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A Case Study of Two Vertical Leadership Teams for the Purpose of School Improvement

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A CASE STUDY OF TWO VERTICAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

FOR THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Tammy S. Wolicki

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2011

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
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Title: A Case Study of Two Vertical Leadership Teams for the Purpose of School Improvement

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The purpose of this study was to examine the process of two public school reform teams to identify if and how changes were made to the organizational, cultural, and social systems considered critical to systemic transformation. School reform is an endeavor in nearly every school district and leadership approaches to improve the educational system have varied over the past three decades from the study of a single individual to multiple contributors.

This study provides a qualitative case study of two vertical teams, including superintendents, principals, and teachers in school reform efforts. The perceptions of superintendents, principals, and teachers as participants of the school reform team were gathered with individual interviews and supported with observations of team meetings and document analysis.

Transformational change requires a visionary superintendent who understands systems thinking with school reform not being an isolated process, but rather a process that affects groups within and outside of the organization and other components of the educational system. The study supports school reform as a district-wide process with the alignment of school level initiatives. The development of a learning organization requires the commitment of the superintendent to engaging with teachers on a regular basis with communication regarding the vision.   This ongoing dialogue facilitates a

shared vision among all team members that, with the analysis of the current reality in relation to the vision, become motivational factors for change. Teachers attribute the sustainability of efforts to the recognition of their leadership skills by administrators, and to the ownership and empowerment generated in the process.

Recommendations for future research and practice include examining the perspectives of members not a part of the team since inception to gain insight into the induction process of becoming a team member and examining the perspectives of teachers who are not members of the school reform team relevant to the impact of change.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century demands an educational approach that provides all

students with high levels of learning. Schools are held accountable for the learning of *all*

students.   Education is no longer based upon compulsory attendance, but rather on

student achievement.   While some schools appear to be educating all students, despite

diversity, to high levels of achievement, such schools are not the norm (Darling-

Hammond, 1997a).

The advancements in technology have created what Thomas Friedman refers to as

a "flat world" causing graduates to face a competitive job market in a global economy

(Friedman, 2005).   Global competiveness and automation have reduced job opportunities

that require little or no training beyond high school; therefore, fewer jobs exist for high

school drop outs or those exiting high school with limited skills. Schools now have the

challenge of educating all students rather than only those that are planning to continue

into post secondary programs. Educators must prepare students to think critically and

creatively while being life-long learners in order to thrive in this knowledge-based

society (Schlechty, 1990).   The educational system must change in order to meet these

new demands. School reform is an endeavor in nearly every school district to meet the

challenges of preparing students for the twenty-first century and to meet the requirements

of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

State policy has had an increased and continuous impact on educational reform

during the past twenty years. The sustainability of this involvement is unusual according

to Richard Elmore (2007) who indicates that political policy generally changes focus

every three to five years. President Bush's education agenda promoted the involvement of the federal government with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) with high stakes testing and accountability. State standards were developed to ensure equitable educational opportunities and high levels of educational achievement for all students. School districts are held to demonstrate proficiency or face sanctions such as being publicly labeled as ineffective, required to offer school choice, or a possible take over. For those involved in reform at the school level, the stakes are high.

Educational reform efforts during the 1980s to mid 1990s indicate a focus on effective schools and instructional leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). A transition was made in the mid 1990s to school restructuring and transformational leadership (Hallinger, 2005).   Distributed leadership in the 2000s focused attention on the leadership practices of many individuals, regardless of formal position. Distributed leadership facilitates teacher leadership as leadership is not limited to a position by labeled authority, but rather by demonstrated competency (Harris, 2005b).   The study of leadership in education has evolved from the study of a single individual to multiple contributors in the complex practice of leadership.

Systemic change requires systemic thinking (Evans, 1996; Senge, 2006). Peter Senge (2006) defines systems thinking as the "fifth discipline" and, as such, critical to the operation of a learning organization. Systems thinking provides organizations the means of looking beyond helplessness or blame to becoming active participants by shifting thinking from parts to the whole. Although systems thinking is complex and challenging, Michael Fullan (2005) indicates the significance of systemic thinking by indicating that it is the key to sustainability.

Statement of the Problem

Schools experience pressure to transform the practice of education to prepare all students for the competitive global economy and to meet the accountability requirements of the federal NCLB Act. Results of reform efforts on education systems have varied and the outcomes are often short lived. The approach to improving the educational system has focused on the development of the principal as an instructional leader. Although school improvement requires a principal that functions as an instructional leader, Michael Fullan (2009) states that this is just a start. Fullan indicates that meaningful gains in student achievement require whole-system reform.

The inclusion of teachers in school reform efforts has gained attention during the last decade. While districts are aware of the need to expand school reform efforts to include individuals beyond the principal, they struggle with how to collectively alter the current organizational and cultural systems to impose systemic transformation. Although attention has been given to a systemic approach in other organizations, this has not been the situation in education. There is limited research in the area of school reform that examines the collaborative efforts of vertical and horizontal leadership teams with a focus on systemic school reform. This study contributes to the research by examining the process of the district wide reform team to impose systemic change.

Purpose of the Study

The Western Pennsylvania Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI) was developed in response to a regional need of school districts seeking a comprehensive, systematic, and integrated approach to leadership development. Developed by university professors from south western Pennsylvania, the goal of the initiative is to bring district teams

together for the purpose of improving student achievement. Within each school district, participation in this three-year initiative involves superintendents, principals, and teacher leaders. These members form vertical and horizontal leadership teams with members developing leadership practices to impact the school system and student achievement.

The purpose of this study was to examine the process of the district reform team to identify if and how changes have been made to the organizational, cultural, and social systems considered to be critical to systemic transformation. The findings from this study may assist others in facilitating disruptive, rather than technical, change through the involvement of district wide reform teams for the purpose of promoting systemic change.

Theoretical Framework

Phillip Schlechty's (2005) six critical systems of educational innovation were used to examine the school reform efforts of two school districts participating in the Western Pennsylvania Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI). According to Schlechty, today's schools are designed to meet the needs of yesterday, but not tomorrow. While schools met the needs of post-industrial society in educating the elite and providing an alternate curriculum for the non-college bound, the current reality is that schools are expected to educate all students to high levels of learning. The former expectations for students to demonstrate compliance and attendance are not sufficient for preparing students for the twenty-first century. Rather, Schlechty calls for schools to require engagement and attention to foster higher order learning. These changes require disruptive innovations, which are dramatic modifications to the current structure and culture of the organization. Dramatic changes are compared to sustaining innovations, which are minor changes that increase efficiency and improve the effectiveness of the

present system.   Rather, systemic school reform efforts must address the critical social

systems in order to truly disrupt and transform the current educational system to meet the

needs of all students.

The six critical social systems identified by Phillip Schlechty are

- Directional System

- Knowledge Development and Transmission System

- Boundary System

- Power and Authority System

- Induction System

- Evaluation System

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The research questions addressed in the study include:

1. What organizational and individual factors motivated, anchored, and sustained
   involvement in this initiative?

2. How were disruptive, as opposed to technical, changes made to the organizational
   system as perceived by teachers and principals and how were these changes
   facilitated?

3. What cultural changes were perceived by teachers and principals to have occurred
   and how were these changes facilitated?

4. How were the social systems impacted and how were these changes facilitated?

Definition of Terms

Disruptive Change: Dramatic modifications to the current structure and culture of the organization (Schlechty, 2005). Schlechty differentiates dramatic modifications from technical changes which merely increase efficiency and improve the effectiveness of the current system.

Distributed Leadership: A leadership model that recognizes the emergent property of the interactions of a group or network (Gronn, 2000). Peter Gronn identifies the collective expertise as "concertive action" as expertise is pooled with the results being greater than the sum of the individual actions. James Spillane (2006) identifies two core components of distributed leadership. The "Leader-plus" aspect recognizes multiple leaders, formal and informal, and includes the people, structures, routines and roles or the "*what*" of leadership. The "Practice-aspect" includes the *how,* or practice of leadership which includes the study of the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situations.

Educational Leadership: Educational leadership is the capacity to influence the future direction of the school or district. This influence can be positive or negative.

ELI: The acronym for the Western Pennsylvania Educational Leadership Initiative. The primary goal of ELI is to change the leadership practices of principals, teacher leaders, and superintendents in key competency areas that impact the school system and student achievement.

Learning organization: A learning organization is an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together (Senge, 2006).

Social System: The norms or cultural expressions that define how an organization

functions.

Sustainability: The capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous

improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose (Fullan, 2005, p. ix). Andy

Hargreaves and Dean Fink expand upon this definition to include "… in ways that do no

harm to and indeed create positive benefit for others around us, now and in the future

(Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 42).

Systemic thinking: A discipline for seeing wholes (Senge, 2006). Peter Senge defines

systems thinking as a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for

seeing patterns of change rather than static "snapshots."

Systemic change: "The alteration of rules, roles, and relationships and of the culture in

which they are embedded so that people can carry out critical functions of the

organization in dramatically different ways (Schlechty, 2005, p. xiii).

Teacher Leadership: A leadership model that recognizes the actions of teachers in

transforming teaching and learning in a school (Murphy, 2005). Katzenmeyer and Moller

identify teacher leaders as those who demonstrate expertise in the classroom, and

contribute to the learning and improved educational practices of colleagues (Katzenmeyer

& Moller, 2001).

Transactional Leadership: An act occurs in which the separate but related goals of the

individuals are achieved, but without a continued pursuit of a higher purpose. The

motivation to act or engage in the exchange is for the purpose of a reward or to avoid

punishment. This form of leadership occurs when one initiates an exchange that is

mutually agreeable to both, satisfies a purpose for both, but does not involve an ongoing and reciprocal relationship (Burns, 1979).

Transformational leadership: Transformational leadership is the capacity to shape, alter, and elevate the motives, values, and goals of followers to achieve significant change. Unlike transactional leadership which involves transactions with people for the purposes of administrative work or offering rewards for good performance, transformational leadership significantly changes the organization (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999).

Research Design

The research was a qualitative design to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators as participants in ELI. This method was chosen as the participants have not been randomly assigned to treatment conditions. The participants were chosen based upon the district's participation in the first phase of the Western Pennsylvania Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI). A qualitative approach was selected because it best matches the purpose of the study, which was to describe and determine emerging patterns found when taking an in-depth look at two school districts participating in school improvement as part of the Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI). Additionally, the purpose of the study was to understand *what* happened and *how* or *why* it happened. Yin (2003) identifies the case study as the ideal approach for descriptive or explanatory questions that are intended to provide a firsthand understanding of people and events.

Population

Administrators and teachers of two school districts, which have participated in the first phase of the Western Pennsylvania Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI), were included in the study. The population includes elementary, middle, and high school

principals and teacher leaders, as well as district level administrators, including the superintendent. Only participants for the full three years of the phase one initiative remaining in the same position for the duration of the initiative were included in the study. The researcher's school district, Greensburg Salem, was one of the initial school districts to participate in ELI and was not included in this study. Six school districts were considered for participation. The selection was based upon the recommendations of an expert panel consisting of the professors involved in the conception of ELI. They selected two school districts that exemplify the implementation of collaborative school reform efforts as promoted through ELI. Lastly, the agreement of the district superintendent for participation in the study was necessary for inclusion in this study. Demographic information such as gender, age, and number of years in the designated position was collected.   Teachers and administrators were interviewed at their school or another agreeable location.

Significance of the Study

School reform is needed and initiatives are common practice in school districts with pressure to meet the accountability requirements of NCLB and to prepare graduating students for the competitive global economy. Yet, historically reform efforts often fail due to resistance to change (Mulford, 2005). Senge (2006) states that systems thinking is needed today more than ever due to the complexity of the world.   Systems thinking requires one to see interrelationships rather than linear cause and effect chains; processes rather than individual snapshots. When one is involved in such activity, it is difficult to see the whole. For this reason, the practices and perceptions of the two leadership teams within their given contexts will provide other school reform teams with a perspective of

the organizational and cultural changes, if any, on the critical systems identified by Schlechty.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

This chapter examined the background of the problem and the need for the study. The theoretical framework includes the historical development of educational leadership and need for systems thinking and systemic change. Chapter two provides a review of the literature in relation to the theory outlined in chapter one.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of chapter two is to provide a review of the literature to narrow or frame the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to examine a collaborative approach to district-wide reform efforts to identify if and how changes have been made to the organizational, cultural, and social systems considered to be critical to systemic transformation. The review of literature includes an historical account of the expectations of schools, the need for systems thinking, a description of the social systems fostering systemic change, and a review of the leadership approaches utilized to reform the process of education.

History of School Reform

Considering the definitions of "reform," which is to make better by removing faults and defects, and "transform," which is to change the condition, nature, or function of (Webster, 2006), perhaps this section should be labeled school transformation rather than school reform. Preparing students for the twenty-first century requires a changed educational system, not just a need to do better or more efficiently what was done during the twentieth century (Darling-Hammond, 1997b). The challenge facing educators of the twenty-first century extends beyond merely providing an opportunity for learning, as in the twentieth century, to ensuring all students a right to learn (Darling-Hammond, 1997a).

Historically, schools have not been expected to educate all students to high levels of learning. Research during the mid-twentieth century indicated that student

achievement was a reflection of aptitude or innate ability and environment, indicating that the school did little to impact student achievement (Coleman, 1966). The Coleman Report concluded that family background, not the school, was the major determinant of student achievement. A second report supported the findings indicating that schools did little to lessen the gap between more and less able students (Jenks, 1972). These findings supported the mindset that schools were responsible for providing an opportunity for learning, but were not responsible for improved student performance.

The Effective Schools Movement of the late 1970s changed the focus on the development of increased accountability for student learning and attention to consistency within the school community (Murphy, 1992). Schools were criticized for a lack of equitable educational opportunities, specifically learning for all students (Edmonds, 1979; Goodlad, 1984). John Goodlad indicates that schools are "perpetuators of the existing society" in that the child's expectations are directly connected to the home life, or socio-economic background and ability level which determine the quality of the educational experience. In other words, the perception exists that the school personnel are limited in ownership or responsibility for the child's educational experience as the conditions are considered beyond their control. Practices such as tracking, ability grouping, and the disproportionate identification of economically impoverished and minority students in special education and remedial classes were common and unquestioned. The effective schools movement shifted the responsibility for improved student performance, regardless of income, from the child to the school (Cuban, 1988). Thus, the purpose of school reform became that of lessening the gap between students from different social classes and racial backgrounds (Sarason, 1991).

The Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) indicates dissatisfaction with the preparedness of graduates for the workforce. George H. W. Bush convened fifty state governors in 1989 to develop national educational goals, an unprecedented act indicating the public's desire to improve education. The reform efforts of the 1990s became "business-like" as they were focused on standards, tests, accountability, and parental choice (Cuban, 2004). The involvement of government in public education for the purposes of school reform continued to increase, even at the federal level, with the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2002. Schools began to operate more like businesses with measurable outcomes; student tests scores in grades three through eight and eleven in the subject areas of reading and mathematics being made public for parents and taxpayers. Parents of children attending schools not making "adequate yearly progress" for two consecutive years have the choice to have their children attend another school within the district, with transportation provided at the district's expense.

The need for school reform identified above has been from policymakers, business leaders, and other individuals outside the educational system. Although the pressure for school reform is often from those outside of the school and classroom, it is the individuals working in the school and, most importantly, in the classroom who are expected to change in the reform process (Sarason, 1996).

Another contribution of the effective schools movement is the reduction of isolation as schools operate as a system with a unified vision, a clearly communicated curriculum, shared levels of expectations for performance, and a strong sense of community rather than as individual classrooms merely housed within a building

(Murphy, 1992).   School improvement requires the collective efforts of teachers and administrators, as opposed to the belief that one can be more successful individually (Kline, Kuklis, and Zmuda, 2004).

In addition to working collaboratively, change efforts require looking beyond a single dimension to the system as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the complexity and interdependent systems within an organization when implementing change to achieve desired results (Darling-Hammond, 1997a; Fullan, 2005; Fullan, 2006; Sarason, 1991; Schlechty, 2005; Senge, 2006).   Linda Darling-Hammond (1997a) states: "The solution to the problems of school failure, inequality, and underachievement do not lie within individual schools or fragments of the system, but will depend on major structural changes throughout the system as a whole. Such changes require … system-wide restructuring" (p. 292). Systemic change is defined as changing the system rather than merely making a change within the system (Sarason, 1991). The system as a whole becomes the focus of the reform, rather than just a fragmented part of the system (Jenlink, 1995).

<div align="center">Systems Thinking</div>

The consideration of the system as a whole requires what Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, and Kleiner (2000) term "systems thinking" which is "the ability to understand interactions and relationships in complex, dynamic systems" (p. 239). Robert Evans (Evans, 1996) further clarifies the idea of a complex and dynamic system with this description: "Linear notions of cause and effect fail to see that every event is both cause *and* effect, part of an interactive loop of mutual influences: no single element can be altered without affecting the rest (p. 10)." A lack of understanding of the

interrelatedness of the system as a whole fosters repetitive actions leading to the same unforeseen results or to "compensating feedback" when well-intentioned interventions cause responses from the system which negate the benefits of the intervention. Senge (Senge, 2006) notes that by recognizing the patterns and interrelatedness of structures, we are better suited to remain focused, to predict unforeseen forces, and to bring about the desired change. Leaders with an understanding of systems thinking are able to use the concepts of continuous incremental improvement, organizational learning, and feedback loops (Thornton, Peltier, and Perreault 2004). Systems thinking is one of the five learning disciplines identified by Senge which promotes the vision of the whole with many interdependent components.

Senge defines personal mastery as the awareness of one's current reality and vision for the future. This dual awareness is defined simply as *what you have* and *what you want*. The difference between these two perceptions creates tension, which in turn promotes action to seek resolution. Clift, Johnson, Holland, and Veal (1992) define this difference between what is desired and valued as the espoused theories in comparison to theories in action. The analysis of one's current reality and the vision for a better future provide the opportunity to make choices and take action to achieve desired outcomes. This process of actualizing one's vision promotes higher standards for future achievement.

