50, first conducted in Meeting 18 (LT_2004-08-24). The reading selection was chapter 1 of Caine and Caine (1997). The reading technique used was to supply participants with a question sheet containing 11 questions. Each reading group was assigned five of the questions for responses back to the larger group. Participants were urged to read for responses to the questions asked. Participants discussed their responses to the questions first in small groups before discussing the responses in the large group session. This reading selection described change in schools, the effect of systemic change on schools, brain/mind learning principles, and instructional approaches that represent three perceptual orientations.

The third reading activity was Activity 54, first conducted in Meeting 20 (LT_2004-09-22). The reading selection was chapters 1-2 of Duffy, Rogerson, and Blick (2000). The reading technique used with this selection entailed the facilitator highlighting sections of the document in advance, then the facilitator read through the highlighted sections and discussed the concept and its consequences, often with probing questions. Members of the Leadership Team asked questions or made comments throughout the discussion. This reading selection discussed Duffy et al.'s concept of Knowledge Work Supervision and mental models, support for change efforts, strategic direction, Search Conferences, Open Space Technology, and more.

The fourth reading activity was Activity 55, first conducted in Meeting 22 (LT_2004-11-15). The reading selection was chapter 1, pages 9-19 of McCombs and

Whisler (1997). The reading technique used with this selection included the facilitator reading through highlighted sections, talking about the most important parts. The Leadership Team had their own article to follow along, but the facilitator had highlighted the article and discussed the significance of each highlighted section. Leadership Team members asked questions or made comments throughout the discussion. This reading selection presented metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and developmental factors along with individual differences using twelve principles. It also defined learner-centered and gave the premises of the learner-centered model. It should be noted that this document was also used as one of the selections for training Midwestern Metropolitan School District administrators, but it was used as a complete text version rather than an excerpted text version. Many Leadership Team members first experienced the selection as an excerpted version rather than a complete-text version.

At this same meeting, a second reading selection was used. It was a paper written by the facilitator for a presentation at the American Educational Research Association annual conference (Reigeluth, 2004). The reading technique used with this selection included the facilitator reading through highlighted sections while the Leadership Team followed along on their own paper. Members asked questions throughout the course of the activity. This reading discussed Complexity Theory (Chaos Theory) and how it applied to systemic change and systemic reform efforts in P-12 education.

The final reading activity during the period of this dissertation study was Activity 59, first conducted in meeting 25 (LT_2005-01-13). The reading selection included pages 118-133 of Duffy, Rogerson, and Blick (2000). The reading technique used with this selection included the Leadership Team reading the entire document with yellow highlighting of the important sections and ongoing discussion throughout the selection.

What Did and Did Not Work Well?

Variety of reading selections. Interviewees expressed the opinion that all of the reading material mentioned above started good conversations, encouraged strong discussions, and challenged the readers to consider new ideas. A number of individuals commented on the mix of readings:

> I like the mixture. Some things [meaning varying the reading/discussion techniques] drive some people crazy, and at least you were only driving some people crazy every time. It was made easier for the audience. Maybe too easy sometimes, but it was made easy for the audience. I liked the highlighting. … Highlighting the piece gave the essence of the article. It fits my style. (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q114[2])

Although the industrial age - information age distinction was first introduced in a PowerPoint® presentation, it was also discussed frequently within meetings and used as an example in many conversations. One interviewee said that the industrial age - information age distinction should be introduced early: “You’ve first got to know about the factory model versus the information age, [and] that has to happen early” (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q083), but another said that they had heard the industrial age - information age distinction too often:

> If I had heard the industrial model one more time, I think that I was going to throw up! Each meeting, we started back up with the industrial model. It’s like when you are reviewing with students and you go back too far. If you spend 15 or 20 minutes in your intro each meeting, then we’ve lost time. I know you have to bring people back, but you could have done that with an activity. (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q077)

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[2] Q followed by a 3-digit number is a reference to the confidential document that numbers each of the quotations used in this dissertation with information that links the quotations to their original location in an audio file.

Also introduced as an early reading selection in the fourth meeting of the original Leadership Team was the DuFour and Eaker (1998) selection dealing with professional learning communities. One interviewee stated that this piece “should come in earlier because it makes you all warm and fuzzy about why, and I think that you need to know why earlier than we did” (Board Member B, Interview, January 3, 2007). Another felt that the DuFour piece “lets you see what needs to be done and what we are not doing” (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q081). One administrator discussed the need for including professional learning communities thusly:

> I think [professional learning communities] should be an integral part of this because that’s how we move forward. It is in having common background to discuss, and that’s what the readings did, and then we apply our own experiences. That’s what moved us through all of this. I think that when we stopped doing this, that’s when we began to falter, when we weren’t discussing important things. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q085)

Several interviewees commented on the appropriateness of the placement of certain reading selections. One noted that the McCombs and Whisler (1997) article, although a very good article for use by the Leadership Team, was introduced too early and in the wrong place:

> I remember when we did this [McCombs and Whistler]. I remember thinking ‘We’re not even there, yet. Why are we talking about this?’ To me, we were already drilling down to the classroom stuff and we really needed to be talking, I thought, about kids. (Principal A, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q079)

Only one reading selection was felt to have no place among the selections that were used. Leadership Team members felt that the Hammer and Champy (2001) selection “had some pretty heavy terminology in it… It seems like it was business or something.” (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q084)

One parent felt very strongly that the reading selections did not always work for Leadership Team members who were not strong readers or who had different styles of learning:

> All people learn differently so you kind of have to cater to those learning styles. We liked the visual because it broke up the meeting. For some people there was too much reading. They thought, 'Oh, I'm not going to read all that!' It needs to have options, maybe some reading, some videos. … Mixed media is needed. Anything you can do as far as something like the hands-on, like that thing was [DuFour's video statements] – we all remembered it. (Parent A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q086)

Another parent agreed with the need for accommodating a variety of learning styles when she said, "I think for me personally because I am not in education I wasn't always sure I knew what the reading was saying. I tried to relate it to business so that I could understand it." (Parent B, Interview, December 15, 2006, Q097). One administrator noticed that non-educators were having difficulty with the professional reading selections:

> I always felt like I really liked the professional development we were getting and the articles, but I always felt that they were hard for people who didn't have a professional education background. I always felt like we were asking them to do more than they were capable of sometimes … I struggled through some of it. It was textbook reading. Not that they weren't significant, but I just thought we were asking an awful lot of these people in this setting and then asking them to talk about it in front of us and how they could not feel like we were judging them. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q100)

Another administrator agreed with the idea that the professional reading selections were difficult and suggested that reading options be made available for less able readers through the internet or through multiple copies of less difficult reading:

> Take one of our educators and pair them up with two or three of our non-educators, and take a few minutes and say, 'You've read your assignment, do you have any questions? Here's the major points of this, did you get them?' Have an identified expert that is an educator work with them to say 'Do you have an understanding of the literature?' (Administrator E, Interview, January 31, 2007)

Variety of presentation styles. Of the seventeen interview subjects' recommendations, seven different recommendations were made regarding presentation style. One of the favored styles was to use highlighted reading sections to emphasize specific points for participants. Another style excerpted the highlighted sections, making them available to the reader without surrounding context. These selections are termed "excerpted notes" in this study:

> I like it when we had the highlighted articles. Then, when you had the time, fine, you could read it. I don't like [excerpted] notes. If I read it [the article] and I'm interested in it and want to read more about it, then it's not an easy source [compared with highlighted lines in the articles]. I like the document with pre-underlined or guided questions. Then, if you have any questions, it's the same as it was in school when you didn't have time to read the whole thing. You'd go find the study guide and read the study guide and you would say 'Good, I know the main concepts and what I'm supposed to get out of this.' (Parent A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q105)

Interviewees had many comments about the reading selections. Interviewees noted the importance of letting the group know the context in which a given reading assignment was being conducted. This could be done by the facilitator setting forth the context or by using a question sheet that could accompany the reading selection to focus attention on the main points:

> Even when you do a jigsaw [participatory reading technique}, there are people who won't read it, won't discuss, won't talk, even if it's small group or large group, or whatever. So it's just an open discussion. It's like a classroom when you do an open discussion. You say, 'read this, we're going to put you in a group of five and maybe two kids discuss it and others don't and even that doesn't work for that small group.' I think we're just learning this, that what we try to do with redesign is that we put out specific tasks. ... We tell people you're going to get in a small group and everybody's going to have a minute to talk about their answer to number 1. It gave purpose to why everyone was reading this and then everybody had a voice in that small group. As a facilitator, we tried to give everybody a purpose and everybody a voice in that process. (Principal B, Interview, December 20, 2006, Q101)

When the superintendent was asked to rate the effectiveness of different kinds of reading selections used in the Leadership Team, his response encompassed most of the processes used:

> Probably ‘read this article with no guidelines, no questions, we’ll just talk about it’ is the least effective. I think having the questions as a guide, you read the questions and it gives you something to focus on as you go through it. It gives you a preview as to what you are going to be expecting. That is very worthwhile. Probably, the most powerful is the highlighting from my perspective. Everybody’s so busy. Now it doesn’t mean that you don’t go through and not read them. Read the highlights first. Then go back and read a little more thoroughly. Because of people’s time and so forth, I know I’ve really appreciated that method. If I’m really, really interested, though, and it strikes me, I’m going to go back and read the whole thing and have, on different occasions. … I think a lot depends on the article and how important it is. There are certain things, a lot of Senge’s work, I think we need to read very thoroughly. … I think the jigsaw approach, where different folks and groups focus on different pieces and then bring it back for sharing, looks very powerful because it does automatically start conversations. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q087)

The strategy with which there was the least agreement was the use of excerpted notes. One administrator found this to be a helpful technique:

> If you hand a reading to somebody who hasn’t got a high school degree, a chapter out of Senge, I think they’re going to be overwhelmed. Is it good stuff that they need to know? Absolutely. You hand them [the reading] and tell them that we’re going to go over this at the next meeting, but you design it like the [excerpted] notes thing. You might always give them [excerpted] notes. Then, you might have someone doing a PowerPoint® on the [reading] or the chapter. ... You change it up to keep people engaged, but you’ve got to be sensitive to the fact that there’s all kind of learners out there with varied backgrounds. (Principal A, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q088)

Two other members of the Leadership Team felt that the use of excerpted notes was unhelpful, at best. One said, “I’m not a big fan of the [excerpted] notes because I don’t feel like I’ve got the whole thing. I go through the [excerpted] notes and I feel that I’ve missed part of it. They didn’t help me at all. (Board Member B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q117) Worse than “unhelpful” was the feeling that it was counterproductive:

> Some people were not ready to read articles like this. They don't have the background.... A couple of ways that I didn't like is when [a facilitator] would just go through and summarize or do [excerpted] notes and we just sat there. It wasn't promoted as discussion, he was telling us. Well, we didn't learn anything from that, especially the people who had no background in it, anyway. It has to be something that gets everybody to be discussing. I like the questions. I like the pre-questions because it gives you something to think about when you read. (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q119)

Of the techniques used in the selected readings, a technique known as the Jigsaw was one of the more popular methods used. The Jigsaw technique divided the reading selection into four numbered parts. In small groups four individuals numbered off and each read a part, then explained the selection to members of the small group. This was done until all four members had participated, and the full article had been discussed. One member felt that this was an excellent method for busy professionals:

> A lot of the activities were very informative. I definitely remember the jigsaw and when we took pieces and we read and shared out. For those of us who were in the classroom and already overworked, that was a good way to do some learning and not have to read everything. (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q089)

Another felt that the jigsaw was a good way to ensure that all participants were able to join in the discussion:

> …everybody needs the opportunity to talk. Personally, I don't think articles should ever be done large group where one person just sits and asks a question because you're not going to get everybody in the discussion. So if you really want people to be in the discussion, you've at least got to give them the opportunity. And then maybe you have some kind of summary so that they take away from it what you want them to take away from it. But I'm not going to understand it ever if you're not going to let me talk about it. (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q121)

This same administrator suggested mixing a number of different reading formats:

> I like variety. I think each time there should be a different way [method to use in reading]. One time, that's all I could do was those [excerpted] notes. If I hadn't had them, I wouldn't have been able to anything because the time didn't permit. So I really like that. I also like the underlined [highlighted readings]. I liked it

> mixed up. I like the variety. I think that's how you keep people coming. (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q106)

Involvement of all stakeholders. Leadership Team members held the view that no matter what method was used to involve stakeholders, it was important to involve all stakeholders:

> I liked what was going to be discussed and read at the next meeting, but just with the knowledge that if you didn't get to it, you weren't going to be left out. That gave you the opportunity to at least skim it or a purpose but the accountability of… Oh, my God, I know people that would say, "I didn't read my stuff!" so I think getting the article and knowing that you are going to come in with some kind of activity would be good. (Teacher A, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q116)

Time spent in reading. Leadership Team members had a wide variety of opinions on how much time should be spent on reading activities during Leadership Team meetings. Suggestions ranged from 15 minutes to 45 minutes on reading and discussion of the reading in any given meeting. One member made the point that "The average parent probably spends fifteen minutes reading the newspaper (Board Member A, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q068). Another said that **"**Everyone could have looked at that in fifteen minutes and whether you read it or not, you at least had some talking points." (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q110) Still another said:

> I think 15-20 minutes reading is good and I think we need to tell people ahead of time, "Here's what we're going to do." I also think that whatever you can do to make the reading easier, like [excerpted] notes or already highlighted [selections], ensuring ahead of time that as you hand out the material they know, "Here's what you are going to learn." These are the broad concepts. These are the things to look for in your reading. We do that for kids. We should be doing that for adults, too. (Principal A, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q069)

One administrator felt that actual time spent in reading should not exceed 30 minutes, but that discussions should be included in the amount of time spent with any give reading:

> [How do you involve community members in difficult readings?] Because they are involved in the discussion. If I read it, I may not understand it, but being a part of the discussion gives me a better understanding. I just don't think it's a good use of people's time to give them 30 minutes to an hour to read something that they could have read beforehand. (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q074)

Summary of Results for Leadership Team Reading and Discussion

The findings on learning activities with respect to reading activities conducted with the Leadership Team are summarized here:

1. All readings should be made available to Leadership Team members in either electronic or hard copy format at least one week prior to a meeting.
2. All readings should pertain to discussions that are occurring in a given meeting. Discussion of longer articles should be broken into multiple weeks rather than to take more time in a given meeting.
3. When possible, all readings should have easy-reading alternatives available.
4. All readings should be introduced and placed into context before reading.
5. When possible, all readings should be accompanied by brief question sheets (2-3 items) and highlighting of selected material.
6. All readings should be followed by small group discussion.
7. Excerpted note versions of the articles may be included, but should not replace the reading and discussion of any given article.
8. Reading and discussion of reading selections should be scheduled for no more than the first 40 minutes of any meeting.

I will discuss each of these summaries below, in greater detail.

1. All readings should be made available to Leadership Team members in either electronic or hard copy format at least one week prior to a meeting. In most meetings, reading selections were scheduled for use with the Leadership Team on a meeting-by-meeting basis. As part of the reading and subsequent discussion process, the selections were made available either immediately before the Leadership Team meeting or at the end of the previous meeting. Reading selections were passed out in hard copy or they were emailed to participants as an attachment. When the readings were given out before the meeting, participants were asked to read them before coming to the next scheduled meeting.

At meetings in which Leadership Team members were asked to read a selection in advance, there were Leadership Team members who had not read the suggested reading selection. Leadership Team members agreed that the reading selections were so important that meeting time should be devoted to reading and discussing each selection at the meeting. Though many participants indicated that they were too busy to read before the next Leadership Team meeting, they also indicated that they would have liked the opportunity to preview the articles before going into a meeting. Although providing reading selections in advance would not take the place of reading a selection at the meeting, it was viewed by interviewees as a necessary element of the reading and discussion process.

2. *All readings should pertain to discussions that are occurring in a given meeting. Discussion of longer articles should be broken into multiple weeks rather than to take more time in a given meeting.* Reading selections were used as resources for further discussion about building the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. With the exception of one Leadership Team member, all interviewees needed prompting to recall the readings, and most members had few comments about the timeliness of

materials, probably because of the amount of time that had elapsed between the creation of the framework and the time of the interview. When prompted about the issue of timeliness, interviewees responded strongly as follows: Reading selections must be tied to the subject matter being discussed. When facilitators want Leadership Team members to incorporate principles expressed by certain reading selections in their deliberations, the material is best used either in the same meeting as the discussion or in the meeting just prior to the discussion. The facilitator, in concert with those who organize Leadership Team experiences, should ensure that all readings are closely related in time and subject matter to whatever topic is being discussed at the time.

3. *All readings should pertain to discussions that are occurring in a given meeting. Discussion of longer articles should be broken into multiple weeks rather than to take more time in a given meeting.* Some members expressed concern about the ability of other participants to comprehend the complex ideas expressed in reading selections oriented to a professional or academic audience. They suggested that alternative information sources should be made available to all participants in advance of a meeting. To address this problem, interviewees recommended that efforts be made to procure information from popular sources such as the newspaper or magazine stories and television or radio broadcasts. This practice could make it easier for all members to be informed about reading and discussion selections.

4. *All readings should be introduced and placed into context before reading*. Interviewees – especially teachers – expressed the need for an introduction to every reading selection to place it into the context of topics being discussed. Interviewees suggested that this process could be implemented prior to every reading session by the

facilitator, or it could be accomplished by a written contextual explanation in an electronic medium through an email or website source. Education professionals mentioned that they regularly employed such a technique in a classroom instructional setting (Garofalo, 1988; Whittlesea, 2004). During follow-up interviews, non-teaching Leadership Team members expressed support for this concept.

5. *When possible, all readings should be accompanied by brief question sheets (2-3 items) and highlighting of selected material.* Support was expressed by interviewees for including a question sheet to accompany each reading selection. This concept is referred to as theme activation during narrative reading (Zhang & Hoosain, 2005). The same idea can also be accomplished by highlighting excerpts from within a reading selection. Interviewees preferred the use of question sheets because of the contextual information provided for the selection by the guiding questions.

