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EVOLUTION OF A HIGH-ACHIEVING SCHOOL: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH LEARNING, LEADING AND PRACTICES

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degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
JEAN L. MCGREGOR CATE
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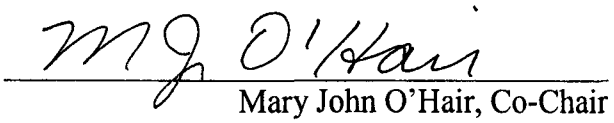
EVOLUTION OF A HIGH-ACHIEVING SCHOOL:
BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH LEARNING, LEADING AND PRACTICES

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE

Department of

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY



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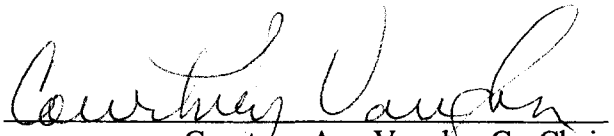

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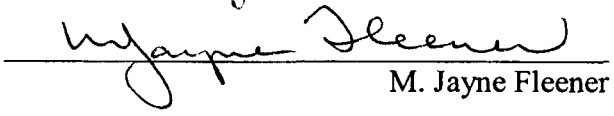

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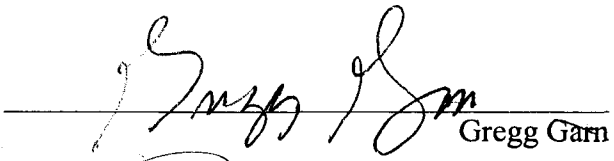

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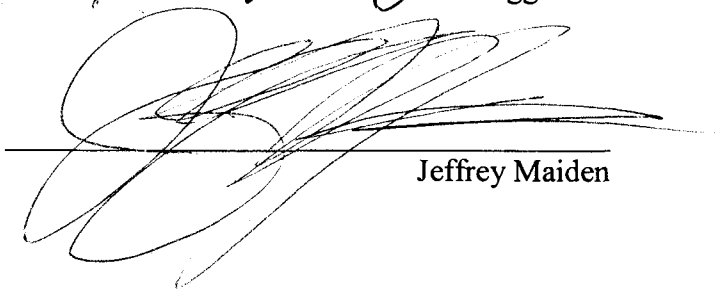

Jeffrey Maiden

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

LIST OF TABLES ix

LIST OF FIGURES x

ABSTRACT xii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Students' Success in School 1

School Organizational Restructuring 5

School Leadership for Learning 7

Statement of the Problem 8

Purpose of the Study 10

Research Questions 10

Definition of Terms 11

Assumptions of the Study 12

Limitations of the Study 13

Chapter Summary 14

CHAPTER 2: INTERPRETATIVE FRAMEWORK

Introduction 15

Traditional Schooling 16

Schools as Communities 19

Democratic Learning Communities 22

Leading for and in Democratic Communities 26

Distributing Leadership Across the Community 28
Building Capacity for Deepening Participation 29
Broadening Participation Across the Community 30
Evolving Through Communities of Practice 32
Increasing Learning for All 36
Chapter Summary 39
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROCESS
Chapter Introduction 41
Qualitative Research and Case Study 41
Case Selection 44
Data Collection 50
Documents 51
Field Notes 51
Interviews 52
Survey 54
The Role of the Researcher 55
Data Analysis 57
Interpretive Framework 60
Trustworthiness 63
Chapter Summary 64
CHAPTER 4: THE SELECTED CASE
Introduction 66
Selected Case 66

Outside Influences on Red Bud 67

History of Red Bud 71

Red Bud in the 21st Century 75

Demographics 77

Student Learning 77

School Processes 80

Perceptions of School 82

Summary of 21st Century Red Bud 85

Chapter Summary 85

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Introduction 87

Building Community and Evolving Through Learning, Leading and Practices 88

Red Bud as a Traditional School 88

Red Bud as a Community 93

Red Bud as a Democratic Community 107

Building Community and Evolving Summary 114

A Living Democracy at Red Bud 115

Chapter Summary 120

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Introduction 122

Evolving Through Learning, Leadership and Practices 122

Changes in Conditions Increased Learning for All 136

Implications for Educational Leadership 139

Significance of the Study 142

Implications for Future Research 144

Chapter Summary 146

REFERENCES 147

APPENDICES 160

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Changes Influencing Red Bud School and Research.....45

Table 2. Comparison of self-similarity between schools as learning communities and the communities of practice which comprised the learning community 134

Table 3. Characteristics for Learning, Leadership, Practices and Student Learning for Each Stage in the Continuum of Moving from a Traditional School to a Democratic Community 137

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Ethnicity at Red Bud and Cisco District from 1989–2003 48

Figure 2. Red Bud's free and reduced lunch percentages from 1995-2003 48

Figure 3. Comparison of Red Bud percentages of free and reduced lunch and ethnicity 49

Figure 4. Percent of students scoring satisfactorily on state assessments in 1996, 1999 and 2003 50

Figure 5. Cisco District school improvement model (1989) 69

Figure 6. Grade three norm referenced test results changes per ethnicity, 2002-2003 79

Figure 7. Grade five criterion referenced test changes per poverty, 2001 - 2003 80

Figure 8. Original continuum of practices in moving from conventional schooling to democratic community 95

Figure 9. Red Bud school covenant: renamed core learning principles 102

Figure 10. Major events that created momentum and moved Red Bud to another stage 130

Figure 11. Representation of the relationships among learning, leadership and practices 131

Figure 12. Continuum of practices in moving from conventional schooling to democratic community with the questioning phase and communities of practice 133

Figure 13. Progression from individual communities of practice to a coordinated democratic learning community 135

ABSTRACT

EVOLUTION OF A HIGH-ACHIEVING SCHOOL:

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH LEARNING, LEADING AND PRACTICES

BY: JEAN CATE

MAJOR PROFESSORS: MARY JOHN O'HAIR AND COURTNEY ANN VAUGHN

The achievement gap of ethnic and poor students has haunted educators, and some schools have narrowed the gap through building learning communities. The purpose of the study was to understand *how* changes occurred in a traditional school as it transformed into a high-achieving democratic learning community. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) indicated that improved student learning occurred when schools organized as learning communities. Leaders of learning communities who distributed leadership across the community (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 1999) and created communities of practice facilitated the learning of both explicit and tacit knowledge across the community (Wenger, 1998) and created conditions that supported new strategies for addressing diverse students' learning needs. Democratic schools were communities in which students experienced authentic learning and democratic practices (Apple & Bean, 1995; O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000).

To explain *how* the community changed and evolved, four sets of data were gathered over seventeen years, including documents, in-depth interviews, field notes and a learning-community survey. The analysis of data produced themes and created a historical, interpretive case study (Merriam, 1998) of the processes, interactions and relationships that occurred as the community evolved. When the school joined a university-school network, inquiry erupted and teacher learning began. Through the

network, teachers examined the IDEALS of a democratic learning community (O'Hair, et al, 2000). Teachers' learning was shared and leadership skills were built. Communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) were created through book studies, site goals, grade level and vertical teams led by teacher leaders (Lambert, 1998). As teachers inquired their own practice, their knowledge of how to address student needs was enhanced. Communities of practice coordinated and moved knowledge across the community. Through learning, distributed leadership (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 1999) and communities of practice, student achievement increased. The school exceeded the achievement scores of much less diverse and lower poverty level schools. Red Bud became an example of a high-achieving school (Haycock, 2001) that closed the gap and provided a model for others. This study revealed how Red Bud evolved.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who because of their love and support, I am able to pursue my dream for a doctorate. First, to my precious mother who provided encouragement and love. My father, until his death in 1972, and she provided me with so much love and nurturing. When I began my masters' degree she moved to Norman to help us care for our two boys and continued to nurture our family. She buoyed and sustained us throughout our lives. She set high expectations and supported me through my journey of learning, growing and maturing. She modeled intellectual curiosity, and shared her love for God, learning and life. She found a wonderful mate to share the later years of her life. She inspired me and continues to do so, even when recently faced with cancer.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Students' Success in Schools

Parents have seen education as a way for their children to get ahead (Labaree, 1997), yet many students have not been successful in schools and the public scrutiny has escalated. Data have shown that education provided a mechanism for social mobility and that college degrees significantly increased one's earning power (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002). High school dropouts have faced numerous challenges in finding and retaining jobs, and, if they did locate a job, the job generally offered less advancement opportunities or benefit offerings. Employers viewed those with higher levels of education to possess the potential for greater skills, problem-solving ability as well as a good work ethic (Robinson, 2002). Because of these views of how education ameliorated one's status, success in education has been sought by many parents.

