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WHAT SOCIAL SERVICE AND COMMUNITY GROUP
PERSONNEL BELIEVE ABOUT COLLABORATION WITH
THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Dissertation
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
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1999

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PERSONNEL BELIEVE ABOUT COLLABORATION WITH
THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR
THE DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

Public schools have access to most school-aged children, but have few resources available to assist those children who are most at-risk for academic failure. Conversely, social service and community health agencies have the services these children and their families need, but have limited access to the children who need them most. This study reviewed the literature on the plight of at-risk children and reviewed current research on the status of school – service agency – community group collaborations and concluded that while much had been written concerning the benefits to schools in these collaborations, very little existed concerning the perspectives of social and health services providers.

Using case study methodology, this study examined a long-term existing schools – service agencies – community groups collaborative from the perspective of the social service providers. Interviews were conducted with six members of the collaborative representing diverse agencies and community groups and observations were conducted during regular meetings of the collaborative. Research questions addressed in this study examined the motivation for participation in a collaborative effort with schools and the extent to which participants felt their professional and personal needs were met as a result of this participation.

Major findings of the study revealed that service agency and community group personnel were motivated by the personal and professional relationships developed by participating in a collaborative, by establishing connections with school personnel, by accomplishing common goals, and by better utilization of time. Results also indicated

that they found their personal and professional needs were met in terms of establishing networks of communication between other groups, agencies and schools, breaking down barriers and building trust, and participating as a collaborative in service activities.

It is hoped that this perspective will provide information concerning the motivation and benefits of collaboration for non-school personnel that school leaders might find useful as they consider alternative ways to better meet the needs of families and children by moving beyond the traditional boundaries of their positions.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background

Today, schools are generally expected to meet all of a student's social, emotional and educational needs. Historically, this has not been the case. Research compiled by Vollmer and Associates (1996) traced the origins and subsequent development of the public schools back to the Massachusetts Pilgrims in the 1640s. At that time, the primary responsibility of the school was to teach the traditional three R's: reading, writing and arithmetic, and to inculcate the values that serve a democratic society into their students. Families and churches, however, bore the major responsibility for child rearing. It was not until some 260 years later that schools began to be swirled into the social-political maelstrom and the responsibility for child rearing began its slow shift from a community's responsibility to the school's responsibility.

The first steps in the shift, according to Vollmer and Associates (1996), began during the period 1900 to 1920, when business leaders and politicians decided that schools were the perfect place for the assimilation of immigrants to occur. Then, with the push to industrialization, the shift began to escalate in earnest. The first responsibilities to be added to the schools' roles were nutrition, health classes, and ensuring that children were immunized. By 1950, vocational education, practical arts, physical education and school lunch programs were added to the responsibilities of public schools. During the 1950s, safety education, driver education, stronger foreign

language requirements, and the beginnings of sex education became part of the public schools. The 1960s saw the addition of consumer education, career education, peace education, leisure education, and recreational education.

During the 1970s, as the breakup of the American family began to accelerate, schools also became responsible for mandatory special education provisions, drug and alcohol education and prevention programs, parent education, character education, and, perhaps most significantly, school breakfast programs. The addition of these school breakfast programs meant that in many cases, schools became responsible for the provision of two-thirds of a child's expected daily meals. Addition to the schools' responsibilities accelerated again during the 1980s and 1990s as technological advances burst upon society. Added during this period were keyboarding and computer education, global education, ethnic education, multicultural education, English as a Second Language education, early childhood education, full-day kindergarten programs, pre-school programs for at-risk children, after school programs, stranger/danger programs, sexual abuse prevention programs, the legal responsibility to report suspected child abuse, HIV/AIDS education, death education, gang education (at least in urban schools), bus safety programs, and, in many schools, bicycle safety education (Vollmer and Associates, 1996). It should be noted that, during all of these years, little was ever removed from the schools' curricula, and in only rare instances was time ever increased to allow for the teaching of these subjects.

In addition to the burden added to schools over time has been the frightening escalation of societal violence and the further degeneration of the American family. The

Oklahoma Kids Count Factbook '98 (1998) indicated that four of the eight indicators used to assess the status of children worsened during the past decade. The four indicators were low birthweight infants, child abuse and neglect, child poverty, and juvenile violent crime arrests.

There were compelling reasons for instructional leaders to consider the influence of these indicators on school performance, as each of them had the potential for negatively impacting the child's performance in school. According to the Factbook, "one in four of Oklahoma's low birthweight infants who live will experience serious health and developmental problems. Low birthweight doubles the chance a child will later be diagnosed as having dyslexia, hyperactivity or another disability" (1998, p. 10). Confirmed child abuse and/or neglect was reported as occurring approximately once every 45 minutes. In addition, the leading causes of death for children were reported to have changed from being primarily of natural causes to that of injury or violence. One out of every four children in Oklahoma was reported as living in poverty. The Factbook noted that, "Every day since 1980, another dozen (average 13.5) children joined those who were already poor" (1998, p. 15). The results of poverty in children included having an inadequate diet, staying cold during the winter, receiving little health care, a high dropout rate, and a higher incidence of death during childhood.

Juvenile violent crime arrests were reported as involving nearly 1,300 children from the ages of 10-17 during the year 1996. The Factbook (1998) reported that 29 of these arrests were for murder, three for manslaughter, 70 for forcible rape, 376 for robbery and 818 for aggravated assault. Those at the highest risk of arrest for violent

crimes were “teenage boys born to adolescent mothers, young people doing poorly in school, youth who expect to die young, youth who are neither in school nor working and those living in urban areas” (Factbook, 1998, p. 17). The Factbook also noted that, “Experts blame the rise in juvenile crime on the failure of families, schools, and communities to recognize early warning signs” (1998, p. 17). Clearly, school leaders could not expect students living in such conditions to experience academic success unless these problems were addressed.

Compulsory attendance in school was the law. Public schools, therefore, should have had all children unless they were home schooled or enrolled in private schools. Because public schools had the vast majority of the children, they also had the social problems that children brought with them to school. Schools, however, had virtually no services available to help these children except a free or reduced rate on breakfast, if it was offered, and lunch. Social service agencies typically were located in facilities away from the school site, and coordination between the school site and the service agencies had traditionally been poor (Levy and Copple, 1989, Briar-Lawson et al., 1997). In light of the problems they faced, however, some schools had become interested in forming collaborations with social service agencies to help them meet the growing needs of children and families.

Need for the Study

While there had been several studies within the last decade related to why schools should collaborate with community groups and service agencies (Tyack, 1992;

Levy and Shepardson, 1992; Kagan and Neville, 1993; Levy and Copple, 1989; Melaville, Blank and Asayesh, 1993; Gaston and Brown, 1994; Levy, Kagan and Copple, 1992; Dryfoos, 1994; Ingram, Bloomberg and Seppanen, 1996; Briar-Lawson, Lawson, Collier and Joseph, 1997), no studies were found that examined the community group or service agency provider's point of view. The reasons for schools to collaborate with community groups and service agencies, as cited in the above studies, were numerous but could be summarized by the following statement: schools had all of the children but few of the resources and in order to meet the growing needs of the families, schools had to take the initiative in linking with outside resources. Why, then, did they not?

In a small, rural Oklahoma community, a school - community groups - service agencies collaboration had existed for over five years. In 1993, the local school invited representatives from all area resource agencies to meet with them for the purpose of establishing a network of resources for area families. By 1994, the effort had become so successful that it was expanded into a county-wide effort. This site provided the perfect opportunity to investigate an on-going collaborative from the perspective of the social service providers. It was hoped that this perspective would provide information concerning the motivation and benefits of collaboration for non-school personnel that school leaders would find useful as they considered moving beyond the traditional boundaries of their positions.

Statement of the Problem

Levy and Copple (1989) detailed a list of barriers to collaboration between services agencies and schools:

restrictive laws, regulations, and policies; categorical funding streams; large and complex organizational structures; very different jurisdictional boundaries and lack of comparability between governance structures; differing professional orientations, training and vocabulary; competing pressures and priorities; 'turfism'; the difficulty of establishing intersystem accountability; and time and resources the collaborative process itself absorbs (p. 15).

Given all of these barriers, one question immediately surfaced: Why collaborate? The research problem addressed by this study was to investigate the reasons for collaboration from the perspective of representatives of social service agencies and community groups currently involved in a successful, long-term rural collaboration with school districts in order to illuminate for school personnel possible motivations and benefits for school – community group – service agency collaborations.

Research Questions

This research study was guided by two research questions. The questions were:

1. What were the motivating factors for service agency and community group personnel to participate in a collaborative effort with schools?

2. To what extent did service agency and community group personnel perceive that their needs were met by participating in a collaboration with schools and other agencies and community groups?

Definition of Terms

Collaborative: Collaborative was defined as “a group of community leaders who have agreed to be partners in addressing shared problems” (Melaville, Blank, Martin and Asayesh, 1993, p.15). In this study, this definition was extended beyond community leaders to include people working with and for social service agencies, community groups and schools who agreed to work together to better meet the needs of children and their families.

Community Group: The term community group, as used in this study, was defined to mean an organization that provided a service to the community and that was specific to the local community. Examples of community groups in the cooperative that was the focus of this study included Delta Community Action Agency, Purcell Police Department, Purcell Public Library, and the Ministerial Alliance.

Service Agency: The term service agency, as used in this study, was defined to mean an organization that provided a service to the community in which it was located and that had not only a local function but a state function as well. Examples of service agencies included in the collaborative that was the focus of this study included McClain County Health Department, Oklahoma Department of Human Services,

McClain-Garvin Counties Youth and Family Services, and the Norman Alcohol Information Center / Area Prevention Resource Center.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was in no way an attempt to define the processes or procedures by which schools should participate, nor was it an attempt to delineate the full scope of collaborative partnerships between schools, service agencies and community groups. What this study did attempt to do was to accurately describe the perspective of social service and community group personnel who participated in an on-going school - community groups - service agencies partnership in a rural community in order to illuminate for school personnel possible motivations and benefits for school - community group - service agency collaborations.