6. *All readings should be followed by small group discussion.* Interviewees emphasized the importance of being able to join in the discussion of the meaning and consequences that each reading selection had for their own life. Group meetings can be intimidating, and all participants should share in the group experience. Participation can only be ensured by dividing into smaller groups for discussion of each reading, and by the expectation that each small group member will add to the conversation.

One reading activity favored by interviewees that accomplished this kind of sharing was the use of the jigsaw reading technique. Individual participants within each three- or four-person small group were assigned numbers one through four. Each participant was asked to read a corresponding fourth of the text and report to the small group about its meaning. This technique depended upon all members of the small group to join in the discussion.

Small-group conversations should be expected to contribute to large-group conversations. This was often accomplished by asking small groups to report out to the large group following initial small-group discussion. Small groups compiled their statements by manually writing group responses on a sheet of paper positioned in front of the group. Interviewees expressed the opinion that this was a favored activity.

7. *Excerpted note versions of the articles may be included, but should not replace the reading and discussion of any given article*. Excerpted notes were used with some of the articles in this study, and they were useful to some of the participants while others felt they weren't helpful and that they may have even been harmful to understanding. Excerpted notes should not take the place of a reading but instead supplement the reading. By making them available, it is possible to reduce the reading load for some members of the Leadership Team, but still provide context to the rest of the members. Excerpted notes used in conjunction with techniques described above were judged to be a value-added component.

8. *Reading and discussion of reading selections should be scheduled for no more than the first 40 minutes of any meeting.* Interviewees expressed a desire to use reading selections at the beginning of Leadership Team meetings. Leadership Team members believed that no more than 15-25 minutes should be spent in just reading. Interviewees expressed the desire to have no less than 15 minutes of small and large group discussion. They also expressed the need to have reading selections at the beginning of the meeting so that they could be fresh when engaging in the reading. Finally, Leadership Team

members were concerned that too many readings had been scheduled only to be dropped at the end of a late-running meeting. A few members proposed 40 minutes for scheduled reading and discussion at meetings, but the consensus was that this would be the maximum amount of time for reading and discussion during a given meeting.

Worksheet-Based Learning Activities

Just as valuable to the Leadership Team as reading and discussion activities were the worksheet-based learning and accompanying discussion activities in which beliefs about information-age learning were explored. Once the Leadership Team re-formed in October, 2003, members of the Core Team adopted the suggestion of advising the Leadership Team to create a series of statements. These statements would represent the vision of the school district, the mission of the district, and the ideal beliefs for an information-age paradigm that should drive the reform efforts.   Three worksheets were used to stimulate the conversation about beliefs. The first worksheet was called "We Are or We Are Not Like This" and sought to connect Leadership Team members' thinking with the results of a previously conducted Community Forum (see Appendix G). The second was a forced-choice worksheet that asked participants to choose the type of thinking that best represented their own mindset (see Appendix F). Leadership Team members were asked whether the schools were better represented by industrial-age markers, information-age markers, or something in between the two extremes. The third worksheet was an open-ended set of questions that formed the basis for the creation of the ideal beliefs in the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs (see Appendix E).   In this section, we will examine what happened with regard to each worksheet as well as what did and did not work well. As in the previous section participants' statements regarding the proper use of the worksheets and discussion prompts for these purposes are offered for consideration.

What Happened?

The first activity focused on Sample Beliefs, Activity 23, was identified as the "We Are or We Are Not Like This" worksheet. Participants were asked to assess the current reality of their own school/district using a Likert-type scale where 1-3 represented that we are not at all like this, 4-7 represented that we are somewhat like this, and 8-10 represented that we are very much like this (see Appendix G). For each statement, respondents were asked to rate their own stakeholder group's reaction as well as their individual assessment of the statements. Regarding content, statements included their schools, how the schools were organized, and how they reacted to change. Respondents were also asked to rate their teachers, what their teachers believed, how they acted, how they used the curriculum, and what the curriculum encompassed.

What Did and Did Not Work Well?

The use of tools to challenge individuals' mindsets is an accepted practice in transformative learning. Brown (2006) describes transformative learning as:

> … a process of experiential learning, critical self-reflection, and rationale [sic] discourse that can be stimulated by people, events, or changes in contexts that challenge the learner's basic assumption of the world. Transformative learning leads to a new way of seeing. (p. 707).

This can be accomplished by worksheets that effectively move the learners beyond their immediate circumstances and asking them to engage in transformative learning. One such worksheet is the "We Are or We Are Not Like This" worksheet that asked interviewees to compare their own beliefs and practices against a standard. In this case, the worksheet was used to help participants to gauge how closely their beliefs and practices measured up to a description of information-age educational conditions. Leadership Team members commented that this first sample beliefs activity was very thought provoking:

> Do you [the researcher] remember the one where they put all the teachers in one group and they put all of the parents in another group and they put support staff in another and then they gave us a set of questions? It was funny about what a parent thought was more important compared to what a teacher thought was more important. And I was amazed at the different perspectives. What a parent perceived compared to what a teacher perceived. It was amazing to me to know how that community person perceived something to [how] a teacher perceived the same thing. You would think that school functions they would have thought pretty much the same thing. Teachers were very, very hard on themselves, where the community thought they were doing a fine job. I think it made the teachers think. (Administrator B Interview, January 12, 2007, Q123)

Other interviewees were interested in the way Leadership Team members were asked to see where others stood in their thinking:

> I think the consensus building exercise we gave to them was the best one we had to work off of because you got a chance to rank them [the choices]. My opinion of one thing, if I say it's a two and we didn't like it at all, or I didn't like it as an individual, [another leadership team member] may come back and say it's a four or a six or between a four and a seven. … Then you could work off of that, and…you could make a consensus from it. We started with these [questions] and they were handed to us and we said, ok, this is it right here. (Board Member A, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q146)

Interviewees expressed universal approval of this worksheet, though some would have used the worksheet earlier or in a different setting.

What Happened?

A different sample beliefs worksheet was discussed but was never adopted by the Core Team members for use with the Leadership Team. This worksheet presented 14 belief statements based on the *Key Markers of the Industrial Age and the Information Age* (See *Table 1.1*), and was referred to as the *forced-choice* worksheet (see Appendix F). I presented this worksheet to participants during focus group interviews and asked how well the worksheet might have worked.

What Did and Did Not Work Well?

Only two interviewees said they thought that the forced-choice worksheets might have had some positive effect on the conversations. One administrator expressed support for this worksheet by saying, "I would have used this [forced-choice worksheet] as one of my introductory ones to get people sharing what they really believe." (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q128). Another administrator expressed a similar belief:

> I think this [forced-choice worksheet] could have created a higher level of thinking where people would at least have an idea of where we probably may need to go. Either one of these [the other two worksheets], projected out far enough, get you thinking about what might be out there. This [forced-choice worksheet] gets you out there where we may end up as a possibility. As a result of that you have a thought process going on moving from here to here, which we need to do. You don't have that [in the other two worksheets]. (Administrator E, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q126)

More participants sided with the Facilitation Team members who decided not to use the forced-choice worksheet with the Leadership Team members. One Leadership Team member stated that the industrial-age choices in the worksheet were too negative compared to the information-age choices, even though those choices characterized their current system:

> Do you think it could have been 'all students should learn the same things' [for a choice selection with the industrial-age key marker]? Do you think now that we should cultivate their special talents? I don't know of any person who doesn't want their child or their grandchild or their neighbor's child to be the smartest, the best, and to get the best possible education that they can get. I don't know one person who would say, 'No, I want that child to be stupid!" (Administrator B, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q132)

Another member said that the worksheet should incorporate a mix of positive statements that provide a more realistic choice to teachers who could get defensive about industrial-age negative statements:

> I think you ought to mix the positive with the negative because just skimming over that shows me that is real negative on school culture and thinks that everything needs to be changed … it's like those true and false [statements], some of them should be on the positive side and some of them on the negative side and you might get a better discussion. (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q139)

Another interviewee believed that the worksheet created defensiveness and guilt among practitioners:

> I think when I read this [the forced-choice worksheet], I felt like there were right and wrong answers and that we were being led away from some things. Because just using words like 'Bureaucratic' and 'monopolies', you instantly want to say that we're not like that. Not because we're not like that but because those are red flag words. I felt that when we were doing this activity, I think we struggled with this. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q138)

That same individual felt that the forced-choice worksheet would actually insult participants by the obvious way that the worksheet highlighted different features of the industrial age and the information age:

> I think you start insulting people with this one [the forced-choice worksheet on beliefs] because if they don't see how obvious it is, then … or if they do see how obvious it is, then they're thinking, 'Why did you give this to me?' I think that we had problems with this one in the planning because we felt like it was insulting to give this to people because they're stupid if they can't figure out what the answer is to this closed one. Especially as you go through, if you are not all on this side [of information age qualities]. On this open one, you can make a case for parents being occasional spectators, but not on the forced-choice sheet. When you put the line down the middle, there is a good side and a bad side. You are going to make the people who, by mistake, picked the wrong side look like they are not part of the group. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q144)

What Happened?

The worksheet finally chosen to guide the discussion of Midwestern Metropolitan School District's Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs discussion is referred to as the *open-ended sample beliefs* worksheet (open-ended worksheet). Conversations on how to begin discussing these beliefs started in the Facilitation Team on November 17, 2003. Consensus as to the best way to begin this conversation with the Leadership was difficult to reach, and the conversation continued over three facilitation team meetings. Agreement was reached on the nature of the questions and the rough outlines of how the conversations should be conducted by the Facilitation Team at their meeting on February 11, 2004. The Leadership Team began discussion on the first three of twelve open-ended beliefs questions on March 2, 2004.

At this meeting, Leadership Team participants first divided into small groups. They were asked to discuss the first three questions, to arrive at a small-group consensus. After coming to consensus, they were asked to share it with the large group by writing their findings on a sheet at the front of the room. This was followed by a large-group discussion of the ideas. The questions that were used to discuss the beliefs are listed in Table 3.3.

What Did and Did Not Work Well?

The open-ended worksheet was deemed by a number of participants to be a strong tool for use in discussion. One interviewee said: "open-ended [questions] would generate more discussion, whereas the statements help you to think where your beliefs are." (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q140). One teacher said, "I remember discussion here [on the open-ended questions], and it was great discussion because we didn't all see it in the same way." (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q135).

Table 3.3

Sample beliefs about education.

1. Should the focus be on presenting all the material or on learning all the material?
2. Should each student progress to the next topic upon mastery of a topic, or should all students progress to the next topic at the same time and place regardless of when or whether mastery occurs?
3. Should students all learn the same thing at the same time, or should they learn what they are ready to learn when they are ready?
4. Should we cultivate the special talents of each student, or should all students learn all the same things?
5. Should teacher care about student development in one subject or care about the whole student?
6. Should the teacher be a presenter ("sage on the stage") or a coach/mentor ("guide on the side")?
7. Should all students experience success, or should only the good students experience success?
8. Should we use norm-based testing (which compares students to each other) or criterion-based testing (which compares students to a standard)?

9. Should we use formative testing (diagnosis and remediation), or summative testing (final judgment only)?
10. Should schools have "command and control" leadership or participatory/empowering leadership?
11. Should parents be constant partners with teachers or should they just be occasional spectators?
12. Should schools be separate from the community, or should there be community partnerships (both ways – school in community and community in school)?

The superintendent said he believed that these conversations were very powerful as well:

> I think that is a very important, powerful piece that centers around learning. As we worked through that process, I felt like the conversations that we had in identifying those beliefs and revising those beliefs was probably the most powerful and important time of anything we had done in Midwestern Metropolitan School District. That was the process that put us through the window from the industrial age to the information age is to have those conversations. That's when we realized it didn't work, it hasn't worked, this comprehensive high school hasn't worked, and we've got to do something different. Of everything in here, in my opinion, those conversations [about the beliefs] were the most powerful piece in Midwestern Metropolitan School District. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q153)

The process used in the Leadership Team to discuss the questions was confusing to some participants. When the conversation on the beliefs began, facilitators realized that because the first two questions were very difficult ones to discuss, conversations would be best facilitated by starting with questions that were believed to be easier. This resulted in presenting the questions in such a manner that they were out of the numbered order on the worksheet. At least one member found this very confusing:

> We never fully discussed one of the questions and then we'd go to another one and then we'd do three different questions – I got confused. We didn't do the

> questions in sequence. I'm more of a sequence person and they jumped around. I know it's because those questions are related, but I like things in order without skipping around because when I do that, I have a tendency to forget. (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q151)

Another Leadership Team member thought that the lists should have been organized in a different cognitive manner, "…if you'd globally chunk it so if you cover three topics. I was overwhelmed with the amount of literature and things." (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q152) This participant also suggested that the questions be grouped so that different stakeholder perspectives could be explored: "Should parents? Should Schools? Should Students? Give me groups of three so you make some use of different perspectives. I would have done them in clusters of the parent, the school, and the student." (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q130).

Summary of Results for Sample Beliefs Worksheet

The findings on learning activities related to worksheets with the Leadership Team are summarized here:

1. The worksheet "We Are or We Are Not Like This" was thought-provoking and was good to use as a discussion opener for sample beliefs.
2. If the forced-choice worksheet is to be used, it should be reworded.
3. The open-ended sample beliefs worksheet should have been:
   - chunked into areas;
   - used in conjunction with readings;
   - taken to all stakeholders for regular feedback during thedevelopment phase; and
   - completed in less calendar time in full-day retreats rather than 2-hour meetings.

Summary of Results for Worksheet-Based Learning Activities

The findings on worksheet-based learning activities conducted with the Leadership Team are summarized here:

1. *The worksheet "We Are or We Are Not Like This" was thought-provoking and was good to use as a discussion opener for sample beliefs.* Interviews of the Leadership Team participants on the sample beliefs provide an in-depth lens on three specific learning activities used or considered for use. The first worksheet – "We Are or We Are Not Like This" – was believed to be a valuable tool that sparked dialogue in a very positive way. This worksheet was judged to be important because it was used to create a neutral setting for the discussion of personal beliefs. It was also important because it referenced actions taken in the past without placing a value on the actions of participants. It allowed participants to compare past realities of the society to the present-day reality of schools.

2. *If the forced-choice worksheet is to be used, it should be reworded.* Leadership Team members agreed with the decision of the Facilitation Team to not use the forced-choice worksheet. Reactions to the forced-choice worksheet as a tool to further the discussion on industrial-age markers as opposed to information-age markers were very negative compared to the other two worksheets. The negative reactions to this worksheet provide a good argument for not using it in the reform process.

3. *The open-ended sample beliefs worksheet should have been:*

- *chunked into areas;*
- *used in conjunction with readings;*

- *taken to all stakeholders for regular feedback during the development phase; and*
- *completed in less calendar time in full-day retreats rather than 2-hour meetings.*

The open-ended beliefs worksheet shown in Table 3.3 was appreciated by all participants for its tendency to spark conversations and to guide the discussion towards the creation of a Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. The most important advice received during participant interviews was to group the beliefs in such a manner that would allow topics that would be more easily discussed at the beginning, saving the more difficult beliefs for later. Such an order would give greater emphasis on learning how to discuss these beliefs while the Leadership Team was still learning how to address these issues. Finally, many were bothered by the fact that the conversation on beliefs tended to skip numbers rather than to follow the list. It is an easy task to number the questions on beliefs to avoid skipping around, but flexibility must be retained in order to discuss beliefs in a timely manner.

Learning Conclusions

I found that Learning Activities experienced by the Leadership Team members played a critical role in understanding the reform project in which they were engaged. When the Leadership Team reformed after a slow start in the beginning months of 2003, they rejected general learning activities and expressed a desire to engage in decision-making from the beginning of their team efforts. Facilitators for this stage of the reform effort must be aware of this desire and must work to ensure that any learning activities are done in a just-in-time manner. Interviewees believed that reading is a necessary part of the learning experiences of Leadership Team members. However, a wider selection of reading material should be available to all, with easy-reading alternatives available. One solution to this problem that was suggested to interviewees in follow-up interviews was to accommodate Leadership Team members by creating a professional library with documents readily available to all participants.

This professional library could have both a physical and electronic presence. By setting aside space in a central office for materials and research, the physical professional library would serve as a place for community members and professional educators to conduct research. This could also be accomplished electronically through a website with materials available to all participants at all times.

All reading selections distributed to Leadership Team members for reading and subsequent discussion should be placed into context before reading, either by the facilitator introducing the reading or by an electronic message. Reading selections should be read and discussed by small and large groups after reading. Reading exercises should not exceed forty minutes and should be at the beginning of any meeting in which they are used. Reading selections used by the Leadership Team were judged to be good choices, and interviewees advised retaining these selections for use with future systemic change efforts. These selections should, however, be updated with a broader range of different reading selections that are less academically oriented.

The conversations held around the three worksheets containing the sample beliefs were critical to progress in creating a Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs that will guide the Leadership Team's efforts in transforming the district's educational system. Most members did not like the forced-choice worksheet, but rather than rejecting it altogether, it could be re-written so that it will not insult users. It should receive at least a trial use in a smaller setting. Midwestern Metropolitan School District Township will be presenting community workshops as the effort progresses, and the possible use of the forced-choice worksheet should be examined closely by researchers.

When questioned about the use of the “We Are or We Are Not Like This” worksheet, interviewees agreed unanimously that it should be used as early as possible in the reform process. The power of this worksheet lies in its effectiveness in evoking examples from individuals’ experiences. These examples make it clear that information-age markers are at work in society. The differences between the industrial age and the information age are thus personalized and made real to participants in this discussion.

The open-ended worksheet should remain a key activity in the discussions that lead to a Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Questions in this worksheet should be arranged so that Leadership Team members engage with easier questions before they engage with more difficult content areas. All content areas within the worksheet should be arranged so that there is a logical progression of ideas in the conversations. In future reform efforts, all three methods would be appropriate to use with Leadership Team participants.