Not all students have been successful in their educational endeavors. School responses to the needs of poor and minority disadvantaged students have been inadequate to level the playing field for these students. This uneven playing field has resulted in the achievement gap, with disproportioned lower scores for disadvantaged and minority students. Goodlad (1984) concluded, from his study of 38 high schools and 17,163 student sample, that a great difference exists in the opportunities for access to knowledge in their schooling and that those differences seemed to be a related to the student's economic and racial status. Even though progress was made in the 1970s and 1980s on narrowing the gap, the achievement gap remained steady over the past decade. Except in

a few isolated states, notably Texas and North Carolina (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2003; Education Week, 2000) this trend has continued. Haycock, Jeralk and Huang (2001) reported that by fourth grade poor students of all races were two years behind other students and that they slip to three years behind by eighth grade, based on data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP].

Decades ago, Goodlad (1984) explained that teachers and principals were challenged to meet the needs of the diverse student populations and backgrounds that they faced. Almost twenty years later, Schwartz (2000) expressed the urgent need for closing the achievement gap because of the relationship between educational success and social and economic opportunities. Gamoran (2001) found that differences existed in academic content and classroom experiences for schools that served disadvantaged students. The challenge to meet the needs of poor and disadvantaged students remained an issue into the twenty-first century.

The achievement gap was created by a complicated set of circumstances and needed to be addressed at multiple levels. Perception was part of the problem; for decades many believed that a student's background dictated that student's achievement more than did the quality of instruction. Haycock et al. (2001) disputed this myth by showing examples of schools serving high-poverty students who have met the challenge and performed well on state tests. The 2003 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll found strong support for public schools (Rose & Gallup, 2003). The poll also reported that even though the public continued to believe that closing the achievement gap was important, the number attributing the achievement gap to quality of schooling was decreasing from

previous polls, and more were identifying factors such as home life, parental involvement, student interest, and community environment as major contributing factors.

When students have failed, teachers were blamed and they felt the burden of the student failure (Sandia National Laboratories, 1993). Often, teachers felt powerless to ameliorate the overwhelming circumstances that influenced student failure. In his book that portrayed schooling through the stories of poor children who were served by devoted teachers in a South Bronx under funded school, Kozol (2000) lamented, "Still the facts are always there. Every teacher, every parent, every priest who serves this kind of neighborhood knows what these inequalities imply...You have a sense of what's ahead," (p. 47). These precious young students were surrounded by failing systems, both in their neighborhoods and in their schools, with little hope for rising above their situation.

Even with the odds stacked against them, some students have succeeded. Morally, public education was obliged to serve all students. Collectively we have a moral obligation to help them succeed. In a Georgia poll, 43% of parents surveyed agreed that we have a moral obligation for providing a quality education for all students (Traiman, 2003). Traiman explained the economic needs to change were a result of the changing workforce and job requirements for additional education and the concern of employers for the lack of skills of high school graduates.

Politically, public school reform was promoted at the national and state levels. Initiated in the early 1980s by the highly critical report, *A Nation at Risk*, and followed by other commissioned reports, educational reform has been at the forefront of the national agenda (Murphy, 1991). Some of the reasons for the national attention for reform cited by Murphy included: competitive factors in the world economy, demands of diverse

student population, dissatisfaction with the school bureaucracy, school effectiveness research findings and lessons from the corporate world. Berliner (2001) explained ways in which the media had mislead the public and spread the claim that America's students were unable to compete in a global society.

Contrary to the national rhetoric, evidence that public schools were failing was not supported in all studies. The Sandia Report (1993) used publicly available trend data and found that performance on standardized tests was improving as were other performance indicators, except for minority and urban students. The Sandia Report projected vast changes in the demographics to impact the educational system as well and that the widespread call for reform had conflicting goals, compounding the direction for school restructuring. The latest Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup poll found that the public actually had a high regard for public schools with little interest in finding an alternative (Rose & Gallup, 2003). Additional findings were that the public was more concerned about finding and keeping good teachers, especially with low salaries for educators. This concern addressed the finding that the quality of the teacher impacted student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Berliner and Biddle (1995) challenged what they believed were attacks by the Reagan and Bush administrations on public schools and countered the myths that damaged American education by citing accounts of rising scores and the recalibration of commercial tests, such as Iowa Test of Basic Skills and California Achievement Tests. They detailed the TIMSS-R data and found that the highest scoring science nations scored correctly on only four more items out of 48 than did American students. They confirmed that it might be true that America was failing some of its students, especially

those poor who existed without decent housing or health care and lived in neighborhoods with crime and drug abuse infested neighborhoods. For example, in some large urban districts the likelihood of students receiving mathematics or science instruction from a highly qualified and fully certified content specialist teacher was much less than in the wealthier suburbs. Berliner (2001) explained that although some schools were not adequately preparing students, others were doing quite well. In *The War Against America's Public Schools*, Bracey (2001) countered the misuse of statistics, biased word selection and selective research by commissions and special interest groups that denigrated the public schools. Bracey (2003) made a case for No Child Left Behind as yet another weapon of such entities to discredit the public schools. The mandates of accountability led many in the educational system to respond to the call for school improvement.

With the challenges to public education accelerated and the issues around school improvement complex, additional research on those factors that impact student achievement was needed. The factors that could ameliorate the achievement gap were of particular interest. This study considered how the school organization evolved and its possible impact on student learning.

School Organizational Restructuring

Even though the national rhetoric and politically motivated commissioned reports negatively impacted the public's perception of public education, there was work to be done to close the achievement gap for poor and minority students. School restructuring as a means for improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap gained favor. Lee and Burkam (2003) found that organizational and structural characteristics of

high schools impacted whether or not students remained in school. In addition to early childhood and school climate initiatives, a focus on the teaching and learning process, family support mechanisms, as well as school organization and management were suggested as strategies to improve student achievement (Schwartz, 2000).

Research highlighted the impact of school organizational restructuring on student achievement. Lee, Smith and Croninger (1996) found that schools that departed from conventional school organizational bureaucracies and moved to a communal model that focused on a collective responsibility for student learning narrowed the achievement gap for high school students. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) found evidence of increased student achievement among schools in which teachers possessed a clear, shared purpose for all students' learning and engaged in collaboration toward the shared purpose that created and fostered a collective responsibility for student learning.

Other studies showed the positive impact of school organizational restructuring on student learning. Interactive methods, teachers' professional preparation and key organizational supports, such as structures for engaging teachers in dialogue with colleagues, showed increased student achievement in Chicago elementary schools (Smith, Lee & Newmann, 2001). In New York's District 2, Fink and Resnick (2001) found that creating a culture of learning with nested learning communities across the district resulted in improved test scores. In a study of 48 high-performing Kentucky schools, Crowley and Meehan (2003) concluded:

> Schools with minimal gap differences had significantly higher scores for learning culture, shared goals for learning, and effective teaching than those with large differences in achievement gap. Those schools that were more successful with all

students in terms of academic achievement had higher perceptions of their schools as professional learning communities... (p. 6)

Griffith (2003) found that the organizational models that explained the most variance in student achievement progress were the open and human relations models. The open system (r^2= .189) was characterized by environmental interaction, flexibility and adaptability through teacher development and the human relations system (r^2=.105) was characterized by teacher involvement with a commitment to a positive morale.

Clark (2002) added to the research on school organizational impact on student achievement in a study of five Nashville schools that found that school and family processes accounted for 51 percent of the variation in student test scores. These processes included teacher instructional actions; teacher expectations for students; students' total weekly out-of-school time in high-yield activities; activity quality; parental standards, beliefs, and expectations; and, teacher-parent communication actions. Learning communities created conditions that influenced teacher learning and created the context for a strong focus on student learning. This strong focus on learning was modeled and communicated throughout the school and especially by the school leader.

School Leadership for Learning

Studies indicated a connection between school leadership and student achievement. Empirically teasing out how leadership impacted student achievement was difficult, yet research indicated that a leaders' impact was significant (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Adding to the Hallinger and Heck findings, a meta-analysis of 70 studies (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003) indicated that there was a relationship between leadership

and student achievement. The greatest effect size was shown by the extent to which a leader fostered a sense of cooperation and community.

The Waters et al. meta-analysis (2003), as well as other recent studies, provided evidence of the connection between leadership and student learning that was either positive or negative. Copeland's (2003) preliminary findings indicated that practices of broad-based leadership, such as staff involvement and inquiry-based practice, created conditions that improved student achievement. Cotton (2003) described five principal behaviors that facilitated distributed leadership and organizational capacity that resulted in increased student achievement: a clear focus on student learning; interactions and relationships; school culture; instruction; and, accountability. School leadership showed to make a difference in student achievement.

Studies have indicated a connection among student achievement, school organization and leadership. This study focused on a school that has shown large gains in student achievement and added to the understanding of the relationship of leadership within this context. The study analyzed how a school evolved from a traditional school into a democratic learning community with increased student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The process of moving from a traditional school, to a professional learning community, to a democratic learning community was complex and nonlinear (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). Leadership within a democratic school community became constructive and distributed. Learning opportunities and building the capacity of all members of the school community supported meaningful participation. Furman (2003) shared that the educational leadership literature should include research that

increases understanding of the qualities in a school community that allow for construction of distributed leadership.