This study utilized volunteer participants who were known to the researcher and who agreed to participate in the study. The researcher was also a participant in the collaborative. Glesne and Peshkin addressed the observer/participant dilemma by noting, "The more you function as a member of the everyday world of the researched, the more you risk losing the eye of the uninvolved outsider; yet, the more you participate, the greater your opportunity to learn" (1992, p. 40). In addition, because the study involved a limited number of volunteer participants, it was descriptive rather than conclusive in nature.

Chapter Summary and Overview

Chapter 1 included the introduction, background and need for the study. The purpose of the study and the research questions were specified. Definitions of terms as well as the limitations of the study were also discussed. Chapter 2 will review the literature related to collaborations between schools, social service agencies and community groups.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature pertaining to school, social service agency and community group collaborations. This review includes research published over the past ten years. The areas included in this literature review are: an overview of the problems facing children and their families, a history of collaboration, the complexity of the collaboration process, the need for collaboration, collaboration in rural settings, and benefits to schools of collaboration. The final section of the literature review includes a statement of the intent of the study.

Overview of the Problems Facing Children and Their Families

One of the most significant goals stated in the GOALS 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 is that all children will start school ready to learn. Unfortunately, for many children this goal is so distant as to be nonexistent. Gaston and Brown (1994) stated:

From the beginning of our country's modern history, the state of the nation has been reflected in the conditions of its children and, in turn, its schools. Stresses in the infrastructure and economy show most prophetically on the faces of our children; they are hardship's first victims.

An examination of the plight of young people in the United States during the 1980s (Melaville, Blank, Asayesh, 1993) revealed that:

- **Poverty among children worsened by 22 percent.** One in five children now live in poverty; among children under 6 years old, the number is one in four.
- **Only about 70 percent of American students finish high school in 4 years.** While an additional 15 percent finish by [age] 24, the loss to society remains substantial.
- **The number of single teen parents is rising steadily.** Births to single teens increased 14 percent during the 1980's.
- **More young people are dying from violence.** The death rate among 15- to 19-year-olds from homicides, suicides, and accidents increased over the decade from 62.4 to 69.3 deaths per 100,000 young people.
- By conservative estimates, **at least 100,000 children are homeless on any given night** (p.6).

Hodgkinson (as cited in Behrman, R.E., 1992) stated that, "at least one-third of the nation's children are at risk of school failure even before they enter kindergarten" (p. 17) because they have been subjected to poverty, homelessness, abuse, are drug babies, or simply lack supervision. Also included in that section were the following statistics from the National Commission on Children: between 1983 and 1989, children in foster care soared from 275,000 to 340,000, and more minors were arrested for

murder by one-third than the number arrested in 1983. Congress addressed additional issues in its 1993 Link-up for learning act. In this act, the following concerns were addressed:

(1) growing numbers of children live in social and economic environments that greatly increase the risk of academic failure; (2) more than 20 percent of America's children live in poverty, while at the same time the infrastructure of support for such children has greatly eroded, e.g., 40 percent of eligible children do not receive free or reduced-price lunches or benefit from food stamps, 25 percent are not covered by health insurance, and only 20 percent are accommodated in public housing; (3) many at-risk students suffer the effects of inadequate nutrition and health care, overcrowded and unsafe living conditions and homelessness, family and gang violence, substance abuse, sexual abuse, child abuse, involuntary migration, and limited English proficiency that often create severe barriers to learning; (4) almost half of all children and youth live in a single parent family for some period, resulting in greatly reduced parental involvement in their education; (5) high proportions of disadvantaged and minority children live with never married or teenage mothers who have extremely limited resources for early childhood development; and (6) large numbers of children and youth are recent immigrants, or children of recent immigrants, with

limited English proficiency and significant unmet educational needs (Bhaerman, 1994, p. 5).

House Resolution 1677 (1993) continued to enumerate the distressing statistics:

(1) one in five children entering school live in poverty; (2) students from poor families are three times more likely to drop out than students from more advantaged homes; (3) nearly 40 percent of the females who drop out do so as a result of pregnancy; (4) the percentage of women with children under six who are working or seeking employment outside the home has nearly doubled since 1973; (5) more than eight million children have no form of health insurance; (6) more than 70 percent of the children who need psychiatric treatment do not receive it; (7) children who are victims of child abuse, poverty, malnutrition, lack of health care, alcohol and drug abuse are at risk for failure; and (8) without health and social intervention, at-risk children often are unable to improve academic performance (p. 5).

In the face of all of these known facts, the “State and Local Education Systemic Improvement” section of the Conference Report of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (as cited in Gaston and Brown, 1994), stated: “(1) all students can learn and achieve to high standards and must realize their potential if the United States is to prosper...” (p. 5). Yet, how are schools to accomplish this goal in the face of the social tragedies that confront America’s schoolchildren?

History of Collaboration

In an attempt to address the myriad of problems many children and families face, some schools have begun to reach out and form partnerships with local social service agencies. This approach, while considered novel, has deep roots in American history. Tyack (1992), in his history on social services in schools, quoted the 1905 reformer Robert Hunter who said that, “The time has come for a new conception of the responsibilities of the school... parents bring up their children in surroundings which make them in large numbers vicious and criminally dangerous” (pp. 19-20). Hunter also insisted that an agency master this problem, and concluded by saying that, “If the school does not assume this responsibility, how shall the work be done?” (p. 20).

Tyack continued his history by showing how the educational system and the health and social services systems have entwined and disengaged since Hunter’s reform efforts. He pointed out that physical education became a part of the school system because so many World War I draftees flunked their medical examinations. Then, in the 1920s, foundations began to subsidize some school social workers in an attempt to reduce delinquency. In the 1940s, Tyack reported that almost all cities with a population over 30,000 had some kind of school nursing or medical inspection programs in their schools. These programs were rarely run collaboratively; in almost all cases they were controlled either by service agencies or by the school district.

In detailing how the agencies disengaged during the years, Tyack pointed out not only periods of economic decline in which social services were cut from school budgets, but also noted that early social service personnel were trained to be social

workers who, in their attempts to advocate for children and families, sometimes became at odds with the school system. He also noted that government mandates for services without corresponding funding to pay for the mandates, particularly in the area of special education, caused educational agencies to back away from their previous support of non-academic services. Now, with the wide range of problems facing children and families, and the limited amount of funding available both to schools and social service agencies, a new period of interest in collaboration has surfaced.

Complexity of the Collaboration Process

Collaboration today is far more difficult than in the past simply in terms of the number of service agencies responsible for the various categorical programs that have been established. As Morill (1992), in his article discussing the American health system, stated:

Health services providers are largely private and nonprofit rather than public, with most health services financed through employer-based and other third-party plans. Low-income and other vulnerable populations are primarily served through third-party public programs (Medicaid and Medicare) dominated by federal and state governments...Like educators, health professionals have been cautious in moving beyond their own professional boundaries to restructure the delivery of health services (p. 34).

The complexity of the health delivery system was not the only obstacle to collaboration. When looking at the social services system, Morill stated that:

The social services delivery system is even more diffuse and fragmented than the education and health systems...the social services system attempted to address a wide range of needs, including income support, child welfare, housing, and child care. All levels of government: federal, state, and local, finance social services. In addition, social services are purchased directly by consumers from a large number of service providers with a relatively narrow focus. Because services are delivered by an array of state and local governments and nonprofit and for-profit private agencies, consistent information about the quantity of services provided and their recipients is simply not available on a nationwide basis (p. 36).

In addition, the rules and regulations that had been developed to ensure that children were protected and that the money that was expended went to the people most in need of it were often the very things that kept families from accessing the help they needed. Briar-Lawson et al. (1997) noted that today's families might have to deal with up to 14 service providers in order to access the services they needed. Children could not be enrolled in school without birth certificates and shot records. Large public programs such as Medicaid and Medicare regulated who could get what services and when and where they could get them (Morill, 1992). Employees within agencies could not share information without first obtaining a release of information. In addition, there

were often language barriers that prevented effective communication. Indeed, Chang, Salazar, and Leong (1994) stated that, “by the middle of the next century...the United States as a whole will cease to have a dominant ethnic group” (p. 5). Briar-Lawson et al. (1997) noted that despite the vast number of difficulties faced by families and even though these agencies dealt with the same families, “these organizations often do not communicate with each other, let alone coordinate or collaborate” (p. 136).

Need for Collaboration

All of these issues pointed to the growing need for education, health and social service agencies to collaborate to meet the needs of children and their families. In a formal statement entitled, “New Partnerships: Education’s Stake in the Family Support Act of 1988”, the following statement was made: “As each [agency] has struggled separately to find more effective ways of helping children and families at risk, it has become increasingly clear that the problems to be tackled reach beyond the purview of any one system” (p. 4). The need to collaborate was clearly delineated in the “State and Local Education Systemic Improvement” sections of the GOALS 2000: Educate America Act of 1994:

State and local education improvement efforts must incorporate strategies for providing all students and families with coordinated access to appropriate social services, health care, nutrition, and early childhood education, and child care to remove preventable barriers to learning and enhance school readiness for all students (p. 34).

Successful collaborations did exist. Briar-Lawson, Lawson, Collier, and Joseph (1997) identified four broad categories of what they termed “first-generation work”. These types of collaborations were: (1) interprofessional collaborations, in which specialized professionals worked together; (2) service integration, in which intervention and remediation strategies between professionals in service agencies were coordinated; (3) systems change, in which the actual structures of the agency changed to accommodate collaboration; and (4) school-linked comprehensive services, in which service-providing agencies were actually co-located within the public schools. Dryfoos (1994) described much the same concept as school-linked comprehensive services, but under the term “full-service schools” in her research and emphasized the importance of this change in her statement:

Because the needs and challenges of children serve as an early-warning system for many other societal needs and challenges and because schools are children’s only universal entitlement, schools are being redesigned to help address interdependent problems.... A growing number of schools are colocating social and health services providers onsite and are establishing communication and organizational partnerships with others in the community (p. 136).