Chapter 4: Decision-Making Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by describing the decisions that were made by the Leadership Team as they created the Framework of Vision, Missions, and Beliefs. First, we will look at the decision made to proceed as a Leadership Team without engaging in an organizing retreat. Second, we will explore the retreat held during the summer of 2005 in which the preliminary version of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs was first completed by the Leadership Team. Third, we will examine the community presentations made by Leadership Team members on the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Finally, we will study the editing process the Leadership Team used to apply community input into the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Each section provides the reader with a description of what happened to invite participants' response and an analysis of what worked well and did not work well. Each section also provides a discussion of the findings for each particular section.

As in Chapter three, participants have agreed with my findings and the quoted material used in this chapter. Where individuals differed from my interpretations and where quotations represent less than unanimous consent, I have noted these exceptions in the introductory statements to the quoted material.

Organizing Retreat Results

In this section on the organizing retreat, I will describe the Leadership Team interviewees' reactions to the decision made to not engage in an organizing retreat. Because the retreat never occurred, it is not possible to describe either what happened or what did and did not go well in the activity. Nevertheless, interviewees recognized the importance of having an organizing retreat, and discussed the consequences of not engaging in the retreat.

Initial Welcome and Organizing Retreat

Prior to the formation of the Leadership Team, facilitators conducted a two-day organizing retreat with the Core Team. Discussing this kind of organizing retreat, Joseph (2003a) wrote,

> The primary goals of this event are: To establish the Initial Core Team identity within the school district and community, to design a capacitating process for the Initial Core Team, to establish a culture of design for change within the school district and the community, [and] to develop the skill and knowledge base of the team. (pp. 113-114)

Based on the experience of conducting an organizing retreat with the Core Team, facilitators suggested that the Leadership Team engage in a similar experience, but the advice was rejected by members of the Leadership Team. When asked to describe the consequences of the Leadership Team's rejection of the organizing retreat, the superintendent described it thusly:

> Honestly, we got through it, but by not having this retreat, it haunts us today because we still struggle with the different stakeholders represented in the leadership team being on the same page. [The retreat] is a necessity and should be a non-negotiable. (Superintendent, Field Notes, January 31, 2007, Q006)

Other Leadership Team members felt that the lack of an organizing retreat resulted in a lack of direction:

> At the very beginning, it seemed like it took us forever to get everything together. When we thought we had vision, mission, and belief statements, everything kind of died out. I don't know if we lost people at that time, at the very, very beginning, if we'd lost people and people weren't buying into it and they were dropping, if that's what stalled it. (Administrator B, Field Notes, January 12, 2007, Q001)

In making the decision not to have a retreat, some of the Leadership Team members felt as though they had been cheated of the same kind of experience that the Core Team had experienced:

> I thought the 'cork' [the major roadblock to progress] was being able to show members that met around [the superintendent's] table had a great camaraderie and learning curve. When we folded other people in we did not do a good job with transition, because we had a group that had been together for over a year. They had met, they had concepts, [and] they had all that. We were folded in, not given the same type of orientation, or even bonding time. I don't think we spent as much time bonding. It's almost like to me you would have to spend the same amount of time with us as you did the core group. We faltered here. We had some of the core group dropped out because they were not getting the same attention and the same feeling that they were getting in [the superintendent]'s office. It wasn't what they had envisioned from that original core group. It seems like, to me, that's where we floundered. (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q002)

In order to achieve the direction that Leadership Team members felt was lacking from the process, the team needed to develop a sense of the group's purpose:

> A retreat has to have a definite purpose, and I'm sure you had an idea for this purpose, so I think that if it was rejected it was because people didn't see the purpose. You have to have very clear purpose because time – in education – we just don't have enough of it. (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q015)

Another administrator discussed the way that an organizing retreat helps to build relationships and trust. These qualities ensure that people come back to continue working on the difficult issues with which the Leadership Team deals:

> I think a kickoff retreat is very important. [You should have it in] June. It's real important that you build those relationships and you build in trust because if people know each other and they are dedicated to each other, then they are going to be more than likely to come back. Those are difficult. (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q020)

One important participation factor in an organizing retreat is to have an equal voice in decision making. In an organization such as a school system which has a vertical hierarchy, learning how to speak up and to be heard can be a challenge:

> How did we establish that it was ok to speak up? I think you have to say [that] up front. In order for you to take on this change process, the expectation is that every participant would participate in the retreat. And this is how it works: if you say it up front, in order for us to engage in this, and to make it work successfully, there are some expectations that have to be stated. (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q018)

Interviewees were asked to describe some of the activities that would help to achieve these purposes, and identified the importance of working with results that were previously obtained in community meetings conducted prior to the advent of the Leadership Team:

> I agree with…the need at the beginning to have that coming together to get off to a good start. It seemed like we were discussing some things over and over and over and couldn't get beyond some points. I really liked when we started with the information that came out of those community meetings. We were taking something from those meetings and adding value to them. This is what the community was thinking. And we brought that to the group. And I think if that had been a retreat when we just did that and looked at what the community was telling us about what they saw as far as change, I thought that was really a valuable piece, for us to experience what those people had come to consensus on in those community meetings. And that really gave us a basis to work because that told us, to a large degree, we were all involved in those meetings so that helped us plan what the next steps would be. I thought that was a good piece that gave substance to what we were doing. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q021)

Some Leadership Team members referenced the decision to spend Leadership Team meetings covering the material that would have been introduced during the organizing retreat by saying, "This [the material contained in the first five meetings of the Leadership Team] would be better condensed into retreat form." (Principal A, Interview, January 31, 2007, p. 4)

One Leadership Team member expressed a concern alluded to by at least four members when she discussed the problems of attending a retreat where she didn't know or trust the attendees by saying, "I don't want to do a retreat with people until I kind of know them and I am comfortable. So to do a retreat not too far in is not a good thing. (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q014) Also commenting on the problems cause by not knowing other members was an administrator who said, “I don’t know that a one- or two-day retreat is going to make people comfortable with each other in one or two days.” (Administrator B Interview, January 12, 2007, Q019)

Summary of Results for the Organizing Retreat

Most Leadership Team members indicated the need for an organizing retreat. Their responses are summarized below:

1. Holding an organizing retreat should be a non-negotiable item.
2. The purpose and intent of the organizing retreat should be made clear before entering into the retreat through goal-setting exercises. The purpose of this retreat is
    - to get to know all participants;
    - to engage in activities that will help members to understand the difference between industrial-age and information-age concepts;
    - to learn techniques that will enable dialogue; and
    - to establish ground rules for the group’s operation.
3. If the organizing retreat is a two-day retreat, the second day should be devoted to reviewing findings of Community Meetings and to establishing professional learning communities.
4. The organizing retreat should occur early in the process.

I will elaborate on each of these summaries below, in greater detail.

1. *Holding an organizing retreat should be a non-negotiable item.* Because the organizing retreat was not held, it is not possible to answer the question of what did and did not work well. Neither is it possible to explore how it could be improved. It can be reported that all Leadership Team interviewees described the decision not to engage in an organizing retreat as a mistake. A suggestion offered by the superintendent was to make the organizing retreat a non-negotiable event in the planning for conducting activities in the Leadership Team schedule. The nature of a contract is such that all terms are negotiated, and it would be necessary for a skillful facilitator to present convincing arguments in favor of a retreat. Many of the interviewees' comments are important evidence that this retreat is an essential element of the process.

2. *The purpose and intent of the organizing retreat should be made clear before entering into the retreat through goal-setting exercises. The purpose of this retreat is*

- *to get to know all participants;*
- *to engage in activities that will help members to understand the difference between industrial age and information age concepts;*
- *to learn techniques that will enable dialogue; and*
- *to establish ground rules for the group's operation.*

When the Leadership Team members rejected engaging in such a retreat, their progress was hindered in a significant manner especially with regard to their group learning and communication skills. Interviewees suggested events for inclusion in an organizing retreat that would build trust, aid understanding of the information-age key markers, explore effective communication techniques, and encourage team building activities for inclusion in an organizing retreat. These types of events were all originally suggested by the facilitators, but rejected on the grounds that participants lacked the trust in others required for participation.

3. *If the organizing retreat is a two-day retreat, the second day should be devoted to reviewing findings of Community Meetings and to establishing professional learning communities*. With the increased recognition of the importance of an organizing retreat, interviewees argued for a two-day organizing retreat. During initial reform efforts and prior to the Leadership Team's formation, a series of community forums had been conducted in the community. Interviewees felt strongly that a second organizing retreat day should include the worksheet "We Are or We Are Not Like This" and should incorporate community responses to the same questions. The willingness to engage in the process using real world results generated by the community is the kind of work interviewees wanted to include in an organizing retreat.

4. *The organizing retreat should occur early in the process.* Finding the right time to engage in a retreat is a challenging process, and there is no clear indication of when the retreat should be held. While most members of the Leadership Team wanted to have the retreat before the third regular meeting of the Leadership Team, others were not certain. For guidance, we looked to Core Team members who had engaged in such a retreat previously. Although the first meeting of the Core Team was held on March 7, 2001, they "decided to delay the retreat until the summer months" (Joseph, 2003a, p. 125) and conducted nine meetings prior to the retreat. Most Core Team members expressed a basic satisfaction with the timing of the original Core Team retreat.

Vision-Mission-Beliefs Retreat

What Happened?

In the re-formation stages of the Leadership Team beginning in October, 2003, participants spent eight meetings beginning the necessary conversations to create the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. During the eighth meeting, team members worked at forming a first response to questions one and two, beliefs about teaching and learning in the ideal school. The responses to these questions were judged to be incomplete by the Facilitation Team with the concurrence of the Leadership Team. In the next meeting, the Leadership Team began work on the fourth question, a simpler question asking whether the special talents of students should be cultivated (See Table 3.3: Sample beliefs about education). By meeting twelve held on May 6, 2004, and after having discussed responses to three questions, the Leadership Team felt confident in their ability to complete the rest of the Framework of Beliefs.

At the May 6, 2004 meeting, participants unanimously committed to attending a two-day workshop retreat during the summer to complete the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. At the next meeting on May 18, 2004, agreement was reached to hold the workshop retreat on June 17 and June 21, 2004, at [a local winery that offered rental space for business meetings] in an all-day workshop. The first day of the retreat addressed each remaining beliefs question, while the second day addressed the first edit of each belief statement as well as preparation of the vision and mission statements.

What Did and Did Not Work Well?

At least one parent participant felt that the Leadership Team waited too long before having the Vision, Mission, and Beliefs retreat. This individual also believed that individuals could have responded separately to the questions, and then could have met to compile and finalize the Framework of Beliefs:

> They could have sent everyone home with a homework assignment to come up with five categories and their own beliefs, coming up with categories and then their five beliefs, the categories they wanted to come up with and then have the retreat sooner to compile all of that data." (Parent A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q160)

Most participants however, responded that the retreat was a timely and effective event held to deal with a complex problem:

> By [the time we started planning the retreat], people pretty well had in their mind 'Ok, this is what I think. What did you think?' Let's compare the two together, and I think that by this point, people were ready to move. At the retreat, we were glad for the people that were willing to do the editing so that we could move on to other things. (Support Staff B, Interview, December 15, 2006)

One of the principals echoed this statement when they said, "A high point for me was when we had the retreat and when we actually boiled it down and got the verbiage we wanted. I walked away from that feeling like we've really got something important here." (Principal A, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q147) Another responded to some of the details that were addressed during the retreat:

> … the retreat we had was good at [the winery]! That was one of the highlights of the whole time! We had our picture taken that day and it seemed like we were a team. We did hash over and edited the beliefs and sent people out to the other rooms to continue editing and to bring what they thought back so that we could get more accomplished – and that was good. We empowered people to make changes without requiring the whole group and that was good. Then they brought back their recommendations. (Support Staff A, Interview, December 15, 2006, Q148)

Yet another respondent addressed the feeling of energy and excitement experienced at the retreat:

> I only got to go to one day of the retreat because summer school had started and I didn't get to go. People were really hyped up [on the second day] and I was

> amazed. I thought, 'What did they do? What did they do to make them so excited like that?' (Administrator B Interview, January 12, 2007, Q158)

Many interview participants were still excited almost three years past the retreat, and tried to explain the essence of the excitement that pervaded the retreat:

> Part of that was that people…that last little bit of bonding happened that first day, so you have team building here, and then you have a learning process, and start getting into the beliefs, and then you can [finish well]. (Parent A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q159)

In addition to the bonding, participants believed that it was one of the first times they were really in charge of the reform process:

> It was the retreat that just snowballed [the feeling of empowerment] even faster. I think people said, 'This is what we're going to do and this is how we're going to do it and no one is going to stop us from doing that. This is what we're going to have to get done.' Here is where people started thinking it was ours. (Board Member A, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q154)

Another participant likened the positive working relationship to a relationship to peer bonding which should have been nurtured from the beginning organizing retreat that was never held:

> It was probably the right time that we had discussed everything. Until then, I think that the time could have been compressed more if you'd had a better working relationship earlier, some of these things would have moved faster. But a lot of these topics needed to be discussed before then because if people did need to think, they needed to go out and discuss with other people, or they had to discuss with their groups. At least I know that I had to discuss some of the things we discussed. I would think about things and discuss with some other people, and then come back. I think that you can be a better representative that way. (Parent A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q156)

Summary of Results for the Vision-Mission-Beliefs Retreat

Responses and recommendations from the Leadership Team members interviewed for this study are summarized in the list below:

1. Hold the Vision-Mission-Beliefs Retreat as soon as participants have demonstrated an understanding of the task and have worked successfully at completing 1-2 beliefs items.
2. Representatives of the Leadership Team should:
    - Plan the retreat;
    - Create an agenda for the retreat; and
    - Receive approval of the agenda from the other Leadership Team members.

I will discuss this summary below in greater detail.

1. *Hold the Vision-Mission-Beliefs Retreat as soon as participants have demonstrated an understanding of the task and have worked successfully at completing 1-2 beliefs items.* The Vision-Mission-Beliefs retreat was considered by interviewees to be a powerful force, not only for completing the Framework, but also for bringing the Leadership Team together and empowering them in a way that they had not experienced previously. The timing of the retreat is difficult to judge, and no hard rule was expressed by interviewees for when the retreat should be held. Most participants expressed the belief that, once participants demonstrated a capability for understanding the dialogue on the topic of information-age beliefs, they should hold the retreat and complete this important task. Interviewees also stated that the retreat should not be held before participants demonstrate the ability to consider the belief questions from an information-age mindset.

2. *Representatives of the Leadership Team should:*
    - *Plan the retreat;*
    - *Create an agenda for the retreat; and*

- *Receive approval of the agenda from the other Leadership Team members.*

The value of this retreat to interviewees was apparent when it was discussed by participants who experienced it. The resulting empowerment and excitement made this a unique opportunity to create advocates for the systemic transformation process. The importance of having ownership of the retreat was expressed by interviewees.

Leadership Team interviewees expressed the belief that they should play a part in planning the retreat, creating an agenda that is given out beforehand, and presenting the goals of the retreat to the larger Leadership Team community. By accomplishing this agenda planning process, facilitators and leaders should be able to take proactive positions in furthering the retreat.

Community Presentations and Forum

In this section, I will examine the process used by the Leadership Team to present the initial draft of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs to the community-at-large.

What Happened?

The Leadership Team met on July 26, 2004, and approved the initial edited version of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Volunteer presenters from the Leadership Team were asked to represent their own stakeholder group in public presentations of the framework. This volunteer group consisted of the superintendent, one teacher, one principal, one parent, and one board member. These volunteers gave 55 presentations of the Framework between August 9, 2004, and October 7, 2004.

Presentations of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs were made to school staff members, community organizations like the Lions, support staff organizations like the District Transportation Department, and any civic or church group that would welcome the presentation. Each presentation employed a PowerPoint® format along with an accompanying script and lasted about an hour. Following the presentation, the group passed out question/remark forms soliciting responses. These records were compiled and shared by the stakeholder volunteers with the Leadership Team.

This presentation effort culminated in a community editing forum held on October 7, 2004. The Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs was presented publicly to an audience of 77 community members. The audience divided into seating at 7 tables, each of which had a facilitator and a recorder from the Leadership Team, and as many different stakeholder attendees as could be seated. Each belief statement was read by meeting attendees, followed by a discussion of the statement and a public reporting from each table of participants. The final result of this meeting was a list of positive and negative statements in reaction to the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs.

What Did and Did Not Work Well?