Mental Models are our subconscious internal pictures of the world which influence our behavior. Since they are subconscious, they are often untested and unexamined. These mental models can become inhibitors to change as they lead to misunderstandings and defensiveness. Senge identifies the task of bringing these invisible

assumptions and attitudes to the surface so people can explore and talk about their

differences and misunderstandings with minimal defensiveness. Members of a learning

organization must be willing to examine their own mental models and consider

differences as shared by others. This practice requires reflection and inquiry. This open

dialogue is necessary for all members to work cohesively to achieve the desired vision.

The identification of the shared vision of the organization is a critical step in

organizational improvement (Collins & Porras, 2002; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985;

Schlechty, 2005; Senge, 2006; Wallace, Engel, and Mooney 1997).   Senge identifies

building shared visions as one of his five disciplines. Vision provides direction for action

to achieve the desired outcome.   Although shared vision is important, the act of

identifying a vision without systems thinking proves futile. Senge provides the example

of vision without systems thinking as "painting lovely pictures of the future with no deep

understanding of the forces that must be mastered to move from here to there" (Senge,

2006, p. 12). Senge identifies personal contact and informal networks as avenues for the

development of a shared vision over time, with much care and strategy. Shared vision is

determined by ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders. The active involvement of all

stakeholders promotes energy and commitment (Sergiovanni, 1992). According to

Senge, the vision will not be sustainable if based on authority.

The final discipline is team learning.   Senge states that team learning can occur

within any group of members if the other disciplines have been addressed. Regardless of

the composure of the team, common learning can occur if members have an awareness of

each other, are aligned in purpose and their current reality. Individuality remains in that

members are not required to think alike and may disagree with one another respectfully.

Team learning outweighs the capacity and intelligence of individual members. When teams are truly learning, they are producing extraordinary results and the individuals grow more rapidly than they could have otherwise.

Senge defines profound change as organizational change that combines inner shifts in people's values, aspirations, and behaviors in addition to shifts in strategies, practices, and systems. Schlechty (2009) supports Senge in that a different level of change is achieved when both the structure and culture is altered to provide a radically new approach, which Schlechty terms as "transformation" as opposed to "reformation." Schlechty defines the structures as the rules, roles and relationships and the culture as the beliefs, commitments, myths, physical artifacts, and lore. Robert Evans (1996) defines those changes aimed at modifying the culture and structure of the organization as "second order" change as compared to "first order" which merely improve efficiency or effectiveness, without significantly altering what is already occurring in the school. Like Schlechty and Senge, Evans proposes organizational change through leadership by impacting both cultural and structural aspects of the organization. Evans, however, purports the need for cultural aspects to be addressed prior to structural aspects for successful implementation. In this manner, commitment building occurs through the development of a shared sense of purpose. Clayton Christensen (1997) uses the term "disruptive innovations" to describe dramatic alterations that are structural, cultural, and that require changes in the way the organization functions. Such functions may include how members are evaluated and recruited. Schlechty identifies six of these organizational functions or systems, which will be elaborated upon below. Systemic

change is defined by Schlechty as the dramatic change of the structure, culture, and the critical functions of the organization.

<div align="center">Systemic Change</div>

Systemic change can be triggered in various ways. A disparity between the moral values and preachments with reality or practices is identified by both Schlechty and Heifetz (Heifetz, 1994) as impetus for change. Heifetz emphasizes the need to acknowledge reality to promote the difficult task of disruptive work. Disruptive work may be avoided because it requires creative processes and solutions and involves feelings of uncertainty.   A second motivator for systemic change occurs when influences outside the school require changes within (Schlechty, 2005).   The demand by national or state agendas for accountability, such as No Child Left Behind, requires systemic change within schools. However, educators are cautioned that school reform efforts focused merely on improving student performance on passing state-mandated standardized testing will limit rather than increase student learning (Schlechty, 2009).   Rather than teaching to the test or teaching test taking skills, which may produce short term increases in student achievement, educational leaders must maintain a systems perspective to promote sustained growth over time (Thornton et al., 2004).

<div align="center">Professional Learning Communities</div>

School improvement is limited due to the structure of the teaching profession and lack of organizational learning. The value of promoting learning communities is provided in this quote by DuFour and Eaker (1998): "The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is developing the ability for school personnel to function as professional learning communities (p. xi)." Elmore states that the "privacy

of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement" (Elmore, 2000, p. 20). This isolation allows unprofessional practices to be tolerated and ignored (Schmoker, 2006). Linda Darling-Hammond (1997a) calls for the redesign of schools to create learning organizations with learning as a focus for both students and teachers. Educators are cautioned that "professional learning community" has substantial implications for actualized practice and is not merely a phrase to be used for general practices (Barth, 2001). Roland Barth contrasts a community of learners with an organization, institution, or bureaucracy in that the responsibility of all members is to support one another in learning, students and adults. He stresses the importance of examining practices and policies to assure that they are aligned with the purpose of promoting learning for all. Ability grouping, assigning letter grades, and large class sizes are examples of policies and practices that are misaligned to professional learning communities.

The terms to describe collective learning vary : professional learning community (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005; Hall & Hord, 2001), collaboration (Darling-Hammond, 1997a), learning organizations (Senge, 2006) , nested learning communities (Fink & Resnick, 2001) and professional community (Hargreaves, 2002; Louis & Marks, 1996, 1998) are often used by researchers to indicate collective learning. While the key variables of collective learning organizations vary by researchers, the following common elements were identified: Shared norms, values, and beliefs (Darling-Hammond, 1997a; Louis & Marks, 1996, 1998) a focus on results or student learning (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Louis & Marks, 1996), collaboration (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Louis & Marks, 1996), deprivatized

practice (Bryk et al., 1999; Louis & Marks, 1996), reflective dialogue (Bryk et al., 1999; Louis & Marks, 1996, 1998), and a culture of learning for continuous improvement (DuFour & Eaker 1998; Fink & Resnick, 2001).

The use of professional learning communities for professional development has been noted as having advantages over the typical event-driven approaches that have a questionable impact on teacher practice and student learning (Emihovich & Battaglia, 2000; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). Fullan (2005) connects this team learning with ongoing job-embedded learning. Rather than workshops that provide isolated and infrequent learning opportunities, a comprehensive approach that requires teams to work together throughout the year promotes capacity building and ultimately changes the school culture. Participating in professional learning communities requires individuals to discuss differences of opinion, as well as agreements. Rather than challenge the status quo, it is typical for teachers to avoid conflict by establishing norms of politeness and non-interference (Little, 1990). Little, Gearhart, Curry, and Kafka (2003) indicate that professional learning communities for the practice of collective analysis of student work by teachers have the potential to minimize teacher isolation, privacy, and non-interference. By working with others to view student work, teachers do collectively what was previously done alone. This de-privatized practice of sharing student work, which is also the teacher's work, requires a balance between comfort and challenge (Little et al., 2003). Hargreaves (2002) emphasizes the establishment of trust as a vital ingredient for productive professional collaboration. This trust, according to Hargreaves, must exist laterally among colleagues as well as vertically within the institutional hierarchy.

Recent literature indicates the need to focus on learning rather than teaching practices. Learning needs to occur not only with individual students and/or teachers but at the organization level. What stimulates organizations to learn? Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt (1998) utilized five variables for organizational learning (OL): stimulus for learning, out-of-school conditions, school conditions, school leadership, and outcomes. The results of their study identify five variables having the strongest overall influence on teachers' individual and collective learning. The five variables determined by teacher interview, in order of greatest impact, are: the district (including its mission, culture, structure, policies and resources, and strategies for change), school leadership, school culture, school structure and policies, and resources. Leithwood et al. call for more research to inquire "about the nature of district-school relationships that foster learning at the school level and those conditions that give rise to collective learning at the district level" (p. 269).

Six Critical Systems of Educational Innovation

Schlechty defines a system as "a set of interrelated elements organized around a common function (Schlechty, 2009, p. 26). The six systems, according to Schlechty, include the Direction System, Knowledge Transmission System, Power & Authority System, Evaluation System, Directional System, and the Boundary System. Schlechty classifies these six systems as "social systems" as compared to "operational systems", which are also found in schools. Operational systems are those that most school reform efforts address, such as changing existing procedures and processes, in other words how tasks are accomplished. In contrast, social systems include the culture and norms that are

ingrained and deeply-rooted, such as the beliefs, values, and shared commitments that give meanings to the rules and roles.

Schlechty (2009) emphasizes the need to understand the linkages between and among all six systems and to coordinate change. He attributes the failure of school reform efforts to a lack of consideration of the systemic impact. For example, improving student learning requires a change to three of the six systems: the direction system, knowledge development system, and recruitment and induction system. The impact of changes in these three social systems upon the remaining three systems the power and authority system, evaluation system, and boundary system, may threaten an innovation due to the systemic impact, unless a systemic approach is utilized with flexibility and attention to all six systems. A professional learning community is contrasted with a bureaucracy in regards to the attention of the leaders. In a bureaucracy, attention is given to maintaining the chain of command, holding individuals accountable, and the delineation of responsibilities. Of Schlechty's six systems, the power and authority, evaluation, and boundary systems are of priority in schools that operate more as a bureaucracy, rather than a learning community. In contrast, schools that function as a professional learning community give precedence to the direction, knowledge, and recruitment systems with an emphasis on establishing direction, sharing knowledge, and developing people who are self-controlled.

Schlechty defines the directional system as the need to maintain direction with the establishment of goals, selection of priorities and allocation of resources, despite resistance. The vision is critical to uniting individuals in a common goal for the benefit of the organization (Wallace et al., 1997). Wallace et al. state that "leading with vision is

critical to the success of schools (p. 3)." If not, competing loyalties may divert attention, reduce available time, or make one aware of the need to address other systems.

The need for a knowledge transmission system that clearly identifies and articulates these morals is the second critical system as outlined by Schlechty. An effective system of induction includes a clearly articulated system of beliefs to guide action and a well-understood sense of purpose and direction among those employed in the school (Lambert, 2003; Schlechty, 2005). Schlechty suggests that school reform efforts often fail as little attention is paid to the moral, aesthetic, and conventional knowledge bases but rather to technical knowledge. Mission statements, vision statements and belief statements are means of formalizing moral and aesthetic knowledge. School-based teacher study groups and learning communities provide opportunities for this type of knowledge transmission as opposed to in-service days which primarily focus on technical knowledge.

The recruitment and induction system indicates the need for a clearly articulated and formal process for selection of members of the organization or group to be made aware of the morals and aesthetic values of the school. The morals are a fundamental aspect of each of the six critical systems. Schlechty identifies the hiring and socialization of new individuals to an organization as one aspect and the selection of current staff for promotion or involvement in district initiatives as a second definition. In addition to the recruitment of individuals sharing a common purpose, Schlechty identifies the need for these individuals to be persuasive leaders. It becomes the work of persuasive leaders to challenge others to confront moral dilemmas and change beliefs. Schlechty emphasizes

the importance of addressing moral, aesthetic, and conventional knowledge and attributes failure at school reform to be lacking in this area.

The boundary system includes "the resources and activities that the school controls or attempts to control" (Schlechty, 2005, p. 167). Boundaries define who and what is a part of the system. Control or influence is imposed by those in and outside of the boundaries. Schlechty includes the relationships between the school and individuals as influences that may support or impede change efforts. For change to occur, the boundaries must include those with authority, resources, and support.

Schlechty defines the evaluation system as "the process of comparing standards to actual performance and rating the performance relative to the standards" (Schlechty, 2005, p. 140.) He compares mastery, which is limiting, to continuous improvement that, unlike mastery, is open ended. In learning organizations evaluation is focused on continuous improvement rather than mastery. Therefore, motivation exists to improve and excel rather than to merely meet minimal compliance standards. This process applies to both students and adults in the school setting. Continuous improvement in an evaluation system is motivating whereas negative or coercive actions, such as loss of tenure and performance-based pay are not.

Systemic change requires both power and influence and is defined by Schlechty as the power and authority system. While an individual may possess power, it is possible that the same individual may not influence others. Power is a condition of a formal position that entitles one to resources, which is critical for school reform. Influence is derived from relationships and social bonds, which enable one to persuade others to react and respond. Schlechty cautions those promoting change to be cognizant of individuals

who control the flexible resources as these individuals may resist disruptive change if it threatens authority.   The role of the superintendent, according to Schlechty, is most critical as he/she must see that resources are available and utilized to promote change efforts. Schlechty cautions that unless a system of shared values, beliefs, common purpose, and standards exists, the decisions made by these teams may not benefit all stakeholders. He further warns of unwanted or unintended consequences if changes in power and authority are not accompanied by changes in other systems as well. According to Sarason (1991), school reform is doomed for failure unless the traditional power relationships are altered. He supports the distribution of power among teachers and administrators to create a more inclusive process of schooling that produces more commitment to excellence on the part of the participants.

Instructional Leadership

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in England evaluated schools and identified effective leadership as the most important factor linked with turning around failing schools (Matthews & Sammons, 2005). A change in school leadership was found to be the single and most efficient means of improving a school's effectiveness. The significance of school leadership is summarized by Leithwood et al. who state that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. 27) or simply school leadership matters. While leadership matters, the varying degrees of impact, distribution, and sustainability are areas of further study.

Fullan (2003) identifies both self and system imposed barriers to instructional leadership. Self-imposed barriers include perceived system limitations, if-only

dependency, loss of moral compass, inability to take charge of one's own learning, and the responsibility virus. Fullan refers to the work of Sarason (1982) who suggests that teaching does not adequately foster the development of the principalship and that the lack of administrative experience promotes the tendency for newly appointed principals to desire stability rather than confrontation. Sarason states that this limitation or narrowness in preparation and desire to maintain the status quo results in practices continuing in a similar fashion with little or no consideration of other possibilities. The if-only dependency is described by Fullan with reference to the work of Patterson, Purkey, and Parker (1986) as explaining one's actions or inactions due to the actions or inactions of others. Fullan identifies the need for individuals to first change their own thinking in order to impact the system rather than viewing the system as a barrier. In the deluge of demands and responsibilities, Fullan recognizes the need for principals to maintain a focus on their moral purpose and to continue to be learners. Barth (2001) supports Fullan as he declares the need for principals and administrators to promote a culture of learning for students, teachers, and themselves as being "lead learners." The barriers that principals may identify for not being active learners as identified by Barth are time taken from other responsibilities, guilt for learning themselves when responsible for teaching others, added responsibility for sharing new learning with others, poor past experiences with staff development, and the admission of not knowing the content already.

<div align="center">Transformational Leadership</div>

Burns (1979) defines leadership as the interactions among people, the consideration of the motives of all persons involved, and the influence or power applied by individuals. A leader uses this authority to combine the efforts and resources of all

individuals to achieve the common desired outcomes, which benefit all involved. Burns contrasts this use of power in leadership in which common goals are achieved to "naked power-wielding" in which power is used by an individual to fulfill their motives alone. Burns states that "all leaders are actual or potential power holders, but not all power holders are leaders" (p. 381). Therefore, leadership exists if the mutual needs and goals of the leader and the followers are addressed.

The definition of leadership provided by Spillane and Orlina (2005) supports Burns' ideas that the work be directed to achieve common motives or core work. However, Spillane and Orlina elaborate on the use of influence, or notably, "the intended influence to motivation, knowledge, affect, and practices of other organizational members." (p. 159). The apparentness of one's actions for the purpose of influencing others or having others understand that they are being influenced is paramount for leadership to exist. Therefore, leadership practices are actions that were either designed with the members of the organization or the members understand that these actions are designed to influence them. In this manner, the leadership practices are known and are directly associated with the core work of the organization. Leadership is an influential process (Yukl, 1999) which is dependent upon others recognizing one's leadership and consenting to being led (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996; Greenfield, 1995; Lloyd & Maher, 1993).

Beyond the existence of leadership, Burns (1979) differentiates between two types of leadership. The leader's intention or purpose for the interaction and the motivation of the followers to act determine the type of leadership. Transactional leadership occurs when one initiates an exchange that is mutually agreeable to both,

satisfies a purpose for both, but does not involve an ongoing and reciprocal relationship. In this form of leadership, an act occurs in which the separate but related goals of the individuals are achieved, but without a continued pursuit of a higher purpose. In a transactional situation, the person is motivated to act or engage in the exchange for the purpose of a reward or to avoid punishment.

On the contrary, transformational leadership includes not merely related, but rather shared purpose. Transformational leadership is identified as intrinsically motivating to both the leader and the followers as it "raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led" (Burns, 1979, p. 382). Rather than the individual goals of both parties being served, transformational leadership motivates followers by inspiring them to seek to achieve organizational goals (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999). Yukl indicates that the transformational leader motivates followers by focusing on the followers' emotions and values. The leader uses the identification of organizational values to build commitment among members. Hallinger (2003) identifies this "bottom–up" rather than "top-down" approach as being highly influential.

Reviews of transformational school leadership studies extending over more than a decade analyzing the impact of transformational leadership upon the organization and student achievement reveal consistent evidence of transformational leadership fostering high levels of teacher commitment and increased teacher job satisfaction (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; 2006). At the organizational level, transformational leadership was found to have positively impacted the school culture, organizational learning, planning, and strategies for change. The analysis of the effects of transformational leadership on student achievement is mixed, with six of the nine studies reporting significant

relationships. Six dimensions of transformational leadership were identified: building

school vision and goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized

support; symbolizing professional practices and values; demonstrating high performance

expectations; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions

(Leithwood, 1994). Current policies, demands for accountability, and pressure from

privatization often promote managerial practices that conflict with transformational

leadership theory (Leithwood, 2007). While transformational leadership is based on

intrinsic incentives and rewards for motivation, the push for accountability with external

incentives and rewards provides the motivation for change, which is most aligned with

transactional leadership. Although Early and Weindling (2004) state that "there is no

evidence to suggest that, on its own, (transformational) leadership brings about anything

but modest improved consequences for pupil learning " (p. 14), there is evidence of

benefits of the integration of transformational leadership with instructional leadership

practices (Marks & Printy, 2003). Termed integrated leadership by Marks and Printy

(2003), the integration of transformational and instructional leadership practices

capitalizes on the impetus for change and the sharing of leadership practices among

teachers in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The influence on school

performance is substantial when measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the

achievement of its students. The role of transformational leadership with distributed

leadership further develops the notion of sharing or distributing leadership activity

beyond the principal (Harris, 2005a).