Models existed of schools that have been successful, yet they did not explain how those schools came to be successful. The research had identified characteristics of schools that supported increased student learning (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Hord, 1997; Lee et al., 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Smith et al., 2001). In Chapter 2, a full discussion of these characteristics was presented. To understand how a learning community evolved over time, a longitudinal analysis and interpretation of the process was undertaken. In this study, how the democratic learning community evolved and the relationship of learning, leadership and practices within the evolution of the community was analyzed.

A geographically isolated suburban elementary school that faced a diverse and mostly low-income student population was the site for the study. This school met the challenges of teacher burnout and critical community perceptions. Following the transformation, the school enjoyed national, state and district recognition, high public esteem and test scores similar to those of the most affluent schools in the district. The school was transformed from a bureaucratically-run school to a learning community with democratic orientations. Learning spread among teachers to students and parents. Leadership of the school was expanded and distributed among the community. Practices were shared. The study documented the evolution and transformation of the school and interpreted how these processes occurred and were impacted by learning, leadership and practices.

Purpose of the Study

The politics of No Child Left Behind [NCLB] (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2002) that promoted adequate yearly progress for all students and advanced the need to narrow the gap for poorly performing students raised the need to know how equitable and just high-achieving schools evolved. The need to know how high-achieving schools evolved and how the school complemented both a concern for equity and an agenda of moral purpose (Furman, 2003) added to our understanding of school restructuring and school leadership. The purpose of the study was to understand the processes and interrelationship of learning, leadership and communities of practice that resulted in a Title I elementary school building a high-achieving democratic learning community. This study addressed how a school evolved over time into a high-achieving school.

Research Questions

The study considered how a democratic learning community increased student achievement and the relationship of school leadership that existed within the context of addressing these needs. The study analyzed changes that occurred in a school as it moved towards becoming learning community with democratic orientations, especially considering the distributing of leadership among the members of the democratic community. Through interpretation of the processes and relationships, the study determined how the community of learners developed and emerged, producing higher student achievement. The study analyzed and interpreted the relationships of the leader and of groups of individuals at multiple layers within the organization to find patterns of

actions that might lead to an understanding of how the transformation of the school occurred, i.e. the study considered changes over time and how those changes occurred.

The research question investigated was:

How did a high-achieving democratic learning community evolve?

a. How did learning influence the evolutionary process?

b. How did leadership influence the evolutionary process?

c. How did communities of practice impact the evolutionary process?

d. What changes occurred to create a high-achieving democratic learning community?

Definitions of Terms

1. Professional Learning Community – A school organization that created a systemic shared vision and purpose, shared decision making and collaborative learning was labeled as such (Hord, 1997; Joyce& Calhoun, 1996; Kruse, Louis & Bryk, 1994; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; O'Hair et al., 2000).
2. Democratic Learning Community – A learning community that shared democratic ideals and practices and a common focus on student learning through meaningful participation among multiple groups, often resulting in civic action provided experiences for and of civic responsibility (Apple & Bean, 1995; Beck & Foster, 1999; O'Hair et al., 2000).
3. No Child Left Behind [NCLB] Act of 2001– NCLB was an omnibus reform act to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools, described by President Bush as the "cornerstone of my administration" (USDE, 2002).

4. Distributed leadership – The acts and roles of leaders were spread throughout the school and did not rest in a single or small group of selected individuals (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 1999).
5. Leadership capacity – Increased knowledge and skills afforded individuals greater ability to analyze school practices, propose solutions, and implement changes in those practices (Lambert, 1998).
6. Communities of Practice – Small groups of individuals who meet regularly with a common purpose, shared practices, and desire to learn and reflect (Wenger, 1998).

Assumptions of the Study

1. School restructuring was an on-going process, not an event.
2. Multiple variables at multiple levels across the educational system impact schools and their restructuring process.
3. Learning, rather than achievement, was an important goal of schools. Learning was a process, and achievement was an event.
4. High-achieving schools were those that have a high poverty and minority population, yet that produce students with high performance.
5. School leaders impact the organization and structures of schools as well as the vision and expectations of the school.
6. School leaders were integral in the process of school restructuring, but leadership emerges more from acts than from roles and positions.

Limitations of the Study

1. By design, the case study was focused on one unique example evolutionary processes, which limited its representativeness, yet allowed additional insight into an evolutionary process (Stake, 2003).
2. Triangulation was employed to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation, yet the case was a process within a context, and difficult to replication (Stake, 2003).
3. Each set that comprised the data was a collection and no one piece of the data spanned the entire seventeen years of the study.
4. The role of the researcher changed throughout the seventeen years, yielding differing views of the evolution. The researcher as participant-observer allowed greater accessibility, yet may have influenced the interpretation. The study was conducted by a single researcher with inherent biases, opinions and perceptions. The researcher worked closely with the staff and had personal connections to them, which impacted the objectivity of the study.
5. The researcher was a life-long educator whose perspective was that of an educational administrator and it was through this lens that the case was filtered. The researcher had a strong philosophical bias towards constructivist and authenticity both in teaching and in leading.
6. The selection of a single case was a unique context and not reflective of all other sites. The case was situated within the context of several levels and layers, within a district and state, within a certain time frame, and with certain leaders. These conditions differed from other cases because of the context of state, district, school, the personnel and the time in history.

Chapter Summary

Parents viewed education as a way for their children to get ahead (Labaree, 1997), yet many students were not successful in schools and the public accountability demands were increasing. Historically, schools have been unable to successfully educate all students; politically, student achievement and school improvement have been targeted; and, morally, all students deserve a high quality education. With the NCLB mandates, requiring adequate yearly progress for all schools (USDE, 2002), understanding how a school changed into high-achieving schools that supported improved student learning can build theory and inform leadership practices.

This chapter considered student success in school and the results of studies from organizational restructuring and school leadership changes. Although reform efforts have been studied to determine what factors contributed to increased learning by students, theories about how these schools evolved into successful high-achieving schools were lacking. This study contributed to the knowledge about the factors and processes that supported increased student learning and proposed a theory of evolution towards a high-achieving democratic school that resulted in broader participation and increased student achievement.

CHAPTER 2

Interpretive Framework

Introduction

The purpose of schooling has been debated among scholars, politicians and educators. Eleanor Roosevelt (1930) explained that the conventional answer had to do with the acquisition of knowledge, yet that in a democracy, the purpose was to produce good citizens. Building on the philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, John Dewey made a clear link between democracy and education (Glickman, 1998). Dewey (1916) explained that democracy was not just a process of governing, but a type of associated living with shared experiences. Mobility and travel broadened the community and required persons in these democracies to be educated and adaptable, drawing from the actions of others to understand and give purpose to their own actions within the larger society. Glickman (1998) took Dewey's work deeper by advocating for "democracy as education" (p. 8) that was based on the capacity for learning with and from each other and active participation in the process of teaching and learning. Goodlad and McMannon (1997) explained that public education was bombarded with economic pressure to produce a quality workforce, but that the broader conviction for public education must be to democracy and quality learning and citizenship for all. Scherer and Rose (1997) lamented the lack of complex thinking about education and school reform. Changing traditional schools into communities that fostered increased learning for all students required strong leadership from a group of committed individuals who were willing to question their practices and learn from each other.

Traditional Schooling

Imagine a clock as the metaphor for schooling. With the clock as a metaphor, time was the stable and other variables were dependent on the centrality of scheduled time. Decisions were based on time, with time serving as the limiting factor. School planning was dictated by time and learning was dictated by time. Events were managed by the sequence of time and knowledge was segmented by time. Elements of a clock included a means of marking off equal increments in a repetitive process and of keeping track of those increments in a display (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2002). Time and equal increments with the mechanistic view of teaching and learning formed the core of traditional schools.

Traditional schools were characterized by their emphasis on the Carnegie unit and the incremental approach to learning. Students were viewed as recipients of the knowledge of the teacher. Teachers were viewed as possessing a body of knowledge, which was documented in the text, and transmitting it to the students through routines, texts and lectures (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Teachers showed that they taught the content by indicating the pages selected from the text. A sense of certainty and routines was complemented by the incremental clock-based view of schools.

This sense of certainty vanished in the progressive schools that began to focus on the needs of the students, rather than on the needs of the teachers and on the process of understanding, rather than on coverage of the content. Even though teaching for understanding was purposeful and structured, the teaching for understanding and mastery strategies required new skills and knowledge of teachers to analyze the needs of the students and to fit those needs to the analysis of the task and content. Teaching came to

be viewed as a complex task. Darling-Hammond (1997) explained that efforts to move towards progressive, democratic classrooms underestimated the differing needs of teachers' skills and knowledge and of school capacity.