Individuals who worked on the presentations were highly respected by others on the Leadership Team: "I think another memorable part of [the presentations to community groups] was the dedication of the group that went out and did all of the community meetings" (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q164). In interviews, the presenters expressed the belief that the job itself was a powerful statement of commitment to the community:

> It gave [the stakeholder presentation team] the opportunity to demonstrate their belief in their document. It also gave them the opportunity to tell that to other people. … It really put them in a leadership role with the vision, mission, and beliefs. I really liked that piece of it, and it also validated them that what we're doing is not just something in an isolated room. It really does impact the larger

> community who was there that night. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q172)

The same administrator quoted above believed that the presentations were notable because of the representation and effort that was put forth:

> It was impressive to be able to say to groups that we had a board member and a parent and a teacher rep and actually a board member from the teacher organization as well as the superintendent. And I think all of those stakeholder groups were represented in like 95% of the meetings that we had with people – 55 community meetings. They were there for every one of them. I think that was a huge statement of the commitment to this document that had been put together. It was a huge statement to an audience that you would have brought those kind of people together. You know, in other school districts, how often do you see…well, you never see a school board member presenting something. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q165)

The superintendent attributed passage of a bond effort to these stakeholder presentations and referred to them as powerful meetings:

> It was very important, very powerful. This right here is why we moved an $85 million project forward without one voice of opposition. That's how powerful these meetings were, and this is why we were able to do that. I believe that wholeheartedly. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q168)

Each stakeholder presentation ended by passing out feedback forms and collecting comments from the meeting participants. The forms that were received were thought-provoking:

> I thought that it was important that we got feedback from those forums that we conducted. They made us think about what was written. There were words in there that we ended up changing that, to us, we knew what they meant, but to them it meant something different. I thought that was a wake-up call for us. We needed to speak in their language instead of ours. (Board Member B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q052)

The culmination of the stakeholder presentations to the community came during an open Community Forum held in the evening on October 7, 2004. At this meeting, the Leadership Team was made aware of a problem that had not been anticipated:

> [For] this you needed a [glossary], but you needed the definitions of [wording used in the Framework] for the parents before you get into them. You've got to give them the vocabulary some way before you discuss the questions. Pick out the ones that are safe, but some of these, you go, 'ugh, oh my goodness.' You could have done some they had a grasp of but others you had to have a vocabulary before they do that. The educators could jump into that. Not everyone could do… Or maybe say, 'From your own learning experience, pick the one that is most like what you engaged in in school.' That's safe for me. (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q131)

The problem was described by members as an educational jargon problem, "There are still parts of our beliefs that I think [have] too much educational jargon. (Teacher A, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q053) One member attributed the jargon problem as a result of not taking into account the background of the district's stakeholders:

> I think sometimes we forget to take into account the background of our stakeholders, and in Midwestern Metropolitan School District we are very diverse. We have our college educated groups but we have a lot of parents who never even finished schools. We have the whole gambit and that document has to meet the understanding – be understood by everyone. That's a pretty tough task, I think. (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q054)

Summary of Decision Making: Community Presentations

Responses and recommendations from the Leadership Team members interviewed for this study are summarized in the list below:

1. Planning for presentations to a wide variety of community stakeholder groups should begin immediately following the Vision-Mission-Beliefs retreat.
    - Identify community stakeholder groups to whom presentation will be made.
    - Identify stakeholders within the Leadership Team that will make presentation.
2. Representation by each sub-group of stakeholders in the Leadership Team is important in the creation of the team of presenters.
3. The Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs needs to be as free of educational jargon as possible to be understandable to all community stakeholders.

I will discuss each of these summaries below in greater detail.

1. *Planning for presentations to a wide variety of community stakeholder groups should begin immediately following the Vision-Mission-Beliefs retreat.*

- *Identify community stakeholder groups to whom presentations will be made.*
- *Identify stakeholders within the Leadership Team who will make presentations.*

Leadership Team members were surprised when they discovered that they had not created a plan for the phase that comes after creation of the Framework. Interviewees expressed the need for advance planning outlined above for this phase of the work. They expressed the belief that direct public presentations to community, civic, and teacher stakeholder groups should have been planned in advance of the completion of the framework.

Presentations were judged by interviewees to be very effective, and Leadership Team members recognized that the planning for these stakeholder presentations should take place immediately following the retreat held to complete the Framework. Interviewees stated that the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs was important enough that it should be included in future implementations and that it should become a part of the planning by the Leadership Team. As Leadership Team members near the completion of the Framework, they should also identify to which groups in the community the presentation should be made. Identifying stakeholders from within the Leadership Team who will volunteer to make these presentations is a closely related task.

2. *Representation by each sub-group of stakeholders in the Leadership Team is important in the creation of the team of presenters.* When the Leadership Team creates

the team of public presenters, it is important that each sub-group of stakeholders be included on the presentation team. Interviewees expressed strong opinions about the need for increased parent and community involvement in the Leadership Team, and this same presence needs to be communicated to the community at large. Interviewees emphasized the need for increased representation in many areas, and the positive representative nature of the presentation team was held as a model for this kind of representation.

3. *The Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs needs to be as free of educational jargon as possible to be understandable to all community stakeholders.* The final community-wide presentation on October 7, 2004, revealed that the Framework contained too much language considered to be educational jargon. In addition, community members found the organization of the document was not as strong as it might be.

Vision-Mission-Beliefs Editing

What Happened?

During the Leadership Team meeting held on November 15, 2004, the Leadership Team began to work on the many changes in wording and comprehension that had been suggested at the community-wide framework presentation meeting. This was the first of four Leadership Team meetings in which editing changes were made to the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. The Framework was finally approved by the School Board during its January, 2005, meeting, and this was reported to the Leadership Team at the February 10, 2005, Leadership Team meeting.

What Did and Did Not Work Well?

Leadership Team members expressed an understanding of the problem of overused educational jargon in the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. This was a problem that had developed since the beginning efforts of the Leadership Team, but no action had been taken by participants. The problem of acronyms and jargon in the Framework were noticed mostly by those who were not involved as teachers or administrators in the school system:

> Even though I have teacher background, I haven't been in the teaching mode for 20 years. A lot of people knew the acronyms of a lot of the things that we were looking for and at that time I had no idea. I came into this kind of blind-sided, and I think parents did, too. I'm just thinking that I wasn't exactly sure that I knew what to do. (Support Staff C Interview, January 12, 2007, Q150)

The effort to organize the Framework and rid it of jargon took more time than most of the participants expected:

> I think we got bogged down in details. I think that we spent way too much time meeting after meeting on some of the same stuff and some of the same wording – editing. It seemed like some of the time we would come into the meeting and talk about the same stuff we talked about the week before. (Parent B, Interview, December 15, 2006, Q174)

When asked for a possible solution to the problem of getting bogged down in details, a range of responses was given. One member believed that, "if you involve more of the common-day people, then you've already worked through that [language problems] before you get to your final draft. (Parent B, Interview, December 15, 2006, Q188). Another questioned whether the problem could be solved by dedicating a workshop or retreat to the effort:

> The editing team should be selected prior to the retreat. If you are going to make big decisions at the retreat with all of the thoughts to that point as well as your own thoughts from homework and then be able to has out all that and then maybe the second day do the editing. You can know that by the time you go to the

retreat you will have a good idea of all the ideas. (Support Staff B, Interview, December 15, 2006, Q163)

The idea of creating an editing team was judged to be a good idea by some:

[Creating an editing team] probably could be more concise. I don't know if you really need the four meetings. … I think, probably, more than just meetings, a couple of days of getting together in a retreat setting. It could be much more productive. I think it's a necessary step because what happened here was consensus. True collaboration that led to consensus. We knew, when that was finally edited, and we had those final conversations, it was ok. We were there. (Administrator E, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q175)

Others suggested that a tighter timeline should be imposed on the process:

There should have been a more definite timeline to say, OK, the edits are done, we're going to present it to you, we're going to discuss it at the next meeting, and then it goes to bed. I mean there has to a timeline. I don't think it needs to be dragged out this long. We spent two days at a retreat, give it to people, let them reflect, say at the next meeting we're going to answer questions and concerns and then we're going to do consensus building. Maybe [working on editing for] two meetings [maximum] after that retreat to put your framework together [would be a good idea]. I think some of that [editing], to be honest, is just saying that, ok, we're not going to spend any more time on this unless we can't build consensus. If we can't build consensus, then you've got to keep moving out. (Principal B, Interview, December 20, 2006, Q179)

One participant expressed a possibility that I had not considered, but someone who was closer to the individuals involved might have noticed earlier: "I wonder if that's not personality conflicts more than editing." (Support Staff A, Interview, December 15, 2006 Q186)

Summary of Results for Vision-Mission-Beliefs Editing

Responses and recommendations from the Leadership Team members interviewed for this study are summarized in the list below:

1. Prior to the Community Forum in which the Leadership Team presents the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs to the community, a subcommittee of the Leadership Team should meet to make editing recommendations to the Framework.

2. The Leadership Team should meet to hear recommendations from the editing subcommittee and make changes to the Framework (1 meeting)
3. The Leadership Team should present the Framework to the community in a public forum and accept editing recommendations from district wide stakeholders.
4. The Leadership Team should meet in a retreat to make final edits to the Framework.

I will elaborate each of these summaries below in greater detail.

1. *Prior to the Community Forum in which the Leadership Team presents the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs to the community, a subcommittee of the Leadership Team should meet to make editing recommendations to the Framework.* The first recommendation stems from interviewees' comments about how much time was taken up editing the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs prior to presentation to the general public. Suggested methods of dealing with editing prior to the public community forum included a retreat that would involve the entire Leadership Team or the creation of a subcommittee to edit the language and to make suggestions to the larger group. Most interviewees agreed that the latter suggestion was the preferred one.

2. *The Leadership Team should meet to hear recommendations from the editing subcommittee and make changes to the Framework (1 meeting).* Although interviewees were willing to let an editing committee make recommendations to the Leadership Team, they wanted to reserve final responsibility for themselves. The sense of ownership of the framework was evident in all interviewees, and this is typical of decisions made by groups such as this (Pearson, 1975).

3. *The Leadership Team should present the Framework to the community in a public forum and accept editing recommendations from district wide stakeholders.*

Leadership Team members recognized the importance of gathering support for the systemic reform effort from the entire community. Whether this is done continuously as recommended earlier or whether this is done through a community forum, interviewees expressed the importance of sharing the results of their work with all stakeholders.

4. *The Leadership Team should meet in a retreat to make final edits to the Framework.* There were three options mentioned by interviewees to the problem of jargon and complex terminology in the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs noted by community stakeholders. Interviewees expressed those options as taking volunteer recommendations for changes to be made in the Framework, meeting over time as a group to discuss the Framework, and meeting in a retreat to make the changes. The first option of meeting as an entire group to consider needed changes was the option that was exercised, and the majority of the Leadership Team expressed the belief that the four meetings held over a period of two months took too long to complete. The second option was not attempted, but interviewees made it clear that all Leadership Team members believed that they should be involved in the final editing process. The third option was to conduct a retreat to make final Framework changes. Most interviewees expressed support for the third option when asked to choose among the three options.

Decision Making Conclusions

Leadership Team members were supportive of the emphasis placed on making decisions that was used when the team was re-formed in October, 2003. To make informed decisions, interviewees depended upon working with data. This process is referred to as lead learning (King, 2002) and is a characteristic of information-age decision making. By effectively integrating learning activities with decisions under consideration, individuals can make timely and informed decisions.

Making informed decisions is also dependent on effective communication. Leadership Team members must communicate with other Leadership Team members freely and without concern for the professional or societal position held by others. To accomplish this, an organizing retreat needs to become part of their joint experience at an early stage in the formation of the Leadership Team. In the organizing retreat, communication and ground rules for action should be emphasized. The failure to hold the organizing retreat has had consequences throughout the project. Leadership Team members have engaged in deferral to positional leaders in some circumstances, and in others they have failed to take action until they have gauged the response of school leaders. This has hindered the Leadership Team and expanded the timetable for action, at the very least. Inclusion of the organizing retreat should be required at the beginning of this phase of the reform effort.

As Leadership Team members become more adept at discussing the beliefs that should guide information-age education, it is time to engage in a retreat or workshop to complete the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. As demonstrated by the strength of participants' reactions to the retreat experience, this is an empowering exercise. It needs to occur as soon as participants are ready to engage. This activity should be included in the planning for this phase, and the facilitator needs to work closely with Leadership Team members to assist in planning for this activity.

It is not clear whether the community presentations described above would be needed in this event, despite the high level of support for them. During interviews, many participants expressed the concern that community stakeholders must be included throughout this phase in a more meaningful manner. In the next chapter, I will describe participants' process observations, which strongly indicate that members of the Leadership Team should communicate more frequently and effectively with those whom they represent throughout the reform process. Such communication could ensure that community members' recommendations will be included in the Framework much earlier and more effectively.

Increased participation in a redesigned reform process does not necessarily remove the need for a final community-wide presentation of the Framework. The final presentation can bring out community members who have not participated in the past, and it can serve as a public affirmation of the Framework for those who have been involved in its creation throughout the process. Such an event should be considered by planners, but they need to weigh the benefits against the time required to make the event happen.

Finally, interview participants believed that the final editing process consumed too much time that could have been better used for planning and moving to the next stage. The most frequently suggested alternative was to ask for volunteers to work on the Framework and to bring their efforts either to a meeting or to a retreat for consideration. This editing subcommittee should become a standing committee of the Leadership Team.

Chapter 5: Additional Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by describing additional data gathered from the Leadership Team with regard to the process used (means), as opposed to learning and decision-making outcomes (ends) discussed in previous chapters. Two major process issues are addressed: (1) building and maintaining strong stakeholder representation and (2) contract and timeline issues. This will end with a summary of the process advice from interviewees. Second, I will present conclusions drawn from the data. Third, I will discuss the limitations of this study. Finally, I will make recommendations on future research possibilities suggested by these research findings.

As in chapters three and four, participants have agreed with my findings and the quoted material used in this chapter. Where individuals differed from my interpretations and where quotations represent less than unanimous consent, I have noted these exceptions in the introductory statements to the quoted material.

Building and Maintaining Strong Stakeholder Representation

What Happened

When members were originally recruited to join the Leadership Team, they were chosen on the basis of their ability to represent the thinking of stakeholder groups within the community. Five stakeholders groups were identified as requiring representation within the systemic change effort. These are community members comprised of parents, business people, teachers, principals, administrators, and the local school board.

What Did and Did Not Work Well

Despite the fact that Leadership Team members were referred to as representatives, no requirement was made of the members to report back to other stakeholders:

> At the beginning, I guess I didn't really realize what I was getting into. I didn't know that I was supposed to do that [go out to my stakeholders with the message]. I think that we needed a better job of informing that core group of what they were responsible for. (Support Staff C Interview, January 12, 2007, Q046)

Another interviewee expressed the same idea in a different manner:

> I'm not sure that I was aware that people on the group were supposed to be going back. I guess that's probably something to think about is how do you intentionally do that, because that is your way to your community. It's making sure that your representation knows they're going back. (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q065)

Many interviewees agreed with the opinion that individuals who participate on the Leadership Team should be expected to communicate back to the stakeholder groups they represent:

> I think we have to make them [members of the Leadership Team] aware that when they are part of our group, part of what they need to do is to bring our group to their group as well. I think they need to understand that there is a bigger piece here – that they don't just come to this meeting. They are supposed to be taking information back to the larger community. Even the parents there, really, we want them to go back and discuss these things with the rest of the parent group that they represent. That's why I always had issue with why there wasn't a teacher from [every] school. There weren't parents from all these other places in the district, [and] it shouldn't be that we operate in isolation. They should be going back and letting all these constituents that they are supposed to represent know what is being discussed and what is important to this group. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q046)

One administrator expressed frustration with the degree to which all stakeholder groups were represented within the Leadership Team:

> Some of the meetings were pretty slim pickings on who was there. There were several meetings that were just really we, as administrators, with a couple of

> teachers. It's really important to have all those stakeholders. I don't know that the decisions would have been any different if everybody had been there, but… (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q025)

The above administrator's concerns were echoed by a second administrator:

> Sometimes I was not comfortable that we had enough people there or the right people there. Sometimes we had a real skeleton crew of people there, and as much as we were making sure that stakeholders were being represented, I didn't feel that we had enough community people [as] part of it or enough parents [as] part of it to really have their voices being heard. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q024)

One of the teacher representatives commented on the effectiveness of the communication that went out to other teachers through the local teacher's association representatives:

> We had representation, but we didn't really have the communication factor going too well until we got the [Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs]. That didn't mean it was in concrete because we did come back and revise [the Framework], if you'll remember. What we did through [the teacher's association], and I don't really think it was effective, the leadership team was always part of our executive agenda through the board meetings. We would talk a little bit about what was happening to our Leadership Team. We would just kind of do an update. Of course, we had representatives there – association reps from the buildings – but I don't think they really went back and did anything in their buildings. There is no way for this team, this Leadership Team, to be all to everyone. (Teacher B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q023)

Another individual gave an example of how the Leadership Team should have prepared members for their role as a representative:

> I want role definition. The ministers, all [of] the cohort group, all the stakeholders – we did not say what your role is going to be in this group. Minister, you are speaking for the community in terms of your parishioners. I think each person's role should be defined. … I need to hear [every stakeholder's] voice. We didn't engage people. We let them sit there and disengage. And I think we should have worked harder to engage them by turning to them. … I need to hear that [stakeholder] voice. (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q031)

This same individual suggested the following to put the above suggestion into practice, by setting up a communications tree:

> You want to talk to … five of your co-workers, and let them present it to smaller groups within their group. We want this to go out to all your folks. (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q044).

In addition to the stated need for stakeholder representatives to report on a regular and continuing basis back to their stakeholder groups, interviewees had much to say about who should be represented and when they should become involved in the process. One member who had been involved in presentations of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs to the community stated, “We [the Leadership Team] should have started reaching out to the community sooner” (Board Member B, Interview, January 3, 2007, Q028). Others agreed with that opinion, and mentioned the need for more parents to join the Leadership Team:

> There wasn’t enough appreciation for parents who were at minimum wage who were working, who couldn’t participate. How would we draw them in? … I think you’ve got to go to the folks. But this was a big expectation for someone who is earning minimum wage who’s going to tell their boss, ‘I’m being selected for leadership.’ (Administrator A, Interview, January 12, 2007, Q047)
>
> Another administrator suggested the following:
>
> I think that you have to do more things like meeting at the community center at the mobile home park, offices, and stuff like that. Really listen to those people and start creating a relationship with them. (Administrator C, Interview, January 30, 2007)

The parent stakeholder group was represented in this study by only two parents who were not employed by the school district, but it was not the only stakeholder group that was underrepresented within the Leadership Team:

> It was very difficult for other principals to understand what was happening because they weren’t in on it. By the time we got to the leadership team, it was me, as an elementary person, and [another administrator], so it was a good idea to

> have [other] schools involved. It makes good sense. There was a lot of confusion about what was this leadership team going to do, anyway? I am sure there were folks out there that, when we finally got the vision, mission, and beliefs written, that didn't buy into it or gave lip service to it because they didn't have any buy-in into it. (Principal A, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q029)

One school board member of the Leadership Team suggested that the problem of having increased numbers of stakeholder representatives could be addressed by involving principals, who would then involve all stakeholders from the building environment:

> I think the other thing that you would have done is that we would have gone to each school and said, 'We want an administrator, a teacher, a parent…' Each school would have had an involvement. Each school would have buy-in. After each meeting we could have said, 'Principals, please email all your people about what we're doing.' I think the administrator, the teachers, and the PTO presidents [need to be invited] into this, because they are actually the ones who probably see the parents more than anybody else. Those are people who are already committed to the school. (Board Member A, Interview, January 31, 2007)

Summary of Results on Building and Maintaining Strong Stakeholder Representation

Responses and recommendations from the Leadership Team members interviewed for this study are summarized in the list below:

1. Leadership Team members should include Central Office Staff and Community Members as well as the following representatives from each school:
    - A principal
    - A teacher
    - A parent
    - A support staff member
2. Representatives should be expected to report back to their respective stakeholder groups on a regular and continuing basis.
3. Training and tips for communicating with stakeholder groups should be given at the organizing retreat.