Larson, Gomby, Shiono, Lewit, and Behrman (1992) further enumerated the characteristics of school-linked services in their work as:

- (a) services are provided to children and their families through a collaboration among schools, health care providers, and social

service agencies; (b) the schools are among the central participants in planning and governing the collaborative effort; and (c) the services are provided at, or are coordinated by, personnel located at the school or a site near the school (p. 6).

Collaboration in Rural Settings

The majority of the research that has appeared, however, has dealt with the school as the primary instigator of the collaboration, and, in general, with urban settings. Rural settings, however, often have very different and often more complicated sets of problems. Sherman (1992) in his article, "Falling by the wayside: Children in rural America," pointed out the crises faced by families, and therefore schools, in rural areas. He included the following problems in his discussion:

- One-fourth of poor children live outside metropolitan areas. In 1990 there were 3.4 million poor children living with their families in rural America and 13.4 million poor American children overall.
- Rural areas have higher child poverty rates than metropolitan areas. If rural children had the same poverty rate as metro children, there would be fewer than 3.0 million poor children in rural areas instead of 3.4 million.
- By age, poverty is especially widespread among younger rural children. The rural-metropolitan gap in poverty rates is especially pronounced for this vulnerable age group. Of all rural children

younger than six, 26.7 percent were poor in 1990 (compared with 22 percent in metropolitan areas.)

- Rural children, like all American children, are far more likely than adults to be poor. Black and Latino children are far more likely than white children to be poor, whether in rural or metropolitan areas.
- Because of the low and failing rural wages...poor rural families are especially likely to be among the working poor. A majority of all poor families in the U.S. (57 percent) had at least one member who worked in 1987. In rural areas, even though one or more family members worked, an even larger proportion of families (65 percent) were poor (pp. 5-6).

In addition to these problems, available resources tended to be scarcer in rural areas than in urban areas. However, the lack of resources also served as a stimulant to professionals to begin collaboration. There were numerous strengths to be found in rural areas, and Sherman noted these as follows:

- Rural schools and communities often reflect the ability to collaborate, are less 'turf resistant' when asked to share resources, are good at recognizing and responding to community needs, and develop closer alliances between schools, churches, and sports organizations.
- The smaller size allows everyone to know more of what is going on.
- Limited resources encourage coordination.

- The school is a community resource: everyone knows where it is, folks are proud of the buildings, and school personnel are known in the community.
- We learn about troubled youth through a well-connected network of family and friends; agency services become well known and trusted.
- We can deal with the 'higher ups' easier because the organization chart is flat; we tend to deal with a handshake instead of multi-page interagency agreements....
- Because there are so few service agencies available, there is little problem with territoriality since most agencies are overloaded and understaffed. Networking is eased since many agency personnel and school staff know each other.
- Just about everyone knows someone who knows someone or who is related to someone who knows someone. If a particular need is brought to the table, chances are someone knows someone who can make a difference.
- Agencies are small and cohesive. For the most part, people share information through informal and formal means. Something can be said for the teamwork that exists in many agencies. Speculation is that fewer staff, smaller budgets, and common goals make for effective integration (pp. 41-42).

Benefits to Schools

Because the school had the easiest access to the children and because schools were trying to provide educational services in the face of often overwhelming obstacles in the lives of the young children they served, they were often the ones who initiated collaboration. The benefits for schools to take the step and collaborate with service agencies have been discussed frequently in the research. Levy and Copple (1989) documented state-level efforts over a 14-year period from 1975 to 1989 and noted the following collaborative efforts: “fifteen written agreements were prepared; twenty interagency commissions were formed to coordinate state and local agencies; eighty-eight committees, commissions, and task forces were convened; and sixty-three collaborative programs and projects were implemented” (p. 15). They also discovered that, “77 percent of adults favored using schools as centers to provide health and social welfare services by various government agencies” (p. 15).

Tyack (1992) noted increased medical services to children, delinquency prevention and mental health programs as benefits to schools in the collaboration process. Morill (1992) discussed the importance of increased social and health services for at-risk children in schools, and particularly stressed the importance of programs directed towards high-risk behaviors such as drug abuse, sexual activity, teen pregnancy prevention, drop-out prevention and violence prevention. He also discussed the difficulty of providing these essential programs without collaboration between schools and social service agencies. Change, Salazar, De La Rosa and Leong (1994) noted the increasing number of non-English speaking children attending the public

schools and added the importance of assisting schools with the multicultural and language issues of these children and families.

Intent of the Study

While there were obviously strong reasons and sentiment to collaborate, few programs actually existed. In addition, very little research existed dealing with reasons for health and social service agencies personnel to collaborate with schools. Collaboration is not an easy task; it requires a shared vision, breaking down of established barriers, building a common vocabulary, planning and implementation coordination, possible re-directing of funding and possible relocation of services (Larson, Gomby, Shiono, Lewit, Behrman, 1992).

Since schools are the only universal entitlement for children, and if the primary mission of the school is student learning, then one goal of instructional leadership should certainly be to remove learning and performance barriers that prevent children from attaining academic success. Collaboration with service agencies and community groups has proven to be effective in removing some of these barriers (Briar-Lawson, 1994, Dryfoos, 1994, Larson, Gomby, Shiono, Lewit, and Behrman, 1992). The intent of this study was to investigate the reasons for collaboration from the perspective of the health and social services agencies' personnel who were involved in a successful, long-term rural collaboration in order to illuminate for school personnel possible motivations and benefits for schools to initiate school -- community group -- service agency collaborations.

Chapter Summary and Overview

The focus of this chapter has been a review of the literature related to collaborations between schools, social service agencies and community groups. The literature review was divided into six sub-sections: an overview of the problems facing children and their families, a history of collaboration, the complexity of the collaboration process, the need for collaboration, collaboration in rural settings, and benefits to schools of collaboration. The final section of the literature review included a statement of the intent of the study. Chapter 3 will focus on the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER III

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

Abraham Maslow (1970), in his discussion on the holistic needs of humans, stressed that people had to have their needs for safety and belongingness met before they would be able to accomplish esteem and self-actualization needs. Unfortunately, as cited in the previous chapter, many children come to school hungry, abused, and unhealthy. Research cited previously indicated that these factors resulted in higher risk for learning problems, higher dropout rates, higher incidences of death during childhood, and higher juvenile crime rates. Service agencies and community groups focus on correcting the conditions that cause children to be at-risk. Effective instructional leaders can promote academic success by helping children and families access these resources.

Successful collaboration, however, requires a great deal of time and effort, and often the benefits received cannot be attributed to any particular agency but to the collaborative effort. It then becomes impossible for any one agency to claim a particular benefit. While a great deal has been published about the benefits of collaboration with community groups and service agencies to the school, very little exists to document the benefits to the participating service agencies. Indeed, there have been no qualitative studies examining the benefits of collaboration to agency personnel. It is the lack of research into the subject of the benefits to collaboration from the perspective of the

social services provider with thought to illuminate for school personnel possible motivations and benefits for school – community group – service agency collaborations that is the basis for the need for this study.

Design of the Study

Focus of the study

This study investigated, explored and described why social service and other agency personnel participated in a school - community groups - service agencies collaborative project. In order to answer the research questions, one-on-one interviews were conducted with representatives from agencies that were currently participating in an on-going school-community-agency collaborative project. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed in order to identify patterns or recurring themes which emerged that answered the research questions. Observations were conducted during meetings of the collaborative to document instances of collaborative behavior such as joint problem solving or project participation.

Research Questions

This research study was guided by two research questions. The questions were:

1. What are the motivating factors for service agency and community group personnel to participate in a collaborative effort with schools?

2. To what extent do service agency and community group personnel perceive that their needs are met by participating in a collaboration with schools and other agencies and community groups?

Context of the study

In the rural elementary school in Oklahoma that was the focus of this study, the district had undergone a dramatic change in demographics over a six-year period of time. In 1991, 29% of the district's school children qualified for free or reduced lunches, indicating that they lived below the poverty level. By 1997, that number had increased to 56% of the children, and the majority of these children were from single-parent or recently "blended" families. In 1991, the district identified only five Hispanic children, or less than .005% of the district's school children, on its annual Federal Programs Evaluation. By 1997, the number of identified Hispanic families had grown to 88, or 12.5% of the district's school children, and the district faced the growing problem of addressing the needs of non-English speaking children in the classroom. The 1997 demographic information concerning this district indicated that of the 1,298 students, 19.2% were American Indian, 12.5% were Hispanic, 3.3% were Black, .2% were Asian, and 64.8% were Caucasian.

While considered a rural district, it should be noted that this district had characteristics making it somewhat atypical of a rural community. With a population of between five and six thousand people, it was small in nature. However, it was situated alongside a major interstate highway, was within 20 miles of a major university and

within an hour's drive of the state capitol. The district, however, had many of the problems found in rural school districts. The closest service agency, the McClain County Health Department and Guidance Center, was located in the district's Human Resources Building. Staffing at that agency included 1.5 guidance counselors who provided services for the entire county. Limited resources at that agency also resulted in the free immunization clinic being offered only one afternoon each week. Transportation was an on-going problem. Two other agencies, the McClain-Garvin Counties Youth and Family Center and the Department of Human Services, occupied small facilities with small staffs across town from the elementary school. Access to these wide-spread locations was a continual problem for families living in poverty. Prior to the University of Oklahoma / Danforth Foundation initiative that began in 1992, coordination between area agencies and schools was virtually nonexistent.

In the spring of 1992, two professors and a graduate student from the University of Oklahoma applied for and received a School Leaders Program grant from the Danforth Foundation. The name of their proposed initiative was the Responsive Leaders for All Children and Their Families Initiative (McQuarrie and Knudson, 1997). Their intent was to work with six school districts and the service agencies from those districts to help them better coordinate the services offered to children and families. Two of the sites chosen were urban, two suburban, and two rural. Of the two rural districts, one was at the site described above. The three-member planning team devised an initiative that would be driven both from the local level and from the state level and

set the goals as: “to better meet the needs of children and families and on developing responsive leaders” (McQuarrie and Knudson, 1997, p. 1).