The model of a clock also described the traditional school organization. Traditional schools used time as a constant. Schedules were built around the constant of time and teaching and learning were to occur within a certain time schedule. In a traditional school, each part of the school performed specialized, routine functions that were completed in specific timed increments. Traditional schools were age-graded and often departmental. Accreditation was based on quantities of items, not performance. Since time served as the constant, learning became the variable. Hierarchical governance structures left the teacher as autonomous in the classroom, protecting her - gender specific - from outside pressures as well as outside learning.

The hierarchical governance structures of traditional school were referred to as "loosely coupled" by Elmore (2000). This model suggested that the main core of teaching decisions, i.e., what to teach, when and how to teach it, how to assess it, was controlled by the teacher in the classroom, not by the school organization. Thus, the role of the school organization was to manage those processes and procedures peripheral to curriculum and instruction, while leaving the curricular and instructional decisions to the individual teacher. This division of labor left the role of the school organization as a buffering agent for the teacher from outside scrutiny. Scientific management excluded community members and teachers from decision making (Darling-Hammond, 1997). In this traditional model, school leaders managed processes and procedures and were not

asked to be instructional leaders. In fact, the organization discouraged them from meddling in the affairs of the classroom (Elmore, 2000).

Traditional schools were places wherein teachers were isolated in their classrooms, faculty meetings were infrequent and limited to school business, and collaboration about teaching practices was left to the discretion of the teachers. Senge et al. (2000) offered these insights into the limitations of traditional schools, "when administrators and teachers focus on narrow and pragmatic questions, such as classroom management, increasing attendance and graduation rates, and improving test scores, then students may internalize those diminished visions and live with unnecessarily low horizons" (p. 22). Sirotnik (1989) enumerated the faults of traditional, scientifically managed schools as those that were characterized by "isolation of educators (both teachers and administrators) from one another, the lockstep chopping up of the instructional day into isomorphic relationship with subject matters, the indiscriminate allocation of untenable student-teacher ratios, [and] the almost nonexistent time for genuine reflective practice..." (p. 107). Sirotnik (1989) concluded that schools should be the places of "knowing and reknowing in the context of action" (p. 109) as they move towards the reconstruction of the organization of schooling itself. The human relations and open view of school organization that gained momentum over scientific management slowly began to give way to a more critical view of organizational theory that challenged the conditions and power relationships defining the organizational tenets (Sirotnik, 1989). This critical perspective became the catalyst for action, action based on a process of continuous change and renewal.

Schools as Communities

In contrast to the autonomous, hierarchical, mechanistic nature of the traditional schools, Sergiovanni (1994) proposed that classrooms became communities of learning, caring, and inquiring; to accomplish this end, schools had to become places in which teachers learn, were valued and had voice. Sergiovanni and others began to apply the metaphor of community to schools. The word "community" had no singular meaning and was an omnibus descriptor for two dichotomous systems, as explained by Beck and Foster (1999). For some, community denoted a "liberal" view of a social system that was characterized by individual autonomy, the purpose of which was to preserve the rights of the individual. This viewpoint asserted the independence of the individual with inalienable rights which were guaranteed through policies, rules and laws and based on the belief that the individual acted rationally in constructing these rules for living together and ordering behavior towards one another. In contrast, the "communitarian" view of a community as a social system was that people were basically social creatures who naturally exhibited dependent, pro-social behaviors and promoted the primacy of community life that linked individuals to others for the collective health of the community. Initially, traditional schools that began to focus on community favored the liberal view of community, based on rules and bureaucratic regulations.

A synthesis of values from both the liberal and communitarian perspectives on community explained that people deserved dignity and respect, were fundamentally rational, and were nurtured in a caring and just community (Beck & Foster, 1999). A synthesis of the liberal and communitarian community concept explained the interdependent and inter-relational meaning of community as advocated by Sergiovanni

and others. Whereas the clock metaphor represented the division of labor and incremental and sequential view of schooling and learning, the community metaphor highlighted the inter-relationships and interdependence of each entity of a school, including the students, the teachers, the leaders, the parents, the district and the greater community. The community metaphor represented the interplay among the members of the community and learning. While the clock metaphor fit well with the prominence of physics as the elitist knowledge, the metaphor of community coincided with the eminence of biology as a highly regarded discipline. In the context of increased school accountability, the promising model of schooling as a community showed links between student achievement and school organization. The model of schooling that created interdependency among the stakeholders of a school came to be called a professional learning community.

The study of Newmann and Wehlage (1995) raised professional learning communities as an organizational structure to prominence by showing improved student achievement over traditional schools. Newmann and Wehlage identified three key components of these schools: (1) teachers pursued a clear shared purpose for all students' learning (2) teachers engaged in collaborative activity to achieve the purpose (3) teachers took collective responsibility for student learning. Schools that possessed the organizational capacity to improve student achievement shared a clear and consistent message about student learning, through common goals and objectives; teachers collaborated to share best practices and to plan together; and, through sharing and addressing common goals, teachers developed a focus on student learning that brought about collective responsibilities to achieve those goals and objectives.

Since the Newmann and Wehlage (1995) study, knowledge of learning communities expanded. Hord (1997), working with schools in the southwest, found these characteristics of a professional learning community, i.e., supportive and shared leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application of learning, supportive conditions and shared personal practice. Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton and Kleiner (2000), applied the business learning organization model to schools, provided the following school learning community components: reflective dialogue; unity of purpose; collective focus on student learning; collaboration and norms of sharing; openness to improvement; deprivation of practice and critical review; trust and respect; renewal of community; and, supportive and knowledgeable leadership. With a variety of foci for learning communities, a common description based on the work of Murphy (2002) and O'Hair et al. (2000) served as the frame that connected democracy and community and fit with the concept of deep democracy based on "participation, communication, and cross-cultural cooperation" (Furman & Shields, 2003, p. 8) that laid the foundation for the practice of democracy in schools.

Professional learning community research provided a school improvement model that resulted in improved student learning through structures for teachers to learn together with a focus on student learning. A learning community was described as a school that involved all staff in a collaborative system with shared purpose and through which student learning was increased (Hord, 1997; Joyce & Calhoun, 1996; Joyce, Calhoun, & Hopkins, 1999; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). In their description of structural conditions and social and human resources that enhanced a learning community, Kruse, Louis and Bryk (1994) discussed the role of teacher

empowerment and school autonomy. In contrast to the autonomy of the traditional school model, in a learning community, all community members were encouraged to learn and differing voices were welcomed and summoned, yielding a more fertile ground for enhanced practices for increased student performance.

Other researchers provided additional components to the school renewal processes which facilitated the movement of schools toward becoming learning communities. O'Hair et al. (2000) proposed a continuum of moving from a traditional school to a democratic learning community as follows: sharing best practices; establishing trust and cooperation; sharing leadership and some decisions; and, critiquing struggles and practices as components of a professional learning community, and, they suggested further that components of a democratic learning community included developing authentic and democratic practices; sharing power, authority and critical decisions; moving from individual classroom concerns to collective school identity; and, serving others. Establishing these structures and practices facilitated the movement of traditional schools towards becoming democratic learning communities with school improvement gains and confronting of issues of social justice.

Democratic Learning Communities

Schools operating as learning communities differed in their beliefs and values. Learning communities that practiced democracy in school governance and classrooms, focused on the common good and student learning, had broad-based support and promoted civic action, which created democratic learning communities. Democratic learning communities were characterized by stakeholders' meaningful participation in schooling, practicing and teaching of democracy principles, shared values, authentic

pedagogy, critical study, and shared decision making, and examination of equity, control and other critical societal issues by teachers and others (O'Hair et al., 2000). In democratic schools, issues from the real world were tackled and changes in student efficacy occurred (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Democratic schools taught the foundations of democracy by establishing the conditions of democracy such as open flow of ideas, faith in people's capacity to resolve problems, critical reflection on actions, concern for a great good and the dignity of all, an ideal set of values as a guide, and the promotion of these ideals (Apple & Beane, 1995). In democratic schools, teachers joined with other stakeholders to inquire and discourse around school practices and their potential impact on student learning. This inquiry and discourse resulted in school and civic action.