4. Community Outreach events:

    - should be scheduled at least four times each year.
    - should seek wider participation by periodic scheduling in non-school environments (such as trailer parks, service club meetings, civic presentations, coffee klatches with administrators, etc.)

I will elaborate each of these summaries below in greater detail.

1. *Leadership Team members should include Central Office Staff and Community Members as well as the following representatives from each school:*

- *A principal*
- *A teacher*
- *A parent*
- *A support staff member*

The question of which stakeholder groups should be included on the Leadership Team was addressed in this study, and interviewees agreed that all of the members included in this study were essential to the process. All of the positions on this list were mentioned in every group interview that was conducted. Each stakeholder position was critical to the success of the systemic reform project, and no objections were made about any stakeholder group on this list. Interviewees were critical of the fact that some schools were represented poorly and others not at all. When asked how to solve that problem, they made the recommendation for including all stakeholder positions from each school.

The consequences of including listed stakeholders from every school are that the Leadership Team would expand from its current size of 20-25 to a possible 45-50.

Interviewees' reactions were evenly divided on this topic. Whether this is too large a group to be included in the Leadership Team is addressed in the section on Conclusions below.

2. *Representatives should be expected to report back to their respective stakeholder groups on a regular and continuing basis.* The Leadership Team had discussed many different group communication options for reaching the public with major announcements. They had never fully considered their own individual communication responsibilities. For the systemic transformation model to work, members must find ways to keep the community informed throughout the process. Interviewees recognized this responsibility, and spoke of the need for training in this area.

3. *Training and tips for communicating with stakeholder groups should be given at the organizing retreat.* Interviewees considered the challenge of how to empower Leadership Team members to effectively represent themselves to the general public. Techniques on how to set up small groups with whom members could interact on an ongoing basis must be disseminated at an early stage. The organizing retreat, discussed in chapter four, was considered a good setting in which to learn the techniques for communication. Because the organizing retreat was viewed as a means to flatten the organization and to initiate communication and understanding among stakeholders on the Leadership Team, this is another topic that would readily fit in this setting.

4. *Community Outreach events:*

- *should be scheduled at least four times each year.*

- *should seek wider participation by periodic scheduling in non-school environments (such as trailer parks, service club meetings, civic presentations, coffee klatches with administrators, etc.)*

Community outreach is a more formal approach to communicating with community members. Interviewees expressed the opinion that the Leadership Team had an obligation to reach out to the community in a series of meetings that were held off school property in an environment that was more comfortable to community participants. Many speculated that meetings in trailer parks, service club meetings, civic presentations, and coffee klatches would be a positive way to strengthen the connection between community and school. Meetings like this should not take the place of small-group interactions mentioned in number three, but should be held around the community to supplement small-group efforts.

Conclusions for Building and Maintaining Strong Stakeholder Representation

No literature was found that addressed optimal size of a decision-making group of volunteers working in a systemic change environment. While Leadership Team members could not agree on the optimal size of such a group, most felt that 45-50 members would require a different approach to decision making. Where a size of 20-25 members allows a group to ensure that all members are heard, the larger number could make it easier to overlook members who were less assertive or more reticent to speak in front of a large group.

Most Leadership Team members agreed that the larger numbers would guarantee participation by all schools. The larger group would ensure that no schools were left out of deliberations and decisions made by such a group of leaders. In turn, the increased membership would also make the task of information sharing with other stakeholders a more manageable venture. Would the increased representation outweigh the negatives of having a larger group? Size of the school district engaging in transformation is another variable that could change the dynamics studied in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District. With more schools in a cluster, using the recommended formula of four representatives for each school could result in a much larger Leadership Team. In school systems that have more than one cluster or where no identifiable cluster structure exists, the size of the Leadership Team might become unwieldy. Each transformation effort in the future needs to examine the question of representation and must apply these recommendations in a manner that best meets each system's needs. These questions cannot be answered in this study and should be addressed in future systemic transformation efforts.

Contract and Timeline Issues

What Happened

Leadership Team members interviewed for this study indicated dissatisfaction with the length of time required to complete the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Interviewees, especially the superintendent, made numerous suggestions as to how to shorten the process, though no agreement was reached on the exact amount of time required to produce the Framework. These issues are discussed below.

What Did and Did Not Go Well

During our interview the superintendent discussed the concept of nonnegotiable features that must be included in any transformation effort. He identified four topics in this category, including a) the organizing retreat, b) readings, c) transformative style of leadership, and d) financial commitment to transformative leadership.

Nonnegotiable items. One feature of a systemic transformation contract between the external facilitator and the school district could be the inclusion of non-negotiable items. Though the effort under consideration was not governed by a contract, the superintendent suggested that future systemic transformation efforts should make use of this concept:

> We've looked at many national models. Every one of them has had non-negotiable items. You need to make [some of the features of the systemic [transformation effort] non-negotiables. If we're going to enter into an agreement, here are non-negotiables that are going to have to happen. That would have been a much better situation if I had known that. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q196)

When asked which elements should have the status of a nonnegotiable item in the contract, the superintendent mentioned four items: a) The organizing retreat; b) reading selections; c) leadership style; and d) financial commitment. These items are addressed below.

a) The organizing retreat. The details of the organization retreat were addressed earlier in Chapter Four. Interviewees expressed great support for holding this retreat early during the formative phase of the Leadership Team. The superintendent had participated in the retreat held for the Core Team, and shared his reaction to the Leadership Team's decision not to engage in the same kind of retreat:

> [The organizing retreat] is going to be a non-negotiable. When you get to this point, this event is very, very important because you've got to do team-building. If you are really going to get to the level that they can interpret the Senge Iceberg to where you're changing mental models, understanding [that] you've got to have this team building where people can get through that surface beyond that level above the water and get down deep in those core beliefs. Because without this

> team building, people are not going to let people understand what's down there. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q005)

b) Readings. I addressed the readings that were used with the Leadership Team in Chapter Three. The superintendent supported the use of reading selections with the Leadership Team, and recommended that the use of reading selections be a non-negotiable item:

> You are going to need to identify those learnings that need to happen. We can't get on to the next level until we have this experience. That becomes a non-negotiable. There might be a little room in how we do it, but we've got to do this work with Senge. We've got to do DuFour's model. It's part of the process. So that needs to be a non-negotiable. You might have other pieces depending on which way you want to go, that there can be some collaboration and negotiation. I think you should put together your total package and in presenting it, it is very important that you have certain pieces that the learning has got to take place. And in certain pieces, there is no other thing but that you're going to have to read a book, because part of this whole thing is that I'm providing you with books and you've got to read them. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q090)

c) Transformative style of leadership. Top-down administrative decisions are one of the key markers of the industrial-age educational model (see Table 1.1: Key markers of the industrial age and the information age). Collaborative decision making is more characteristic of schools that use an information age model of education. For systemic school transformation to work, schools must be committed to a transformative style of leadership (Brown, 2006). The superintendent places the collaborative style of leadership on the list of non-negotiable items:

> The leadership style of the superintendent is very, very critical for this to work. The superintendent has got to be able to let loose, be a collaborator, and understand that leadership in this process means something totally different than leadership in the traditional role. I think of some of my colleagues and no way – no way are they ready to move through this process. That's a condition that's got to be right. Once the superintendent understands that I've got to have a different kind of leadership. I'm still superintendent, but I've got to share. I've got to build leadership capacity in other people. And that's ok. Those things can begin

> to happen. You need to know that up front. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q208)

d) Financial commitment to systemic transformation. Lack of funds to support systemic reform efforts had typified this project since its inception. Funding can be used to provide release time for teachers to attend meetings, retreats, and planning sessions. Without funding, extended retreats or work sessions can become extremely difficult to schedule. All stakeholders who participated in these sessions tended to suffer from the strain and fatigue of adding another session into already overstrained and overscheduled lives. The superintendent described the need for a financial commitment to accomplish systemic change in these words:

> There has got to be an understanding up front that there is a financial commitment [for the district/corporation] … – and you need to plan a budget from the beginning as to what it's going to take to implement this. As far as buying people's time and for facilitators, retreats. That's just something that is very, very necessary. Our input without trying to make that work has just been really a struggle. That's one of the first things you're going to need to do that perhaps we didn't do. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q194)

Additionally, the superintendent advised ways to approach funding:

> It could be [done in] a couple of ways. One, to look for grants, which is very, very hard. You know that. Or there is going to be a commitment from that school corporation's available funds to them to make this work. That's a very necessary piece. That's important, too, due to this reason. This [systemic change process to date] was very, very long because we did not have the funds or make the funds available to make it more concise, to get the people out of the classroom, to buy their time during the summer, to pull people together for a two- or three-day retreat. That's how you're going to make this more concise. To get more people together on a more regular basis on a lesser timeline to get the work done. (Superintendent, Interview, January 31, 2007, Q195)

The participants chosen for inclusion on the Leadership Team have always been considered to be leaders of their respective stakeholder groups. As leaders in the school and community, they are the types of individuals who are always overscheduled with greater demands placed on their time. Interviewees discussed the problem of time commitment to the Leadership Team:

> I don't know that there is a way to solve [the problem of committing time to the reform effort] because I certainly understand the premise of meeting every two weeks because you do lose a lot when you meet just once a month. But you can't pull people away from their jobs because you can't get [the employers to allow release time from their jobs]. I'm not sure there is a solution to it. It's just one of those big hurdles that you have to find a solution for the people you are working with. There were lots of times that I said, 'I'm not going tonight!' You always did, and it was fine, but… Like I said, the end result was worth it but whew. (Administrator D, Interview, January 30, 2007, Q198)

Other Leadership Team members wanted to discuss the length of time required by the process of creating the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. When asked whether they felt that the process required the two years that it took to create the framework, most agreed with this response advocating that less time would be appropriate:

> I would say six months to a year. By the time you've built relationships with everyone – because not everyone's going to know everyone – and there is no reason to rehash things the way that we did. You need to keep things on task. To go this long talking about the same things is difficult. (Parent B, Interview, December 15, 2006, Q201)

Summary of Contract and Timeline Issues

Responses and recommendations from the Leadership Team members interviewed for this study are summarized in the list below:

1. Leadership Team interviewees recommended that the Leadership Team needs to commit to representation of, and communication with, all stakeholders, including administrators at all levels, teachers, support staff, and parents.
2. The amount of time required to create a framework of vision, mission, and beliefs is highly variable. By making a professional, financial, and ethical decision to

engage in the process intensively, the school system can shorten the variable of time by deciding to increase the length of meetings, the frequency of meetings, or a combination of both.

3. The process for a framework of vision, mission, and beliefs through a Leadership Team approach requires certain non-negotiable elements. These are:
   - An organizing retreat for new Leadership Team members.
   - A commitment to engage in a Professional Learning Community that will engage in readings and discussions.
   - A retreat to finalize the creation of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs.
   - An editing retreat following the presentation of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs to the public.
   - Community forums and meetings that engage members of the community in a meaningful way.

I will elaborate this summary below in greater detail.

1. *Leadership Team interviewees recommended that the Leadership Team needs to commit to representation of, and communication with, all stakeholders, including administrators at all levels, teachers, support staff, and parents.* Stakeholders included on the Leadership Team should be expected to actively and individually seek opportunities to communicate with the stakeholder groups they represent. Interviewees clearly outlined this responsibility in interviews, and many stated that the lack of this kind of communication was responsible for lack of progress in the systemic reform effort.

2. *The amount of time required to create a framework of vision, mission, and beliefs is highly variable. By making a professional, financial, and ethical decision to engage in the process intensively, the school system can shorten the variable of time by deciding to increase the length of meetings, the frequency of meetings, or a combination of both.* The Leadership Team required two years from the time that the first group formed, through the re-formation of the team, to the completion of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Most meetings held were two hours in length, with fifteen minute breaks for dinner and a mid-meeting break, bringing the total effective working time spent to less than two hours. Leadership Team interviewees expressed frustration at the total length of time, and suggested shortening this timetable in one of two ways: meet more frequently or meet for longer times in a retreat format. Either option would increase the efficiency of the Leadership Team and decrease the amount of time required to complete the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs.

3. *The process for a framework of vision, mission, and beliefs through a Leadership Team approach requires certain non-negotiable elements. These are:*

- *An organizing retreat for new Leadership Team members.*
- *A commitment to engage in a Professional Learning Community that will engage in readings and discussions.*
- *A retreat to finalize the creation of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs.*
- *An editing retreat following the presentation of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs to the public.*

- *Community forums and meetings that engage members of the community in a meaningful way*.

The superintendent was the first to suggest including certain non-negotiable elements in the project. Each of the elements (discussed earlier) is so important that they must occur or the progress of the reform project will suffer. Each has a cost, but the value added is judged as far outweighing the cost.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Contract and Timeline Issues

Finding new and meaningful ways to represent all stakeholder groups is one of the most challenging aspects of systemic transformation efforts. Parents and community members can turn out *en masse* when school problems boil into the public arena. But a long term reform process is more challenging because by its very nature, it is a long term process requiring many different levels of extended participation. To reach the different levels of extended participation, the Leadership Team must learn to reach out to parents in places where parents are comfortable. These should include non-traditional settings such as trailer parks, Laundromats, churches, clubs, sporting events, and anywhere that parents might be found. The Leadership Team must make a group effort to involve the community in the process through regularly and irregularly scheduled community outreach efforts.

The amount of time required for engagement in systemic transformation will always be a challenge to those who wish to engage. Creative and determined school districts would be well served by organizing grant writing teams or by hiring grant writing experts to support the mission. Early in the systemic transformation process, dedicated funds for training, retreats, and other events should be secured in the school budget. If internal funds are not available, the school district must find new ways to raise additional revenue to support the transformation process. For the transformation effort to succeed, funding must be secured to support stakeholders in their efforts.

The data have indicated the value of including certain non-negotiable events in the systemic transformation process. Because of the nature of the relationship between the facilitator and the school district, this tool must be used cautiously, or it could break down the collaborative environment. Nevertheless, experience tells us that without events like those mentioned in the above section, the systemic transformation process will be compromised. Any activity that is judged to be non-negotiable should have the benefit of having proven value through the formative research process.

Community forums, workshops, and retreats that are labeled as non-negotiable items should be viewed by all stakeholders as important opportunities for them to be heard district wide, opportunities to speak out with the knowledge that district leaders want to hear the voice of the community. Interviewees recognized the power of non-negotiable events such as the community forum on the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs, and felt that events like this strengthened the overall effort.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Research Questions

In Chapter One, I posed five research questions that guided this study. In this section, I restate the questions followed by a summarization of the responses to these questions.

Research Question 1: How can the decision making process and the learning process best be integrated so that both are accomplished most effectively and efficiently in the early stages of a Leadership Team (or Decisioning Team)?

a. What is a good sequence of decisions for a leadership team to make?

b. What learning activities are most helpful for each of the decisions to be made by a Leadership Team?

Sequence of leadership team decision. In Chapter Three, I identified five critical decisions that occurred over the time period that covered the formation of the Leadership Team through acceptance of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs by the School Board (See Table 3.1, *Critical Decisions of the Leadership Team* on page 69 for details). With the exception of the first critical decision, all decisions were process decisions that referenced the creation of the Framework, communication about the Framework with the public, editing the Framework, or submitting the Framework to the school board. The sequence of decisions made in the production of the Framework was a good, if not smooth, progression of decisions.

The first critical decision warrants close attention. As discussed on page 149, the organizing retreat is a valuable tool that can provide a foundation for conversations throughout any process. The Leadership Team decided that an organizing retreat was not necessary and that the goals of the retreat could be accomplished during the first meetings. There was no preliminary work accomplished to aid participants in communicating effectively with stakeholders they represented, communicating with school leaders throughout the educational hierarchy, or understanding the need for the entire system to evolve before implementing change. Participants expressed the opinion that the organizing retreat would be essential to the smooth functioning of the effort in future implementations.

Regarding the third Critical Decision to hold a 2-day workshop to finalize the Framework, interviewees expressed the opinion that this workshop format would be a positive influence on deliberations and could serve to speed up the entire process had it been used more frequently.

Regarding the remaining Critical Decisions, interviewees expressed the opinion that the need for revisions to the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs should be anticipated. This finding would require advance planning for such a workshop as part of initial planning for the event. Interviewees expressed the opinion that such advance planning would benefit the overall process.

Sequence of leadership team learnings. In Chapter Three, I identified twelve critical learnings that occurred over the time period that covered the formation of the Leadership Team through acceptance of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs by the School Board (See Table 3.2, *Critical Learnings of the Leadership Team* on page 70 for details).

Regarding Critical Learning number three, the explanation of materials that were included in the three-ring binder, interviewees in the validation interviews agreed with the superintendent's suggestions that multiple methods of organizing materials used in the process should be made available. Some members of the Leadership Team work best in an environment in which all materials should be made available ahead of the time that they are used. Some work very well with electronic documents, while others require hard copy of all materials. Rather than using only the three-ring binder, multiple methods of organizing Leadership Team materials should be employed to allow each member to use the method that best supports their learning style. The superintendent expressed the belief that this event should be in place during the earliest formative stages of the Leadership Team.

Regarding Critical Learning number six, in which the Leadership Team viewed the DuFour Learning Communities video, interviewees expressed the opinion that the DuFour-type learning communities should have been incorporated throughout the process. The video used to inform the process should have been shown earlier, and a greater emphasis should have been placed on the use of learning communities throughout the effort.