To accomplish this, the initial meetings involved state-level decision-makers from the following agencies: Alternative Education Program, Chamber of Commerce, district attorney offices, head start programs, hospitals, Juvenile Services, libraries, not-for-profit agencies, Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, Oklahoma Department of Education, Oklahoma Department of Health, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Parent-Teacher Association, police departments, sheriff’s offices, school foundations, senior citizens’ organizations, substance abuse organizations and agencies, teacher unions, University of Oklahoma College of Education, University of Oklahoma School of Social Work, University of Oklahoma Sociology Department, YMCA/YWCA, and a decision-maker from each of the six public school districts (McQuarrie and Knudson, 1997). The intent at this level was to gain top-level support for the initiative and to address barriers between agencies that could only be dealt with by making significant changes at the state level. Agencies worked together to develop means to overcome barriers to collaboration and to develop a common vision. One example of the success of this state-level group was an agreement by the heads of all agencies to recognize a standard release-of-information form that helped local agencies “cut through” the confidentiality barriers to collaboration.

Once the state-level initiative was under way, the emphasis shifted to include work at the local, or school district, levels. In the rural initiative in this study, the

Superintendent of Schools designated an elementary administrator to work directly with the University of Oklahoma professors to start the local initiative. During the 1993-94 school year, invitations were sent out from the district inviting all area service agencies to attend an initial meeting at a school site. The response, while tentative at first, grew stronger. A three-day retreat for the collaborators was arranged by the University of Oklahoma / Danforth Foundation, during which time the participants engaged in trust and vision building activities. By the end of the school year, monthly coordination meetings were held with a focus on the best ways to meet the needs of children and families and to share information about agencies and the school.

In November, 1994, the State Steering Committee joined with the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY), a statewide outreach program. As a result, the local collaborative project participated with OCCY and the Danforth Project in a locally held retreat, in which additional stakeholders from McClain County and the community of Lexington were invited to participate. As a result of this expansion, the local collaborative became a countywide collaboration with an expanded vision statement and expanded membership. The group decided upon a new name to reflect this status: the Community Alliance of Resources for Everyone, or C.A.R.E.

By 1997, the funding for the original Danforth Project was ending just as the local collaborative, C.A.R.E., was facing an increased need for funds to accomplish some of its goals. The group held its first fundraiser and collected \$3,000. This fundraiser was repeated the next year, with similar results. Funds were used primarily to support the new Lexington-Purcell Summer Youth Program and to provide audition

fees for children who wanted to try out for the Missoula Children's Theater program. During this period of time, C.A.R.E. also participated in a local Bike Rodeo that provided bike safety instruction and free bicycle helmets for all participating children, and published a countywide service directory made available for all county schools, service agencies and community groups. The number of schools that became actively involved grew from one to five schools across the county.

There has been a great deal of information published in recent years detailing the benefits schools can expect from collaborations with service agencies (Levy and Copple, 1989; Tyack, 1992; Morill, 1992; Chang, Salazar, De La Rosa and Leong, 1994). Among the direct benefits to the school site in this study were the establishment of better working relationships between the school and local agencies and the ability to bring case studies to the group for assistance with needed services. Direct benefits to students included a permanent loan from the local library of a closed circuit television (CCTV) system needed by a visually impaired child, collaboration on a grant to establish an alternative high school program, collaboration on a Bike Rodeo, in which students who participated received free bicycle helmets, and grants given by the collaborative for local children to participate in local summer youth programs.

The benefits to children, and thus to the school, have been enormous, eliminating or reducing barriers that prevented some students from benefiting from the instructional programs at school. However, successful collaboration requires a great deal of time and effort, and often the results cannot be attributed to any particular agency but rather to the collaborative effort. It then becomes impossible for any one

agency to claim a particular benefit in its reports and grant requests. While a great deal has been published about the benefits of collaboration for children, families and the school (Levy and Copple, 1989; Tyack, 1992; Morill, 1992; Chang, Salazar, De La Rosa and Leong, 1994), very little exists to document the benefits to the participating service agencies. It is the lack of research into the subject of the benefits to collaboration from the perspective of the social services provider that is the basis for the need for this study. One expected use for this information is that it might provide insightful information for school leaders when considering whether or not to join or initiate collaboration projects.

Methodology

The methodology used for this study is case study. Case study researchers frequently employ procedures in which the primary organization is by themes or topics (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). These include the use of highly individualized information-gathering techniques, consisting primarily of in-depth interviews in which the participants are encouraged to give honest feedback related to their personal and professional experiences, and professional and intensive observation in the setting itself. In fact, Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) define case study research as “the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 754). Since the purpose of this study was to attempt to describe the motivating factors for service agency personnel to participate in a long-term collaboration with schools, procedures defined in Gall, Borg and Gall

(1996) for descriptive case study research were followed. According to these researchers, descriptive case studies were:

attempts to depict a phenomenon and conceptualize it. A good depiction will provide what is called **thick description** of the phenomenon, that is, statements that re-create a situation and as much of its context as possible, accompanied by the meanings and intentions inherent in that situation.... Researchers also can add depth to their descriptions by searching for themes present in the phenomena. We define **themes** as salient, characteristic features of a case (p. 549).

The following section describes the procedures for collecting data. The primary forms of data collection were observation and interviews.

Observations

In order to accurately record the culture of the collaborative and the interactions of the participants, observations were conducted during regular meetings of C.A.R.E. The observations employed the two column note-taking technique described by Freedman (1987). In this technique, each page was divided into two columns. Transcriptions were recorded in the left-hand column. Themes, keywords, and descriptive phrases noted by the researcher during analysis of the data were recorded in the right-hand column. This allowed the researcher to quickly code or organize data. During regularly scheduled C.A.R.E. meetings, the researcher used a modification of this technique by noting agenda items, discussions, interactions and

non-verbal behavior in the left-hand column and then noting themes, keywords and descriptive phrases in the right-hand column during later data analysis.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with representatives of the agencies that comprised the membership of the collaborative. Interviewees were chosen from members who were among the original members of the collaborative, as well as members who had joined the collaborative more recently but had been members for at least one year. These interviews focused on personal experiences, interactions, reflections, recommendations, and problems that each participant experienced as a member of the collaborative. The interview questions are listed below:

- ⇒ What was your initial interest in a service agencies / school district collaboration?
- ⇒ As a professional, what, if any, professional and personal benefits have you received from your participation in a collaboration?
- ⇒ What have been the most beneficial aspects in this collaboration?
- ⇒ What have been the least beneficial aspects in this collaboration?
- ⇒ Has the collaboration lived up to your initial expectations? In what ways?
- ⇒ What has been the most meaningful result of the collaboration to you personally?
- ⇒ What has been the most meaningful result of the collaboration to you professionally?
- ⇒ What recommendations would you make to groups starting a collaboration?

Audiotaping

In order to ensure accuracy on the part of the researcher, the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, and keywords that demonstrated collaborative patterns or themes were identified and analyzed for the frequency of occurrence throughout the interview process. In addition, interviews were analyzed as to the participants' perceptions of what constituted a successful collaborative and of particular strengths or weaknesses that were perceived by the participants.

Population

The population of this study consisted of the members of the C.A.R.E. group. This group is roughly divided into representatives from three groups: public schools, service agencies and community groups. Because the emphasis of the study was to investigate the reasons for service agencies and community groups to collaborate with schools, only these two groups were included in the sample.

Service agencies were defined as those organizations that provided a service to the community in which they were located and that had not only a local function but a state function as well. Examples of some of the major participating service agencies included in the population were: Youth and Family Services, Department of Human Services, Health and Guidance Departments, and the Norman Alcohol Information Center / Area Prevention Resource Center.

A community group was defined as an organization that provided a service to the community and that was specific to the local community. Examples of some of the

community agencies included in the population were: Delta Community Action Agency, Purcell Police Department, Purcell Public Library, and the Ministerial Alliance.

Sample

The sample consisted of six representative members of service agencies and community group members of the C.A.R.E. group. The criteria for selection of the sample was (1) they were representative of diverse agencies, (2) they had at least one full year of participation in the C.A.R.E. group, and (3) they were representatives of both large service agencies and local community groups. People were asked to participate based on the above criteria. The concept of the study was introduced at a regular C.A.R.E. meeting. The purpose of the study and the interview process was explained to the group. Permission from the group was granted to the researcher prior to contacting individuals for in-depth interviews. Individuals were contacted by the researcher by phone and were asked to participate in the study. Individual interviews were scheduled only after these steps had been completed.

Because the setting of the study is a small rural community, participants were concerned that their identities might be revealed. In order to protect the identity of the participants and honor the confidentiality assurances made to them, the decision was made not to describe the participants in depth.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data was done continuously as data were collected. In-depth, one-on-one audiotaped interviews were conducted and transcribed in order to collect information on the collaborative process from the viewpoint of the service agency/community group representative to illuminate for school personnel possible motivations and benefits for school – community group – service agency collaborations. Keywords that indicated themes of motivation for participation in a collaborative were identified, and each transcription was analyzed to determine to what extent, if any, these words, or similar words, occurred. Observational data were collected during regular meetings (see Appendix A for copies of meeting agenda), focusing on the interpersonal relationships and non-verbal signals that participants demonstrated in an attempt to see whether audiotaped interview comments matched with public behavior and whether or not there was actual evidence of collaboration occurring.

Chapter Summary and Overview

Chapters 1 and 2 described the background, need for the study, and the review of literature pertinent to the study. This chapter described the context of the study and its design and methodology. Chapter 4 will describe the results of the study.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

Focus of the Study

This study investigated the reasons for collaboration from the perspective of representatives of social service agencies and community groups currently involved in a successful, long-term rural collaboration with school districts. In this chapter, the research questions are restated and the results presented. The results section focuses on three areas. First, the patterns that emerged from the interviews are described; second, information from observations of the C.A.R.E. meetings are presented; and third, benefits that resulted from the collaboration but were not formal C.A.R.E. actions are reported.