Distributed Leadership

A recent focus on distributed leadership acknowledges the need for leadership from others beyond the principal (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003; Gronn, 2000; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; Spillane, 2006; Woods, Bennett, Harvey, Wise, 2004). The concept of distributed leadership, however, is not clearly defined as there are a variety of interpretations (Harris, 2005b). The description "distributed leadership" is often used synonymously with shared leadership, situational leadership, collaborative leadership, and transformational leadership (Spillane & Orlina, 2005; Spillane, 2006). While distributed leadership shares common characteristics, Spillane (2006) differentiates distributed leadership from these types of leadership.

The need for multiple individuals in sharing leadership responsibility is apparent with the complexity of tasks, intensive knowledge requirements, and varied external demands for results and accountability (Elmore, 2000; Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007; Wilson, 2005). However, Spillane (2006) argues for a practice that is more complex than merely sharing the leadership responsibilities. Distributed leadership has an emergent property, meaning that the leadership arises from the interactions of a group or network, rather than an individual (Gronn, 2000). The network of individuals pool their expertise with the results being greater than the sum of the individual actions, termed by Gronn as c*oncertive action.* The boundaries for participation in leadership are expanded to include those not in formal leadership positions (Harris, 2004; Woods et al., 2004). The fostering of leadership practices of those outside formal leadership roles, such as teacher leadership, will be further explored in this literature review. Additionally, distributed leadership recognizes that expertise exists among the many rather than the few

(Harris & Lambert, 2003); however, this does not indicate that everyone is or should be a leader (Gronn, 2000).

Distributed leadership extends beyond the recognition of multiple leaders, which Spillane (2006) refers to as the "leader-plus" aspect, to the "practice" aspect. Spillane argues that the focus of school leadership has been on the people, structures, functions, routines, and roles rather than on the *practice* of leadership. His research includes the *interactions* of the leaders and followers. In this manner, inter-dependency rather than dependency among multiple leaders is the focus of the distributed leadership process (Harris, 2005b). Therefore, leadership is not merely identified by the distribution of responsibilities to additional individuals, but by the dynamic interaction or practice of leadership between leaders and followers.

Spillane (2006) defines "distributed leadership" as the collective interactions among leaders and followers and their situations. He purports that the situation is more than merely the context in which the leadership practice takes place, but rather is a defining element of the leadership practice. Although Spillane identifies the situation as a defining element of distributed leadership, distributed leadership is more complex than situational leadership in that the situation is more than just the context in which the interactions between the leaders and the followers occur, which may influence what the leaders do. Rather the situation is defined or produced by the leadership practice. The situation is one of the three essential elements, along with leadership practice and the interactions of leaders.

Collaborative leadership is distributed by definition, but all distributed leadership is not necessarily collaborative (Spillane, 2006). The situation may warrant much or little

collaboration in a distributed leadership perspective. For example, an initiative faced

with resistance could be distributive, but not collaborative. Therefore, in collaborative

leadership common goals exist between the leaders and the followers, which is not the

case with distributed leadership. Distributed leadership can be autocratic as well as

democratic.

Transformational leadership is another area Spillane (2006) contrasts with

distributed leadership. As described earlier, transactional leadership seeks to benefit the

separate goals of the leader and followers while transformational motivates others with

the desire to promote the common good. Distributed leadership cannot be defined

according to either transactional or transformation for two reasons. First, a distributed

practice is not defined by the motivational force. Secondly, both transactional and

transformational leadership focus on the intent of the individual leader rather than on the

practice of leadership. For these reasons, distributed leadership cannot be classified as

either transactional or transformative.

Harris (2004) identifies several barriers to distributed leadership such as

traditional hierarchies of schools, those in formal roles reluctant to relinquish power, and

financial constraints. In addition to the delineation of roles, responsibilities, and

authority, the current structures limit teachers working collaboratively. The delegation of

responsibilities to others poses challenges to those in formal positions who must

determine who to involve and how to go about distributing responsibility and authority.

Harris (2004) cautions against misguided delegation as one seeks to foster

interdependence among multiple leaders.

The contribution of distributed leadership to school improvement gained attention during the early 2000s (Gronn, 2000; Harris, 2004). Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor (2003) selected elementary schools involved in the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) models to determine if a greater number of formally designated leadership positions exist, the variety of leadership functions, and whether or not the data support programmatic change and instructional improvement. The results indicate that the creation of instructional coaches who were provided with role expectations and explicit and extended training in instructional leadership practices appeared to be associated with higher levels of instructional leadership. Additionally, Taylor (2004) analyzed the instructional practices of teachers involved in the Comprehensive School Reform models to determine if distributed instructional leadership promoted and sustained these practices. He concluded that total instructional leadership independently is not sufficient to motivate teachers to implement reform. However, total instructional leadership in the context of a cooperative professional community is sufficient to influence teachers' motivation or reform.

In conclusion, distributed leadership focuses upon the practices of many rather than primarily on the actions of the individuals involved. The structures or context in which leadership operates is considered to be an integral component and not merely a supporting or inhibitive factor. Spillane (2006) emphasizes the need to focus attention on the interrelationship of principal and teacher leadership practices rather than viewing each separately which has been the case historically. Spillane also notes that a focus on outcomes limits the identification of leadership practice as leadership can occur without an outcome. For this reason, the process rather than the outcome needs to be analyzed.

Distributed leadership is not a prescription for how to implement leadership practice, but rather provides a framework for thinking about and analyzing leadership practices (Spillane, 2006).

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is closely aligned to the concept of distributed leadership in that leadership is not limited to those in particular positions with authority, but rather is determined by competency as individuals behave collectively toward a common goal (Harris, 2005c). Education reform efforts have historically focused upon the role of the principal with little attention to the role of teachers (Hallinger, 2005; Sparks & Hirsh, 2000). Demands for accountability and the need to educate all students have increased the recognition, possibilities, and hopes for contributions of teacher leaders in school reform efforts (Little, 2003). Although teacher leadership is an area gaining attention, this form of leadership remains a secondary or supportive form to other areas of leadership (Crowther, 2009; Murphy, 2005).

As with many other concepts of leadership, teacher leadership lacks a concise definition among researchers. Teacher leaders are first and foremost expert teachers in the classroom, where the majority of time is spent (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) define teacher leaders as "teachers who lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice" (p. 5). Unlike administrative positions that require teachers to leave the classroom, teachers can influence other teachers while continuing to teach students. The level of involvement beyond the classroom is dependent upon the structure and climate of

the school.   Learning is the focus of teacher leaders, for students, colleagues, and themselves. Professional learning communities are the social context that decrease teacher isolation and comprise Katzenmeyer and Moller's "community of teacher learners and leaders." Teacher leaders are often described as those who influence other teachers to improve instructional practices (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Murphy, 2005).   The ability to influence others to change is based upon positive relationships with the outcome of increased teacher and student learning.

Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan (2000) identify three waves of the intentions of teacher leadership on school improvement efforts. The first wave provided formal leadership positions such as department chairs, head teachers, and union representatives for the purpose of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. Although instruction was not a focus of the first wave, it was the focus of the second wave as additional formal leadership positions for teachers were created such as team leader, curriculum developer, and staff development positions. Silva et al. point out that these positions were often held by individuals outside of their work as classroom teachers. It is not until the third wave of teacher leadership that integration occurs of leadership positions and the day-to-day work through collaboration. Similarly, Little (2003) compares the involvement of emerging teacher leadership practices to the present day and notes initial growth in this area for the purpose of recognizing and rewarding accomplished teachers who often mentor newly hired educators. However, current practices are in response to accountability pressures with higher demands and fewer rewards. Little also notes that as teacher leadership practices evolve, the roles of these

individuals become "heavily weighted toward institutional agendas over which teachers have little direct control and over which teachers themselves are divided" (p. 416).

Teacher leadership supports instructional leadership efforts of the principal and provides several advantages to school improvement efforts. Teachers are the greatest in number, closest to the students (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001), and generally have a longer tenure than the principal at a school, thus they are the most constant professionals of the school (Lambert, 2003). The shared expertise of teachers of various content areas is necessary because the principal has limited content expertise due to a background in generally one content area (Danielson, 2007). This expertise is shared formally and informally through such practices as coaching, learning communities, mentoring, and networking (Lambert, 2003). Beyond the advantages of teacher leadership to the school and students, the strongest impact is to the teacher leaders themselves (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teaching can be an isolated profession; however, the involvement in school improvement efforts reduces these feelings of isolation and affords teachers opportunities to assume greater challenges (Danielson, 2007). Teachers participating as leaders in school reform reported a shared sense of purpose and vision, increased collaboration, and increased participation in decision making that positively impact their teaching and student learning (Hyland, 2003).

The promotion of teacher leadership is not without challenges and requires support to address the barriers that exist. Donaldson and Johnson (2007) state that teacher leaders require formal support structures provided by administrators. They identify the lack of reorganization, defined roles, and release time for instructional purposes as limitations to the effectiveness of teachers in this capacity. The hierarchical

view of authority, peer opposition, and the desire for harmony are identified as additional limitations to teacher leadership (Lambert, 2003). Teachers are not accustomed to working in such ambiguous ways (Clift et al., 1992). A study of selected teacher leaders and their principals identified time, talented and committed workers, resources, good school climate, and meaningful professional development as important factors supporting teacher leadership (Fitch-Blanks, 2004). Teachers stressed the important role their principal played in supporting them as teacher leaders by demonstrating trust, facilitation, flexibility, and active involvement in the professional learning experience.

Sustaining Leadership

Current reform stresses the need for restructuring schools with the aims of clarifying purpose and goals, addressing new approaches to teaching and learning, and redesigning the organization of schools to ensure student success in today's society (Darling-Hammond, 1997a; Schlechty, 1997; Hyland, 2003). Michael Fullan (2006) states that large scale reform needs to go beyond student achievement and move toward leading organizations to sustainability. Sustainability is defined as more than simply maintaining (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Fullan defines sustainability as "the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement, consistent with deep values of human purpose" (Fullan, 2005, p. ix). Hargreaves and Fink (2006) extend the definition to include that no harm is imposed upon others or the surrounding environment as a result of this initiative and that the benefit is positive for others as well, now and in the future.

Fullan suggests that systems thinking is the key to sustainability and that, although more than a decade has passed since Senge's (2006) work was shared, little

application or transferability exists in the field of education (Fullan, 2005). He indicates the need for leaders to do more than improve upon their own organization therefore widening their sphere of engagement by interacting with other schools. Fullan defines this process as lateral capacity building. Lateral capacity building is necessary to foster the development of practitioners. The mark of a leader, according to Fullan, is not the impact upon student achievement but rather the development of other leaders. Fullan outlines the lack of training for leaders in systems thinking and promotes the linking of systems thinking with sustainability.

Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI)

The Western Pennsylvania Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI) supports school districts interested in changing the cultural and operational systems to promote student achievement. The organization's vision indicates a focus on the quality of leadership, shared vision, and excellent teaching. ELI is described by the co-founders, Rose Swenson and Jerry Longo, as not another program, but as a way of thinking and focusing on collaboration, informal analysis, and planning for instructional improvement. District teams include principals, teacher leaders, superintendents, and central office administrators, creating "vertical" leadership teams. With professional development, the leadership skills of these participants are designed to create sustainable impact and to improve student learning in the region. Funding is provided by The Heinz Endowments, The Grable Foundation, and the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. Each school district also pays $10,000 annually to participate.

An explicit objective of ELI is to foster relationships between districts and with other agencies, institutions, and individuals that will augment the learning and growth

opportunities for superintendents, central office administrators, principals, and teacher leaders.   Each district is assigned one or more Colleagues in Residence (CIR), who is either a university professor of education or a retired superintendent. These individuals have the responsibility of providing expertise, being responsive and available to the district needs, and connecting the district with outside resources, networks, or expertise. Additionally, professional development is facilitated for specific roles. For example, a teacher leadership session was provided for representatives to attend and share information with other teachers within the district.

ELI plans to assist districts by tailoring professional development plans, supporting an intense focus, targeting the training and coaching support based on the focus, and engaging districts in multi-level teams to ensure successful implementation. Resources and personnel from a variety of sources, including local universities, intermediate units, and professional organizations are used to deliver professional development to vertical teams of principals, teacher leaders, superintendents, and central office administrators. These professional developers also provide direct, role-based coaching and mentoring and assist districts in developing and implementing long-range professional development plans. Assistance is provided in planning and conducting evaluations of the impact of the professional development. The engagement of all vertical team members in professional learning communities is facilitated and the ongoing commitment from top leaders is sought. The program focus is to build and support conditions for successful teaching and learning by working with leadership teams to focus on three areas of leadership that are critical to improvement of student learning:

vision-based organizational leadership, data-based instructional leadership, and authentic pedagogy and assessment.

Authentic pedagogy is defined by the co-founders of ELI, Rose Swenson and Jerry Longo, as instructional leaders actively engaged in the teaching and learning process. As instructional leaders they create a sense of urgency and excitement about teaching and learning, have deep knowledge of the curricular approaches that they are leading in their schools, and actively disseminate best practices within their school communities. The second program focus area is data-based instructional leadership in which leaders use data to inform decision making, engage faculty in the analysis of student performance data, and guide teachers to use data to improve teaching and learning. The final focus area, vision based organizational leadership, includes effective organizational leaders who align all school activities to structures to support the values and vision for student learning and academic growth, motivate staff around new initiatives through communication, persuasion, and a sense of purpose, and finally, set clear standards of behavior. Coaching is provided by Colleagues in Residence (CIR) to district teams on-site and across districts by specific roles to promote collegial capacity building within and across districts.

The initial ELI membership was a pilot phase in August, 2006, and included nine school districts. These districts were chosen for participation based upon geographical distribution in western Pennsylvania, variation in district size, socio-economic status, racial and ethnic student population, combination of rural, suburban, and urban type of district, and the inclusion of "at risk" school districts. Seven of the nine initial school districts continued participation beyond the pilot. In 2008 and 2009 eight and three

school districts respectively joined ELI. As of August, 2009, a total of eighteen school districts are ELI members.

Chapter Summary

The literature review provided a brief overview of the historical efforts of school reform. Although pressure is from the outside to improve the educational system, systemic and sustained improvement will require change on the part of those working within the schools. Lessons from history have indicated that individuals, such as principals, cannot make the necessary changes alone. Literature related to instructional, transformational, distributed, teacher, and sustainable leadership have been included in chapter two. Leadership teams are needed for learning organizations to exist. School improvement efforts need to be made with systemic thinking (Senge, 2006). Peter Senge's description of systems thinking and the theoretical framework for this study, Phillip Schlechty's (2005) six critical systems of educational innovation were also reviewed in chapter two. This framework assists in examining the school reform efforts of the ELI teams upon the social systems of their respective organizations using the detailed procedures outlined in Chapter three.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

School reform efforts have historically been unsuccessful or short lived. The limitations of school reform efforts have been attributed to an educational system that was not designed to provide all students with an opportunity or option to learn. The twenty-first century presents a globalized economy that provides limited opportunities for students not prepared for such competition. Thus, educators are facing political pressure to not merely provide, but rather to assure, high levels of learning for all students.

The Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI) was developed to assist school districts in southwestern Pennsylvania in this team approach to school reform. The purpose of this study was to examine the process of the district reform team to identify if and how changes have been made to the organizational, cultural, and social systems considered critical to systemic transformation. The findings from this study may assist other school districts utilizing a team approach to systemically change the educational process to prepare all students for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Research Design

A qualitative approach for this inquiry into school reform was selected because it best matches the purpose of the study, which was to describe and determine emerging patterns found when taking an in-depth look at two school districts participating in school improvement as part of the Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI). This purpose is aligned with the description Merriam (Merriam, 1998) provides in that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 6).

Additionally, the purpose of the study was to understand *what* happened and *how* or *why* it happened. Yin (2003) identifies the case study as the ideal approach for descriptive or explanatory questions that are intended to provide a firsthand understanding of people and events. Case study methodology seeks to provide a holistic description. The case requires the consideration of context (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2006) . This holistic approach is supported by Patton (1990) who states that "a system is a whole that is both greater than and different from its parts"(p. 120).   Therefore, rather than using a quantitative approach, which would focus on the parts, a qualitative approach provides the researcher the opportunity to examine the phenomenon as a whole, with integrity for the system and context, to gain an understanding of the perspectives of the participants.   A quantitative approach would require an oversimplification of the experiences of the participants and would not provide the rich description that is necessary to gain an understanding of the complex system as a whole. This study examines this complex holistic system through the following research questions.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

1. How were the social systems impacted and how were these changes facilitated?

2. What organizational and individual factors motivated, anchored, and sustained involvement in this initiative?

3. What cultural changes were perceived by teachers, principals, and superintendents to have occurred and how were these changes facilitated?

4. How were disruptive, as opposed to technical, changes made to the organizational system as perceived by teachers, principals, and superintendents and how were these changes facilitated?

A challenge for the case study researcher is the identification of the case (Cresswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2006). This study includes two individual cases bounded by the selection of two school districts participating in the Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI) beginning with the pilot groups of 2006 and continuing through the Fall of 2009.   The case is the school improvement team.

A criticism of the case study approach is the lack of generalizability. A multiple case study was utilized providing the researcher the opportunity to cross-case analyze findings from the two school districts. Merriam (1998) states that "the inclusion of multiple cases is a common strategy for enhancing the generalizability of findings" (p. 40). Yin (2003) recommends the use of a multiple-case design rather than a single-case design due to the potential analytic benefits with two or more cases. Another advantage to a multiple case study, and perhaps most important to this particular study, is the opportunity to understand how the local conditions or context impact the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Yin (2003) states that the external generalizability can be expanded if common conclusions are found to exist for both cases under these varied circumstances or contexts. The researcher determined two school districts to be appropriate for providing the opportunity to compare the findings between two school districts, while maintaining a small number of districts allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of the participants.

Purposive sampling was utilized. Nine school districts participated in the first year pilot of ELI.   It is important to note that the researcher was a part of this initiative as the district in which she was employed was involved in ELI as a part of the pilot phase. The researcher's school district was not selected for this study.   This experience

provided the researcher with the background information and similar experiences as the

participants in the two selected districts. Two school districts discontinued participation

during the second year. ELI team members in one of the remaining six districts served as

an expert panel to review the interview questions. The remaining five school districts

were considered for this study. The selection criteria for the two participating school

districts included the following. First, the school district must have participated in ELI

since the inception in 2006 and continued to participate in ELI through the fall of 2009.