Regarding Critical Learning number eleven, which was a reading selection from McCombs and Whisler (1997), interviewees expressed the belief that the McCombs and Whisler (1997) article on learner-centered classrooms and schools should have been used at a meeting in which the topic of learner-centered instruction was to be the topic of discussion. Using the article during a meeting when this topic was not under discussion was believed to be ineffective by interviewees.

Research Question 2: What elements of the observed process used by the Leadership Team worked well? and

Research Question 3: What elements of the observed process used by the Leadership Team did not work well?

Elements of the process that worked well or not as well as expected. Using the Formative Research methodology described by Reigeluth and Frick (1999) (see pages 42-43 for full description), all interviewees were asked which processes worked well and which processes did not work as well as they could have. Interviewees responded to these questions with detailed and elaborate responses. Within each list cited immediately below, the reader will find answers to both what worked well and what did not work as well as expected. The responses about Leadership Team readings and discussions are summarized in a list found on page 83. The responses that address questions about the use of worksheets are summarized on page 97. Decision making results regarding the organizing retreat decisions are summarized on page 106. A summary of the decisions made regarding the Vision, Mission, and Beliefs retreat is found at the bottom of page 111. A summary of the decisions made regarding community presentations in which the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs was described is found on page 116. A summary of the decisions made regarding editing of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs is found beginning on page 120. A summary of the results on building and maintaining strong stakeholder representation is found on page 129. Finally, a summary of the contract and timeline issues is found on page 137.

Research Question 4: What changes should have been made in the observed process used by the Leadership Team?

Specific recommendations for the manner in which the observed process should be improved are located at the end of each discussion section. Learning Conclusions begin on page 98. Conclusions for all decision-making activities are offered on page 121. Conclusions for building and maintaining strong stakeholder representation are offered on page 131. Conclusions and recommendations for contract and timeline issues are described on page 139.

Research Question 5: What guidelines should be added to the GSTE to improve the process?

Guidelines that should be added to the GSTE. In this section, I list the elements of the guidelines that should become a part of the GSTE. Each item is followed by a page number in parentheses, describing the location where the concept is discussed in further detail.

- All learning activities should be closely paired with decision-making activities and done in a just-in-time manner (p. 98)
- When literature is used, a wider selection should be made available with easy-reading alternatives covering the same content (p. 98).
- A professional library should be available for use by all individuals engaged in the project. These materials should be made available in hard copy and electronic copy (p. 99)
- Reading selections should be placed into context by means of an introduction before they are used (p. 99).
- Reading selections should be discussed by small groups and/or large groups following individual reading (p. 99)
- Reading and discussion of ideas should not exceed forty minutes and should occur at the beginning and not at the end of the meeting (p. 99).

- Learning activities should make use of worksheets like the “We Are or We Are Not Like This” worksheet and the open-ended worksheet to encourage small- and large-group conversations (p. 100).
- Learning activities must be integrated with decision-making activities to make timely and informed decisions (p. 122).
- Activities that foster effective and freely-flowing communication should be a part of initial efforts in the Leadership team (p. 122).
- Extended retreats and workshops should be utilized to concentrate participants’ efforts and to best use their time (p. 122).
- Regularly scheduled community forums and presentations are an effective way to involve the public (p. 123).
- The Leadership Team must find good editors who will be assigned to a standing committee responsible for editing the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs (p. 123).
- Leadership Team members should represent all stakeholders from each school, including the principal, a teacher, a parent, and a support staff member (pp. 128, 139).
- Funding for the systemic transformation process must be obtained, either externally or through internal balancing of funds (pp. 138-9).
- Throughout Chapter 5, events such as the organizing retreat, community forums, workshops, and other retreats were considered of such importance by interviewees that they wanted to call these events “non-negotiable”.

> Facilitators must be aware of such events and should be ready to argue for the inclusion of them in the process (pp. 139-140).

Limitations of the Study

In this section, I will highlight three limitations of this study: 1) scope of the research; 2) problems associated with having only a single iteration of the process; and 3) problems associated with having only one case in the study.

Scope of the Research

The GSTE, as applied in Midwestern Metropolitan School District, was and currently continues to be a complex set of processes, and this research has studied only one part of the process in what is already a seven-year effort. Additional strengths, weaknesses, and improvements for this part of the process will likely continue to be identified as the larger study continues. Other events could affect the manner in which the Leadership Team should create the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. It is not possible to predict how future events will affect the results of this study.

Only One Iteration in the Formative Research

Because the Leadership Team could engage in the process of learning and decision making only once in the creation of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs, it was not possible to apply the findings of this study to a second iteration of the process. For example, facilitators were only able to collect formative data on one retreat to complete the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs, because the task was completed in that retreat. Using knowledge generated by this study, the facilitators would have made and studied tentative revisions to the retreat but were not able to do so.

Single Case

Another limitation of this study is that it examined only a single case – one school district. Additional studies on other school districts should be conduct and the findings compared to the results of this study. Additional strengths, weaknesses, and improvements would be expected in other school districts, and results will emerge to support, qualify, or contradict findings made in this case. In addition, events and activities that were beneficial in this research may or may not work well in other school districts. It will be important to compare results obtained in this school district with results obtained in other districts. In the mean time, readers should exercise caution in attempting to apply what worked here in other school districts.

Recommendations for Future Research and Theory Development

Due to the long duration of this study, many opportunities for additional research have come to my attention. In this section, I will first discuss recommendations for replicating this study with respect to different situations. I will close this section with recommendations for working with extensions of this study.

Recommendations for Replicating this Study

Formative evaluation of the Midwestern Metropolitan School District's systemic transformation process was accomplished under conditions outlined in the methodology section of this study. It is likely that the results of this study were affected by the size of the district with respect to total number of students, geographical size and location of the school district, and percentage of free- and reduced-lunch eligible students enrolled, to name a few. Replicating this study in diverse districts would give researchers the opportunity to explore different approaches to the formation of a representative Leadership Team. I examine each of these elements in turn.

Numerical size of the district. The district studied included 5,824 pupils enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12. By replicating this study in a much larger district, research could explore issues of adequate representation of stakeholders which change from district to district. Larger school districts, especially, might be challenged early to find new ways to communicate and to enlist new advocates for stakeholder representation and dissemination. A school district that is two to fives times the size of this one would likely require differences in the plans for representation of and communication with the stakeholder base.

The district in this study included ten different schools that form a single cluster to feed the district's single high school. In many larger districts, there are factors other than attending a particular school that determine where a student attends high school. In these districts, it might not be appropriate to organize the change process through academic clusters, and that would make the challenge of both design and communication significantly different than in this school district.

Geographical size and location of the school district. The district studied comprises 32 square miles located roughly on the beltway surrounding a medium-sized Midwestern City. The area is characterized by rising poverty rates with a primarily Caucasian populace employed in blue collar positions. A systemic transformation project that was centered in a very stable and rural environment that serves a much larger geographical area might require different thinking about how to solve the representation and communication questions that are key to full stakeholder involvement.

Percentage of free- and reduced-lunch students. The district in which I conducted this research reported that about half of its students were eligible for free- and reduced-lunch. Future studies that are located in communities that have either a much lower or much higher percentage in this category would offer opportunities to study the effect of poverty or wealth on the process. In many lower-income areas, stakeholders often feel closed out of the process. A systemic transformation process emphasizes participation, and such a process could offer new opportunity and hope for disenfranchised stakeholders, but differences in the change process would likely be needed.

Recommendations for Extensions of this Study

Recommendations for studying learning techniques. Interviewees considered the literature excerpts that were used to promote discussion to be informative and relevant. The excerpts were an important element of both personal change and creation of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. I could not find literature that discussed goal-oriented, volunteer, stakeholder groups working on *ad hoc* improvement issues. The literature that I found focuses on what adults read (Burke, 1999; LeGrand-Brodsky, 1979), assistive technology literature for physically or mentally handicapped adults (McLaughlin & Andrews, 1975; Riviere, Academy for Educational Development, & National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, 1996), adult education (Johnson & Education Commission of the States, 1975), and citizenship (Nussbaum, 1971). A study that examines how goal-oriented stakeholders can best use literature in the pursuit of educational improvement would be useful for facilitators of systemic transformation efforts.

Similarly, studies of the best method to promote comprehension of literature used in goal-oriented stakeholder groups would enhance the learning and mindset change process. These kinds of studies are done frequently on adult education (Hahn & Eric Clearinghouse on Tests, 1977; Riviere et al., 1996) but not on volunteer, goal-oriented stakeholder groups. Studies on conversation and dialogue for professional development are found in educational change literature that seeks to improve professional development skills in a general educational setting (Deglau, Ward, O'Sullivan, & Bush, 2006), but have not been found for goal-oriented stakeholder groups such as those studied in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District.

Based on the results of this study, finding ways to coordinate learning activities with decision making activities is important to the success of the systemic transformation process. Participants in coordinated activities are more likely to find meaningful interaction (Lockhart, 2004) and higher levels of understanding (Maclellan, 1997). This Just-In-Time approach to linking learning and decision making is a challenge to all future systemic transformation efforts. Additional studies that examine Leadership Team members' comprehension in the decision making process should take place in future iterations of the systemic transformation process, in areas outlined by Chalofsky (2001), which include experiential activities to apply the information-age paradigm in academic settings, small-group discussion, large-group synthesis, increasing learning capacity of individuals and teams, learning based on reasoning processes, learning based on coaching, and other methods.

Recommendations for studying how many people should be on a leadership team. One important goal of systemic transformation is to involve as many stakeholders in the process as possible. To this end, the Leadership Team was formed to support the process. Event 13 of the GSTE (Jenlink et al., 1998) recommends “approximately 20 members, which includes a broad representation of all stakeholder groups” (p. 227). In this study, I have reported the suggestion of Leadership Team participants to include as many as five members from each of ten participating schools. Combined with central office representatives, this is a total of 50-60 individuals. Team effectiveness is dependent on many variables. Some of these include team type, size, autonomy, interdependence, and context (Rasmussen & Jeppesen, 2006). Other factors include team leader behavior, team commitment, and perceived team support (Pearce & Herbik, 2004). I have found no ideal team size mentioned in the literature, and it is a variable that should be studied in future systemic transformation projects.

Recommendations for studying inclusion of an organizing retreat. The organizing retreat is a common tool used in the corporate world, and creating a vision for the organization is considered a good focus for the organization (Bonstingl, 2004; Hebard, 1998). Though the Leadership Team did not conduct a retreat similar to the retreat that the Core Team experienced (Joseph, 2003a), the organizing retreat can be a valuable tool and should be the focus of a study in conjunction with subsequent accomplishments to identify ways that such a retreat can have the greatest possible impact on team performance. There is no literature to point the way toward success for the factors noted in chapter four of this study, but future retreats should be studied and compared.

It is my hope that this study will encourage others to help advance the knowledge about how to help a leadership team in a systemic change effort to integrate a learning process with a decision-making process in the development of a framework of mission, vision, and ideal beliefs about education.

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Appendix A: List of Decisions

Decisions

LT_2003-03-03: Meeting B of Leadership Team

Decision 1: **What was decided**: The Leadership Team met to **discuss and generate ground rules** for working together that reflect emphasis on consensus and respect. **How learned:** Small group and large group discussion.

LT_2003-11-18: Meeting 2

Decision 2: What was Decided: First attempt at writing a vision statement for the Midwestern Metropolitan School District effort. Much difficulty reported by participants in this task. **How it was decided:** Small group discussion

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LT_2004-03-02: Meeting 8

Decision 3: What was decided: Beliefs about teaching and learning (see questions 1 and 2 in *Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education)* in the ideal school are worked on in Committee Discussion groups. **How it was decided**: Accomplished through Carousel activity in which small groups work on question and report out on banner paper hung at the front of the room. Exercise ends with groups reporting to the large group followed by large group discussion.

LT_2004-03-16: Meeting 9:

Decision 4: What was decided: Beliefs about whether all students should learn according to the special talents of the student or the same thing at the same time (see question 4 in *Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education).* **How it was decided:** The question is discussed first in small group, then in large group through the carousel process.

LT_2004-04-06: Meeting 10

Decision 5: What was decided: Leadership Team reviews the response to the question of whether emphasis should be placed on presenting or learning all material studied (see question 1 in *Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education)* Participants are asked for 3-5 statements that are representative of the beliefs that the groups came up with about education. **How it was decided:** Large group and small group discussion.

LT_2004-04-22: Meeting 11

Decision 6: What was learned: Groups continue discussions begun in LT_2004-04-06 (see Meeting 10) in small group. **How it was decided:** Large group and small group discussion.

LT_2004-05-06: Meeting 12

Decision 7: **What was decided**: LT discusses the need and adopts a decision to hold a 2-day workshop to finalize the Vision-Mission-Beliefs. **How it was decided**: Large group discussion.

LT_2004-05-06: Meeting 12

Decision 8: What was decided: Leadership Team discusses refinements to beliefs about whether all students should learn according to the special talents of the student or the same thing at the same time (see question 4 in *Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education).* **How it was decided:** Large group and small group discussion.

LT_2004-05-17: Meeting 13

Decision 9: What was decided: Small subgroups of the Leadership Team were asked to work on refinement of Question 4 time (see question 4 in *Appendix F: Sample*

Beliefs about Education) Small groups then reported to the large group How it was decided: Small and large group discussion. **How decided**: Small and large group discussion.

LT_2004-05-18: Meeting 13:

Decision 10: What was decided: Refining the statements made for question 2 (see question 2 in *Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education)* Small groups work to prioritize and refine the statement and then report out to large group. **How decided:** Small and large group discussion in a Jigsaw reading activity where each individual in the group is responsible for reading and explaining only a small portion of the overall reading assignment.

Leadership Team Retreat Day 1 – 2007-06-17 (morning session)

Decision 11: 9:00-9:30 Small group discussion of questions (see questions 3,6,11, and 12 in *Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education).* This activity is followed by 9:30-11:00 Large group discussion and revision. 11:00-11:45 Synthesis of questions 3,6,11, and 12 in small groups. **How decided**: 11:45-12:00 Share and discuss belief statements for questions 3,6,11, and 12 in large group

Leadership Team Retreat Day 1 – 2007-06-17 (afternoon session)

Decision 12: What was decided: 1:15-1:45 Small group discussion of questions (see questions 7,9,13, and 10 in *Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education).* This activity is followed by 1:45-3:15 Large group discussion and revision. 3:15-4:00 Synthesis of questions 7,9,13, and 10. 4:00-4:15 Share and discuss belief statements for questions 7,9,13, and 10 in large group discussion session

Leadership Team Retreat Day 2 – 2004-06-17

Decision 13: What was decided: 9:30-10:00 small group discussion of questions (see questions 7,9,13, and 10 in *Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education)*. This activity is followed by 10:00-11:100 sarge group discussion and revision. 11:00-11:45 Synthesis of questions 5,8, and 15. **How decided**: 11:45-12:00 Leadership Team members meet as a large group and share belief statements for questions 5,8, and 15

LT_2004-07-26: Meeting 16

Decision 14: What was decided: Leadership Team members review changes made by the editing committee (who worked outside the Leadership Team meeting on their own time) in the VMB documents. **How learned**: Editors work with individual small groups and later talk with large group to share suggestions.

LT_2004-07-26: Meeting 16

Decision 15: What was learned: Leadership Team members work in small groups to write suggestions for editing changes. H**ow learned**: Small and large group discussion.

LT_2004-08-12: Meeting 17

Decision 16: What was decided: Leadership Team makes preparations for a community-wide forum to gather input on the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. H**ow decided:** Large group discussion and planning session.

LT_2004-09-22: Meeting 20

Decision 17: What was decided: Leadership Team members meet to finalize plans for community-wide forum on the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. H**ow decided:** Large group discussion and planning

Community Forum 2004-10-07

Decision 18: (community forum) What was Decided: The community was invited to a presentation and discussion of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Following is the agenda:

- Welcome + Intro
- Dealing with Change – How learning occurs
- Small group discussion of beliefs (Learning, Learning Environment, Assessment)
- Whole group debriefing – questions and clarification
- Small group discussion of beliefs (professional learning communities, professional development, technology)
- Whole group debriefing – questions and clarification
- Wrap up and Raffle

How decided: All Midwestern Metropolitan School District stakeholders met in many small groups to discuss the framework items. Each small group session was followed by a large group presentation and discussion in which points on the framework were brought to the attention of the group.

LT_2004-11-15: Meeting 22

Decision 20: What was Decided: Bring new members on our Leadership Team to replace members who have either stopped coming or who need to take a break from serving on the Leadership Team. **How decided**: Large group discussion.

LT_2004-11-15: Meeting 22

Decision 21: What was Decided: Leadership Team members engage in discussion of how to incorporate subcommittees into their current structure. **How decided:** Large group discussion.

LT_2004-11-22: Meeting 23

Decision 22: What was decided: The Leadership Team engages in group editing of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. **How Decided**: Large and small group discussion.

LT_2004-12-06: Meeting 24

Decision 24: What was decided: Leadership Team members share the overall coming format for incorporating subcommittees into the meeting structure. During this discussion they discuss the names of potential new members. **How decided**: Large group discussion.

LT_2004-12-06: Meeting 24

Decision 25: What was decided: Leadership Team members engage in continuing discussion on final revisions of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs**. How Decided:** Small groups report to the large group to revise the framework based on Community Forum Input.

LT_2005-01-13: Meeting 25

Decision 26: Leadership Team members engage in final discussion and approval of Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. **How decided**: Large group discussion leading to the recommendation to present the framework to the school board for adoption.

LT_2005-01-13: Meeting 25

Decision 27: What was decided: Leadership Team members discuss the best way to publicize the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs by putting subcommittees together with different responsibilities. They discuss the expectation that subcommittees will do their work between Leadership Team meetings and report to the larger group. Decide the chair for each subcommittee along with the next date to meet. **How decided**: Large group discussion.

LT_2005-01-13: Meeting 25

Decision 28: **What was decided**: Leadership Team members engage in large group planning sessionon how to best bring new members into the Leadership Team. What was Decided: How to bring new members into the Leadership Team. **How Decided**: Large group discussion.