Research Questions

1. What are the motivating factors for service agency personnel to participate in a collaborative effort with schools?
2. To what extent do service agency and community agency personnel perceive that their needs are met by participating in a collaboration with schools and other agencies and community groups?

Results

Procedures

Six interviews were conducted with professionals involved in the collaborative. These people held positions in the Department of Human Services, McClain-Garvin County Youth and Family Center, Area Prevention Resource Center, McClain County Health Department, local police department, and public library. Everyone interviewed had been a participant in the collaborative for at least three years. Two subjects had been involved since the initial meeting, three subjects had been involved for four years, and one subject had been a participant for three years. Interviews were conducted during working hours during November and December, 1998, and lasted between one and one and one-half hours each. Interviews were audiotaped, with notes taken during the interview as a backup. Interviews were then transcribed and verified by re-listening to each tape and comparing it to the written transcript. Difficulty in transcription occurred during one interview because the interviewee spoke so quietly it was not possible to understand everything the interviewee said. However, listening to the tape several times while referencing notes taken during that interview helped to verify important remarks and comments.

Responses to Research Questions

1. What are the motivating factors for service agency personnel to participate in a collaborative effort with schools?

The first research question that guided this study dealt with the factors that motivated service agency and community group personnel to participate in a collaborative with schools. In order to ascertain motivating factors, questions that focused on initial interest in collaboration, current interest in collaboration, problems addressed through collaboration, personal experiences as a participant in a collaborative, and benefits and limitations, both personal and professional, experienced as a result of being part of a collaborative were asked to each subject. Four general themes emerged in response to this research question. These themes were: developing personal and professional relationships, establishing a connection with the schools, accomplishing goals set by the group, and time management.

Developing personal and professional relationships

All participants stated that developing personal and professional relationships was one of the motivating factors that drew them initially to the collaborative and that has kept them active over time. One person, who had been a participant in the initial retreat sponsored by the University of Oklahoma / Danforth Foundation, specifically mentioned the time spent breaking down barriers and building relationships as a critical factor in her continued participation. Other participants also identified activities designed to eliminate barriers as important factors in building relationships between people and helping them to find common goals. One of the participants stated:

being in other groups like that...most of the time I felt like I was one of the outsiders looking in. I was actually there as a representative, but yet

the conversations never focused around, “What did I have to provide? What could I provide to the group to better serve them?” And once we formed this organization, the first thing I noticed was that we were going around the table saying who we were and what we represented and what we had going on in our line, which kept everybody else abreast of what was going on with us. And then, in the conversation, we were able to talk about needs that we had, and so it kind of opened up the forum to say, “Well, I can provide this. I can provide that.” And so it makes everybody feel like they’re a part of the group instead of an outsider looking in on the group.

This sense of belonging was repeated in various ways by all participants during the interviews. Some expressed it as a sense of “coming home” if they had not been able to attend the meetings for some time, some expressed it as a sense of comfort or camaraderie, others as building trust with people from other agencies, but that personal bond was consistently expressed in some form.

Also expressed under establishing personal and professional relationships was the sense of sharing a difficult responsibility. One participant expressed it as having “one purpose together”, and went on to elaborate, “This group understands. They understand the frustrations of the prevention part...we’re trying to prevent so many different things. The intervention, they understand that...And so I go because I know that these people understand. And that understanding keeps me going.”

Establishing connections with schools

Establishing a connection with the schools was also mentioned by all of the participants during the interviews as one of the factors that motivated them to participate initially. Indeed, their interest in attending the initial meetings was because the schools had issued the invitation and they felt hopeful that a connection might be established. Two people stated that the opportunity to get to know the school counselor was important to them because it gave them a contact with a school service provider. One of these people added that the similarity in job role between what she did and what the school counselor did was important to her. She also felt that developing a relationship with the principal of the school was important to her ability to make contacts with families. One person, who had not been a member of the original collaborative, said his interest was sparked when he learned of the group because of the school's involvement with all of the different organizations in the community. A fourth person stated that her initial interest in becoming involved in the collaboration was because the schools were going to be involved and that had never happened before. Another person said her initial interest in participating was because she believed that if schools knew what they had to offer, the personnel in her agency would have an easier time working with the schools. The sixth participant mentioned that by participating in a collaborative that involved the schools, she had been able to extend her services and actually been able to use school facilities during summer months to provide programs for children, something that had not happened prior to her involvement in the collaborative.

While the participants were enthusiastic about establishing a connection with the schools that were in the collaboration, they expressed frustration with area schools that did not collaborate. Although they were carefully polite in their responses, their tones of voice, facial expressions and body language gave vent to their frustrations in establishing good working relationships with non-participating schools. In discussing his frustration with schools in a district whose leaders still refused to participate, one participant stated:

They're shortchanging themselves because by not being in the circle, you don't know what services are available. And you don't know, when you're sitting there floundering trying to solve a problem, that there's someone sitting over here on the side that can take that problem for you and can resolve that problem and allow you to move on to other things. But you don't know because you're not involved.

Another participant echoed this sentiment about her relationship with schools prior to beginning the collaborative as she said, "I'll tell you, it really felt like we were real outsiders." Another person stated his belief that participating in the collaboration was the key to establishing a partnership with the schools as he stated:

The hardest thing in the world for me to do in my job, and I looked back through the records, was to get into the...schools. And now I'm in [the] schools. I don't have enough time to get into the middle school and the high schools because I'm so busy here [at the elementary school].

When asked about schools that did not collaborate, this participant stated that he believed that fear was the largest factor in schools refusing to collaborate. When asked to expand upon that answer, he said, “They’re afraid that we’re going to come in and say or do something and they’re going to have to answer to their parents.” When asked what message he would want to send to those school leaders, he replied, “Don’t be afraid! If you don’t know what we are, check us out...You’re missing out. We’re here to help you.”

Goal accomplishment

The third broad category of responses that dealt with motivation was that of goal achievement. All of the respondents named goal accomplishment specifically as something that made collaboration worthwhile. One participant stated the importance of this as:

I want to see a purpose, a goal, to shoot for something. And we accomplished everything we set out to do [in the initial set of goals] within what? A year and a half? Two years? I mean, we had it mapped out and we accomplished everything – a five year plan and we accomplished all of it within three years, two years! And then we were sitting there...and at one point were saying, ‘Well, now, we’re not doing anything.’ But now we’re motivated again, we’re doing things again...and that feels good. Because we’re not just an independent little group down there that goes around and sits around and talks about each

other and visits here and there. We're a group of professional people and agencies that collaborate.

Another participant stressed the importance of establishing goals early in the collaboration and of leaving initial meetings with a sense of having a goal or direction established as she stated:

Make sure you get from the planning stage to having some goals when you leave. I think that is the difference in making people stakeholders and making people say, "That's a good idea. I don't know if it'll ever happen." You need those goals.

Another example of the importance of goals was that one goal of the collaborative was for area counselors (including school counselors) to participate in crisis management training in order to have a trained team available in the event of a crisis in the schools or communities. One participant stated:

I feel real good about that both professionally and personally. That feels good to me. To actually see something go from an idea and an expressed need in the community to actually, you know, being a full-blown service that's available and being used. That feels good.

This person went on to mention that since the crisis management team had been trained, they had been called out twice to deal with a crisis in the schools. She also pointed out how important that service had been to the schools, and how good it felt to the participants to be able to be there when they were needed.

All participants listed the accomplishments of the group, especially that the group had provided over \$3,000.00 in scholarships for youth to attend summer youth programs, as something their agencies would never have done individually. All participants stated that it was this type of accomplishment that was a primary motivating force for them to continue in the collaboration. In discussing accomplishments, one participant specifically mentioned vision building and the goal setting and evaluation process as important in giving the group a sense of direction and achievement as he stated:

And so we were able to look back and say, “Yes, we’re doing what we thought we needed to do.” And then...seeing the thing begin to blossom and to see it do what we thought it ought to do, it gives you a feeling of accomplishment.

Time management

The fourth broad area, time management, elicited both positive and negative responses. In general, participants indicated that it was often difficult to set aside the time for the monthly meetings because of their various agencies’ demands on them, yet at the same time felt that it was the most effective way to meet many of their agencies’ demands. One participant stated, “I think the meetings are kind of long...At the same time, and I’m going to be real contradictory of myself, it seems like sometimes there’s not enough time to really talk in depth about things that seem important.” Another

participant stated that it had been time saving to him because having one purposeful collaboration eliminated the need to attend many smaller meetings.

Two participants mentioned a different aspect of time management. For them, learning who could provide different services to families was mentioned as a time-saver. One participant stated:

[By] knowing what professionals are available as far as what services are available, I think that we have cut out a lot of the repetition. And now we have a better idea of who provides those services, and we're able to funnel those services to people at a faster pace...five years ago, I didn't have the foggiest idea who to turn to...So I believe by forming this collaboration, it cut out a lot of repetition and cut the time for being able to provide services to people.

2. To what extent do service agency and community agency personnel perceive that their needs are met by participating in a collaboration with schools and other agencies and community groups?

The second research question in this study dealt with the extent to which service agency and community group personnel felt that collaboration met their needs as professionals. In order to ascertain this, questions were asked that dealt with the degree to which they found collaboration beneficial or not beneficial to their work, what they found most meaningful in terms of what they had been able to accomplish, and to what extent collaboration had met their expectations. Three general themes emerged in

response to these questions. They were: establishing networks between groups, breaking down barriers and building trust between agencies, and participating in community service activities.

Establishing networks

All participants indicated that the networking that resulted from participating in a collaboration met their needs in a variety of ways, from simply learning names and associating people with agencies to enhancing their ability to work more effectively together within the community. One participant indicated that his participation in the collaborative had actually eased his entry into a second career as he stated, "...it really has because it helped me get known as well in the community, not as a minister as I was before, but as a professional consultant-type person, a counselor." This same person continued by saying:

...it has helped our agency...to become more involved than ever before. A lot of people didn't even know about the services we had and now...I have more than I can handle...And it's helped me to know what other services are available out there for me, and I can tap into those.