Secondly, an expert panel consisting of the university liaisons working collaboratively

with all involved districts recommended the school districts. Lastly, the school district's

superintendent agreed to the participation of ELI team members in the study.

Setting of the Study

Two public school districts that had been a part of the Western Pennsylvania

Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI) since the inception were chosen for the purpose

of this study. ELI was designed to be a comprehensive, integrated program of

professional development for teams of principals, teacher leaders, superintendents, and

central office administrators to enhance the respective leadership skills of district

participants in order to create sustainable impact and improve student learning. Both

districts were part of the pilot phase, which began in July of 2006. A three-day

orientation provided members of the nine school districts with professional development

in the areas of vision-based organizational leadership, data-based instructional leadership,

and authentic pedagogy and assessment. Colleague's in Residence (CIR) who are

professors or retired superintendents worked with assigned districts following the

orientation to assist with tailoring professional development, limiting the instructional

focus, and engaging the team both within and across districts to promote school reform efforts.

The two selected school districts for this study are located in Allegheny County of Southwestern Pennsylvania.   Both school systems serve students in grades kindergarten through twelve. Both superintendents were responsible for their district's initial and continued participation in ELI. These superintendents along with all district building principals and selected teachers comprise the district's vertical leadership team. The individuals interviewed for the purpose of this study have been members of ELI since the inception and continued to serve as ELI members during the spring and summer of 2009.

Green Ridge provides education for 3500 students housed in a primary school for grades K-2, an intermediate school for grades 3-5, a middle school for grades 6-8, and a high school for grades 9-12. The student to teacher ratio per full time teacher is 14 to 1, with the state average of 14 for the 2007 – 2008 school year.   The free and reduced lunch rate provides an indicator of the socio-economic status with 21 % of students receiving a free and/or reduced lunch rate during this same school year. The state average for students eligible for a free or reduced lunch for the 2007-2008 school year was 31%. The district has met Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets in all areas: student attendance, academic performance, participation, and graduation rate for the past three years. The racial and ethnicity reported for Green Ridge for the 2008-09 school year is: 89% White, 6% Black, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% Hispanic.

For the 2009-2010 school year, the district graduation rate for Green Ridge was 99% for all students, 93% for students with Individualized Education Plan (IEP's), and 97% for students classified as economically disadvantaged. Achievement scores on the

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) for the 2009-2010 school year district-wide in the content area of mathematics for all students was 79% proficient and in the content area of reading for all students 77% proficient. Students with IEP's district-wide scored 43% proficient in mathematics and 35% proficient in reading. When disaggregated for economically disadvantaged status, 67% scored proficient for mathematics and 63% proficient in the content area of reading.

River Side school district provides education for 4500 students housed in four elementary schools for grades kindergarten through five, a middle school for grades six through eight, and a high school for grades nine through twelve. The student to teacher ratio for the 2007-2008 school year was eleven students per teacher. The state average was fourteen students per teacher. The free and reduced lunch rate was 14% for this same school year with a state average of 31%. This district also met AYP targets in all areas for the past three years. The racial and ethnicity reported for River Side school district for the 2008-09 school year is: 90% white, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% Black, 1% Hispanic, and 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native.

The graduation rate for the River Side school district for the 2009-10 school year was 97% for all students and 91% for students classified as economically disadvantaged. The state report card did not include a percentage for students graduating with IEP's because fewer than ten students existed in this classification. Achievement performance on the PSSA district-wide for all students in mathematics was 88% proficient, with 59% proficiency for students with IEP's and 71% proficient for students classified as economically disadvantaged. For the content area of reading, 89% of students district-

wide were proficient, 56% with IEP's, and 67% classified as economically disadvantaged.

The ELI team for the Green Ridge School District was comprised of the superintendent, directors, principals for each level, and selected teacher representatives from each building. The team met monthly during the school day. At River Side School District, the ELI team consists of teacher representatives from each building, principals, a data analyst, technology coordinator, special education coordinator, elementary and secondary supervisors, the assistant superintendent, and superintendent who meet voluntarily monthly after school.

<center>Data Collection</center>

Participation was voluntary. The superintendents of the two participating school districts were asked to merely see that the elementary, middle, and high school teachers and principals who had participated on the ELI team since the inception and continued to participate through the Fall of 2009 were provided with invitation letters. A self-addressed stamped envelope addressed to the researcher was provided for the interested teachers and principals to return the Informed Consent Form (Appendix A) to the researcher and not to the superintendent. In this manner, the researcher and the superintendent did not select or persuade the individuals to participate.

The most common form of data collection in qualitative studies in education is the interview, and more specifically, the person-to-person encounter (Merriam, 1998). Although face-to-face interviews can require more time and feasibility concerns than a phone interview, the advantages include the ability to develop a rapport with the interviewee and to read nonverbal body language. For this latter reason, Patton (1990)

describes interviewing and observing as "fully integrated approaches." It is necessary for the researcher to be observant during the interview and to be attuned to the body language of the interviewee. Patton defines the purpose of the interview as being to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind." Yin (2003) identifies the dual role of the researcher as both seeking answers while maintaining an open ended and unbiased conversation. The interviews for this study were semi-structured in that the questions were open-ended in nature and afforded the respondents more latitude in their responses; however, a list of predetermined questions provided a focus throughout the interview (Appendix B). The participants were informed of the nature of the questions, but were not provided with an advance copy of the questions prior to the interview. In this manner, the ELI participants were engaged in the interview process in a guided, yet open ended, conversation to gain an understanding of how they perceived their experiences and efforts in school improvement. Information gathered from interviews of teachers, principals, and superintendents were compared to determine consistencies and inconsistencies.

Following IRB and district approval, the interviews were conducted from February to August of 2010. Participation in interviews was voluntary and selection was determined by individuals submitting letters of interest to the researcher. The researcher selected individuals to interview from the submitted letters to represent elementary, middle, and high school staff. Additionally, the researcher selected both males and females. The anticipated number of individuals for each team was seven, including a teacher and principal from each level and the superintendent. However, the IRB protocol included the requirement for participants to have participated in ELI since the inception

in 2006 through the Fall of 2009 and to agree to participate in the study. Responses were not received for participants holding the position of elementary teacher and high school principal for the River Side School District. The high school principal that participated in ELI since the inception is no longer employed by the school district. Participants were interviewed separately during a single session for approximately forty-five minutes. Interviews were scheduled either at the participant's school or at a convenient location selected by the participant. The interviews were audio taped, with the participant's permission.

The researcher protected the privacy of each of the participants. The names of the school districts and of the participants were changed to maintain anonymity. Each participant received a written summary of the purpose of the study prior to the interview. Additionally, the researcher asked each interviewee if they had questions regarding the purpose of the study prior to each interview. Table 1 provides demographic information regarding the individuals who volunteered to participate and were interviewed.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Participants Interviewed

Green Ridge	Years of Teaching Experience	Grade Level(s) Assignment	Gender
Elementary Principal	28	K-2	Male
Elementary Teacher	6	K	Female
Middle School Principal	30	6-8	Male
Middle School Teacher	6	6-8	Male
High School Principal	30	9-12	Female
High School Teacher	42	9-12	Male
Superintendent	39	K-12	Male
River Side	Years of Teaching Experience	Grade Level(s) Assignment	Gender
Elementary Principal	15	K-5	Male
Middle School Principal	16	6-8	Male
Middle School Teacher	15	6	Female
High School Teacher	38	9-12	Female
Superintendent	34	K-12	Female

In addition to interviewing participants to determine their understandings, teams were observed by the researcher in a naturalistic setting. Patton (Patton, 1990) defines several advantages of utilizing direct observation. First, the observer is better able to "understand and capture the context within which people interact." Second, he defines the benefits of the observer as experiencing first-hand rather than relying on documents

or verbal reports. Next, he explains that by being a firsthand participant, the observer may note what may otherwise be overlooked. Lastly, he points out that the observer may learn that which individuals are not comfortable talking about in an interview. Therefore, the researcher observed ELI team meetings in the location at which the team normally convenes. The superintendent of each district informed the researcher of when such meetings occurred and provided permission to attend. Participants were informed of the researcher's purpose for attending such meetings. The participants were informed that their identities would not be revealed. The researcher recorded notes regarding the discussion, actions, and interactions of the individuals during the observations. The notes were organized, categorized, and coded. The patterns, themes, or categories identified in the observations were compared to those of the interviews and the document analysis.

Document analysis provides information that may not be visible through observation or interviews. The superintendent or assistant superintendent provided copies of documents such as meeting agendas, minutes, memos, and schedules. The document collection included items from the inception of the team's participation in ELI to the present.   The researcher compared the patterns, categories, or themes identified by analyzing the documents will those identified in the interviews and observations.   Yin (2003) identifies the most important use of documents as corroborating and augmenting evidence from other sources. The analysis of the documents provided the opportunity to determine if the contents support or contradict information gathered via interviews and observations. Lastly, the researcher synthesized the information gathered from the documents with data from the interviews and observations to draw conclusions and gain an understanding of the school reform process as a whole.

Interview Questions

The interview questions were based on the theoretical framework of Phillip Schlechty's (2005) six critical social systems of educational innovation and were designed to determine if and how the social systems were impacted by the ELI team. Additionally, the questions were designed to determine if and how systemic thinking as defined by Senge (2006) was evident to impact cultural and organizational changes for the purposes of school improvement. Questions inquiring about the interactions of the team members provide an understanding of the leadership styles and practices. Appendix B identifies the four research questions and the corresponding interview questions utilized by the researcher to gather the perceptions of the participants regarding participation in the school reform process. Questions were developed to be open-ended so that respondents could focus on their own interests and concerns and would share a variety of experiences with the reform efforts. The researcher asked probing questions for clarification of the respondent's meaning or intent. Although the researcher used a pre-determined list of questions to guide the interview in addressing specific issues, the sequence and wording varied so that the researcher could respond to the situation and emerging ideas. The researcher's approach aligned with Merriam's (1998) definition of a "semi-structured interview" which is a mix of more and less structured questions as a "semi structured interview" as opposed to a highly structured or unstructured format.

Validity and Reliability

Data triangulation was utilized to promote validity. Interviews were conducted with superintendents and elementary, middle, and high school principals and teachers. Additionally, methodological triangulation was utilized with document analysis,

observations, and interviews. Patton (1990) identifies the purpose for attaining multiple perspectives to identify any inconsistencies that develop further insights rather than the common misconception as the purpose being to demonstrate consistency.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) "trustworthiness" is another word for validity and reliability that is used more often in qualitative work. The rich, thick descriptions included in the data analysis and reporting of findings provide the reader with the opportunity to make decisions regarding the transferability of data and interpretations.

A third approach for validation is the use of member checking. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify this technique as the most critical for establishing credibility. The researcher will provide the participants with the data, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility. In this manner, the researcher's interpretation of the participant's reality will ensure the truth value of the data.

Expert Panel

The interview questions were shared with an expert panel consisting of the superintendent, principals, and teachers participating in ELI. A school district participating in ELI, but not selected for the actual study served as the expert panel. Feedback from the panel provided a means to refine and modify as necessary the interview questions. Verbatim responses and recommendations for changes to questions were recorded using a tape recorder. The results provided a means for the researcher to determine if the interview questions provoked responses to answer the research questions.

The interview questions were revised and the alignment of the interview questions to the research questions are outlined in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Yin (2009) proposes four general strategies of data analysis. The first, and most preferred, strategy is theoretical orientation of the case study analysis. Yin defines the descriptive framework as an additional strategy for data analysis, but indicates that this format is less preferable as the first and may be employed when research questions are not utilized. The third strategy incorporates quantitative data with qualitative for a dual analysis. The final strategy is the examination of rival explanations. The purpose of this study was to examine the process of the district reform teams to identify if and how changes were made to the organizational, cultural, and social systems considered critical to systemic transformation. The study includes specific research questions in response to the purpose of the study. Additionally, the purpose of the study does not lend itself to the collection of quantitative data or the evaluation of rival explanations. Therefore, the researcher chose to utilize the theoretical propositions as the framework for data analysis. The theoretical orientation was utilized as the research questions were developed to reflect the posed theories in relation to systemic change, cultural change, and organizational change. The review of literature regarding transformational and disruptive change guided the determination of research questions and what data was collected and analyzed in response to these questions.

Stake (1995) states that "there is no particular moment where data analysis begins" and that analysis should not be seen as separate because sense-making is ongoing. Merriam (1998) supports Stake in promoting the simultaneous collection and

analysis of data for the purpose of refining future data collection. Feldman (1995),

however, cautions against the blending of data collection, analysis, and interpretation as

this may reduce the effectiveness of the research. Data collection may be ceased

prematurely as the temptation exists to seek data to support pre-established

interpretations, causing missed opportunities to gain new understandings of the

phenomena reflected in the data. For these reasons, the researcher describes the stages of

data collection and data analysis so that each is given careful attention and consideration.

The first stage of analysis was data collection, which required the management of

a large amount of data. The process of analyzing a large volume of qualitative data

recommended by Tesch (1990) was utilized to reduce the data to patterns, categories, and

themes and then interpreting the information. Tesch defines the process of first taking

apart the data as de-contextualization to re-contextualization as the data is synthesized or

consolidated for the big picture. For data preparation, the researcher transcribed the

responses of each interviewee from the tape recorder to a word processor as soon as

possible following each interview. A software program called Dragon was utilized as the

researcher repeated the responses of the participants heard from the tape and read aloud

into a microphone as Dragon composed the text. The researcher then reviewed the text

for accuracy while listening to the recording. Additional questions or needed

clarification was gathered using email.

Data identification is the second stage and occurred as the researcher coded and

categorized the data. Tesch (1990) refers to this process as de-contextualization. The

researcher read the transcripts from the interviews several times in addition to reading

them aloud for the voice to text translation. The researcher used the margins to code the

participant's ideas and emerging patterns. Tesch recommends compiling all topics written

in the margin and organizing into clusters to show relationships. The next step is to

return to the data and add abbreviations for the topics as codes. Tesch recommends using

descriptive words for the topics and making them categories, which can then be grouped

as they relate to each other. Once a final list of abbreviations for each category has been

defined, the codes are alphabetized. The data should then be assembled by category and

recoded if necessary. The codes provided a means of identifying frequencies, patterns,

and themes in the responses.   Tesch refers to the consolidation or synthesizing of the

data as re-contextualization, which is the final stage of data analysis. Categories were

constructed from the data collected in response to the research questions.

The process recommended by Tesch was utilized for the written translations of

each interview as well as for the documents collected from the teams regarding agendas,

minutes, and other written materials. Observation or field notes were also handled in the

same manner so that coding was consistent.

Since a cross case analysis of two public school districts was conducted with

teachers, principals, and superintendents, the findings are reported by district and role. In

this manner, comparisons and patterns are noted among the perceptions of the individuals

between districts and roles.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

Chapter three provides the purpose for a qualitative research design in order to

respond to the identified research questions. The interview questions and their

relationship to the research questions were identified. Additionally, chapter three

provides the delineation of the population, including the school districts and participants,

for participation in the study. The manner in which the data collected during individual

interviews, team meeting observations, and documents such as meeting agendas, minutes,

etc. is defined for the purposes of establishing validity and reliability.

Chapter four presents the identified themes of the perceptions of the teachers,

principals, and superintendents for each research question. Although pseudo names are

used to assure anonymity, the responses indicate the participant's school district so that

the reader can identify the commonalities and differences and gain an understanding of

the context of each district. Additionally, the position of teacher, principal, or

superintendent and the level is identified for the reader to gain an understanding of the

role of the participant and the relationship to the school reform process.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the process of two district teams involved in school reform efforts to identify if and how changes were made to the organizational, cultural, and social systems considered critical to systemic transformation. There is little research in the area of school reform that examines the collaborative efforts of vertical and horizontal leadership teams. The following research questions, which guided this study, focused on school reform team member's perceptions of changes within the organization, culture, and social systems.

1. How were the social systems impacted and how were these changes facilitated?

2. What organizational and individual factors motivated, anchored, and sustained involvement in this initiative?

3. What cultural changes were perceived by teachers and principals to have occurred and how were these changes facilitated?

4. How were disruptive, as opposed to technical, changes made to the organizational system as perceived by teachers and principals and how were these changes facilitated?

This chapter presents the data using the headings of the theoretical framework of the social systems, organizational change, and cultural change.

Social Systems

This section focuses on the perceived impact on the social systems and how these changes were facilitated.   Schlechty (2005) explains that the systems are not operational in isolation but rather are linked and impacted by changes in the other systems. The

purpose of the research was to understand the linkages between and among the systems; therefore, the findings were reported for each of the six systems with much overlap.

<div align="center">Directional System</div>

Establishment of Purpose

The directional system focuses on the establishment of goals, determination of priorities, and how resistance is addressed. Goal setting includes the examination and alignment of beliefs, values, and understandings and supports the vision of the district. Participants of this study identified the initial stage of the school reform process to focus on the analysis of beliefs and the establishment of a shared vision. The teams identified purpose and direction for collaborative effort by central office administrators, building level principals, and teachers.

The Green Ridge ELI team utilized the first year of the school improvement process to discuss core beliefs and to develop a vision. The perceptions of the teachers and the principals indicate that the first year began without a clear direction or purpose. However, a vision evolved because of this year of ongoing dialogue between the superintendent, principals, and teachers. The superintendent shared that he met regularly with teachers to have "deep conversations about our practice." The superintendent shared the following regarding his vision of the future of education:

> We started trying to create the future we need rather than defending what we've got. It is some sort of manufacturing model of how we organize schools. We have got to give people high quality options and that means the roles and responsibilities of teachers have got to change. They have got to be more responsive to change, the agents of change, and objects of change. The traditional role of teaching six periods a day must change.

The outcome or development of the mission statement by the teachers, principals, and superintendent served to promote a common understanding of the beliefs and values and built commitment among the team members.

Dennis, an elementary principal, indicated that because of the superintendent's messages during these meetings, he gained an understanding of the vision of the district. While the perceptions of Dennis and other ELI members of this first year indicate ambiguity and uncertainty of the purpose of their work, the outcome was a two-page vision statement generated by teachers, administrators, and the superintendent based upon these conversations. Dennis identified the mission statement as providing clarity and purpose, which he indicated is necessary at the building level as well as the district level. He elaborated in his belief that the building statement needs to focus more specifically on student achievement.