Appendix B: List of Learning Activities

LT_2003-02-13 Meeting A of Leadership Team #1

Activity 1: What was learned: Introduce yourself to others while expressing two "positives" and one "wish" for the future of education in Midwestern Metropolitan School District. **How Learned:** Informal verbal conversations.

LT_2003-02-13 Meeting A of Leadership Team #1

Activity 2: What was learned: Facilitator led lecture with PowerPoint that emphasized the following points:

- What is systemic change and why is it needed?
- Big picture of our “Journey toward Excellence”
- History of our effort. (Systemic Change)

How learned: Combination of lecture through PowerPoint with clarifying conversations between participants

LT_2003-02-13 Meeting A of Leadership Team #1

Activity 3: What was learned: Facilitator-led lecture with PowerPoint that discusses three cultural paradigms (agrarian, industrial, information) and how they affect mindsets of educators. **How learned**: PowerPoint lecture followed by conversation.

LT_2003-02-13 Meeting A of Leadership Team #1

Activity 4: What was learned: Facilitator-led lecture with PowerPoint that discusses the following points:

- Shared vision/values
- Mental models
- Stakeholder ownership

- Leadership support
- Shared vision/values
- Research on change process

How Learned: PowerPoint lecture followed by conversation.

LT_2003-03-03: Meeting B of Leadership Team #1

Activity 5: What was learned: Conversation between Leadership Team and Facilitator focusing on how to reach a consensus as opposed to "majority thought." **How learned:** dialogue led by facilitator.

LT_2003-03-03: Meeting B of Leadership Team #1

Activity 6: What was learned: Facilitator-led lecture with PowerPoint that discusses the following points:

- Consensus
- Collaboration
- Co-learning
- Trust
- Disclosure
- Consensus building discussion (team building)

How Learned: PowerPoint lecture followed by conversation.

LT_2003-03-03: Meeting B of Leadership Team #1

Activity 7: What was learned: Volunteers are requested for creation of a Mission Statement. **How learned**: No further information on this group available.

LT_2003-03-17: Meeting C

Activity 8: What was learned: The Leadership Team reviewed the events of the past two meetings. H**ow learned:** Large group debriefing through discussion.

LT_2003-03-17: Meeting C

Activity 9: What was learned: Survey conducted by facilitators to understand mindset of Leadership Team members. **How learned**: paper survey administered to group.

LT_2003-03-17: Meeting C

Activity 10: What was learned: Leadership Team reviews ground rules that guide the leadership team (content from previous meeting) **How learned**: Facilitator-led large group discussion.

LT_2003-03-17: Meeting C

Activity 11: What was learned: Leadership Team discusses the importance of our group's efforts. **How learned:** Facilitator-led large group discussion.

LT_2003-04-14: Meeting D

Activity 12: What was learned: Leadership Team members engaged in Jigsaw reading activity discussing the values of a "Community of Learners" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). **How Learned**: 60 minute jigsaw reading and discussion (Jigsaw: assign different sections to individuals in a group, who then read and report on only that section. This process is followed by small group and then large group discussion.

LT_2003-04-14: Meeting D

Activity 13: What was learned: Leadership Team engaged in discussion about communicating their actions to other community stakeholders. **How Learned:** Small and large group discussion.

LT_2003-04-14: Meeting D

Activity 14: What was learned : Leadership Team reviews ground rules that guide the leadership team (content from previous meeting). H**ow learned**: Large and small group discussion.

LT_2003-04-14: Meeting D

Activity 15: What was learned: Leadership Team members engage in small group brainstorming session on the big picture (systemic transformation on a district-wide basis and continued discussion of co-learning. **How learned**: Small and large group discussion.

LT_2003-04-28: Meeting E

Activity 16: What was learned: Leadership Team members studied results of community meetings conducted previously. **How Learned:** Read and discussion of results.

LT_2003-04-28: Meeting E

Activity 17: What was learned: Leadership Team members started to read a selection on the principles of systemic change (Senge, 2000, pp. Chapter 1: 9-10, 19-22, 27-42.), but ran out of time to complete the discussion. **How Learned:** Started reading.

LT_2003-04-28: Meeting E

Activity 18: What was learned: Leadership Team members agree to reading homework (Senge, 2000, pp. Chapter 1: 9-10, 19-22, 27-42.) **How learned:** Individual reading homework.

NO MEETINGS from May 2003 to October 6

LT_2003-10-07: Meeting #1 of Reorganized Leadership Team

Activity 19: What was learned: Superintendent talks to Leadership Team about what is expected of them in the re-designed effort and responds to questions. Includes discussion of meeting dates, food, possible child care (none needed). **How learned:** Large group presentation with follow-up questions asked by Leadership Team members.

LT_2003-10-07: Meeting #1 of Reorganized Leadership Team

Activity 20: What was learned: Superintendent discusses Leadership Team's ability to impact the district positively. **How learned**: Large group listening activity (Motivational lecture).

Indiana University Facilitators were notified that the Leadership Team – through the Facilitation Team – decided to reject the planned retreat for the Midwestern Metropolitan School District Leadership Team. They reject the idea of having a two day retreat, deciding to do training through and during meetings of the Leadership Team

LT_2003-11-18: Meeting 2

Activity 21: What was learned: Leadership Team views vido: *Primetime Live presents Failing Grade***.** This video illustrates challenges of schooling in 20th Century. **How learned:** Active viewing.

LT_2003-11-18: Meeting 2

Activity 22: What was learned: Leadership Team lists three reasons why their school district needs to change from industrial age model to information age model. **How learned:** Small and large group discussion.

LT_2003-11-18: Meeting 2

Activity 23: What was learned: Facilitators present PowerPoint file that asks why the Leadership Team needs to develop a framework of beliefs. Participants ist beliefs and share in reporting out from small group. **How learned**: Listening, small and large group discussion.

LT_2003-11-18: Meeting 2

Activity 24: Leadership Team members are asked to do review the Midwestern Metropolitan School District existing framework and to be prepared to discuss this at the next meeting. W**hat was learned**: review of the school district's existing belief statements. **How learned**: Reading (homework requested but not verified).

LT_2003-12-02: Meeting 3

Activity 25: What was learned: Leadership Team views a video based on the learning community ideas of DuFour (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The video flashed statements and asked viewers to list items that are felt to be important themes. This activity seemed to create a lot of confusion. Eventually, groups applied the themes to the discussion. **How learned:** Small and large group discussion.

LT_2003-12-02: Meeting 3

Activity 26: What was learned: Leadership Team listened to presentation of Indiana University facilitators' history of actions taken by the Facilitation Team in Midwestern Metropolitan School District. Small group work concentrates on comparing their personal responses to responses gathered previously at a Community forum on the ways society and community have changed in general. **How Learned**: Small and large group discussion.

LT_2003-12-02: Meeting 3

Activity 27: What was learned: Leadership Team reviews and discusses current framework and compares their own responses to Community Forum responses. **How learned**: Small group and large group discussion.

LT_2004-01-06: Meeting 4

Activity 28: What was learned: Leadership Team completes worksheet activity – *We Are or We Are Not Like This* – in which they compare the way school is conducted in the Midwestern Metropolitan School District system to ideals taken from an information age schooling model. **How learned:** Small group and large group discussion.

LT_2004-01-06: Meeting 4

Activity 29: What was learned: Leadership Team members develop responses for the four community questions and then compare their responses to community forum questions. Focus: is on Question 2 (Discuss the major ways that society and the Midwestern Metropolitan School District community in particular should change in the next 10 years. Do not just project past trends to the future, but think also in terms of how you would like your community and society to change, for education can be a powerful instrument for such change. Discuss these changes separately for each category: the workplace, the family, and general social and cultural factors in the community and society). **How learned**: Small group and large group discussion.

LT_2004-01-06: Meeting 4

Activity 30: What was learned: Leadership Team members reflect on the similarities of the current educational framework in effect in the district and the ideals of an information age model of education. **How learned:** Small and large group discussion.

LT_2004-01-06: Meeting 4

Activity 31: What was learned: Leadership Team members concentrate on reflecting on the evening's activities through writing personal reflections. They respond to three learning activities described above for LT_2004-01-06. **How learned:** Self reflection writing activity.

LT_2004-01-26: Meeting 5

No record of this meeting exists

LT_2004-02-03 Meeting 6

Activity 32: What was learned: Leadership Team members reflect on similarities of current framework with the committees' work from previous meeting. H**ow learned**: Small and large group discussion.

LT_2004-02-03 Meeting 6

Activity 33: What was learned: Leadership Team members write responses for Question #3 (Discuss the capacities and qualities our students will need to be successful, given the actual and desired changes in our community and society. Discuss these capacities and qualities separately for each category: the work place, the family, and general social and cultural factors in the community and society) of the Community Forums response survey. **How learned**: Small and large group discussion following written response form.

LT_2004-02-03 Meeting 6

Activity 34: What was learned: Leadership Team meeting was dismissed after 45 minutes so that members could attend the monthly meeting of the Civic Council. **How Learned**: No record was kept of members who attended the Civic Council meeting.

LT_2004-02-17: Meeting 7

Activity 35: What was learned: Leadership Team received three-ring binders and were given an explanation of each of the items included. **How Learned**: Large group demonstration.

LT_2004-02-17: Meeting 7

Activity 36: What was learned: Leadership Team members write responses for Question #4 (Discuss the extent to which our schools are currently developing the capacities and qualities for which they should be responsible) of the Community Forums response survey. **How learned**: Small and large group discussion following written response form.

LT_2004-03-16: Meeting 9

Activity 37: What was learned: Leadership Team listens to report on the progress of a student leadership team goal-setting exercise. **How learned:** Large group report and discussion.

LT_2004-04-06: Meeting 10

Activity 38: What was learned: Leadership Team listens to report on the progress of a student leadership team goal-setting exercise. **How learned:** Large group report and discussion.

LT_2004-04-22: Meeting 11

Activity 39: What was learned: Leadership Team listens to report on the progress of a student leadership team goal-setting exercise. Many parallels are drawn between the students and the LT. **How learned:** Large group report and discussion.

LT_2004-05-06: Meeting 12

Activity 40: What was learned: Indiana University facilitator presents PowerPoint on mindset and the evolution of ideal beliefs. **How learned**: Presentation.

LT_2004-05-17: Meeting 13

Activity 41: What was learned: Leadership Team members use the Jigsaw reading technique on reading packet I (Senge, 2000, pp. 9-42). Members are divided into groups, and divide the reading into 5 sections. Each group member agrees to read one section and to offer a synopsis of each section to the group. This is followed by large group sharing consisting of "aha's", conclusions, and thoughts about the reading. **How learned**: Jigsaw activity (read, discuss, collaborate) followed by large group discussion.

Leadership Team Retreat Agenda/Day 1 (2004-06-17)

Activity 42 (8:30-8:50): What was learned: Leadership Team members shared a continental breakfast and watched a video taped from the Oprah show on brain based learning. **How Learned:** Viewing the video.

Leadership Team Retreat Agenda/Day 1 (2004-06-17)

Activity 43 (8:50-9:00) What was learned: Introduction to the retreat. **How learned**: Observation and clarifying questions.

Leadership Team Retreat Agenda/Day 1 (2004-06-17)

Activity 44 (12:45-1:15) What was learned: Leadership Team views a video based on the learning community ideas of DuFour (see also Learning Activity 25, DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The video flashed statements and asked viewers to list items that are felt to be important themes. Viewers applied the systemic transformation themes to the discussion. **How learned:** Small and large group discussion.

Leadership Team Retreat Agenda/Day 1 (2004-06-17)

Activity 45: **What was learned:** Leadership Team members engaged in reflection about the events and accomplishments of the day. **How Learned**: Self-reflectio

Leadership Team Retreat Agenda/Day 2 (2004-06-17)

Activity 46 (8:30-9:15): What was learned: Leadership Team members listen to a Learning Communities presentation by a principal in the district who has instituted a Professional Learning Communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998) approach to his school. **How Learned:** Individual listening with clarifying questions.

LT_2004-07-26: Meeting 16

Activity 47: What was learned: Leadership Team members asked to complete reading for a literature selection at home, prior to the next meeting (Caine & Caine, 1997, pp. 3-29). **How learned:** Personal reading at home.

LT_2004-08-12: Meeting 17

Activity 48: What was learned: Leadership Team members discuss the PowerPoint presentations made by stakeholder representatives in schools and at community clubs and groups throughout the Midwestern Metropolitan School District area. **How Learned**: Large group discussion.

LT_2004-08-24: Meeting 18

Activity 49: What was learned: Leadership Team members discuss the feedback gathered from the forms filled out following PowerPoint presentations made by stakeholder representatives in schools and at community clubs and groups throughout the Midwestern Metropolitan School District area. **How Learned**: Large group discussion.

LT_2004-08-24: Meeting 18

Activity 50: What was learned: Leadership Team members read Senge (2000, pp. 43-58) and respond to questions written on the notes sheet of a guide to the reading selection. **How Learned**: Large group discussion.

LT_2004-08-24: Meeting 18

Activity 51: What was learned: Leadership Team members participate in informative discussion on future developments coming up in the systemic transformation process. This discussion asks members to think of ways to empower individual schools who will engage in the process with a building level focus and ideal design. This discussion anticipates future Design Team work. **How Learned:** Large group discussion.

LT_2004-09-08: Meeting 19

Activity 52: What was learned: Leadership Team members discussed recommendations for the future actions of the Midwestern Metropolitan School District project, including the following:

- Transformation process should have a building level focus
- We need to provide support for building level design teams
- We need to support the transformation process by devoting time to the process.
- The district needs to provide support for building level design work – who will do this? How will it be done?
- The district level needs changes to support the new kinds of structures that are developed on the building level.
- Who makes decisions about what the building level team should be like (how many, who?)
- The district needs to promote understanding of the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs
- How should we ensure that ideal designs from the building level fit the

Framework?

- Should the district try to change all at once or promote transformation in smaller units?
- Should we support turning large and existing school buildings into smaller schools?
- What steps can we take to minimize resistance to the transformation process throughout the district?
- What are the barriers to transformation in the schools?
- What are the consequences of decisions that we make in the transformation process?
- How do we make sense of interrelated nature of systemic transformation efforts?

How Learned: PowerPoint presentation followed by large group discussion.

LT_2004-09-08: Meeting 19

Activity 53: What was learned: Leadership Team members consider feedback from the composite of the public Framework of Vision, Mission, and Belief presentations. **How Learned:** Small and large group discussions.

LT_2004-09-22: Meeting 20

Activity 54: What was learned: Leadership Team members engage in reading activity on the topic of knowledge work supervision (Duffy et al., 2000, pp. xv-xvi, 4-12). **How Learned**: Small group reading and discussion followed by large group discussion.

LT_2004-10-06: Meeting 21

Leadership Team members did not engage in any learning activities during this meeting.

LT_2004-11-15: Meeting 22

Activity 55: What was learned: Leadership Team members engage in reading activity on the topic of learner-centered instruction (McCombs & Whisler, 1997, pp. 9-19). **How Learned**: Reading followed by large group discussion.

LT_2004-11-22: Meeting 23

Activity 56: What was learned: Leadership Team members engage in active listening during an informative lecture by IU facilitator. The presentation describes the structure and function of the newly proposed Leadership Team Subcommittees which include:

- Coordination Subcommittee
- Alignment Subcommittee
- Ownership Subcommittee
- Process Subcommittee

How Learned: Large group presentation followed by clarifying questions.

LT_2004-12-06: Meeting 24

Activity 57: What was learned: Leadership members chose to reschedule this reading activity (Duffy et al., 2000, pp. 118-133) due to Activity 56 (Revision of the Leadership Team discussion).

LT_2005-01-13: Meeting 25

Activity 58: What was learned: Leadership Team members engaged in introduction of new members. **How learned**: Self-introduction.

Activity 59: Reading:

What was learned: Leadership Team members engage in reading activity using highlighted reading selections from (Duffy et al., 2000, pp. 118-133). This technique involves engagement in ongoing discussion throughout the selection. **How learned**: Combined individual reading and large group discussions.

LT_2005-02-10: Meeting 26

Activity 60: What was learned: Superintendent announces to the Leadership Team members that the School Board accepts the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs as the way to do business in the school corporation. **How learned**: Announcement followed by clarifying questions and large group discussion.

LT_2005-02-10: Meeting 26

Activity 61: What was learned: Superintendent announces to the Leadership Team members of the status of a new grant affecting the high school, organized according to the Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs guidelines. How learned: Announcement followed by clarifying questions and large group discussion.

Appendix C: Questions and procedures for gathering information on the Timeline of Events

Interview Protocol

Materials:

- List of Decisions created
- List of Learnings
- Timeline of Decisions and Learnings
- Sticky notes (for use with scrolled timeline)
- Study Information Sheet (From Human Subjects form)

Protocol #1: Group Interview

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to work with me today. I have given each of you two copies of an Information Sheet that I would like you read and sign before we begin our interview today. This Information sheet describes the Dissertation project that I am conducting and talks about your role as interview subjects in that project.

As the final paragraph reads, "Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may refuse to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed."

Questions: We are going to examine the work that was done by the Leadership Team during the period of time from the first meeting of the Leadership Team on February 13, 2003 (noted as "Meeting A") through Meeting #26 held on February 10, 2005. At the Leadership Team held on the final date, Don Stinson announced to members that the Midwestern Metropolitan School District School Board accepted the Vision, Mission and Belief framework as the way to do business in the school corporation.

Task 1: In my study, I have examined the type of work done by the Leadership Team and I have classified all of the work done by this group into two categories: Learning activities and Decisions (or Decisioning). Let's look first at the Decisions that were made by the team. If you remember back, on May 6, 2004, we made Decision #7, which was to hold a 2-day workshop during the summer to complete the Vision-Mission-Beliefs. Let's find that Decision in the list of Decisions and use it to understand the way the Decisions have been marked for your understanding.

Please survey the Decisions that have been made, and let me know if there are any questions or comments. I should note that we will be looking at all of the Learnings and Decisions on a scrolling timeline so that you can get a better feeling for the relationship between Learning and Decisions.