Another person related networking to a feeling of not being "the only one out there doing anything," and indicated that until she began to work within a collaboration, she had felt that way. She also indicated that being part of a collaboration had "given me more names, more contacts than I ever had before." Another person indicated that being part of a collaborative gave her a feeling of having a support system in place

should she need to call for help as well as a way to get information out to a large number of agencies in a very short period of time. Finally, one person indicated that she felt better professionally because services were better coordinated to families who needed them when everyone was working collaboratively.

Breaking down barriers and building trust

Another theme that emerged consistently from all of the interviews was that of breaking down barriers and building trust. In addressing how he felt before the collaboration began, one service provider stated, “I don’t know how you put this one in your writings, but, you know, everybody used to be afraid to get around DHS [Department of Human Services]. Now I love DHS people...and I understand them. They’ve got a hard job.” Another person described her perceptions before the collaboration as, “It was like the school had their way of doing things and [their] own rules and kind of procedures and attitudes and language and everything. And the mental health counselors and private service providers were...totally different worlds...we were real outsiders.” In describing the process that allowed collaboration to be successful, this participant, who had been involved from the initial stages, described:

Spending so much time together [2-3 days during a retreat] and eating wonderful food together that Danforth provided for us...just spending time together and being able to just talk about the needs and basically do a needs assessment, that processing in and of itself is going to bring people closer together no matter what...You just know somebody

better after you've spent two days in a workshop with them, I think. And then you follow that up...once every month or two after that for quite a while. And so the follow-up was critical, too, I think. I really hate that process because it's so time-consuming...but other people need time to go through that and have their say and work it out and think about it and process it...and although there were certainly many issues that could have been real controversial, it was all done very professionally [trust building and barriers to collaboration activities]. And that helped people get beyond the emotional aspects of things and figure out a solution.

The importance of leadership and facilitation during the initial stages of collaboration when barriers must be overcome and trust established was mentioned by five of the six participants. One person said she developed a "sort of a special belonging" as a result of trust building activities. Another said that as a result of the activities, "people from different organizations in the community, civic groups, schools, agencies, all of a sudden began to come together instead of being at odds or competing with one another." He continued on to say that everyone finally seemed to understand that, "we're all sitting out there trying to do this on our own, when we could work together and we're a more powerful force than we would be by ourselves." Another participant described much the same process and feelings and indicated that, for him, it was seeing beyond the labels that made the real difference. He described it as, "You know, anytime someone gets hid behind a label, it seems to

set up a wall. And when you break down that wall, you're on a one to one basis with someone." He continued on to note that ultimately, once the barriers were down and people were working together, they also tended to defend each other because of the relationships that were developed. He described one situation, saying that when someone tells him they won't talk to an agency because the people at the agency don't care, he more often would respond, "Well, I know personally that this person is involved and this person does care about what's going on," whereas before he began to work closely with people from other agencies in the collaboration, he probably would not have done that.

The trust that grew when the barriers came down was important to all of the participants. Each one mentioned a greater willingness to share information and work together because of the trust developed during their participation in the collaboration. One person described her feelings as, "...people are more likely to be willing to help you because they know who you are...I know who I can trust." Another participant, in describing a program her agency was trying to develop, indicated that she did not hesitate to ask the advice of a local school superintendent who was part of the collaborative. She said, "It's only because I know who [the school superintendent] is and felt like I could go out and talk to him and ask him about it and had I not been involved in C.A.R.E....I would not have done that."

Participating in service activities

While this area was highly related to goal accomplishment, it was treated separately because participating in service activities was extremely important to the participants. One participant expressed it as, "I'm interested in people and the welfare of people." When asked what kept them coming back to the collaboration meetings and what had meant the most to them, every participant mentioned the activities they believed had made a difference in someone's life. The most frequently mentioned was the work they did to raise funds so that needy children could participate in the summer youth recreation programs. One participant expressed it as:

A lot of those kids are our customers. Some of them we see on a daily basis and you know that they're here because mom and dad are working and...and you know that that's an opportunity that they would not have had if C.A.R.E. hadn't paid for it. It makes you feel good.

At the time of the interviews, the collaboration's work with summer recreation programs had expanded to programs that existed in three communities across two counties and involved children from at least five different school districts.

The second most frequently mentioned project was the funding and participation the collaborative provided to establish a crisis response team. The crisis response team had already been called out twice to deal with the deaths of students. The participants interviewed felt that, whether or not they were on the crisis response team, they had made a difference because of their participation in the fund-raising

activities that funded the training. They also felt a sense of pride because so many members of the collaborative were on the team itself.

Observations from meetings of the collaborative

Observations of regular meetings of the collaborative were conducted to observe interactions between the participants and determine to what extent the statements made during the one-one interviews were reflected in actual activities of the collaborative. Meetings followed a set pattern of welcome, introductions, minutes, treasurer's report, old business, new business, speaker, committee breakouts, committee reports, announcements and adjournment.

There was always a great deal of teasing and joking as people arrived, got refreshments, and found a place at one of the tables. Members of the collaborative appeared very comfortable with each other, were open and friendly, and shared information with each other freely. Tables were always set out in a U-shaped format so that everyone could see everyone else. People generally sat in different places at each meeting, although they did generally sit with other people from their agency or group, if there were more than one attending. The first part of each meeting was generally spent in round-table introductions and sharing. Everyone took a turn stating their name and agency or group and then took a few minutes to describe anything interesting that was occurring in his/her organization or a new program their agency or group offered. The activities during this portion of the CARE meetings supported the statements that participants made during the one-one interviews relating to the importance of

networking, developing personal and professional relationships, and building trust between members of the collaborative.

One of the most valuable periods to the group occurred during new business. At this time, schools or agencies were able to bring up particular “cares and concerns” to be staffed by the group. Without using any names or other identifying information, pertinent information dealing with a child or family was presented to the group, the help that was needed to solve the problem was stated, and then the group discussed how they might assist with the problem. One example of this occurred during the early years of the collaborative when the local schools asked for assistance in writing a grant to get a special equipment that enlarged books for a visually impaired child. During the course of the discussion, it was discovered that the public library had the exact equipment sitting unused in their facility. Arrangements were made for the school to check this equipment out on a long-term loan. It was estimated that this saved the school approximately \$6,000.00 that they would have spent had the matter not come before the collaborative.

A recent example of this kind of problem solving was observed when a counselor from a vo-tech school asked for assistance in providing Christmas gifts for three children who did not qualify for assistance from the local Operation Christmas. During the same meeting, an area principal requested help for a family whose children attended his school. The children’s mother was in serious condition in the hospital and the family was in need of assistance during the holidays. A representative from the Department of Human Services offered to assist that family with completing the

paperwork for subsidized daycare and see that they were enrolled in Operation Christmas. Since the three little boys did not qualify for any services, the members of the collaborative voted to provide assistance to them from collaborative funds. Another example was observed when a counselor from one of the participating schools gave an update on the help that the crisis response team had provided to her school after the death of a student. She stated:

We [school people] tend to think the school can just take care of itself. But this was such a huge burden. There were at least 25 kids outside of my office. Then the crisis response team came. I have learned that there is no need to do it all by yourself. It was such a big help to call on C.A.R.E.

She continued on to thank the group for being there when they were needed. This segment of the collaborative meetings reflected one-one interview statements related to personal/professional relationships, trust between members of the collaborative, establishing relationships with schools, accomplishing goals, and participation in service activities.

Another critical time during the regular meetings occurred when the group broke into smaller committees. One collaborative member laughingly addressed this time during one of the meetings as, “Oh, no, now it’s time to work!” The committees focused on different projects or concerns of the group, plus an action committee that involved everyone in some way. The previous action committee had focused on organizing and funding crisis response training. The current action committee’s focus

was on “Bridging the Gap” and involved generating ways to strengthen the connection between children in schools and the elderly in the community. There was also a committee working on organizing for the yearly fundraiser, a scholarship committee that functioned when it was time to give out scholarships to children recommended for the summer recreation program, a publicity committee, and a committee to decide on a monthly speaker. Committees generally met for 45 minutes and then returned to the whole group to report out and discuss their progress. During the reporting period, one principal thanked the group for providing so many scholarships to attend the summer program and told of a student who had come running up to her and said, “Guess what! I got a scholarship! I get to go to the Summer Youth Program! I never thought anyone would ever give me a scholarship!” This principal continued on to say that she had never had any idea when she first began attending the meetings that working together would make such a difference in her school. This component of the meetings of the collaborative supported the one-one interviews across all themes related to the research questions.

Indirect benefits to collaboration

One unexpected pattern that emerged during the interviews was the extent to which the initial collaboration had caused other smaller or different collaborations to be created. Some members had been asked to serve on a smaller taskforce that worked directly with the district attorney’s office to make recommendations for action in child abuse and neglect cases. One agency head was doubtful this cross-agency coordination

would have come about had not the barriers between agencies already been breached, since discussions during this taskforce are highly confidential and involve multiple agencies and schools. Members of the collaborative were also instrumental in establishing a Retired and Senior Volunteers Program in one of the local schools when other efforts had been unsuccessful. A third example occurred during one of the regular meetings of the collaborative when one of the schools' Oklahoma Parents as Teachers parent educators met a Healthy Beginnings educator from another agency and they agreed to coordinate some of their programs. A new public school – head start collaborative program for four-year-olds had its beginnings during discussions between the head start director and an elementary principal just before the start of one of the regular C.A.R.E. meetings.

Another indirect benefit to collaboration was the professional opportunity that opened to one of the subjects because of her participation in the collaboration. Because she agreed to serve as a member of an evaluation team for the Danforth Foundation, she had the opportunity to study collaborations in other states. This led to an opportunity for her to learn about community focus groups. After observing the power of focusing a community around a problem, she brought the technique back and convinced her organization to hold similar meetings with the purpose of ensuring that their agency offered services that the community needed. As she phrased it, "If we're not meeting the needs of our community, it doesn't matter how good we think our services are."