George, the middle school principal believed the vision statement served to generate ownership and to guide and support decisions.

> I think it (vision statement) helped build buy-in in the belief that what everyone has to say matters. There was discourse at some of the meetings, of course. Not everyone would agree to certain words or phrases, but at the end everyone was at least comfortable with the final draft or vision statement.

Additionally, George describes how the mission statement provided a frame of reference for making instructional decisions and influenced science instruction at Green Ridge.

> As the curriculum has been examined for revision and textbook committees have been put together, a belief statement or position paper has been put into place. For example the new science series that we are trying to have the Board adopt that went from a six-month process to a year and a half and again we looked at research for where is science is going. And we looked at elementary, middle, and secondary and again we created this vision statement of how that vision should be driven along. But now that belief paper, if I can call it that, accompanies the

proposal and shows that the teachers are not saying we just want this program, but here is why. Here is our research and our philosophy of what we believe should be occurring in the next few years in science. And that again came from that large mission statement originally.

Goal Clarity from Within

The superintendent of River Side School District identified the development of teacher leadership as the focus of the ELI team. Additionally, she indicated that the past four years have focused on differentiated instruction and determining authentic learning. She described her purpose for district involvement in this school reform process as a means to connect all schools to one vision and one mission. She stated, "Although many wonderful things were happening in the district, the schools were operating in isolation."

River Side teachers and principals, like Green Ridge, described the initial phase of the process to be ambiguous. According to the teachers and principals, the focus changed during the initial years from determining areas to reduce energies or "take things off the plate," to a focus on adversity, and finally to differentiated instruction. Joyce, a middle school teacher, described this time as a mystery. She stated, "It started off in this big stormy, bubbly grey cloud where no one kind of knew what we were doing." Richard, an elementary principal reflected,

> We had no idea what this was about. I think we were really questioning why we were doing this and is it important for us to do it because we have plenty of things we need to work on as a district. I think only when our district took over, that we stopped attending the larger meetings with all the other schools, that's when there was more of a focus. Our assistant superintendent has done a really good job in narrowing it, which that is what you have to do.

The common perception of the teachers and principals was that a district focus emerged once the team had the opportunity to decide how ELI could influence the district. Richard, the elementary principal, stated that he felt the goal was to connect ELI

with what the district initiatives were since "it does not make sense to have something completely separate and all over the place" and "ELI had to connect or it was just of no use." Bradley, the middle school principal shared how ELI fostered building level goals.

> At first it took some time for us to figure out what was going on with ELI really. We focused on general leadership. But there wasn't anything really tying us directly back to what we were doing in the buildings. So that took some time. The building initiatives had a bit more focus and intensity to them than initially the district level focuses. I used my ELI team as a way, along with our site-based management team, to start looking at the middle school concept and to look at ways that we could become a model middle school in the country.

The most recent and most commonly referred to district-wide initiative at River Side was differentiated instruction. An expert in the area of differentiated instruction provided training to all teachers. ELI members participated in the initial cohort of training. Joyce, the middle school teacher, agreed with this approach.

> Your first group was your mavericks, people that were not going to buck the system, who were really into it, and slowly start to bring everyone else on. You then have that group doing things in their building which sort of started to expand out in little mini in-services where you were giving training to the people who hadn't had official training in it yet and everyone is kind of slowly pushing through.

Joyce described a recent teacher In-Service day that included various sessions on differentiation facilitated by teacher leaders. Peers selected sessions to attend, which Joyce described as highly motivational. Joyce believes that all ELI teachers have a common understanding of the goal and when asked would describe practices such as pre-assessments, direct instruction, or tiered lessons as components of differentiated instruction. She indicated that responses would vary for non-ELI teachers based upon the teacher selected and occurrence of training.

Richard, the elementary principal, like Joyce, described practices building-wide that support the focus on differentiation. He described data teams that provided support

to teachers in collecting and analyzing data, which are no longer existent or necessary as teachers now implement these practices in identifying student needs for differentiated instruction. Richard described the expectations for implementation of practices of differentiated instruction as teachers visit classrooms of colleagues in walkthroughs.

Karen, the high school teacher, shared her perceptions of the impact of the focus of differentiation on students. "I think the kids are given more choice on a regular basis, more opportunities to find something they can wrap their mind around while learning new concept, and I think that they are more challenged." She described her principals as being "in the loop" and shared that an upcoming formal observation was scheduled by the principal specifically to observe her implementation of differentiated instruction.

In both districts, the superintendents purport to have had clear goals for district involvement in the school reform process. The teachers and principals in both districts, however, indicate an initial stage of uncertainty of the purpose for involvement with ELI. At Green Ridge, the teachers and principals credit the collaborative development of a mission statement to providing goal clarity and direction. The teachers and principals at River Side attribute goal clarity to the assistant superintendent.

Alignment to Other Initiatives

Schlechty promotes the idea that school reform requires that schools operate as a system within the district rather than a system of independent schools. In other words, the school district rather than the schoolhouse should be the focus of concern. Thomas required each building principal to set annual goals in relation to differentiated supervision. Sharon noted her goal or purpose for participating in ELI to change the practice of schools within the district operating in isolation. Richard, the elementary

principal at River Side, identified the district goal and numerous practices in his building

that align with differentiated instruction or the district goal for ELI.

> The district goals are differentiation and data differentiation. Those are the goals
> that we seem to talk about all the time, and walkthroughs… The differentiation
> part is a huge investment in our school district… money-wise and time to train
> our teachers in differentiated practices. With that, it goes on with the
> walkthroughs. Big expectations now from our districts point. What do they want
> to see? What should we be seeing in the classrooms? So we are constantly
> working on refining that.

> Additionally, Richard elaborated in the need for ELI to align with other district

initiatives.

> I think (initially) we were just trying to make ELI connect with what our district
> initiatives are. It does not make sense to have something completely separate and
> all over the place. All the initiatives, programs that we put into place (must
> connect). Having something that just did not connect just did not make sense.
> That is why ELI had to connect or it was just of no use.

> Like Richard, Bradley, the middle school principal, viewed ELI as fulfilling two

different roles, one for the district and the other for the building.

> There really are two different roles with ELI. I had my own building ELI, types
> of things that were happening and then there were the district initiatives that were
> going on as well. So they (middle school ELI team members) had both charges.
> The building initiatives had a bit more focus and intensity to them than initially
> the district level focuses. … I used my ELI team along with our site-based
> management team, as a way to start looking at the middle school concept and
> look at ways that we could become a model middle school in the country. We
> used a lot of work from the Schools to Watch organization and the ELI team did
> the self-assessment.

At Green Ridge, a structure that was formally functional at the high school level

was expanded district-wide. The establishment of teams of teachers within all buildings

for various, but specific purposes was utilized to promote the attainment of goals. The

teachers annually generated purposes for committees. The administration reviewed the

suggested committees and provided all teachers the opportunity to select a team on which

to participate for the school year. A monthly two-hour delay start to school was utilized to provide the time for teacher committees to meet. Individuals from each of the levels met monthly with central office staff and building principals to review goals and progress in achievement.

Goal consensus was promoted as teachers selected which committee they wished to participate annually. Changes were made each year as some committees were dissolved and others continued. Although all teachers were part of a team, it was acknowledged that the majority, but not every teacher, was committed to the process. However, individuals not fully committed to the goals did not impede the team's efforts as they were the minority and their actions were generally complacent. As goals were realized, the number of teachers not committed was reduced.

Attention was given to opposing or contradictory forces such as a small portion of parents voicing concerns to the school board of the practice of the two-hour delay start of school once per month for the teams to meet. Teams were encouraged to include parents in the process, where appropriate. Additionally, the committees were encouraged to share their work with parents through Parent and Teacher Organization meetings and via newsletters. In this manner, the boundary system was impacted as the need was identified to communicate with the parents and community to reduce or eliminate the resistance to the use of monthly two-hour delayed start of school.

The superintendent at River Side identified teacher resistance to the collection and analysis of data, primarily at the high school level, as an obstacle. She cited the complacency with current practices as the rationale for resistance to change. Sharon's approach to change is data driven as she stated "change occurs when the evidence points

to a lack of progress in specific areas." She credits overcoming this resistance to the participation, peer guidance, and enthusiasm of the ELI members who served on the data teams. Additionally, Sharon described the practice of communicating the goals and evidence of the teams in a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), which is presented to the school board for discussion and input. Outside agencies or study teams of experts from outside the district are utilized for major areas of change, such as a four-year study of graduates and a kindergarten through grade twelve study of special education services.

Like Sharon, the middle school principal, identified the use of data to promote change. He referred to Jim Collins (2001) phrase "facing the brutal facts" as he shared discussions with teachers in regards to student failure of courses. He described changes made to teacher positions and schedules to prevent and respond to student failure. Teacher resistance was minimal as Bradley described these changes as "natural.. to achieve the goal."

Richard, the elementary principal of the same district, also cited teacher resistance as a barrier to progress. He attributes the process of generating ownership and creating an awareness of practices in other districts to motivating teachers.

> An obstacle is getting buy in from the teachers and how you do that. First, it is being knowledgeable in what you are telling them to do. It is knowing that we are not the only ones doing it and that they have to understand that if they look at other school districts, we are not the frontrunners. We are actually behind some of the school districts that have been using data and differentiation for a while.

At Green Ridge, the involvement of teachers on the various committees included the expansion of the role of the teacher with additional responsibilities. Despite these additional expectations, union resistance at Green Ridge was not an issue according to the superintendent. He attributed this lack of resistance to the understanding of the vision

and need for change. However, the middle school principal in the same district identified teacher involvement in presenting for in-service days as a union concern. George stated that the union perceives the need for teacher compensation when presenting to peers as the district has previously paid non-district employees for such services.

Recruitment and Induction System

The recruitment and induction of teachers and administrators in the school reform efforts were analyzed. For recruitment, the criterion for selection of members of the school community to participate in ELI and how agreement was gained to participate was examined. The induction process included an examination of the means these selected members were made aware and became committed to the norms and beliefs to engage in school reform efforts. Additionally, the means that non-ELI members were made aware of and involved in the school reform efforts were explored.

Teacher Leadership

The superintendents in both districts shared their rationale for participation in ELI and the selection of members. Thomas, the superintendent of Green Ridge, pointed out the motivation of a small group of high school teachers involved in a prior school reform effort approached him about expanding teacher leadership within the district. These six teachers were asked to be a part of the ELI team. Additionally, two members from the primary, intermediate, and middle school were asked to participate, along with the building principals from each level. When asked how he selected members, Thomas shared that he relied on the principals to assist in the selection of individuals within the buildings who had a sense of organizational leadership. He then referred to the "smile

index" that he suggested be used as "those are the kinds of people that are really happy, that do good work, and they see the world from a very positive perspective."

Sharon, superintendent of River Side, identified the administrative team for participation, including all building principals. The building principals selected teachers from their respective buildings for their leadership skills. The criteria for selection of teachers, as described by the principals, included demonstrated leadership capacity, team players, respected by peers, interest in school improvement, and willingness to question. Furthermore, the secondary principals expressed attention given to the inclusion of a variety of departments, when possible.   Richard, an elementary principal at River Side, selected a replacement for an ELI teacher on maternity leave with a teacher he viewed as being respected by peers, having ideas, and willing to question the work of the team.

The principals and the teachers shared common criteria for selection for participation in ELI. For example, principals and teachers indicated selection based upon demonstrated teacher leadership. Joyce, a middle school teacher at River Side, believed her principal selected her because she got along well with the principal and completed tasks. Karen, a high school teacher in the same district and the former union president, believed her invitation to participate was for her "longevity" and willingness to professionally disagree and challenge, when necessary.   Karen stated,

> I think she (the superintendent) is comfortable (with me) and she knows I am going to speak in a way that's acceptable, but it may not always be in agreement with what she's saying. I would say we don't always have an identical opinion.

Karen indicated that her relationship with the superintendent was one of mutual respect as they may professionally disagree, but accept the varied opinions of one

another. Karen acknowledged that she is not afraid to challenge the status quo or identify areas of improvement.

Involvement of All Teachers

Schlechty identifies a cause of failed school reform efforts to be the lack of attention to the induction of existing members, or in this case, non-ELI members.   The perceptions of those interviewed in both districts were that a common understanding exists among all teachers, ELI and non-ELI, of the purpose and goals of the ELI team. Practices, such as the sharing by the ELI teachers, invitations of guests or non-ELI teachers to occasional meetings, and the involvement of all teachers in professional development were factors attributed to the development of these common understandings.

The Knowledge System

Schlechty stresses the importance of the knowledge system in school reform. He says, "It is becoming clear that the way an organization deals with change is determined in large part by the systems devised to support the creation, importation, and diffusion of knowledge within the organization, as well as by the way knowledge is shared between the organization and the larger environment." Both school districts modified systems of promoting knowledge among teachers, and ultimately students.

District-wide Professional Development

The River Side vision statement included the following:

"Students in the River Side Area School District will enter schools that are prepared to address individual needs. The school community will nurture and inspire students' desire for knowledge and provide the foundation for them to be successful in a global society and to become lifelong learners."

The ELI group facilitated a district-wide focus of professional development for all teachers in the practice of differentiated instruction, which supports the vision of addressing individual needs.   Differentiated instruction influenced the knowledge system as an expert on differentiated instruction provided professional development over several years.

River Side's approach for providing professional development meets Schlechty's definition of a learning organization in that learning communities were favored over isolated workshops or in-service days.   All district teachers were scheduled for training over a three-year period, with some teachers being trained the first year, others the second, and the remainder the third year. Teachers attended training as cohorts, with cohorts consisting of teachers across grade levels and departments. Joyce, a middle school teacher, indicated that the ELI teachers attended the initial cohort and expected to promote the practices of differentiation. For example, the ELI teachers provided professional development sessions during the in-service day on the topic of differentiated instruction. In this manner, the ELI teachers became resources and supports to members of later cohorts. Both Joyce and Richard, the elementary principal, shared that the professional development on differentiation influenced their practice. Richard stated, "You go in there thinking one thing, that you're a great teacher, and you come out of there and really question yourself and what you should be doing for kids. " Richard indicated that the district modified the elementary report card to reflect a standards-based format because of the training on differentiated instruction. A district-wide ELI meeting focused on the development of a survey for all teachers regarding a self-assessment of current practices of differentiated instruction and a needs assessment. Additionally, the

discussion included the need to expand the practice of peer visitation focused on differentiated instruction.

Green Ridge teachers provide professional development to peers on in-service days, similar to River Side teachers. George, the middle school principal, shared that teachers presented for peers district-wide on a recent in-service day. He did, however, share that there is union resistance to the practice as they indicate that this is an administrative responsibility and that teachers should be compensated for this practice.

Networking with Other Districts

Although networking with other school districts was an integral component when ELI was initiated, individuals in both districts indicated that progress in achieving the district's identified ELI goals were best promoted by efforts within the district. Joyce, the middle school teacher at River Side, identified the desire to network with other districts, but referred to the lack of time as a barrier to engaging in this practice. However, Karen, the high school teacher in the same district, noted benefits in visiting another ELI district. These visits to other districts were identified as being most valuable when seeking models and practices from other districts having strengths in the particular area of interest. The services of the CIR were noted as being of benefit when identifying districts who have implemented successful practices in the identified area of need.

Boundary System

The boundary system as defined by Schlechty includes the resources and activities that the organization either controls or attempts to control. Additionally, this system considers who the school system considers to be "in" the organization and who is "outside" of the organization. The desires or pressures that groups outside the

organization place upon the school system can negatively affect the school reform process. Therefore, the awareness of the groups and their intentions by those leading the school reform process is necessary to maintain control over the resources and personnel to promote school reform. The perceptions of the superintendents in regards to the school board, teacher unions, and parents provide insight to how these leaders managed these groups in the school reform process.

School Board

Sharon, superintendent of River Side, described the site-based team of administrators, teachers, and parents that develop a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) that determines the activities that take place in the building and at the central office level to achieve goals. The evaluation of the CIP and evidence of success or improvements determines future actions. The superintendent includes the content of the CIP in a State of the Schools Report that the school board reviews and provides input. Sharon described the process as follows:

> Once it has been determined that a change is needed, meetings are held with stakeholders to determine new ways to meet the stated goal or whether a new goal needs to be set. If the change involves the curriculum, our supervisors, principals, and teachers begin the study. We often involve outside agencies or create study teams of experts from outside of the district when we see that a major change is needed. Some of those studies have involved the creation of a panel of experts to study the K-12 special education services. Once the selected committees meet, principals roll out the potential changes with their staff and information is presented to parents at one of four district forum meetings held during the school year. We also communicate change through our (local magazine) that is mailed to all residents, and through .. an electronic communication completed by the superintendent.

While Sharon appeared to include her school board by informing them of the goals and seeking input based on the State of the Schools Report, Thomas indicated his goal of sheltering the teachers in the process of school reform as much as possible.

Thomas viewed the school board as a barrier to school reform with the potential of school directors identifying negative aspects of the process. In this respect, Thomas maintained boundaries so that school reform efforts can occur in spite of the system. While Schlechty states that strategies used by school leaders to maintain boundaries are generally not articulated and sometimes not recognized, the circumstances surrounding Thomas's retirement relating to dissatisfaction with the board may have lent themselves to articulating this need.

Teacher Union

Schlechty identifies the existence of more than one organizational loyalty and to which the individual places primary allegiance. In both districts, the ELI teachers indicated primary allegiance to the school and fulfillment of the purposes rather than to being union members. The use of time, and in one of the two districts, uncompensated time after school hours, was not perceived to be a union issue. Time was identified as the most valuable and limited resource by individuals in both districts in achieving the goals of ELI. Monthly ELI meetings at River Side occurred after school hours and attendance was voluntary and non-compensated. Since the monthly ELI meetings at Green Ridge occurred during the school day, other teachers provided coverage while ELI teachers attended the meetings. Additionally, all district teachers met on a regular basis with the implementation of a monthly delayed start to school. The teachers, principals, and superintendents indicated that time was critical to achieve the goals of the teacher leadership team.

Non-ELI Teachers

Joyce, the middle school teacher at River Side, referred to initial animosity of non-selected teachers for ELI. However, she identified the recognition of the amount of work and the time commitment as the deterrent to jealousy. Additionally, the practice of inviting guest or non-ELI teachers to occasional meetings at both districts reduced ill feelings as all teachers could participate in this manner.