Q: Ask for observations. Prompt with question such as these:

*** Was this sequence of decisions a good one?
*** How could it have been done better?
*** Are these the kinds of decisions that should have been made?
*** Were there things that should not have been done?
*** Were there things that should have been modified or done differently?
*** Is there any place where you think a different sequence of events would be a good idea?

Task 2: In the same manner, I have created a list of all of the Learning Activities accomplished by the Leadership Team in the same period. Let's take a look specifically at Activity 34 in the list of Learning Activities.

Please survey the Learning Activities that have been made, and let me know if there are any questions or comments. I should note that we will be looking at all of the Learnings and Decisions on a scrolling timeline so that you can get a better feeling for the relationship between Learning and Decisions.

Q: Ask for observations. Prompt with questions such as these:

*** Was this sequence of learnings a good one?
*** How could it have been done better?
*** Are these the kinds of learnings that should have been made?
*** Were there things that should not have been done?
*** Were there things that should have been modified or done differently?
*** Is there any place where you think a different sequence of events would be a good idea?

Task 3: We will now look at the connection between the learning activities and the decisioning activities. Looking now at the scroll of events, let me direct your attention to some important items.

- First, look at the first 5 meetings, A through E. You can see that only one decisioning event occurred during this time.
- Note the large red boxes that indicate critical decisions or learning activities. I will direct your attention to each of these areas individually.
- We want to look especially at the decisions that were made and to connect those decisions to the learning that preceded them.
- Are there learning events that were not matched with subsequent decisions?
- Are there learning events that should have been matched with subsequent

decisions closer in time?

- Examine the readings, particularly, and identify which decisions they supported the best and which they supported the least. Are there any topics that are missing? Are there any that are redundant?

Protocol #2: Individual Interviews

Individual interviews will be conducted following Focus Groups. Individuals will receive a fact sheet with grouped responses from Focus Groups and will be asked the following types of questions:

Q: Given the findings of the Focus Groups, displayed in this document, what kinds of changes would you want implemented in the next implementation of such a reform effort?

Q: If you were able to direct the process in which you have engaged, what kinds of large-scale changes would you make in the process?

Q: Do you feel that the process took too little time, just the right amount of time, or too much time? How should this be addressed?

Appendix D: Human Subjects Study Information Sheet

INDIANA UNIVERSITY - BLOOMINGTON

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

Research on the Integration of a Decision-Making Process and a Learning Process in a Newly Formed Leadership Team for Systemic Transformation of a School District

You are invited to be included in a research study connected with the Midwestern Metropolitan School District school change effort. The purpose of the study is to improve our knowledge about how to facilitate change in public school systems.

INFORMATION

We will be using a series of guidelines to help you and the Midwestern Metropolitan School District community to engage in a school change effort. Our involvement in facilitating your change effort is expected to last from one and a half years to five years. As a part of the Midwestern Metropolitan School District change process, you will be participating in an interview. We will be recording the interview via written notes, audio and/or video. The purpose of recording the interview is for identifying strengths and weaknesses in the literature used in the change process and identifying ways of improving the change process. These findings may be presented at professional conferences, or published in dissertations, books, and/or professional educational journals. However, we will ensure that your identity will not be revealed in any documents that we make public. While the study is in progress, the audio/video tapes will be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked office in the School of Education. The tapes will be destroyed on June 30, 2012.

BENEFITS

As a state higher educational institution, we are providing your school district with a service to facilitate your change effort. Ultimately our goal is to help your school district achieve significant improvements with which all stakeholders are happy. In addition, our study of this process should help Indiana University to do a better job of meeting the needs for change in other school districts in Indiana.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will keep your input completely confidential. If at any time you feel you do not want to be audio/video taped during an interview, we will immediately stop recording and solely take notes. Personal identifying information (i.e., your name) will be removed from any records we make, and a case number will be assigned. The list of case numbers and personal identities will not be made available to anyone beyond the researchers. The researchers will destroy the identity list by June 30, 2012

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Mr. Kurt Richter, M.Ed., at 3816 S. Bushmill Drive, Bloomington, IN 47403 or (812)335-8177, or by email to kurichte@indiana.edu.

If you feel that you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or that your rights as a participant in research have not been honored during the course of this project, you may contact the office for the Human Subjects Committee, Indiana University, Carmichael Center L03, 530 E. Kirkwood Ave., Bloomington, IN 47408, by telephone at 812/855-3067, or by e-mail at iub_hsc@indiana.edu.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may refuse to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Appendix E: Sample Beliefs about Education (1)

The following are a few sample beliefs about education to give an idea of what is meant by "beliefs." Feel free to ignore any of them and generate your own belief statements.

1. Should the focus be on **presenting** all the material or on **learning** all the material?

2. Should each student progress to the next topic upon **mastery** of a topic, or should all students progress to the next topic at the **same time and pace** regardless of when or whether mastery occurs?

3. Should students all learn the **same thing** at the **same time**, or should they learn **what they are ready** to learn **when they are ready**?

4. Should we cultivate the **special talents** of each student, or should all students learn all the **same things**?

5. Should a teacher care about student development in **one subject** or care about the **whole student**?

6. Should the teacher be a **presenter** ("sage on the stage") or a **coach/mentor** ("guide on the side")?

7. Should **all students** experience success, or should only the **good students** experience success?

8. Should we use **norm-based testing** (which compares students to each other) or **criterion-based testing** (which compares students to a standard)?

9. Should we use **formative testing** (diagnosis and remediation), or **summative testing** (final judgment only)?

10. Should schools have **"command and control" leadership** or **participatory/ empowering leadership**?

11. Should parents be **constant partners** with teachers or should they just be **occasional spectators**?

12. Should schools be **separate from the community**, or should there be **community partnerships** (both ways – school in community and community in school)?

Appendix F: Sample Beliefs about Education (2)

The following are a few sample beliefs ("should" statements) about education to give an idea of what is meant by "beliefs." Each of the following items presents a belief underlying the way education typically occurs today in most school systems, along with one possible alternative to that belief. These are solely intended to stimulate your thinking about beliefs that are truly fundamental to the way schools operate. Feel free to ignore any of them as you discuss beliefs that you think are the beliefs that should guide any efforts to improve education in Midwestern Metropolitan School District.

Beliefs typical of the current system	Some possible alternative beliefs
1. The focus should be on **presenting** all the material.	The focus should be on **learning** all the material.
2. All students should progress to the next topic at the **same time and pace** even if they haven't mastered it.	Each student should progress to the next topic upon **mastery** of a topic.
3. Students should all learn the **same thing** at the **same time.**	Students should learn **what they are ready** to learn **when they are ready**.
4. Learning should be separated into **distinct subject areas** and taught as separate disciplines.	Learning should be **relevant to students' lives** and therefore **interdisciplinary** or thematic or problem-based.
5. All students should learn all the **same things**.	We should cultivate the **special talents** of each student, as well as a core of knowledge and skills for all students.
6. A teacher should care about student development in just **one subject.**	A teacher should care about the **whole student**.
7. The teacher should be a **presenter** ("sage on the stage").	The teacher should be a **coach/ mentor** ("guide on the side").
8. Only the **good students** should experience success.	**All students** should experience success.
9. We should use **norm-based testing** (which compares students to each other).	We should use **criterion-based testing** (which compares students to a standard).
10. We should just use **summative testing** (final judgment only).	We should also use **formative testing** (diagnosis and remediation).
11. Schools should have **"command and control" leadership**.	Schools should have **participatory/ empowering leadership**.
12. Parents should just be **occasional spectators**.	Parents should be **constant partners** with teachers**.**
13. Schools should be **separate from the community**.	There should be **community partnerships** (both ways – school in community and community in school).

14.	Students should be **passive learners** whose learning is **controlled by the teacher**.	Students should be **active learners** who assume ever greater responsibility for **directing their own learning**.

Appendix G: We are or We are not Like This Worksheet

<u>Consensus Building Exercise</u>

Stakeholder Group Represented:

Student	Parent	Community/Business
Teacher	Administrator	School Staff

An important step in creating a learning organization is making an honest assessment of the current conditions in your school/district. The following survey includes conclusions presented by different researchers who have examined conditions in schools across the country. To assess the current reality of your school/district, use the following scale to rate each statement in terms of how well it describes conditions in your own school/district.

1-3 We are not at all like this.
4-7 We are somewhat like this.
8-10 We are very much like this.

I. Schools and Change

Group **Individual**
_____ _____ Schools are not organized to respond to the needs and interests of students. They are bureaucratic monopolies that rely on a captive audience for their customers. There are few incentives – and fewer rewards-to improve.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ The issue is not that individual teachers and schools do not innovate and change all the time. They do. The problem is that the change is unproductive, focusing on the margins of practice rather than on the core of teaching and learning.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ From the perspective of teachers, much of school life is an endless cycle of first implementing and then abandoning new initiatives. Teachers are left with the impression that no one in the system really understands why change is occurring.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ For teachers, the concept of change becomes a matter of coping with management's tendency to introduce and then abandon educational fads.

II. Teaching

Group **Individual**

______ ______ Teachers believe that it is their job to teach and the student's job to learn. Thus, they are responsible for teaching but not for student learning.

Group **Individual**

______ ______ Typical classroom instruction is dominated by "teacher talk." Teachers work very hard, and students sit passively and watch them work.

Group **Individual**

______ ______ Teachers work in isolation. There is little opportunity for serious professional interaction in which teachers share ideas, observe each other teaching, or assist each other in professional development activities.

III. Curriculum

Group **Individual**

______ ______ The typical school curriculum is overloaded with trivia. Schools cannot do what they *should* be doing as long as they continue to do what they *are* doing.

Group **Individual**

______ ______ There is typically no uniform school curriculum. Students studying the same subject with different teachers n the same school often learn vastly different content and have vastly different experiences.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ Subjects are taught in isolation. Teachers make little effort to connect content from different subjects into a meaningful conceptual framework.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ Schools typically have no meaningful curricular goals. They focus on means (materials, programs, instructional arrangements, etc.) rather than on ends--student outcomes.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ Because they are unclear on the outcomes they are trying to achieve, schools are typically unable to offer valid evidence that they are accomplishing their intended purpose (i.e., student learning).

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ Teachers have not worked collectively to identify the criteria by which they will assess student work.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ The inability to establish a results orientation means that the procedures for continuous improvement do not exist in schools.

IV. Structure

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ Schools have no structure. They are simply convenient locations for a bunch of individual teacher, like independent contractors, to come together to teach discrete groups of students.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ Schools have no infrastructure to support teacher collaboration in addressing schoolwide problems. Teachers, like their students, carry on side by side in similar, but essentially separate, activities.

Group **Individual**

_____ _____ Schools are structured as top-down bureaucratic hierarchies that rely heavily on rules for teachers, who can ignore much of the top-down direction when they are behind their own classroom doors.

VITA
December 2007

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Education

B.S. cum laude in Elementary Education from University of Minnesota, 1974.
M.S. in Public School Administration from University of Alaska, 1981.
Ed.D. in Instructional Systems Technology from Indiana University, 2007

Professional Experience

2002 – 2007: Doctoral Candidate at Indiana University
2003 – 2006 Research Assistant at Indiana University
2002 – 2003: Associate Instructor in W200 Educational Technology at Indiana University
2001 – 2002: Associate Instructor in M301 Teacher Lab at Indiana University
1999 – 2001: Computer Lab Manager in IST Departmental Lab at Indiana University
1999 – 1999: Methods Student Supervisor at University of Alaska Fairbanks
1974 – 1997: Elementary Teacher in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District in Fairbanks, Alaska

Management Experience

1984 – 1994 Assistant Principal/Teacher-in-Charge in principal's absence at Weller Elementary School in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, AK.
1978 – 1984 Assistant Principal/Teacher-in-Charge in principal's absence at Hunter Elementary School in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, AK.
1975 – 1976 Assistant Principal/Teacher-in-Charge in principal's absence at Barnette Elementary School in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, AK

Research and Teaching Interests

Educational Systems Design: Systemic transformation process, learning-focused educational systems.

Instructional Theory: Integrating piecemeal knowledge into a common knowledge base for an information-age paradigm of instruction and applying models of instruction

Publications

Richter, K. (2007). Integration of a decision-making process and a learning process in a newly formed leadership team for systemic transformation of a school district. Unpublished Dissertation. Indiana University.

Richter, K., & Reigeluth, C. M. (2004). *Preparing for Systemic Transformation: Understanding the Effects of Current and Recent Change Efforts.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Richter, K., & Reigeluth, C. M. (2006). A systemic change experience in Decatur Township. *Tech Trends, 50*(2), 35-36.

Richter, K., & Reigeluth, C. M. (2007). Systemic transformation in public school systems. *The F.M. Duffy Reports, 12*(4), 21.

Presentations at Conferences

2006 AECT: Integration of a Decision-Making Process and a Learning Process in a Newly Formed Leadership Team for a Systemic Change Effort: A report delivered at the American Education Research Association Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL

2005 AECT: Developing a District-Wide Framework of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs: A Progress Report of a Systemic Change Project in the Decatur Township School District. A Report delivered at the American Education Research Association Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA.

2004 AECT: Preparing for Systemic Transformation: Understanding the Effects of Current and Recent Change Efforts. Paper presented at the American Education Research Association in Chicago, IL.

2004 AERA: Preparing for Systemic Transformation: Understanding the Effects of Current and Recent Change Efforts. Paper presented at the American Education Research Association, San Diego, CA.

2001 AECT: Frick, Richter, Kim, Yang, & Duvenci. (2000). AECT Needs Survey, 2000. Paper presented at the AECT National Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Seminars, Workshops, and Paid Presentations

1998 AK/DOE Rocks and Minerals Annual Conference representative at Alaska Mining Conference in Fairbanks, AK.

1997 AK/DOE Rocks and Minerals Traveling Teacher Consultant on North Slope of Alaska based in Kotzebue, AK.

1997 AK/DOE Rocks and Minerals Annual Conference representative at Alaska Mining Conference in Anchorage, AK.
1996 TOYS Toys in Science and Chemistry. Instructor at school district inservice training in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District in Fairbanks, AK.
1996 AK/DOE Technology and Space Science. Co-instructor (Paid) at Alaska Leadership Conference in Anchorage, AK.
1995 AK/DOE Astronomy and Space Science Made Easy: Co-instructor at Alaska Department of Education Math/Science Conference in Anchorage, AK.
1987 AK/DOE Alaska Writing Project Workshop: Instructor (Alaska Writing Fellow) at creative writing workshop sponsored by Alaska Department of Education in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, AK.
1975 FNSBSD Grade Three Reading Curriculum In-service Coordinator. Facilitator at district-wide grade three reading curriculum development conference in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, AK.

Consulting

2005: Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township, Indianapolis, IN (paid). Created and interpreted online survey of township stakeholders.
2003: Creating Digital Images Using Photoshop (paid). Contracted with Indiana University Bloomington IST chapter of Graduates in Instructional Systems Technology to conduct workshop on digital imaging for first year graduate students
1983: Technology Software Advisory Committee (paid release time). Field testing and author of white papers advising Fairbanks North Star Borough School District on district software purchases, 1983-1990.
1977 In-service Professional Development Cadre Team Leader (paid release time). Coordinate district-wide professional development opportunities in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, 1977-1981.

Grant Proposals Written

Evaluation Research for Systemic Change for Learner-Centered STEM Instruction in Public School Districts (co-author), for $1,306,474 over three years, submitted to the National Science Foundation on May 15, 2005.
Advancing the Knowledge about Systemic Organizational Change in Public School Districts (co-author), for $740,964 over three years, submitted to the National Science Foundation on August 16, 2004.
Profitt Grant to support the systemic transformation process (co-author), for $79,927 over two years, submitted to the Indiana University School of Education in May, 2004. Accepted in July, 2004
National Council for Teachers of Mathematics grant for $3000 (author), for $2500 grant to represent Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, AK, at NCTM annual conference, in January, 1997.

Center for Chemical Education grant (co-author), for $92,000 over one year, submitted to Miami University Middletown, Middletown, OH, and Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, AK, in July, 1996.

Flight Opportunities for Science Teacher Enrichment (F.O.S.T.E.R.) (co-author) for $35,000, submitted to NASA, San Jose, CA, and Fairbanks North Start Borough School District, Fairbanks, AK, in April, 1996.

Community Service

Board member of Twin Bears Camp State Concessionaire Advisory Board. Representative of Fairbanks North Star Borough School District on State of Alaska Outdoor Resources and Educational Camp concession, 1984-1997.

Professional Service: Teachers' Associations

Served as one of three Teacher Rights Advocates of the Fairbanks Education Association in the 15,000 student Fairbanks North Star Borough School District in Fairbanks, AK.

Served as a board member (elected) for the Fairbanks Education Association from 1984-1996.

Served as Fairbanks Education Association Representative (elected) to the Alaska Statewide Delegate Assembly, 1975-1998,

Served as Alaskan Delegate (elected) to the National Education Association's National Representative Assembly, 1985, 1992, 1993.

Served as building representative to the Fairbanks Education Association (elected) for four different elementary schools in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, 1975-1997.

Web Authoring

Webmaster of Research Support Team website at https://www.indiana.edu/~syschang/ (password required). Confidential meeting notes, audio files, digital files, and data reporting, 2003-Present.

Webmaster of Decatur's Journey Toward Excellence website at http://www.indiana.edu/~syschang/decatur/ (public site). Public web data supporting the research project between Municipal School District of Decatur Township and Indiana University, 2002-Present.

Webmaster of Indiana University Racquetball Club website at http://www.indiana.edu/~racquetb/ (public site). Public relations for Indian University Racquetball Club (2000-Present).

Webmaster of Spriggs Family and Friends website at http://spriggsfest.com/. Community service website advertising free non-profit bluegrass concert in Monroe County, IN, 2002-present.

Web creator of W200 instructional website at http://www.indiana.edu/~educw200/kurichte/index.html (public site). Support for W200 undergraduate class in Educational Technology, used as example for W200 Associate Instructors, 2002-2003.