O'Hair et al. (2000) described practices of democratic schools through a framework known as the *IDEALS: Inquiry, Discourse, Equity, Authenticity (in teaching and learning), (shared) Leadership, and Service.* Through *Inquiry*, community members analyzed their practices as well as reviewed data and analyzed these data to find strengths and weaknesses and to determine which students required additional support. From the inquiry of the data and school practices, the community engaged in *Discourse* which provided voice for all stakeholders in deciding on needs of diverse groups within the school and community and courses of action to address their needs. Including the voices and ideas from all stakeholders and considering differing perspectives brought issues of *Equity* to the forefront during the discourse and decision making. By allowing for participatory roles in decision making and with a focus on *Authentic* teaching, learning and assessment, participation was extended and learning occurred. Sharing information,

ideas, engaging in authentic practices, and learning through inquiry and discourse built the *Leadership* capacity (Lambert, 1998) of the members of the school community. Serving the common good through this work and reciprocating with valued interaction and *Service* provided a network of support within the school community and outreach to the greater community. Schools that practiced the *IDEALS* had principals, teachers, parents and community members who shared leadership and nurtured the development of themselves and others to provide powerful conditions to support student learning. Therefore, research focused on how school leaders and teachers collaborated to create and foster a network of supportive structures (Fullan, 2001; Lambert, 1998; Reitzug, 1994) and improve student learning (Hord, 1997; Joyce & Calhoun, 1996; Louis et al., 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

Sergiovanni (1989) explained that a covenant served as a key to focusing on purpose within a school organization. Glickman (1993) applied this explanation and proposed a covenant of learning principles, a decision making charter and critical study as a basis for renewing schools based on democratic practices. The covenant moved the vision and mission statements of a school from outside the classroom walls to inside the classroom walls. The covenant, or core learning principles, was based on the mission and vision of a school, but addressed the school communities' collective beliefs about effective teaching and learning and guided school and classroom decisions, bringing coherence into the classrooms and across the school. The school charter opened the decision-making processes to the school community so that members shared meaningful decisions that guided teaching and learning in the school. Glickman (1993) proposed that the charter serve as a guide for the core work of school improvement. Glickman (1993)

defined the litmus test for a good school as "the solid, purposeful, enduring results it tries to obtain for its students (p. 50)" and asserted that critical study should address important questions about student learning. These processes fit within the context of a learning community.

As addressed in Chapter One, not all students have been successful in schools. Success in school tends to be differential, based on ethnicity and socio-economic level, rather than on ability. Lack of opportunity and experiences created inferior access for ethnically diverse and poor children and served as a catalyst for the accountability movement (Lunenburg, 2003). Issues of social justice were confronted through state accountability measures that allowed for public disclosure of academic failure rates of specific subgroups, opening the inquiry about these data for the community and resulting in a reversal of the norm of underachievement based on race and poverty in individual schools (Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson & Koschoreck, 2001).

NCLB (2001) legislation redefined accountability for individual schools. Through NCLB, issues of social justice became public record and adequate yearly progress of all students and subgroups of students was mandated. To successfully address these mandates, schools had to find ways to improve student achievement. Grissmer, Flanagan, Kawata and Williamson (2000) reviewed National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) data and proposed that additional resources be spent in states with greater proportions of minority and disadvantaged students. While additional resources for highly diverse and poverty-ridden schools were needed, other areas were suggested as targets for improving schools as well. Practices of schools, school leadership and teachers impacted student achievement (Miller, 2003). Stigler and Hiebert

(2000) proposed increased investment in generating and sharing knowledge about teaching and learning to address the achievement gap between American students and those of other countries. To accomplish the sharing and generating of knowledge in a culture of participation, a reculturing of schools was required that provided time for teachers to learn together.

Leading for and in Democratic Communities

Expanding opportunities for students and greater civic participation among the school community required a new set of more complex leadership skills. "Building democratic education is extremely knowledge intensive for all actors in the system," (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 36). Murphy (2002) proposed three synergistic paradigms for the reculturing of school administration: social justice, school improvement, and democratic community. Murphy applied the metaphors of *moral steward*, *educator* and *community builder* to conceptualize these paradigms. As a *moral steward*, the administrator was directed by purpose and beliefs, especially related to justice, community and teaching and learning, in all decisions. The *educator* metaphor was based on the need for administrators to be pedagogically grounded with a focus on learning for all members of the school community, including the administrator as lead learner. The administrator as *community builder* accepted the tasks of opening communication and nurturing parents and other community members' involvement, fostering the evolution of learning as a community, and creating caring, personalized learning environments for all students. Community builders engaged in reflection and self-critical analysis and stretched leadership across the system in an interdependent web.

That is, rather than a mere reshuffling of the principal's duties and procedures, school leadership became distributed across the school community.

In a democratic learning community, leadership does not rest just in the principal's office as it does in the "loosely coupled" theory of leadership. In fact, in successful schools, administrators found ways to open classroom, and other practices in supportive, non-threatening ways (Elmore, 2000). Beck and Foster (1999) explained that administering in a community required a retooling of roles and assumptions about leadership, "Ideals must be acted out in practices guided by critique, caring, and justice and should be reflected and shaped by changes in the way we talk about our work" (p. 351). Beck and Foster (1999) continued to explain that by embracing the metaphor of community, administrators were committed to allowing serious inquiry among colleagues, developing humane and caring practices, working among indeterminate factors, and confronting conflict.

Murphy (2002) reviewed the historical perspectives of school administration preparation programs as content knowledge, methods, administrative roles and tasks, and mental disciplines or processes. Content knowledge included a tension between discipline-based and practical knowledge, while methodology of study focused on ways to improve research and knowledge in the domain. Focusing on the mental discipline revealed administrative processes and metacognitive skills, while analyzing roles, acts and functions of administrators, brought new insights about administration. As had Beck and Foster (1999), Murphy (2002) proposed a drastic change in the study of administration and suggested that school administration was organized as if "no

knowledge of either student learning or the needs of professional adults" (p. 181), was available and that management theory had driven the profession for decades.

Distributing Leadership Across the Community

After analyzing high-achieving schools that successfully reshuffled of acts of leadership, Spillane, Halverson, Diamond (1999) proposed a new theory of leadership, known as distributed leadership. In their description of distributed leadership, Spillane et al. (1999) explained that leadership was based on an analysis of how leaders think and act during the practice of their leadership and identify three assumptions: (1) understanding of leadership came from analyzing the tasks of leadership (2) leadership was spread out and stretched over practices of others, not merely divided into parts and shared (3) leadership weaved in and through the context and situations of the organization. This model of leadership built on the cognitive tradition of school leadership theory by considering what leaders do, such as think about their work and the context in which they do it. In addition, in distributed leadership, the interaction between the leader and the environment was important, similar to the way in which interactions were important within the context of a professional learning community. Distributed leadership expanded the concept of leadership to the acts and practices that establish the conditions for teaching and learning and moved theory into the how and why of these acts and practices. Distributed leadership was additive in that these acts of leadership were accomplished by others in the school community. Also, leadership became more reflective, environmentally dependent and social in nature.

When faced with complex, uncertain and unique situations, successful community leaders spontaneously and intuitively reflected on their actions, bringing others into the

process. As described by Schon (1989) reflection-in-action occurred when the solution was elusive, required a critical analysis of the situation and resulted in a newly devised solution, in other words, through reflection, the problem was reframed. Schon (1989) provided an example of how a small group of teachers who were viewing a videotape reacted and changed based on new information heard by only one of the teachers. Reflection-in-action was conducted when thinking was "turned back on itself...conducting on-the-spot an action experiment by which they seek to solve the new problem they have set..." (Schon, 1989, p. 204).

Citing several studies on transformational instructional leadership, Spillane et al. (1999) identified the following acts or practices that influence instructional practices in schools: visioning; creating and maintaining a collaborative school culture; providing adequate resources; supporting professional growth of teachers; monitoring teaching; and, providing a safe environment in which teachers can teach. These leadership functions complemented the characteristics of a democratic learning community and the leaders as a community builder. In order for the practices of leadership to spread or stretch across the members of a school community, the knowledge and skills of the entire community had to be enhanced.

Building Capacity for Deepening Participation

"Efforts to develop thoughtful democratic classrooms have repeatedly been killed by underinvestments in teacher knowledge and school capacity" (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 13). Developing the capacity of the adults in the system that in turn supported the students added to the complexity of the school leaders' role. Facilitating the process of increased knowledge and skills was described by Lambert (1998) as building of

leadership capacity. Lambert (1998) stated, "capacity-building principals align their actions to the belief that everyone has the right, responsibility, and capability to work as a leader (p. 43)." Capacity-building principals created opportunities to bring groups together to share knowledge, learn from each other and reflect on their practices, as they created shared meaning and purpose towards higher student achievement. As a school leader facilitated the development of the capacity of others in the community to perform acts of leadership, the roles and responsibilities of the leader changed.

In addition to sharing a vision while building knowledge and relationships, Fullan (2001) proposed that leaders must understand change and build coherence. Fullan (2003) expanded this proposal to include *Horizon Two* leadership, i.e., leadership with a deep understanding of change as well as a strong theory of learning and focused attention on the role of the district and state as co-contributors to the school as a community. Thus, within a learning community the complexity of the issues of leadership increased and became more ambiguous and contextual. Organizing and leading in a democratic community meant that a leader had to balance indeterminacy, openness, diversity of opinions and beliefs, and interdependence while being mindful of the moral purpose of the community, the common good, and the needs of the students.

Broadening Participation Across the Community

Democratic community extended beyond school employees and out into the greater community (Beck & Foster, 1999). Rather than being excluded from decision making (Darling-Hammond, 1997) as they were in traditional schools, community members and teachers were invited into the process, not just as observers, but as contributors. After inquiry and discourse, school structures and processes were created

around the shared beliefs of the school community (Wood, 1992; Joyce et al., 1999). Through an open process of school change, the community members created a school of the community, by the community and for the community, with a strong focus on student learning.