Community

This practice of a delayed start to school once per month at Green Ridge was threatened as several parents indicated dissatisfaction to school board members due to the inconvenience of childcare. The superintendent indicated the need to "build advocacy" with newsletters, PTG (Parent, Teacher, Guardian) meetings, and invitations to team meetings when appropriate. In this manner, informing the parents and school board members of the utilization of this time reduces the resistance.

Evaluation System

Schlechty supports an evaluation system that includes more than a measure of what students have and have not learned. Additionally, evaluation that is motivated by moral authority rather than coercion promotes continuous improvement. For this purpose, Schlechty supports the practice of teachers observing one another as a means of effectively improving instructional practice. Schlechty also identifies the need for clearly communicated expectations for an effective evaluation system.

Walkthroughs

The superintendent of Green Ridge shared his desire to utilize ELI to develop an intense focus on improving the performance of the organization in terms of teacher

supervision. Thomas further elaborated on his desire to participate to address the district's "antiquated system of teacher supervision." Thomas stated,

> My goal when I first heard of ELI was to build the capacity of the organization with teachers and to improve the performance of the organization in terms of how it supervises teachers because the system that was here had absolutely no capacity to change what people do in the classroom.

Thomas's desire to change the district's supervision model and awareness of the skills of two of the CIR's of ELI prompted him to agree to district participation in ELI when invited.   The process of "walkthroughs" were developed and utilized, with the support of resources through ELI, to implement a system that involves teachers and administrators visiting classrooms for an identified purpose. The term "walkthrough" describes principals visiting teacher's classrooms for the purpose of observing instruction. Principals included teachers in this practice for learning instructional practices from peers. The principals and teachers visit to view a specific aspect of instruction, such as student engagement, and provide feedback to those observed through debriefing following the visit or walkthrough. Both districts indicated an increased usage of walkthroughs.

The teachers at River Side shared perceptions of clear expectations for differentiated instruction. Joyce, the middle school teacher, shared that the teachers shared the pre-assessments with administrators when observed and that daily lesson plans must include the "KUD's" or what students are expected to know, understand, and do.

Ownership versus Coercion

Judy, the elementary teacher at Green Ridge, described her manner of interacting with her peers as "giving (other teachers) their say, without telling them what to do. They have to come to it themselves." As an example, she compared the directive to post

objectives when having no understanding of the purpose or value to engaging teachers in

walkthroughs in which they as observers were made aware of the need for posted

objectives. When sharing her perceptions of the increased collaboration and practice of

walkthroughs, she stated, "It is becoming a part of who we are and what we do and it is a

greater expectation." Her example extends beyond the omission of a directive to include

the identification of the purpose or value of the action. She credited the coaching

provided by Bob, the teacher serving as a half day coach in her district, as being

instrumental in helping her and the other teacher leaders to interact with peers by

promoting understanding as the motivation for change rather than compliance with

directives and mandates.

The Green Ridge School District Vision Statement, developed collaboratively by

teachers and administrators, provides motivation for moral and aesthetic purposes of

evaluation, rather than coercion or the avoidance of punishment. The vision statement

indicates that teacher leadership and professional learning communities are valued and

supported.

> The professional staff of the Green Ridge School District is committed to
> continue to ensure a high-performing educational environment. The district is
> also committed to the support and development of professional learning
> communities, teacher leaders and teacher leadership teams in all of our schools. It
> is our belief that students win when leadership is shared among all stakeholders,
> creating a powerful and high-performing organization.

The teachers participate in teacher teams and complete tasks that exceed the

monthly two-hour delay start of school, not to avoid punishment, but rather for self-

fulfillment purposes. For example, Judy states, "we do more of it on our off time because

we know that the projects are valuable." Similarly, Bob, the high school teacher and

coach at Green Ridge, states "You put a lot into it so you are vested and it is a part of

you. You are the parent." The perception of the teachers of the value or purpose for the action indicates their willingness to engage or degree of motivation.

Student Achievement

While the principals at Green Ridge indicated numerous benefits of the teacher teams, they identified the need for a focus on student achievement. Dennis identified the need for measurable goals in relation to student achievement.

> Our vision also needs to focus more specifically on student achievement. It has to be measureable and it has to really focus on student achievement. We still have some work to do along those lines, but we are moving in that direction.

Similarly, Deborah identified the need to focus the work of the various teacher teams on student achievement.

> We need to make a huge shift and it's got to be very much PSSA focused. You know doing these internships are nice, assistantships are nice, but they don't publish that in the paper. (The newspaper) puts you up against (other districts) and they want to know how come you are not (achieving to the same level).

Sharon, the superintendent of River Side, too referred to the need to promote student achievement and noted the challenge of operating an organization with diverse economic status.

> My passion is to reach the 20% that are not achieving at grade level. When you mix the very privileged with those who have very little, it is sometimes difficult to find a balance in how you will provide each student with a great education. Growing students at the top can be as challenging as growing the emerging learners. In this setting, I have increased my passion to accomplish this.

Sharon identified the increase in student achievement on standardized test scores to be an outcome for her district that sustained energy.

Role of the Superintendent

The ELI meetings in both districts included teachers, principals, superintendents, and the CIR or Colleague in Residence. The CIRs were facilitators and resources for ELI teams and most are university professors or retired superintendents or principals who participated as active members of the team. Neither district indicated a focus on hierarchical roles. Karen spoke of the inability of an observer to distinguish between the roles of individuals at the meetings due to the active participation of all members. Both superintendents attended the ELI meetings, which indicated to the teachers that the work was of great value. Beyond attendance, the superintendent at Green Ridge assumed an active role serving as facilitator of the meetings. Alternatively, the Assistant superintendent at River Side was the facilitator. All teachers referenced the importance of the involvement and accessibility of the superintendent.

Schlechty identifies the full involvement of the superintendent in the school reform process as critical to systemic change because the superintendent has the authority and power to control resources. In both districts, the superintendent or assistant superintendent assumed an active role and utilized time and money to support team meetings and initiatives.   Judy alluded to the attendance of the superintendent and other administrators as motivational as those in the position to see that decisions made or plans to be implemented were supported and brought to fruition. Dennis, a middle school teacher at Green Ridge, supported Judy's statement.

> The good thing about the ELI team is that the decision makers are involved in it….you need to have the decision makers involved because they are major players in ELI and if they want the change it's going to get done…if it is

something we bring up and they agree with then it's going to get done so you need these change makers in the room.

Role of the Principal

The impact on the power and authority system was evident at Green Ridge as the building principals referred to their predecessors as having a top-down leadership style, unlike their current practice of shared leadership. George believes his leadership style supports the efforts of ELI as he considers himself a team member and collaborator. George described the former principal as a perfectionist and dictator who needed monthly meetings with the union to address issues or potential grievances. During his three years in the position of principal, only one such meeting was necessary to address such concerns. Deborah, the high school principal for eight years, also described the previous principal as having a "military style" to whom the teachers would initially indicate verbal agreement, but not with actions or follow through to his directives. Deborah identified her shared leadership style as necessary to work collaboratively with the staff to accomplish all that needs addressed to meet the needs of students. Similarly, Dennis described the culture of the intermediate school of which he was previously the principal as "militant" unlike the primary school which he finds to be collaborative in nature and increasingly so because of ELI.

The superintendent in this district also spoke about the role of the principal when the hierarchical boundaries narrow.

> Having deep conversations about our practice with teachers was something that at first my administrators were a little wary of because the superintendent was meeting with a core team of teacher representatives of the whole district to sit and have conversations. Not that I ignore them (principals), but I needed to get the teachers to feel an authentic part of the process which they could be involved in creating a preferred teaching environment for themselves as well as for the

organization. Finally, I brought the principals back in and we started meeting and having district-wide meetings.

Role of the Teacher

When reducing hierarchical roles to promote shared leadership, the superintendent noted that he anticipated being "tested" as teachers determined if they truly were given power and authority. He emphasized the need to communicate individually and to provide explanations when rejecting an idea or proposal to avoid the stifling of teacher leadership. He shared, "A lot of the development of the human capacity in an organization has to do with the leadership being really sensitive and intuitive about what motivates people." Thomas elaborated on the selection of with whom to share power and authority.

> The fundamental idea is to find out how to share power and authority with people who can use it productively. It does not mean you give it to everybody because some people do not know how to use it. You recognize skills and strengths of people and be willing to share that authority and power because this investment will come back tenfold.

Thomas cautioned school leaders to anticipate and beware those attempting to negate this process of empowerment.

> I think you have to anticipate. I think it is a process but as it grows it can be derailed. There are people who could try to sink the whole thing, who do not like the idea that teachers were involved at such a level of creating this type of thing because frankly the union wants to be six period a day. This is what we do. This is how we operate.

Bob, the high school teacher in Thomas's district supports Thomas's need for an explanation when not supporting an idea or request. Bob identifies the practice of providing a rationale as critical for the development of respect.

Several of the teachers indicated that an initial obstacle was the lack of understanding of the expanded role of teachers and the assumption that teachers were

doing the work of administration.   This misunderstanding was minimized as the

outcomes of teachers assuming additional leadership responsibilities became evident.

Andrew, the middle school teacher at Green Ridge, cited an example of teachers

perceiving ELI teachers doing the work of others as they provided professional

development that was formally conducted by outside consultants paid for their services.

This concern was addressed as Dennis shared "we would say well would you rather sit in

that meeting with them (outside presenters) or with one of your colleagues that you

respect and admire?"

<center>Organizational Change</center>

This section focuses on the perceptions of the individuals interviewed in regards

to individual and organizational factors that motivated, anchored, and sustained

involvement in the ELI school improvement initiative.

<center>*Vision of the Superintendent*</center>

The superintendent in both districts identified the value of a vision to motivate

and align efforts in changing current practices to provide an educational environment that

meets the needs of all students. Additionally, the values of the superintendents were

made apparent to the staff through ongoing conversations and practices.

Thomas cited the need for a superintendent to have identified what he believes

and values to maintain focus and direction. He explained these values and his vision of

schooling as he met regularly with teachers and principals.

> We can't continue to do what we're doing. We can't continue to organize the
> school day as we do. It follows a manufacturing model. I don't believe we will
> be sending in   five years 4,000 kids to school all day. The roles and
> responsibilities of teachers have got to change. The traditional roles of you teach
> six periods a day, that's going to change. I think if this organization with the

teachers thinking the way they are allowed to think and encouraged to think will make that transition easier.

<div align="center">*District-wide Reform*</div>

Sharon stated, "We needed to work on connecting all schools to one vision and one mission. There were few threads that tied everything together to move forward." She attributed the concentration of efforts at the school rather than district level as inhibiting progress. Sharon also indicated the value of decision-making based upon data.

> Data was not being collected, so decisions for the district and for individual students were being made without examining hard facts. Today we use data for making all decisions. We collect data, disaggregate data, study data, and use data to build lessons.

<div align="center">*Collaboration and Communication*</div>

The factors that anchored or sustained the efforts of the school reform team were identified as increased district-wide communication and collaboration, and perhaps most importantly the time scheduled regularly for these practices. Individuals at all levels acknowledged the increased amount of collaboration among the teachers participating in ELI and for all teachers. Richard, the elementary principal at River Side, commented on the increased communication between elementary and secondary teachers because of ELI. George, a middle school principal at Green Ridge, recognized the increased collaboration between fifth and sixth grade teachers to ease the transition of students from the intermediate school to the middle school, because of a teacher leadership team. George, and his fellow principals at Green Ridge, identified the increased collaboration and communication across the levels. The benefits to this increased collaboration were shared by George.

> I think there are things that are misunderstood between the buildings, like middle school or the high school. They don't understand because we are getting kids

ready for college. I think that has helped teachers who are specific to a certain grade level to understand the bigger picture a little bit better.

Communication was facilitated in both districts as time was scheduled regularly for this purpose and was viewed by all as a critical component to organizational change. Andrew, the middle school teacher at Green Ridge, shared his frustration with the past principal who failed to secure coverage for his classes so that he could attend an ELI meeting.   He perceived this action to indicate a low level of importance of the principal of the value and purpose of the meeting. On the contrary, his current principal provides coverage, which Andrew states "when the superintendent, the curriculum director, and (other teachers) are making time to attend, then they must feel it is important and then you feel that way too."

Communication, and perhaps listening more than speaking, provided a vehicle to address or overcome resistance for one participant.   Karen, the high school teacher at River Side, indicated that change was facilitated and opposition was addressed by listening. She stated "if you are going to move your culture forward, you have to pay attention to the people that are seeing things differently than you are. So how do you move them forward if you're not open to hearing? What I have to do is talk less and listen more." While Karen indicated the need to listen to naysayers, Thomas expressed a different opinion. "Although I am sure that there are naysayers out there, you don't hear them anymore. No one listens to them anymore. There is no fuel for that and they are outnumbered. People are excited about coming to work, staying after school, and creating new projects within their buildings to support their initiatives and the organization's initiatives.

All acknowledged increased collaboration between teachers and principals and most notably, teachers and the superintendent. Sharon shared her belief in the value of collaboration with structures in place to provide time for her to collaborate with teachers. Sharon shared, "No one works in isolation. High school teachers spend time at the middle school and middle school teacher at the high school. The same exchange happens between the elementary and the middle school." She indicated that the teachers value these discussions and stated "I often forget that they see me as the superintendent – a person who has a certain amount of power and may not be approachable."

The scheduled time that was provided for the collaboration and communication was what Thomas referred to as the "fuel" for the school improvement efforts. The scheduled meetings provide the time in both districts for communication with central office, principals, and teachers of all levels. Collaboration facilitated the development of teacher ownership as hierarchical roles were minimized and teachers assumed a more active role.

Teacher Leadership

Both superintendents recognized the talents of teachers and valued teacher leadership. Thomas indicated that the impetus for creating teacher teams was initiated by a small group of teacher leaders from the high school who approached him regarding the expansion of the practice district-wide. He referred to these teachers as "a gift" and explained that the role of one of these teachers was modified to be a "coach" for the teachers and principals in promoting teacher leadership at all levels.

Sharon identified the development of teacher leadership as a current practice at River Side. She cited the practice of teachers training other teachers and involvement in

site-based teams as examples. The modeling of best practices by teachers for colleagues

was noted by Sharon as important. She described teacher leadership as emerging in

various stages.

> Some have been very eager and ready to lead others while some have continued to
> learn, but have not stepped up to the next level of actively participating in
> walkthroughs or presenting to peers.

<p align="center"><i>Responsibility to Professional Learning of Peers</i></p>

Modifications to organizational practices in the areas of supervision and

professional development occurred in both school districts. Supervision practices

formerly utilized by principals to observe teachers expanded to include ELI teachers for

the purpose of professional growth rather than evaluation. This practice involved

increased collaboration and communication between teachers and principals in regards to

effective instructional practices.   Additionally, professional development was impacted

in both districts as past practices of one day presentations by experts outside the district

were replaced with teachers providing training to colleagues, participating in visitations

to other school districts, hosting other districts to view practices, and presenting at

national conferences.

A sense of responsibility in the development of other teacher leaders was apparent

in the responses of the teachers.   Karen, a high school teacher with thirty-eight years of

experience, stressed the need for her to help develop other teacher leaders. She stated, "I

have been trying really hard to make sure other people feel the opportunity to be a leader

and try to find the thing that makes them feel more of a leader."   Similarly, Bob, a high

school teacher at Green Ridge with forty-two years of experience, identified the

development of teacher leaders within his district as a beneficial outcome of the process.

The question posed to the ELI team at Green Ridge of "What does it mean to teach in Green Ridge?" led to deep conversations of the shared beliefs and expectations by the teachers of best instructional practices. The ELI team identified an acronym to organize the expectations according to Focus, Instruction, Rigor, and Environment or "FIRE". The team identified a common understanding of each of the four areas with a descriptor of each. Focus is to provide clear expectations of articulated goals and objectives. Instruction is to vary instruction to actively engage all students to think critically and creatively. Rigor is to establish high expectations and promote intense effort necessary to maximize student achievement. Lastly, environment is to create a positive, collaborative, safe, and supportive culture that respects diversity. Teachers participated in walkthroughs to gather specific classroom examples to determine what each of these four areas look like for students and teachers. The result is a document that outlines the expectations for teaching at this district for grades kindergarten to twelve. Thomas, the superintendent, identified the value of this document in "coming from within the organization" and that the teachers are defining the roles. Thomas also stated that while the product or document is important, the process of determining best instructional practices by teachers is most important. Additionally, Thomas referred to the implications that this process and product will have upon hiring, induction, supervision, and evaluation. In this manner, change occurs as teachers identify, communicate, and participate in the monitoring of shared best instructional practices.

The principals of both districts indicated that their participation on the district-wide school reform team was expected by the superintendent and that they did not have a clear purpose initially for participation on this team. Richard states,

I think basically it was our superintendent who signed us up and we just participated from that standpoint. I don't think we all knew what this was about until we went out to this very first meeting… So I really didn't seek it out myself, that was the superintendent."

Dennis, an elementary principal at Green Ridge stated, "It (participation) is an expectation, but we are not forced to (participate), everyone is very interested in participating."

Alignment to Building Initiatives

Although the principals had not sought this opportunity, the principals at River Side identified how their building team was utilized to advance initiatives at the school level. Bradley, for example, identified his school initiative as having "a bit more focus and intensity to (the teachers) than initially the district level focuses." His building initiative was to achieve school recognition on the "Schools to Watch" list. He cited his team's motivation as being attributed to the clear vision and path in accomplishing the goal.

I think the whole idea of just driving for that vision of being a model middle school not only focuses the staff, if focuses the leadership too. Then all of a sudden you start developing this sort of ground spring of passion for becoming a model middle school and achieving excellence and whatever it is that you are doing.

Richard's elementary school has the highest percentage of socio-economic diversity of the district. Therefore, his school initiative was to develop a more student-centered and responsive learning environment. He described the connection of the district goals in the utilization of data and implementation of differentiated instruction practices to respond to student needs. He shared, "I think we were just trying to make ELI connect with what our district initiatives are. It doesn't make sense to have something completely separate and all over the place." In this manner, the process and

structure of the district-wide school reform team was used to promote initiatives of the principals.