A final area emerged unexpectedly as a result of a probing question to a response during the first interview. That question was then repeated with other interviewees. The question was, "What message would you like to send to schools or other groups that do not currently participate in a collaboration project?" One participant said, "They (the schools) are shortchanging themselves ...[they] don't know what services are available." Another person said, "...all of us are working with a lot of the same families and the more that we know about that particular family, the more we can work together to [help them]." A third person said, "...tell them that it would help them personally to do their jobs." One man was vehement when he stated, "You're missing out. You're losing it. You're out there suffering on your own and you don't have to. We're here to help you." Another person expressed the business side of collaboration when she said, "You do business with your friends and the people you're familiar with. You know, you're much more inclined to pick up the phone and call someone that you know than a total stranger. They need to get to know each other." Overall, however, the general sentiment was summed by a participant as, "We can accomplish a whole lot more together than [we] can alone."

Chapter Summary and Overview

In this chapter the research questions were restated and the results were presented. The results section focused on three areas: first, the patterns that emerged from the interviews were described; second, information from observations of the C.A.R.E. meetings was presented; and third, benefits that resulted from the

collaboration but were not formal C.A.R.E. actions were reported. Chapter 5 will focus on conclusions from the study and the implications of the results.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Educators interested in becoming instructional leaders must realize that children cannot succeed to their fullest potential when their basic needs for safety, food, shelter and belonging are not met. A significant challenge to the instructional leader is assisting children and families to overcome these obstacles. At the same time, however, educators can no longer continue to add additional responsibilities to the long list for which they are already accountable. Collaborative efforts between service agencies, community groups and schools are one possible solution to the overwhelming problems that confront and confound many families and lead to children being at risk for academic failure. This study examined one rural collaborative effort between schools, service agencies and community groups that had grown from a small, local effort to a countywide collaboration known as the Community Alliance of Resources for Everyone (C.A.R.E.). The focus of the study was to investigate the reasons for collaboration from the perspective of representatives of social service agencies and community groups involved in a successful, long-term collaboration with school districts. It was hoped that this perspective would provide information concerning the motivation and benefits of collaboration for non-school personnel that might induce school leaders to join or initiate collaboratives within their own school districts.

The need for the study grew from an examination of research into collaborative projects. During a review of the literature, it was noted that, while there was a great deal of research into why schools should collaborate with community groups and service agencies, no studies were found that examined the community group or service agency provider's point of view. Schools had all, or most, of the children but limited access to resources. Conversely, community groups and service agencies were providers of resources without direct access to children. Collaboration, therefore, seemed obvious. It was, however, not at all common. This study may provide insights into the perspective of non-school personnel that school leaders might find useful and that might encourage them to move beyond the traditional parameters of their positions.

To examine the reasons for collaboration from the perspective of representatives of social service agencies and community groups personnel currently involved in a successful, long-term collaboration, two research questions were formulated. The first research question addressed the motivating factors for participation. The second question addressed the needs that were or were not met by participating in a collaboration with schools.

This study used descriptive case study methodology to search for themes or patterns that arose from the research questions. Both in-depth one-one interviews and observations of meetings of the collaborative were used in data collection. The sample, drawn from the population of the C.A.R.E. group, consisted of six representative members of service agencies and community group members who had been participants

in C.A.R.E. for at least one full year. The purpose of the study and the procedures to be utilized were explained by the researcher at a regular meeting of the collaborative and permission was obtained from the group to conduct observations during their meetings and to contact individuals for interviews. Observations of the C.A.R.E. meetings took place during the 1998-1999 school year. Individual interviews were conducted during November and December, 1998.

Four patterns, or themes, emerged from the first research question dealing with motivation. In order to determine motivating factors, questions during the interviews focused on initial interest in collaboration, current interest in collaboration, problems addressed through collaboration, personal experiences, and the benefits and limitations, both personal and professional, of participation in a collaboration. The themes that emerged from these interviews were: developing personal and professional relationships, establishing a connection with the schools, accomplishing goals set by the group, and time management. All participants expressed continuing motivation to participate based on the personal and professional relationships they had developed and the goals they had accomplished. They were satisfied and motivated with their connections with participating schools and felt that collaboration had enhanced their job performance and ability to bring services to children and families. However, participants also expressed frustration with schools that did not participate. Body language was a key factor in determining the frustration felt. Participants changed from open, relaxed positions, shifted in their seats and often crossed their arms over their chests when discussing this issue. In addition, they began to choose words very

carefully, often almost hesitantly and watched the researcher's expressions closely, possibly to see if, as a school person, there was a negative reaction to what they were saying.

The area of time management generated both positive and negative motivation responses. The majority of participants felt the collaborative saved time in combining several smaller meetings into one monthly meeting and in easing the referral process, but also felt frustration with the length of the monthly meetings and pressure from their agencies not to be away for an entire morning.

Three patterns, or themes, emerged from the second research question dealing with whether or not participants in the collaborative felt their needs, both personal and professional, had been met. In order to determine this aspect, questions were asked that dealt with the degree to which participants found collaboration beneficial or not beneficial to their work, what they found most meaningful in terms of accomplishments, and to what extent collaboration had or had not met their expectations. All participants responded that their needs had been met and, in several cases, that collaboration had exceeded their initial expectations, especially in the following areas: establishing networks between groups, breaking down barriers and building trust between agencies, and participating in community service activities.

Conclusions

Research indicates that children today are in ever-increasing jeopardy of being at risk academically. Melaville, Blank and Asayesh (1993) reported that one in four

children now live in poverty, with the ratio higher in rural school districts. In addition, only 70% of students finish high school within four years, more children die from violence than ever before, and an estimated 100,000 children are homeless each night. In fact, one third of our nation's children are at risk of school failure before they ever enter kindergarten (Hodgkinson, as cited in Larson, Gomby, Shiono, Lewis & Behrman, 1992). We also know that without health and social intervention, at-risk children are often unable to improve their academic performance (House Resolution 1677, 1993).

This study indicated that community group and social service agency personnel want to collaborate with schools to bring much needed health and social intervention services to children. They expressed satisfaction with the personal and professional relationships they had developed with participating school leaders and indicated that the networks they had established had been beneficial to the performance of their jobs and enhanced their ability to bring much-needed services to children and families. On the other hand, they expressed frustration with schools whose leaders chose not to collaborate.

Tyack (1992) discussed how educational, health and social services systems have engaged and disengaged over the course of time, and indicated distrust and economics as contributing factors to this process, while Morrill (1992) added that the sheer number and the complexity of health and social service organizations made collaboration difficult. In examining the benefits to collaboration, respondents in this study noted again that the relationships and communication networks that had been

developed through trust-building activities and over the course of time were important to the collaboration's continuation and to their on-going participation. They stated that they were able to refer clients more quickly to the appropriate agency or community group, and were able to work together effectively to solve specific problems for families and children. They also indicated that the goals commonly established by the group and the service projects engaged in by the group that surpassed the boundaries of their professional responsibilities were important motivating factors to their continued participation. The time spent in trust-building and barrier-breaking activities during the initial stages of the collaboration were important contributing factors to its longevity and success and to the working relationships they had established with other collaborative members.

Another factor indicated in the research as one that was a major stumbling block to collaboration was that of information sharing (Briar-Lawson et al., 1997; Morrill, 1992). That the C.A.R.E. collaborative was able to move beyond this major barrier was due to two factors. The first element was the work that was done by the state steering committee in obtaining agreement on a common release of information form for all agencies to use. Second, at the local level, participants indicated the personal and professional relationships that they had established, the goals towards which everyone worked, and the structure of the meetings themselves in which cases were discussed anonymously as important factors in moving beyond this barrier.

Perhaps, as the research indicated, it is simply easier for rural communities to form collaborations because of the lack of resources available to them creates a strong

impetus for collaboration to occur (Sherman, 1992). On the opposite side, Sherman also indicated that, in many ways, children in rural America face an even greater crisis than do their urban counterparts. Certainly it is true that in the case of this collaborative, available community resources were scarce, and the poverty ratio in the local school district was 56%, not 25% as indicated in Melaville et al.'s national report (1993). Nonetheless, in looking at surrounding counties and school districts with an equally high, if not higher, poverty rate, the only collaborative to be found was the one examined in this study. The most intense reactions during the interviews were obtained when participants discussed the personal and professional relationships they had developed because of their involvement in C.A.R.E., and during the interviews the participants also mentioned the trust-building activities, the facilitation during the initial stages, and the results achieved as reasons why they believed these relationships were able to flourish.

During analysis of the data related to the meetings of the collaboration, three distinct patterns emerged. An examination of documents dating back prior to the establishment of the initial local group meetings and continuing through current agenda meetings of the C.A.R.E. group indicated three distinct growth phases of the collaborative: dependence, expansion, and independence.

During the dependent phase of the collaboration, a professor from the University of Oklahoma / Danforth Foundation facilitated meetings. Participants numbered no more than five or ten each month and meetings were held in a small room that adjoined the local public library. Funding for any activities or meals came from the Danforth

Foundation. Although the group was small, the trust-building activities resulted in a determined core group who met regularly and formed strong bonds with each other. During this period, participants drew up a set of common beliefs and a common vision that guided the group into the expansion phase. Many of the members of that original group continue to be participants today.

The second phase of the collaborative, the expansion phase, began when the University of Oklahoma / Danforth Foundation began working with the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (O.C.C.Y.) at the state level. Because O.C.C.Y.'s emphasis was on working with one group in each county, and since McClain County already had a collaborative in place, the two joined forces. Additional schools, service agencies and community groups from across McClain County were invited, and the collaborative grew rapidly. New retreats were held with an emphasis on trust-building activities and re-establishing common beliefs. A new vision statement with specific goals and action steps was developed. Many new service agencies and community groups were added to the regular membership of the collaborative, and meetings grew so large they had to be moved to the area vo-tech school. However, no new schools accepted the invitation to participate until two years ago. At that time, a dynamic, insistent principal from another small, rural district joined the collaborative and, working with the only other principal involved, began a campaign of letter writing and phone calling that resulted in several additional school administrators and counselors becoming involved in the collaborative.