Fullan (2003) suggested that there was a vague response to the criticisms in schools in the 1980s, but that by applying complexity theory tenets of taking risks to develop open, interactive systems that were guided by moral purpose, the development of public trust and understanding of the complex issues was facilitated. Fullan (2003) proposed, while developing relationships and building knowledge, maintaining a focus on the purpose of schools, not abdicating to the detractors, but instead, building on and mobilizing community members around the purpose. To support the work of change in the schools, Darling-Hammond (1997) proposed that policymakers first create increased learning opportunities for all in the school community and adopt strategies for widespread engagement, while reforming regularities of schools to support successful teaching and development of professional standards that balance external and internal needs.

Being a member of a learning community created benefits and drawbacks. Participation was an expectation for all members of the school community and that participation included being a learner, reflecting and developing leadership skills and knowledge. Learning included reading, discussing through activities such as book studies and participating in development activities. Reflecting required members to know themselves and to consider their actions and how those actions influenced themselves and others. Reflective practices meant that members of the community committed to ongoing

growth coupled with inquiry and discourse with others that ultimately could lead to new actions (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere & Montie, 2001).

Building the leadership capacity among the members of the school community had additional implications for members of the community. Members were invited to spend time in collaboration with others, to share resources and ideas with others, and to test various roles and strategies to solve problems and to seek solutions (Lambert, 1998). Lambert (1998) also suggested that community member's work together to develop a shared vision, inquire about issues, and take collective responsibility for student learning. After having the knowledge and skills for meaningful leadership roles, members of the community assumed those roles and continued their learning, often reflected on their learning, and took actions accordingly.

Just as roles in the learning community changed, so did the teacher and student roles, as they were active members of the community. In addition to the changes that were similar to those of all members of the community, teacher activities became more public. In traditional schools, teacher acts remained anonymous, and even protected; in communities, teacher acts were transparent and visible. Teachers were able to have voice, as were students and other members of the community. As the school community practiced democracy through shared decisions, learning, and reflection, they developed a collective concern about their school, the greater community and issues about equity, began to emerge, creating a democratic environment (O'Hair et al., 2000).

Evolving Through Communities of Practice

An hypothesis proposed by Joyce et al. (1999) explained "building small work groups connected to the larger community but responsible for one another will increase

the sense of belonging that reduces stress, isolation, and feelings of alienation," (p.58). Connecting these work groups to peer coaching groups showed increased implementation, energy and student achievement. These small work groups functioned as centers of inquiry as well and resulted in evolutionary changes. These insights suggested how the incorporation of small work groups might influence the evolution of a school.

A framework for the analysis of how the democratic community evolved was provided in the literature on communities of practice (Wenger, 1999). In the Wenger model, communities of practice were created by groups who shared common concerns and issues and who, through their passion, deepened their understanding and knowledge in the area of concern through interactions and learning together. In practice, democratic learning communities showed a shared common goals and values and a deep passion for student learning needs and created interactive structures to promote their own learning about the concerns and issues. The community groups met because they valued their interactions and they gained insight and knowledge from their interactions. Communities of practice moved knowledge, both explicit and tacit, throughout the community through conversations, coaching, and storytelling. In communities of practice, knowledge became social and dynamic and through these interactive spaces knowledge evolution progressed and brought value to both the community members and to the organization (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Communities of practice shared three basic structures: a domain of knowledge, a community of people, and a set of shared practices. The domain served as the focal point, bringing those together who have a shared purpose and passion and who gain

meaning from the interaction. The community interweaved the social fabric of interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust, supporting the open sharing and the sense of belonging. The practice provided the framework for ideas, tools and information to flow and mold together to create new learning and produce change. The community of practice afforded a "social structure that can assume responsibility for developing and sharing knowledge" (Wenger et al., p.29). The interaction of teachers collaboratively learning, shapes their practice, creating purpose, relationships and opportunities for leadership acts (Wenger, 1998).

A primary task of a community of practice was to establish a baseline of knowledge and to standardize the knowledge so that it served as a foundation for increased knowledge. The knowledge resided in the skills, understandings and relationships of the members of the community, not just in the tools, documents and processes that emerged from the knowledge (Wenger et al., 2002). These communities addressed two complementary goals, one a goal of interaction with peers and another for creating knowledge, thus serving as community-building and knowledge-building. Yet, these goals were not met without leadership creating time and value for their work. Wenger et al explained that leaders show they valued these communities by "making time and other resources available for their work,, encouraging participation and removing barriers...integrating communities in the organization – giving them a voice in decisions and legitimacy in influencing operating units, and developing internal processes for managing the value they create" (p.13).

The leader's role became more complex and the acts of leadership more distributed. Opening up the communities to all stakeholders broadened the perspectives

through which the domain and practice were viewed, yet also provided additional approaches and a broadening of the power base. By design, communities of practice encouraged new leaders, built the culture and created momentum, yet the leader continued to facilitate the process so that these communities remained areas of positive energy that contribute to the whole. Since communities of practice have the potential of hoarding knowledge, limiting innovation, creating narrow and unjust practices and perpetuating negativity, leaders provided an important role in working to facilitate the process of communities of practice and to share the learning of the communities with others across the organization. Wenger et al. (2002) explained this adaptive and emergent approach, "This action-oriented change approach does not offer a conveniently codified, programmatic plan for implementation...the issues must be addressed along the way, including core values, identity, relationships, and formal and informal structures" (p. 195). Distributed leadership thrived among communities of practice, creating new power bases. Rogoff, Turkanis and Bartlett (2001) reported on a school in which parents and teachers collaboratively created communities of practice with children that foster student learning. They concluded that the leadership of adults that supported student learning and engagement in the community was successful, yet each community adapted to its own unique situation.

While traditional school organizations focused on procedures and processes and progressive schools focused on performance and accountability, communities of practice produced a focus on "the living nature of knowledge" (Wenger et al., 2002, p.12). Formal and informal processes shepherded information throughout the organization. Communities of practice offered an open forum for collective inquiry and a place to

explore new meanings and ask the difficult questions. Communities of practice found strength in addressing dissension and transforming a negative situation into a productive one. Communities of practice thrived on the explicit and tacit knowledge within an organization and were energized through external knowledge and tough questions. Healthy communities of practice created a rhythm for the community and pumped the knowledge throughout the organization, honing the knowledge of individual community members.

Since schools were in the business of knowledge-building and communities of practice nurtured that construction, school leadership that encouraged communities of practice facilitated transformation into high-achieving democratic schools. Fullan (2001) explained that even though schools were in the business of teaching and learning, they were inept at learning from each other. Stigler and Heibert (1999) shared Albert Shanker's, the American Federation of Teachers president, belief that teaching "is a cultural activity and that it is governed by powerful forces that function largely outside of conscious awareness" (p. 107). Building and sharing knowledge sounded simple, but it was a difficult pursuit at best.

Increasing Learning for All

Student learning was the focus of the learning community and this focus resulted in increased student achievement (Hord, 1997; Joyce & Calhoun, 1996; Louis et al., 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). How a school organized and arranged its work influenced student learning (Elmore, 2002). Newmann and Wehlage (1995) analyzed data from four studies with over 1,500 elementary, middle and high schools and find that schools in which teachers shared a common focus on student learning, collaborated

around that focus and took responsibility for the learning showed improved student learning. Schools with these three characteristics built the capacity of teachers to provide authentic learning that supported in-depth learning, with conversations and inquiry about that learning and connect the learning to a value beyond school. Through research on 820 high schools, Lee and Smith (1995) found links between school organizations of learning communities and improved student learning, while narrowing the achievement gap between low and high SES students.

Joyce et al. (1999) proposed the legitimation of democratic governance that included parents and communities with shared leadership and inquiry as the linchpin of the school improvement process. Through this process, schools focused on students, learning across the system was targeted and implemented through small work groups. These researchers shared several case studies of successful school change, including one with reading as an innovation and another with technology as the innovation. Whichever innovation was reviewed, the tenets of democracy and open inquiry through staff development and small group interaction were the movers of the evolutionary process that resulted in increased student learning.

How learning and leadership "stretched" over an entire learning community involved a complex set of interrelated activities. The leader's role was important to open this process and to provide support and resources to support the process. An effective leader was a good communicator and knowledgeable of adult learning theories and facilitated these strategies, spreading learning across the members of a school community and distributing the acts of leadership. Finding ways to open the process of school improvement challenged school leaders.

As suggested previously, the roles of leaders and other members of the school community were becoming more complex. Yee (1998) suggested that personal and professional support networks served principals to meet the stress and demands placed upon them. According to Yee (1998), effective networks "require a professional focus, relevant topics, a comfortable environment for substantive discourse, and leadership opportunities... (p. 1)." Similar technology networks served other members of a school community. Morrisey, Cowan, Leo and Blair (1999) investigated the role of the principal in a learning community and found that principals in a learning community established mechanisms through which they obtained input regularly from staff.