Shared Leadership Style of Principal

The middle and high school principals of Green Ridge identified their style of leadership as being conducive to this high level of teacher leadership. George, the middle school principal at Green Ridge, cited the change from a top-down leadership style to shared leadership that promoted ownership and empowerment.

> I think my leadership style is a good fit in helping move ELI forward….I am a team   player and collaborator.. I have shown the staff here that I do care about what they think and feel and we do want to work together in collaboration on issues and to move them ahead. That has been helpful. There is buy in and there is the belief that I am approachable which I sure hope I am and that we can sit down and discuss an issue before it becomes a hot button issue where people are upset and angry…. I think we all feel empowered and in some way that we are part of the decision-making process and that this isn't just some quirky idea or plan a superintendent has but rather that we all believe in this.

Similarly, Deborah, the high school principal at Green Ridge, also credited her style of shared leadership to promoting teacher ownership and action unlike the former principal who had a "military" approach in which teachers would respond positively and verbally to his demands, but then "they would kind of do whatever they wanted." Both principals indicated that teachers find their style of shared leadership to be motivational and accommodating for teacher leadership.

Cultural Change

The third section focuses on the cultural changes perceived by the teachers, principals, and superintendents that facilitated efforts in school improvement. Senge (1999) defines culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that have been learned by the members of their group." The organizational changes described in the previous

section occurred as the members of the ELI team collectively examined shared basic assumptions and modified assumptions and/or practices accordingly. Organizational and cultural changes are deeply interrelated and challenging to view in isolation. Therefore, there is much overlap in the perceptions of organizational and cultural changes.

Clear and Common Vision

In both districts, the teachers indicated that they are involved in meaningful work leading to the fulfillment of a vision, which facilitates action. Joyce credits her building principal for bringing clarity and purpose to the team and believes that the worst thing is "when you have a committee and it is not doing anything." Similarly, Karen credits the assistant superintendent for providing clarity. She stated, "He's the type of person that likes to pick a focus. He's all about clarity and defining things correctly." Bob, the high school teacher and coach at Green Ridge, identified lack of purpose as the primary reason for a decline in teacher motivation, along with lack of validation by administration.

George, the middle school principal at Green Ridge, noted the value in the district's vision for maintaining clarity and purpose when outside pressures tend to distract or impede progress. He referred to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation as a possible hindrance if the focus is merely on standardized test scores.

> The development of our mission statement has deepened my sense of looking and thinking about the actions that we take and the outcomes that are more than just making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) and that are beyond just making sure that we use words like rigorous curriculum. We must have clear expectations that we are looking at students more as human beings and wanting them to be successful in life at whatever their passion happens to be and to support that in any way we can versus we have these kids who take standardized tests really well. Our mission statement includes the arts and need for developing 21st century learners, not just some canned phrase, but our mission is very comprehensive.

Bradley attributed the facilitation of the process of change in his middle school to the clear purpose and path of achieving status of a model school.

> We had a clear goal in mind.. and then started breaking down what it would take to get there. That was sort of the motivating thing, just having clear vision and clear paths to take. I think the same was true for the staff, having sort of a clear vision of what we wanted for the building. The staff, they easily saw that as a benefit to them as professionals here, being recognized as a School to Watch.

This vision led to the identification of a disparity between beliefs and practices, which led to change. Bradley stated, "Addressing the brutal fact that an eighth grader failing three or four classes and being sent to the high school is just not acceptable." The result led to the implementation of a secondary RTII (Response To Instruction and Intervention) model with an organized and consistent support system such as after-school programs, tutoring during the school day, a new summer program, and summer intervention program for students who have failed courses even after all the interventions have been put into place during the school year. Additional changes made to the middle school were shifts in positions and the manipulation of the master schedule. According to Bradley, "some big things we just had to do and it was natural doing them because everything we had to do to achieve the goal."

Richard, the elementary principal at River Side, noted a similar need and improvement with "I think we did a good job before, but now we do not let kids fall through the cracks." The outcome of the team's work led to what he describes as "way more student-centered than we used to be." He shared that data guided their work and improved practices in meeting student needs.

Continuous Improvement

The superintendent of River Side, referred to previous accomplishments that fostered "living on a reputation" that promoted complacency. Change was promoted as they began to examine needs of students in the 21st century and "didn't like some of the things we saw." She credited the collection and analysis of data to promote change. Similarly, Bob, the high school teacher and coach at Green Ridge, referred to dissatisfaction with the status quo as he stated, "Every year we want to tinker, even if it is good. Don't ever be satisfied. If you are at the top, then you are sliding backwards." The belief in the need for continuous improvement was evident as individuals recognized strengths without overlooking areas in need of attention.

Ownership, Recognition, and Empowerment

Although the purpose of the district team was unclear, the teachers in both districts agreed to participate when asked by their principals. The teachers indentified the accomplishments of their work as the reward, which facilitated feelings of empowerment and ownership. They indicated that the request to participate on the committee itself was recognition of their leadership by administrators, which is motivational.

Judy, elementary teacher at Green Ridge, finds great value in the process as she stated, "We share, brainstorm, and problem solve and do things that I think are unheard of in other districts. We have really learned a lot. I wish all teachers could rotate to be a part of this."

Karen, high school teacher at River Side, indicated that she was selected by the superintendent because of her role as union president, her longevity in the profession, and her willingness to speak out in a professional manner. Karen credited the superintendent

and assistant superintendent for listening and respecting her opinion "enough to come and ask (me) more about it (her opinion)." Karen labeled teacher empowerment as the vehicle for promoting and sustaining the efforts of the school reform team. She indicated that younger teachers are being "raised on empowerment" and "it is a given to them as opposed to a privilege."

Like the teachers, the principals and superintendents attributed the motivation of teachers to ownership of the accomplishments. Richard, elementary principal at River Side, ascribed teacher buy in to motivation.

> That's the good part of having the teachers there (at ELI meetings) because there is teacher feedback, this will work, this won't work. When you have teacher buy in, it's not just an autocratic administrative thing or declaration that we are going to do this. Now it becomes a part of them, teachers are saying this. This is what we need to get done. This is what we need to do.

George, the middle school principal at Green Ridge, identified authentic accomplishments as opposed to "lip service from administrators" as maintaining teacher enthusiasm. Deborah, the high school principal at Green Ridge, credited the sustained momentum of teacher leadership to the feeling of accomplishment. "I think they (teachers) all really care and they like doing the projects and they just keep going. It's kind of amazing the time that they put into it that nobody realizes…. the magnitude of what these teams have put together and done. It's incredible what they have accomplished." Thomas, superintendent of Green Ridge, said "When people are given the opportunity to put their name on something, it is amazing what they can do as compared to you just telling them what to do and when to do it."

Bob frequently referred to the establishment of relationships between the various participants of the school reform team, especially the superintendent with the teachers. He spoke frequently of the development of trust among these individuals. Judy, the elementary teacher in his district, commented on the accessibility of the superintendent. She identified the superintendent's interest in knowing first-hand her successes and challenges as a team member. Thomas's establishment of a rapport with his team appeared to be a major factor in motivating and sustaining change within his district.

At River Side School District, the assistant superintendent appeared to be the person in a similar position in regards to accessibility and approachableness by the teachers. Karen and Joyce, teachers in this district, credited the assistant superintendent for providing the direction for the team and his strength as a listener to promoting a positive working relationship.

Chapter Summary

The school reform team in both districts comprised the superintendent, all building level principals, and teachers selected for their demonstrated leadership. A district-wide focus developed after a year or more of ongoing conversations in which the superintendents shared their vision and developed a common purpose among the team. Although teachers and principals described the initial phase of the school reform process as ambiguous, the superintendents stated their initial purpose for district involvement and vision for the efforts of this collaborative process. The outcome of the initial phase of ambiguity is that all team members shared clearly identified and common purpose(s) of

their work. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, ownership and understanding of the need for the purpose(s) of the work was apparent among all team members.

A systemic, rather than linear, approach to school reform was recognized in the school reform process of both school districts. The perceptions of the school reform team in both school districts identified modifications to the six social systems as defined by Schlechty. Participants frequently referred to the establishment of purpose and goal clarity within the district as valuable components of the school reform process. The alignment of the district-wide goals with building initiatives was identified as critical to sustainability. The changes in culture facilitated organizational changes such as increased teacher leadership. Teacher leadership increased as teacher leaders provided professional development, participated in Walkthroughs and assumed ownership of learning for all teachers. In this manner, the boundary system was expanded to include non-ELI teachers in professional learning and increased opportunities for leadership. The recognition of administrators of teacher leadership facilitated a flattening of hierarchical roles and shared leadership. Therefore, teacher leadership led to a shift in Schlechty's evaluation and power and authority systems as teachers assumed greater responsibility and ownership.

Change was facilitated as the vision evolved and team members identified a disparity between beliefs and practices. Time for collaboration and communication were identified as critical for the examination of common beliefs and development of understanding for ownership of action. The teachers indicated increased feelings of empowerment, ownership, and validation as a result of participation in this process. The sustainability of the efforts were perceived by these individuals as based upon the

continuation of the structures, such as regularly scheduled time and continued administrative support, that currently support the efforts.

The perceptions of the participants and data collected in observations and documents in this chapter were analyzed and synthesized to answer the research questions in chapter four. Chapter five provides the conclusions and recommendations in response to the research questions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examines the process of school reform efforts in two school districts to identify if and how changes have been made to the organizational, cultural, and social systems considered critical to systemic transformation. The perceptions of the individuals were gathered and analyzed in chapter four in relation to Schlechty's framework of social systems to identify if and how the organization was changed as a result of the implementation of district leadership teams including superintendents, principals, and teachers. The implications of the conclusions and recommendations may be of value for future school reform efforts. The analysis of chapter four provides the foundation to answer the research questions.

Summary of the Study

The perceptions of individuals were gathered via personal interviews to answer the following four research questions. Observations of school reform meetings and documents such as agendas and meeting minutes were used to support the findings and conclusions. The findings are reported for each interview question, although there is much overlap as the findings indicate systemic rather than linear changes.

1. How were the social systems impacted and how were these changes facilitated?

2. What organizational and individual factors motivated, anchored, and sustained involvement in this initiative?

3. What cultural changes were perceived by teachers and principals to have occurred and how were these changes facilitated?

4. How were disruptive, as opposed to technical, changes made to the organizational system as perceived by teachers and principals and how were these changes facilitated?

Findings

Question One

The impact of the team's efforts on implementing transformational change rather than reform was examined. Schlechty (2009) differentiates between reform and transform by describing the first as change designed to improve the performance of current systems; whereas the latter is change intended to "make possible things that have never been done by the organization" (p. 3). Schlechty promotes the need for transformational change to the organization by changing the culture and the structures within the organization. The culture and structures of the organization are impacted by six critical systems that are operational in a school organization: Recruitment and Induction, Knowledge Transmission System, Power and Authority System, Evaluation System, Directional System, and Boundary System.   The emphasis of these six critical systems, according to Schlechty, determines if the organization functions as a bureaucracy or a learning organization. A bureaucracy is existent when the Power and Authority, Evaluation, and Boundary systems are emphasized and facilitate formal control. On the contrary, a learning organization is promoted when the systems of focus are the Direction, Knowledge Development and Transmission, and Recruitment and Induction systems. While the classification of the organization is determined by the emphasis of the systems within the organization, Schlechty notes that all six systems exist in every organization and that no organization, including schools, reflect either a perfect

bureaucracy or learning organization. The first research question explores how these six social systems were impacted and how these changes were facilitated.

The perceptions of individuals in both school districts indicate that efforts attributed to the systems were associated with a learning organization as opposed to a bureaucracy. The identification of the impact of the school reform process on all six critical systems identified by Schlechty and more importantly, the way in which the school reform process influenced these systems is significant in making this determination.

The teachers and principals in both districts described the initial stage of the school reform process to be ambiguous; however, the superintendents shared specific purposes and direction for their respective ELI teams. The time may be necessary to provide for the team to form and to complete an internal audit to determine direction. Clarity and purpose materialized as the ELI team sought and found direction within the ELI team specific to the needs of the district. The ELI team found that the direction was located within the district rather than from the outside, such as the ELI organization or other school districts. If the superintendent had merely provided the purpose initially, teachers may have perceived this as a top-down directive. In this manner, the ELI team gained purpose and value as meaning came from within the organization. Additionally, the inclusion of teachers and principals in the process developed ownership.

Teachers and principals in both districts noted the involvement and accessibility of the superintendent to the effectiveness of the school reform process. The presence of the superintendent recognizes the value of the work of the school reform team. Additionally, the accessibility provides the opportunity for the superintendent to reinforce

the vision for the teachers and principals. Teachers indicate a willingness to take risks and act when they know that their actions align with the vision.

While the superintendent must be involved in the school reform process, he or she does not necessarily need to directly facilitate the process. As in the case of the River Side school district, the assistant superintendent facilitated the process. The teachers identified the assistant superintendent as approachable and credited his work for providing direction and clarity. Additionally, rather than attributing the focus of ELI and practices to the vision statement, teachers and principals at River Side attributed the development of the focus to the assistant superintendent. The teachers and principals indicated that the focus had changed several times and currently differentiated instruction is the focus. The superintendent, however, identified differentiated instruction as the initial and continued goal of ELI. In this regard, the vision of the superintendent in promoting differentiated instruction to meet the needs of the economically diverse population became the focus of the ELI team. However, rather than as a directive to the team from the superintendent, the assistant superintendent facilitated the ELI team in determining differentiated instruction as the focus.

The mission statement developed collaboratively at Green Ridge was the result of the year-long process of identifying common beliefs and a vision of the future. This statement provided a foundation for other decisions, such as the science program, and for practices, such as the modifications to the senior year. The teachers and principals in this district referred frequently to the mission statement and the impact upon practices. While River Side teachers and principals attributed the assistant superintendent for providing

direction, Green Ridge teachers, principals, and the superintendent referred to the vision statement.

Several teachers shared their belief that the superintendent or principal selected them for participation because they ask questions, professionally disagree, or challenge the status quo. Of the five teachers interviewed, two have six years of experience, one has fifteen, another thirty-eight, and the final teacher has forty-two years of experience. This range of years of experience indicates that those selecting participants value the skills and input of teachers beginning their careers as well as those who are veteran teachers.

The willingness of the teachers to engage in the process of school reform without having a clear sense of the purpose indicates that the goal was not the motivation for participation, but rather the recognition of the leadership of the individuals asked to participate. Considering that the purpose changed several times in one of the districts provides benefit to factors other than motivation based upon purpose for sustainability. Additionally, the motivation of the individuals sustained for a minimum of four years, from the initial involvement during the summer of 2006 to the interviews during the summer of 2010.

The principals in both districts supported the practice of shared leadership. Most referred to their predecessors as leading in a top-down manner, which would not work in the present system. The situation or expectation of the superintendents may have facilitated or necessitated shared leadership by the principals. Although teachers indicated a sense of shared leadership and empowerment, they still looked to those in higher positions for direction.

Principals, however, may be less inclined to share decision-making responsibilities when pressures exist, such as the possibility of identification of their school not meeting state expectations.   At Green Ridge, the elementary and high school principals indicate the need for teacher teams to focus on student achievement due to achievement scores for subgroups narrowly meeting Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) levels of expectation. This indicates that while the principals identify themselves as proponents of shared leadership and recognize the ownership and empowerment associated with this style of leadership, they indicate the need to provide direction when stakes are raised. In this manner, shared leadership is situational.

The superintendents in both districts provided evidence of systems thinking with school reform not being an isolated process, but rather a process that impacts other groups within and outside of the organization and other components of the educational process. Thomas incorporated the teacher teams into the ELI process and identified the perspectives of stakeholders, such as parents, teachers' union, and school board members, and planned accordingly. Sharon also demonstrated an awareness of the perspectives of such groups. Although both Thomas and Sharon considered the school board in relation to the school reform process, the inclusion of the school board in the process varied by district and for specific reasons.   Sharon included the school board to the extent that she kept them informed. Thomas chose to limit the involvement of the school board to shelter the process from negativity.   The practices of these two districts indicate that while consideration must be given to the involvement of the school board, the relationship and involvement is situational.

Teachers, principals, and superintendents in both districts spoke of the perspective of the teachers' union and the development of teacher leadership. The teachers participating on the ELI team acknowledged the desire to assume additional leadership responsibilities but realized the conflicting interest of union leaders who stated that such actions should be compensated. The principals and superintendents indicated an awareness of the conflicting allegiances of the ELI teachers and minimized these conflicting interests by including union members on the ELI team. Additionally, conflicting interests were minimized with increased communication, a sense of empowerment among teachers to achieve the shared vision and goals, and the recognition by all teachers of the need and value for teacher leadership . Additionally, the ELI teams in both districts incorporated non-ELI members into the process, eliminating resistance or unnecessary boundaries. School improvement efforts do not exist within a vacuum, therefore, it is critical that the superintendent consider the perspectives of all factions and act accordingly to promote and protect school reform efforts.

Participation in ELI affected the supervision and professional development systems in both districts. Teachers and principals identified an increased practice of teachers presenting to peers and participating in walkthroughs. The promotion of teacher leadership empowered teachers to assume responsibilities for training one another and sharing information. The commitment of River Side in providing professional development was evident as increased funding supported training to all teachers by a national consultant. Additionally, both districts committed time for teachers to participate in walkthroughs, to visit other ELI districts, and to meet collaboratively for the purposes of sharing.

Question Two

The second research question explores the organizational and individual factors that motivated, anchored, and sustained involvement in the initiative. The reduction of hierarchical or top-down structures facilitated organizational change in both districts. Teachers noted the "flattening" of power positions as the superintendents attended ELI meetings, sought their input, and utilized resources to support efforts. The teachers indicated a sense of empowerment, which was motivational, and promoted their participation and implementation of change. In this sense, a linear rather than hierarchical power structure promoted organizational change.

The teachers identified the district's commitment to the process through the time and resources allocated to facilitate the goals of ELI. Scheduled time for collaboration promoted communication and a common understanding of goals that facilitates organizational change. Both districts utilized the first year to develop the shared beliefs and values prior to attempting to adjust structures. The teachers, principals, and superintendents shared perceptions of understanding the purpose for actions. Time provided opportunities for the implementation of practices aligned with the purpose, such as data analysis and sharing of differentiated strategies. Both districts implemented the practice of walkthroughs, which promote continuous growth and a transparent learning environment. A learning community is promoted as teachers observe one another and discuss instructional practices for the purpose of improvement rather than evaluation. Teachers in both districts presented to peers on in-service days for the purpose of professional development. Both teams perceived and attributed the sustainability of the team's efforts to the structured time for such practices and collaboration.