The third distinct growth phase of the collaborative occurred when the Danforth Foundation funding ended and the collaborative found itself with very limited funds. At the same time, the cities of Purcell and Lexington began a summer recreation program for the youth of their cities. However, the cost of the program was prohibitive to poor families. Participants in the collaborative wanted the children they were working with to attend this program, so they decided to begin fundraising projects as the C.A.R.E. group and separate from the agencies that employed them. This decision was perhaps one of the most significant in the history of the collaborative because with it came an emphasis on service activities as a group separate from individual employment. C.A.R.E. is the source of the scholarships given to children and the source of the crisis response team, not separate agencies or groups or schools. Working together on fundraising projects was also mentioned by the participants in the development of deeper and more meaningful personal relationships with other collaborative members.

Indirect benefits to collaboration that were revealed in this study fell largely into the category of opportunities that opened or were created as a result of participation in the collaborative. Other, smaller collaborations formed to meet a specific purpose or to deal with highly confidential matters. For one participant, a new professional opportunity that was a direct result of her participation in the collaborative led to her agency conducting community focus groups to ensure that they offered the services the community needed and wanted. The unanticipated result that had the most direct link to school leadership, however, was the response participants wanted to make to schools that continued to choose not to collaborate with them. Two responses stood

out in this area: “You’re out there suffering on your own and you don’t have to. We’re here to help you,” and, “We can accomplish a whole lot more together than [we] can alone.”

Recommendations for Future Study

This study focused on one collaborative in one rural county in Oklahoma. The subjects and the researcher in this study were members of that collaborative. Further study should be conducted in order to determine whether or not the researcher-as-participant affected the outcome of the study. In addition, other studies that should be conducted include interviews of personnel who are members of service agencies or community groups who are not participants in a collaborative to determine if they hold the same interest in collaboration as their counterparts who do collaborate. It is possible that the results of this study were due to the experiences the participants underwent rather than a basic desire for collaboration. It would be important to study the role of the facilitator and the activities conducted during the initial stages of collaboration to determine whether or not these elements were critical to the success of collaboration.

Other studies that should be conducted include interviewing school personnel who are involved in collaborating as well as school personnel who are not involved in order to determine whether or not they perceive benefits in collaboration. It would be beneficial to examine the differences between urban and suburban collaborations, to examine collaborations in other rural districts, and to examine collaborations with and

without a connection to a statewide collaborative effort in order to determine whether the same patterns identified in this study are repeated in other collaborations or are unique to this study. It would also be very useful to examine sites where collaborations started and later failed in an effort determine what elements are critical to successful collaboration.

One final element that deserves serious study is that of time. This area elicited highly conflicting statements in that participants felt enormous pressure not to take time from their jobs to participate in a collaborative while realizing that the time spent collaborating was ultimately highly productive to their purposes. It would be beneficial to examine this aspect not only from the local providers' point-of-view but also from that of the state offices that set the policies to which agencies must adhere.

Summary

The literature is clear that schools can benefit greatly if they will collaborate. It is equally clear that school leaders have enough to do without trying to solve all of the problems children bring with them to school. It is also clear that the numbers of children coming to school with unmet needs is increasing every year. The problems that these children bring with them to school must be addressed if they are to achieve success in school, and school leaders must accept some responsibility for helping families find solutions to the problems that they face.

As a result of the collaborative effort examined in this study, we now have a better understanding of why service agency and community group personnel value

working closely with instructional leaders to address the problems of children and families. This study has also enumerated several examples of the benefits of collaboration to schools and the families they serve that should further illuminate for school leaders the reasons why they have a responsibility to initiate collaborative efforts within their communities. If all children are to be successful in school, everyone charged in any way with meeting the needs of children and families must work together.

The following situation is one of many examples of why school leaders must take the initiative in collaboration if others have not. While observing a school breakfast program, this researcher observed a seven year old child lick syrup from his breakfast tray after quickly eating the two small pancakes on the tray. When asked why he was licking the tray, the child replied, "Because I haven't had anything to eat since lunch yesterday [at the school] and I'm really hungry." Through participation in the Community Alliance of Resources for Everyone collaborative, the school district that was the focus of this study has developed the resources to meet the needs of children such as this one.

School leaders would be foolish indeed to believe they can ignore the plight of children of poverty. They would be equally foolish if they believe they can solve the problem alone.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Agendas from C.A.R.E. Meetings

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

APPENDIX A:
Agendas from C.A.R.E. Meetings
1998-1999

**CARE Meeting
Mid-America Vo-Tech
10-20-98**

**Welcome
Introductions
Minutes
Treasurers Report
Old Business
New Business
Speaker
Committee Breakouts
Committee Reports
Announcements
Adjournment**

**Pat Bain
Group
Ron Ellis
Shelly Gillis**

**Bobby Martin
Comm. Chairs
Comm. Chairs**

Notes:

CARE

MONTHLY MEETING 9:00 A.M.
11/17/98 MID AMERICA VO-TECH

AGENDA

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. WELCOME/MINUTES | FLOYD KIRK |
| 2. TREASURER REPORT | FLOYD KIRK |
| 3. ROUND TABLE INTRO'S/WHAT'S UP? | GROUP |
| 4. NOMINATION OF NEW OFFICERS | NOMINATION |
| 1998-99 | COMM. |
| PRESIDENT-PAT BAIN | |
| VICE-PRES.-LAURA RANDELS | |
| SECRETARY-RON ELLIS | |
| TREASURER-SHELLY GILLIS | |
| **ANY NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR? | |
| 5. COMMITTEE BREAKOUTS | COMM. CHAIRS |
| 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS | COMM. CHAIRS |
| 7. OLD BUSINESS | FLOYD KIRK |
| 8. NEW BUSINESS | FLOYD KIRK |
| 9. ANNOUNCEMENT | FLOYD KIRK |
| 10. ADJOURNMENT | FLOYD KIRK |

NOTES:

**CARE Meeting
Mid-America Vo-Tech
12-15-98**

Welcome	Floyd Kirk
Introductions	Group
Minutes	Floyd Kirk
Treasurers Report	Floyd Kirk
Old Business	
New Business	
Speaker – Children First Program – Janet Wilson & Christy Vandruff	
Committee Breakouts	Comm. Chairs
Committee Reports	Comm. Chairs
Announcements	
Adjournment	

NOTES:

CARE Meeting
Mid-America Vo-Tech
01-19-99

Welcome
Introductions
Minutes
Treasurers Report
Old Business
New Business
Speaker – Delta Community Action
Committee Breakouts
Committee Reports
Announcements
Adjournment

Pat Bain
Group
Ron Ellis
Shelly Gillis

Comm. Chairs
Comm. Chairs

Notes:

CARE Meeting
Mid-America Vo-Tech
02-16-99

Welcome
Introductions
Minutes
Treasurer's Report
Old Business
New Business
Speaker – Mid-America Vo-Tech
Committee Breakouts
Committee Reports
Announcements
Adjournment

Pat Bain
Group
Ron Ellis
Shelly Gillis

Rita Morris
Comm. Chairs
Comm. Chairs

NOTES:

CARE Meeting
Mid-America Vo-Tech
04-20-99

Welcome
Introduction
Minutes
Treasurers Report
Old Business
New Business
Group Discussion: Summer Youth Scholarships
Committee Breakouts
Committee Reports
Announcements
Adjournment

Laura Randels
Group
Ron Ellis
Shelly Gillis

Comm. Chairs
Comm. Chairs

Notes:

CARE Meeting
Mid-America Vo-Tech
05-18-99

Welcome
Introductions
Minutes
Treasurers Report
Legislative Update
Old Business
New Business
Committee Breakouts
Committee Reports
Announcements
Adjournment

Laura Randels
Group
Ron Ellis

Bobby Martin
Summer Youth Scholarships

Comm. Chairs
Comm. Chairs

Notes:

CARE Meeting
Mid-America Vo-Tech
06-01-99

Welcome
Introductions
Minutes
Treasurers Report
Old Business
New Business
Speaker – ASCOG
Committee Breakouts
Committee Reports
Announcements
Adjournment

Pat Bain
Group
Ron Ellis
Shelly Gillis

Dave Halcomb
Comm. Chairs
Comm. Chairs

Notes:

APPENDIX B
Informed Consent Form

PART III - INFORMED CONSENT FORM

- I. This research is being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus, and this signed form is your consent for participation in this research project.
- II. The working title of this study is "What Do Service Providers Believe about Collaboration with Public Schools". It is being conducted as part of the requirements to complete a dissertation under Dr. Frank McQuarrie's direction. The person conducting this research is Sherry Davis.
- III. The purpose of this research is to explore the subject of service agency – public school collaboration projects from the perspective of the service provider. This will be done through one-one interviews with service providers (from agencies such as: Department of Human Services, McClain Co. Youth and Family, McClain Co. Guidance Center, McClain Co. Health Dep't., Purcell Public Library, and other members of the Community Alliance of Resources for Everyone (C.A.R.E.) organization.
- IV. The only foreseeable risk to any subject would be if someone within the local collaboration might recognize a participant by a quotation that person might make during the interviews. However, nothing in the dissertation will reveal the identity of any participant.

The benefit to the subjects will be to examine the results of agency-school collaborations from the perspective of the service provider. By discovering what, if any, benefits are perceived by service providers, it is hoped that other service agencies and school districts might use this study to strengthen or begin collaborations.

- V. All participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

Confidentiality of records will be maintained. The interviews will be conducted one-one at the convenience of the service provider, will be audiotaped, and will last 30 minutes to 1 hour. The researcher will also document activities of the C.A.R.E. group during regularly scheduled meetings. Confidentiality will be maintained by not using any person's name in the dissertation. Audiotapes and other data collected will be stored in a locking file cabinet in the researcher's office.

Compensation for injury: This research involves little to no risk and no compensation or medical treatment will be required.

For information regarding participants' rights, contact the Office of Research Administration, 325-4757.

For additional information about this research contact: Sherry Davis, 527-2146 x 205 (w) or 527-6930 (h).

I agree to participate in this study: _____ Date: _____