After *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and other reports that followed, new demands on the educational system emerged. Reports began comparing U.S. schools to other more successful schooling models, the standards-based and accountability movements emerged. Fullan (2003) proposed that although the standards movement rolled through schools in the 1990s, in the 2000s it was about leadership, not leadership of a single leader, but leadership across the system. He continued by describing *Horizon Two* leadership as leadership that created a context for leadership development and that built the capacity of members of a school community to do the work of continuous improvement. This continuous improvement spanned the school, the district and the state/national levels, and leaders of continuous improvement were able to interact with agencies within all three levels of this tri-level reform cycle and to leverage the complexity of the issues within the reform context. *Horizon Two* leaders worked with teams and built a supportive context for change, that is, they worked from a passionate "collective informed professional judgment (Fullan, 2003, p. 9). Century and Levy

(2002) reported lessons from research on sustaining reform that focused on adaptability, while maintaining goals as well as being aware of stages, contexts, and the interaction of unexpected influences and contributors. In applying these findings from Fullan (2003) and Century and Levy (2002), leaders who built flexible networks of deep learning and interdependence were more likely to sustain their efforts.

Glickman (1998) defined democratic learning as, "freedom of expression, pursuit of the truth in the marketplace of ideas, individual choices, student activity and participation, associative learning, and the application, demonstration, and contribution of learning to immediate and larger communities" (p. 29) that occurred in a context of social justice. Within the context of a democratic community, the capacity of all was developed through active learning, shared leading, and focusing on student needs. The increased capacity resulted in school improvement and active participation in democracy which created supportive conditions for increased student learning.

Chapter Summary

The landscape of public education evolved through time. Traditional schools served bureaucratic functions and placed learning as the variable in schools. In contrast, learning communities that focused on the needs of students, increased teacher learning which, in turn, increased student learning. Democratic learning communities allowed students and other actors in the community to learn about and practice democracy. With schools operating as democratic learning communities, more complex and contextual school leadership, knowledge, and skills were required. Leaders built the capacity of community members and shared the leadership. With distributed leadership, leadership became more about acts and stretched across the members of the entire school

community. Just as leading stretched across the community, so did learning. Through shared inquiry, critical reflection and dialogue within the context of a community of practice new learning occurred and the ongoing process of school renewal emerged. The product was an environment that supported the learning for all and was focused on meeting the needs for student learning.

CHAPTER 3

Research Process

Chapter Introduction

For this study of the Red Bud Elementary school community, case study was selected to explain the *what* and the *how* of the changes that occurred over the 17 years of the selected case. First, this chapter explained the case study philosophy as it related to the case. Second, the chapter explained the data collection process and the four data sets that included documents, field notes, interviews and surveys. Third, the role of the researcher was described to clarify the relationship of the researcher to the case. Fourth, the process of data analysis was explained. This process included reduction of the data sets, the constant comparison process, triangulation and the display of the data. Fifth, the issue of trustworthiness of the data and the analysis of the data was analyzed.

Qualitative Research and Case Study

Qualitative research explained the *what* and the *how* and for this reason was selected for this study. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggested that the *why* was addressed discreetly through the analytics of interpretive practice. Qualitative research described *what* was happening and to whom. It described *how* the actions impacted the actors. Qualitative researchers studied to understand the complexities of relationships that led to a deepening understanding of the human experience.

Case study, in particular, was the study of a single bounded system with many variables and depths of relationships. Merriam (1998) defined a case as a thing or entity, with boundaries and limits, yielding a finite set of data. The case study allowed multiple perspectives. These lens included being holistic, viewing the case from varying vantage

points; particularistic, studying the case within a particular setting and context; descriptive, providing in-depth details of events and happenings within the given context; and, heuristic, bringing new meaning to confirm or dispute what the reader already knew. This case study was about the questions being investigated, more than it was about the method. The case study provided concrete and contextual data through which the researcher interpreted meaning and deepened the understanding of the case to assist in the untangling of complex processes of school change and renewal. Case study methodology was selected because a case study afforded a means to study in-depth the school change process, from multiple perspectives that included leading, learning, and practices, and to interpret the *how* of the change process.

The original study was approved by the Institutional Review Board in 2001, as shown in Appendix C1. The study was reviewed and approved by Cisco District's Research Committee in 2001 and the chair of that committee, the assistant superintendent was kept abreast of the study. The Institutional Review Board approved a revision of the study and the addition of the document and field note data sources in 2002, (see Appendix C2). The case study methodology was the appropriate means to gain a deep and rich understanding of *how* the school evolved.

To help in understanding the *how*, Merriam (1998) described the theoretical framework as the underpinnings of the study that combined both the lens of the researcher and the literature to scaffold the investigation. Identifying previous studies and theories that related to the problem improved the study and added depth and perspective to the findings. Merriam (1998) suggested methods for locating sources and defined the literature review as a critical assessment that "integrates, synthesizes, and

critiques the important thinking and research on a particular topic" (p. 55). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) separated the researcher from the theoretical paradigm. They discussed the researcher's ontology or beliefs as developed through history and experiences and how these provided a filter for the questions or epistemology, analysis, and interpretations. They defined the theoretical paradigm as the beliefs that guided actions and interpretations and provided a chart describing these interpretive paradigms. The paradigm most closely aligned to the case study was constructivist, a belief in the capacity of the individual to grow and change. The ontological viewpoint was one that accepted multiple realities. Terms such as trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability replaced validity and reliability.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) introduced five phases of the research process: the researcher as a multicultural subject; theoretical paradigms and perspectives; research strategies; methods of collection and analysis; and, the art, practices, and politics of interpretation and presentation. Merriam (1998) divided the process into three segments: design; collecting data, and analyzing and reporting the data. The process administered in this case study consisted of combination of these experts.

Case Selection

Qualitative research was selected for this research study because it provided a description and interpretations of events and processes and the interrelationships among those events and processes, while allowing the researcher to participate in the study, observing a specific context over a given time. Through qualitative research the design was open, inter-relational, and inductive, considering the *what* and *how* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This qualitative research described what was happening and to whom as

well as how the actions impacted the actors, revealing the complexities of relationships that deepened our understanding of this particular experience, i.e. *how* a school changed over 17 years to become a democratic learning community.

This qualitative case study research allowed the researcher to participate with the case within specific contexts, producing a set of interpretations of a setting or event and making the world more visible. The researcher served a variety of roles over the seventeen years of the study. These roles changed over the years as the position of the researcher changed and included being assigned as a school improvement coach, an elementary principal colleague, a supervisor, and a university network liaison. See Table 1. Insights were gained from each of these perspectives and reflections from these roles were included in the field notes data set. See Appendix A2.

Table 1

Changes Influencing Red Bud School and Research

	1986	1990	1995	2000	2003
State	Reform legislation		State curriculum and assessments		
University	Worked with district office		Network began	Network dissolved	Network Renewed
District	School improvement model (See Figure 1)	Worked with state on reform	Worked with state on curriculum and assessments		
Red Bud Themes	***Isolated Pockets***		***Outside In***	***Inside Out***	***Flows***
Principal	Sarah		Carrie		
Main Researcher	District Curriculum Administrator and Staff Development Trainer		Elementary principal: Red bud colleague	District Director and Red Bud Supervisor	University Network Director
Researcher 2					Interviewer Research Reviewer
Researcher 3				University Network Director and Research Reviewer	