School reform is a district-wide process in which district and school initiatives must be aligned. Both superintendents provided a vision for the district and supported school level initiatives that aligned with the district's goals. The principals commented on the importance of connecting ELI to school level initiatives and shared specific examples of accomplishment. Changes such as the use of data to monitor student progress at Richard's elementary building and recognition as a "School to Watch" for Bradley's middle school were outcomes of the organizational change of ELI at the building level. In this manner, ELI was not viewed as a separate program but rather as an integral process of promoting teacher leadership to fulfill the vision of the district.

The outcomes and results of the organizational changes anchored and sustained the efforts. The findings in response to how cultural changes were facilitated identify how the culture promoted organizational change.

Question Three

What cultural changes were perceived by teachers and principals to have occurred and how were these changes facilitated?

The culture in both districts indicated a belief in the practice of continuous improvement and not being satisfied with the status quo. Evidence in both districts indicates current and previous involvement in other school improvement initiatives. Jim Collin's (2001) ideas were also evident as team members identified the need to avoid complacency by settling with good rather than great results. The vision or clear purpose guided improvement efforts, not just change for the sake of change. Superintendents, principals, and teachers spoke of the need to ask difficult questions, supportive of Collin's "facing the brutal facts." The comfort level of teachers in voicing

disagreements and asking these tough questions of supervisors indicates a high level of trust. Time spent together communicating and collaborating facilitated this level of trust, which developed over several years.

A shared understanding was evident among team members that school improvement requires leadership of administrators as well as teachers. Superintendents and principals recognized the value of teacher leaders as they scheduled time to listen to their ideas and for teacher leaders to share with peers. Teachers also recognized the value of their leadership and assumed the role of developing teacher leadership among their peers, such as Karen who spoke of her retirement. The teacher leaders identified a sense of responsibility of learning for all teachers and students within the school and district.

Teachers attributed the sustainability of their efforts to the recognition of their leadership skills, the empowerment they found in the process, and the ownership they identified in the outcomes of the process. The principals identified the outcomes of the process, such as increased teacher leadership, teacher participation in walkthroughs and increased involvement of teachers in professional development as contributors to the sustainability of the school reform process.

Of note is the number of years both Thomas and Sharon have served as superintendents, and more particularly, within their current district. Thomas served as superintendent for ten years, five with Green Ridge. Sharon has served as superintendent for sixteen years with River Side. The number of years in the role of superintendent with the same district provides the opportunity to develop relationships with people and to gain an understanding of the culture, structures, and social systems. In my opinion, it would be more challenging for a superintendent new to a district to engage in the school

reform process of this magnitude without first having time to develop the relationships and to understand the culture, structures, and social systems.

Question Four

How were disruptive, as opposed to technical, changes made to the organizational system as perceived by teachers and principals and how were these changes facilitated?

Technical changes are labeled by Heifetz (1994) as addressing routine problems in contrast to disruptive changes that demand innovation and learning. Heifetz defines disruptive work as "learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and reality they face (p. 22)."

The ELI teams engaged in change to align practices with an identified vision. This "misalignment" between the vision and current practices became the leverage for change. The superintendent or assistant superintendent provided the vision and purposes, which promoted disruptive change. In addition to the superintendent or assistant superintendent providing this direction, the teachers and principals were motivated to act as the superintendent clearly communicated the direction and supported actions with his or her time and resources.

The teachers in both districts described their work as uncommon in other districts. Additionally, the teachers described the involvement of their district with other ELI districts to be limiting in value as their work was already beyond what was occurring in other districts and thus limited what they could learn from others. The teachers recognized the value in networking for the other ELI school districts to learn from River

Side and Green Ridge. This sharing with other districts promoted recognition and sustainability for practices.

The principals and teachers indicated that their work would continue in the absence of ELI. Although they noted benefits to having the participation of the CIR's and networking with other districts, teachers and principals viewed their work as continuing regardless of the involvement in ELI. In this manner, ELI functioned effectively in promoting the process of school reform, but the continuation of the district in the school reform process is not dependent upon the continuation of ELI.

The principals identified the superintendent's or assistant superintendent's vision as providing clarity and direction for their work as well.   The misalignment of the current practices with that of the vision promoted participation of principals in disruptive change. The principals identified the need and value of the work of teacher leaders in fulfilling the vision. Additionally, the principals identified the support of the superintendent or assistant superintendent in supporting the work through time and resources.

While change was prompted with the discrepancy between the current status and the vision, actions were motivated and sustained with a clear direction in moving forward, recognition of the leadership skills of those involved, and structured time for communication and collaboration. In this manner superintendents and principals maintain balance with recognition of efforts and achievements with a focus on continuous improvement and dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Implications for Professional Practice

In both districts, the school improvement efforts were very specific to the district, indicating that another district cannot and should not follow a prescriptive path to school reform. Neither school reform team found the answer to be learned in another district by networking but rather by the building of capacity of the teachers and administrators within the district itself. The commonalities of the processes described in both districts provide direction for other districts seeking to engage vertical and horizontal leadership teams in the school improvement process. For example, the leadership of central office staff, or more specifically the superintendent or assistant superintendent, is critical for the process of school reform to be initiated and sustained. The vision of the district must be determined at this level and continuously communicated to all teachers and principals for change to occur. Although the teachers and principals indicated ambiguity in the initial stages of the process, the superintendents had a vision from the start. The process requires time for the team to analyze beliefs, values, purpose, and roles prior to developing a clear direction. Knowledge of this process assists teams in continuing efforts amidst initial stages of confusion and uncertainty.

The superintendent's role in providing recognition of teacher leadership is critical for motivating and sustaining teacher involvement in the process. Time given by superintendent to communicate directly, talking and listening, to teachers is critical to develop a common purpose and clear pathway for fulfilling the vision. In addition to structured time to communicate with the school improvement team, it is necessary for the school reform team to be allocated time and resources to share with peers and to complete actions in the fulfillment of the vision.

School leaders, both principals and superintendents, need to maintain a balance in continuously recognizing the efforts of the individuals involved in the school reform process while simultaneously providing direction for future steps. In this manner, motivation and sustainability are maintained without complacency of the status quo.

Superintendents and principals must consider the systemic impact of school reform and be prepared to identify other areas that must change to support the fulfillment of the district's vision. As identified by the two districts in this process, all six social systems as defined by Schlechty are impacted in the process of developing a learning organization. The means in which the social systems are impacted provide for a learning organization or a bureaucracy. Superintendents in both districts attended to the directional, knowledge transmission, and recruitment and induction systems to provide a vision with the involvement of teacher leaders. A commitment was made to build the capacity of these teacher leaders with the necessary knowledge, skill, time, and resources to progress in achieving the vision. Simultaneously, the superintendent attended to the social systems of power and authority, boundary, and evaluation systems to minimize competing obstacles.

The role of ELI in providing the motivation to the superintendent in identifying a school improvement team and committing to involvement in the process proved successful. The networking of the CIR's in providing recognition to districts based on their strengths by promoting visitations by other school districts seeking such information also proved valuable for motivation to one district and a means of learning for the other. The ELI team members perceive the CIR as a facilitator to promote the district's progress in achieving the vision, especially when seeking resources or expertise outside of the

school district. ELI team members attribute ownership of the school reform

achievements to the efforts of the ELI team.

<center>Recommendations for Further Study</center>

It is important to note that only two of the nine districts included in the pilot phase

of Eli were analyzed for the purpose of this study. Therefore, the practices and findings

of these two school reform teams cannot be generalized to the other ELI districts.

Additionally, as the collection of data for this research has shown, the school reform

process for each district is unique in that the purpose originates within the district and is

greatly impacted by other factors specific to the district. However, the similarities

between the two school reform teams provide insight and direction to the use of vertical

and horizontal leadership teams for the purpose of school reform. A future study

including additional districts involved in this process or another similar school reform

initiative would provide further insight.

Secondly, due to limitations of time, only a number of ELI members were

interviewed for each team. Only individuals serving as members of the ELI team since

inception were invited to participate in the study.   A future study including the

perceptions of teachers not on the school reform team would provide further insight.

Additionally, the perceptions of individuals not a part of the team since inception may

provide more insight into the induction process of becoming a team member of a school

reform team.

<center>Conclusions</center>

District reform, rather than school reform, may be a more comprehensive term for

the systemic approach to transforming the organization. Both school districts in this

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study established a common purpose and direction for the district as a whole, rather than for individual schools or classrooms. This district-wide focus in changing the culture and organization included the collective efforts of the teachers, principals, and superintendents. Kline, Kuklis, and Zmuda (2004) support this focus on the system as a whole as opposed to the belief that one can be more successful individually.

The role of the superintendent in a district-wide reform process may vary slightly in presentation; however, common elements exist and appear necessary. "Systems thinking" by the superintendent is critical and recognized by Senge (2006) in maintaining focus, predicting unforeseen forces, and to bringing about the desired change. All participants repeatedly referenced the focus or vision as necessary for progress in the school reform process. While participants in one district referred to the vision statement, participants in the other district identified the role of a person in providing the focus. Senge identifies "building shared vision" as one of his five disciplines, which is accomplished through personal contact and ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders over time. The first phase of the district reform process in both districts was utilized for the development of the shared vision. The role of the superintendent varied in this process as one assumed the role of the facilitator and the assistant superintendent fulfilled this role in the other district. One can conclude that the importance is that the process of developing a shared vision occurs and that the superintendent is involved, however, involvement may vary in presentation.

Professional development was a priority for both district reform teams in that learning for all staff members became on ongoing process rather than isolated unconnected presentations. Michael Fullan (2005) supports this practice of ongoing team

learning. Fullan identifies increased capacity building when a comprehensive approach is utilized that requires teams to work together throughout the year. Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt (1998) refer to this practice as organizational learning, which is perhaps more important than the individual learning of teachers.

A changed practice in both districts was the inclusion of teachers in the Walkthrough process. With a focus on learning, Elmore (2000) identifies the privacy of practice as the enemy of improvement. A supervision model in which only the principal observes teachers teaching, indicates that only the principal possesses the knowledge and skill to provide feedback to help teachers grow professionally. The practice of teachers visiting one another's classrooms on a regular basis for the purpose of learning from one another increases the responsibility of learning by all teachers. This practice of teachers participating in Walkthroughs was supported by the findings in this study as the participants assumed ownership for the learning of their colleagues. Roland Barth (2001) identifies the responsibility of learning by all members as a characteristic of a community of learners as opposed to an organization, institution, or bureaucracy.

The perceptions of the participants interviewed and the data collected via observations and document analysis, portray the team's focus on the establishment of direction with a clear vision, the sharing of knowledge by and among all teachers, and the development of teacher leadership as teachers supported and provided feedback to one another. The emphases on these practices align with Phillip Schlechty's description of a learning community as opposed to a bureaucracy. Additionally, the cultural and organizational changes in these areas negated the need for bureaucratic practices such as maintaining a chain of command, holding individuals accountable, and the delineation of

responsibilities. The superintendents in this study demonstrated an awareness of the interconnectedness of these social systems as defined by Schlechty, as they recognized and addressed the impact of changes in one area upon another.

The participants in this study displayed a high degree of intrinsic motivation. The teachers identified the source of their initial motivation to the recognition of their leadership skills when asked to participate on the school reform team. As the team utilized the initial phase of the process to the development of a shared vision and organizational goals, the teachers referenced the fulfillment of the vision and goals as the source of motivation. Such practices align with transformational leadership, as described by Burns (1979). Commitment was evident among the team members as they identified common purposes for their respective teams.

The teachers identified increased responsibilities and referenced the importance of the ongoing conversations with the superintendent in one district and the assistant superintendent in the other. The noted importance of these interactions between the superintendent or assistant superintendent as the "leader" and the teachers as the "followers" supports Spillane's (2006) description of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership, according to Spillane, is not merely the distribution of responsibilities, but the dynamic interaction or practice of leadership between the leaders and followers. These interactions provided a continued focus on the direction and provided teachers the willingness to act when they know their actions align with the vision.

Distributed leadership requires a building principal to determine who to involve and how to go about sharing responsibility and authority (Harris, 2004). The principals in this study identified their style of leadership conducive to sharing authority. The

selection of who to involve in the school reform process did not appear to be a major challenge for these principals. One superintendent in this study recognized the level of discomfort for principals initially when he was meeting with teachers to foster commitment building and increased leadership of teachers. His selection of a recognized teacher leader within the district to serve as a half day coach to both the building principals and teachers to facilitate the process documents his knowledge and the importance of this shift in leadership styles of the principals.

Participants in both school districts noted the increased practice of teacher leadership. The superintendents, principals, and teachers recognized the value of teachers assuming increased responsibilities in the de-privatization of teaching and responsibility for the learning of colleagues as well as students.   Practices in both districts appeared aligned with Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2001) description of a "community of teacher learners and leaders." These teacher leaders influenced colleagues to change through positive relationships. One teacher shared her perception of the need for her colleagues to gain an understanding for the proposed change rather than following a directive or command.

Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan's (2000) third and highest level of teacher leadership appeared to exist in both districts as teacher leadership extended beyond the development of formal roles or positions to an integration of teacher leadership in daily collaboration. The teachers identified administrative support and ongoing time for collaboration as necessary components for their roles as teacher leaders. These perceptions support the challenges identified by Donaldson and Johnson (2007) for the promotion of teacher leadership. However, two limitations identified by Donaldson and Johnson did not

appear to be a concern for the teachers of this study; defined roles and peer opposition. No teacher expressed a desire for a more clearly defined role. Peer opposition, though recognized by the teachers as an initial concern, was eliminated as other teachers participated and the workload of the teacher leaders was recognized. Attention to Schlechty's boundary system by the superintendents in including non-ELI members may have reduced peer opposition as a boundary.

The system-thinking exhibited by the superintendents, although not referred to as such directly, supports Michael Fullan's (2005) key to sustainability. These two districts also practice "lateral capacity building" as they interact with other schools, which Fullan also sites as necessary for sustainability. Lastly, Fullan defines a leader as one who develops other leaders. Although no participants stated specifically that they developed other leaders, the practices of the teachers, principals, and superintendents indicate concern and attention to the learning of the organization and the building of capacity of others.

With global competitiveness and high stakes accountability, school districts must engage in transformational change. Transformational change requires a district-wide focus with changes to the culture and organization by the collective efforts of the superintendent, principals, and teachers. The promotion of learning among all members of the organization needs to be the focus of the superintendent, principals, and teachers. Districts participating in such changes that include vertical leadership teams provide models of effective practices for other districts seeking to reform the organization to better meet the needs of all students. The process is complex, but achievable and critical to the sustainability of educational organizations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Dear ELI Team Member:

You are invited to participate in this research study for the purpose of my dissertation. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate because you are a member of ELI.

The purpose of this study is to examine the process of your ELI team. Participation in this study will require approximately 45 minutes of your time for one interview. The interview will be held at a location and time of your choice. Your school district may be the most convenient location. During the interview, I will be asking you to share information about the vision, efforts and progress of your ELI team. Tape recording your responses will assist me in my research. Additionally, I will observe your team meetings to gather additional information regarding your school improvement efforts. Your responses will remain strictly confidential and will in no way be identifiable. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

You may find the learning experience enjoyable and the information may be helpful to you as you reflect upon school reform efforts within your school and district.   The information gained from this study may help us to better understand the process of school reform efforts to improve student achievement.

Your participation in this study is <u>voluntary</u>.   Your superintendent was asked to distribute these letters as your identity is not currently known to me. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or IUP. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying me. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. Your response will be considered <u>only in combination</u> with those from other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in a doctoral dissertation, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and return to me in the self addressed stamped envelope provided. Take the extra unsigned copy with you to keep. If you choose not to participate, please indicate on the enclosed form and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope provided.

Project Director: Faculty Sponsor:
Mrs. Tammy Wolicki   Dr. Cathy Kaufman
Doctoral Student   Professor
Administration and Leadership Studies   Administration and Leadership Studies
Indiana, PA 15705   Indiana, PA 15705
Phone: 724-972-8981   Phone: 724-357-3928

<u>This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).</u>

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

_____I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

_____ I choose NOT to participate in this study.

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature

Date

If participating:
Phone number and/or email where you can be reached:

Best days and times to reach you:

Position:

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____
Date   Investigator's Signature

Appendix B

Matrix of Research and Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question Number	Interview Questions
1. What organizational and individual factors motivated, anchored, and sustained involvement in this initiative?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16	1. Why did you become involved in ELI? Who participates on your ELI team? How and why were they selected? 2. Have your beliefs or values changed, deepened, or remained the same as a result of your participation in school improvement? Explain. 3. How have interest and efforts in school improvement been sustained and/or maintained?
2. How were disruptive as opposed to technical, changes made to the organizational system as perceived by the teachers, principals, and superintendents and how were these changes facilitated?	2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16	4. How is the need for change determined, communicated, and received? 5. How have your school improvement efforts impacted students? Teachers? Principals? Others? 6. Has your culture been impacted through your school improvement efforts? If so, how? 7. Has your involvement in this process changed the way you interact with your colleagues? If so, how? 8. How have your school improvement efforts impacted the use of time, space, and resources for students? For teachers?
3. What cultural changes were perceived by teachers, principals, and superintendents to have occurred and how were these changes facilitated?	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16	9. What changes were made to facilitate progress in achieving the vision? 10. What obstacles have slowed your pace and how do you circumvent these barriers?

4. How were the social systems impacted and how were these changes facilitated?		11. What is the focus of your ELI team? Would you agree that all team members share this focus? Why?
Direction	2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	12. Has your focus on school improvement impacted professional development practices? If so, how? How is time allotted for collaboration
Knowledge	2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13,	13. How has your team benefited from networking with individuals in other districts also participating in ELI?
Boundary	1, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14	14. Do all ELI members have an active role? An equal role? Describe and/or explain.
Induction	1, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12	15. How do you know if you are making progress in achieving your ELI goals?
Power & Authority		16. How is the work of the school improvement process recognized?
Evaluation	4, 8, 11, 14	
	15, 16	