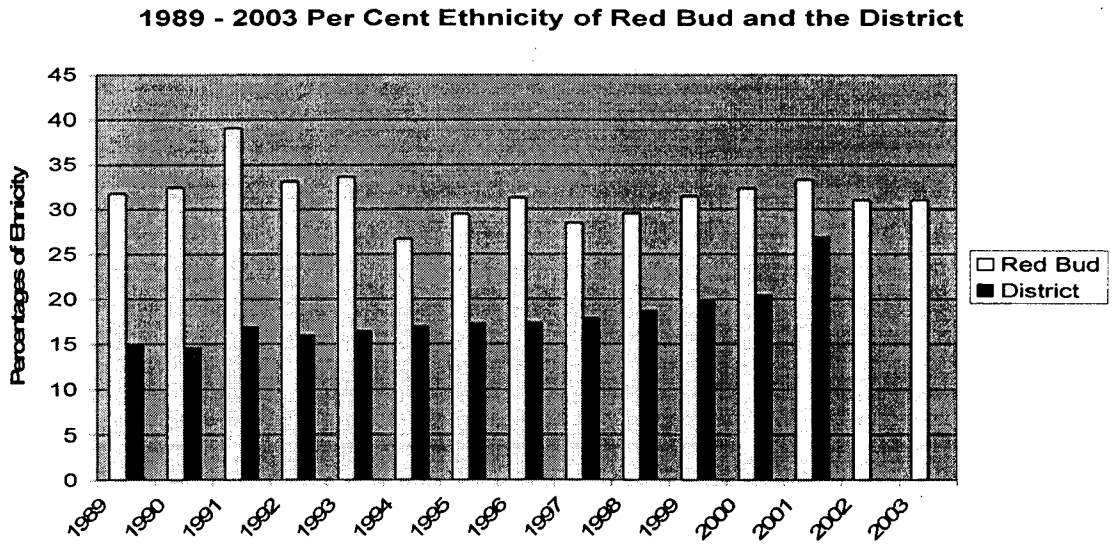
Merriam explained that through a case study complex social or educational contexts comprised of multiple variables can be studied, while emphasizing the holistic view. The case study with the school community, its principal and teachers, as the unit of analysis was the appropriate method to investigate these issues for several reasons (Merriam, 1998). First, the study looked at a single, unique system, an elementary school community over a seventeen-year historical time frame. The school community investigation focused mostly on the school leaders and teachers with a more limited

investigation of the students, parents, and external factors, such as the university network as well as state and district mandates, that impacted the school community. To understand the interrelationships, a single entity as a focus brought continuity and context, yet the variety of interrelationships brought complexity and ambiguity. Deepening the analysis yielded new insights and allowed time for real changes to occur. Second, the case study was holistic, i.e., the researcher viewed the case from varying perspectives. By viewing the case from the perspectives of learning, leading and changes unveiled additional connections. Third, the case study was particularistic, within a particular setting and context. The nature of the particular setting and context conveyed richer description and illuminated new vantage points and connections within the context of school change and leadership. Fourth, the case study was descriptive, deepening the details of events and happenings. The details of events and happenings during the school changes showed relationships among events and happenings. Fifth, the case study was heuristic, bringing new meaning to confirm or dispute what the reader knew about school renewal and providing insight into the interaction of ideas and beliefs that led to changes in individual and group behaviors, bringing forth a deeper understanding of the human experience (Hiles, 2002). To understand the changes that occurred in the community and in their primary role of teaching and learning, the changes in the teachers that impacted students was the focal point of the research.

The school community was the unit of analysis for two reasons. First, the school participated in the university network and significant changes in the school community were observed by the affiliated university network professor through this interaction. Second, the school was selected because of the increased achievement of students with

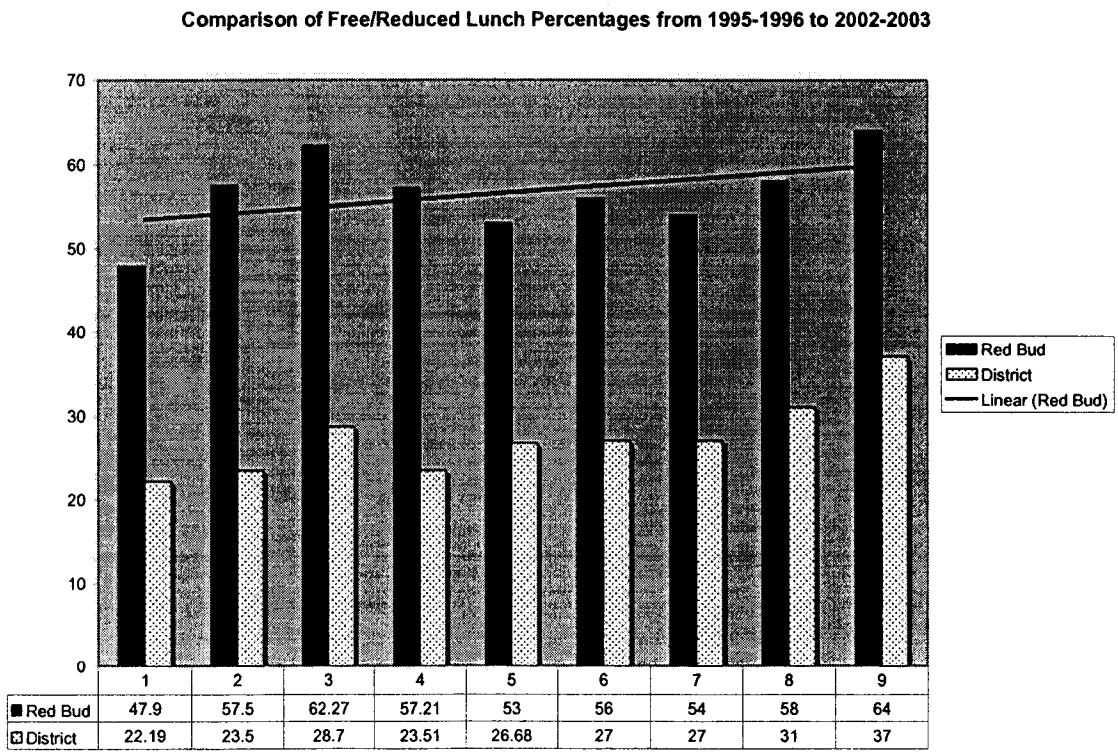
high rates of poverty and diversity, two factors which tended to produce lower-student performance. This increased achievement set the school apart as an anomaly. The school population of 516 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade was diverse and mostly low to low-middle socio-economic status students. In 2003, the school's ethnic makeup included 68% white and 31% non-white. The non-white distribution included 12% Black, 8% American Indians, eight percent Asian, and four percent Hispanic (see Figure 1). The school provided bilingual services to four percent of its students in 2003, down from a high of 21% in 1995. The school's poverty rate as measured by the percentage of students on free or reduced lunch for 2003 was 64% (see Figures 2 and 3). The school was located close to a state university and many of the children were sons or daughters of international college students. With many international university families located in the area, other foreign families located in the area as well. Mobility rates in 2003 showed 40% of students who started the year at the school moved during the year, yet new students replaced those who moved to maintain a relatively steady attendance number.

Figure 1. Minority ethnicity at Red Bud compared to Cisco District: 1989 – 2003



Source: Red Bud accreditation files, 1988-2003

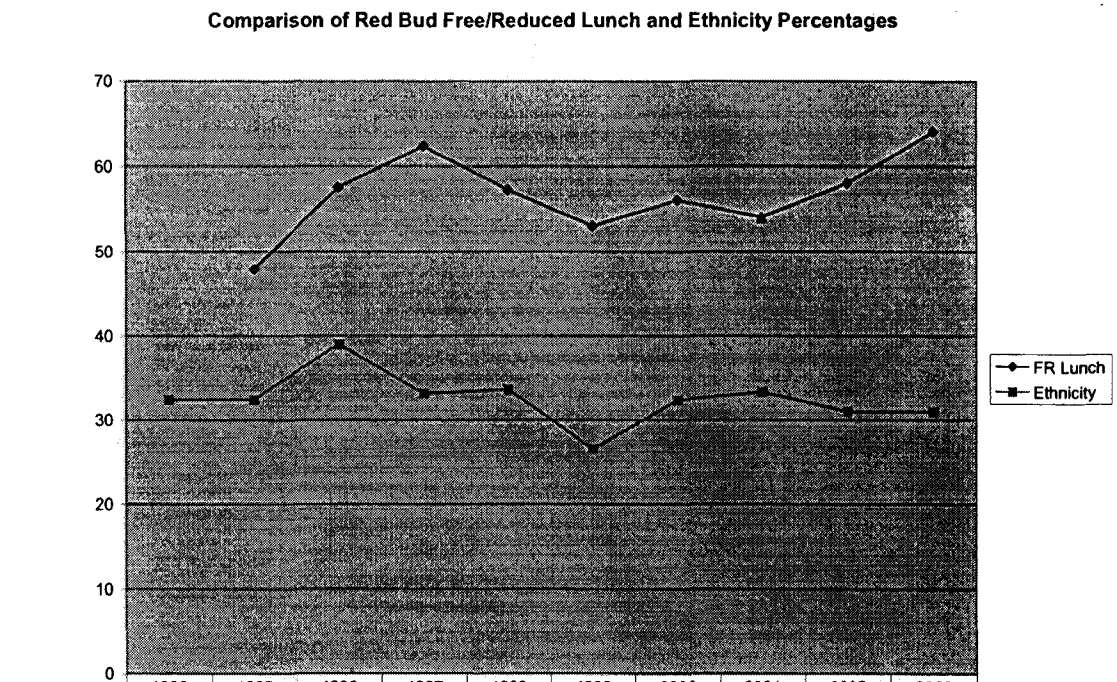
Figure 2. Red Bud's free and reduced lunch percentages from 1995-2003



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Red Bud	47.9	57.5	62.27	57.21	53	56	54	58	64
District	22.19	23.5	28.7	23.51	26.68	27	27	31	37

Source: Red Bud, 2003b

Figure 3. Comparison of Red Bud Percentages of Free and Reduced (FR) Lunch and Ethnicity

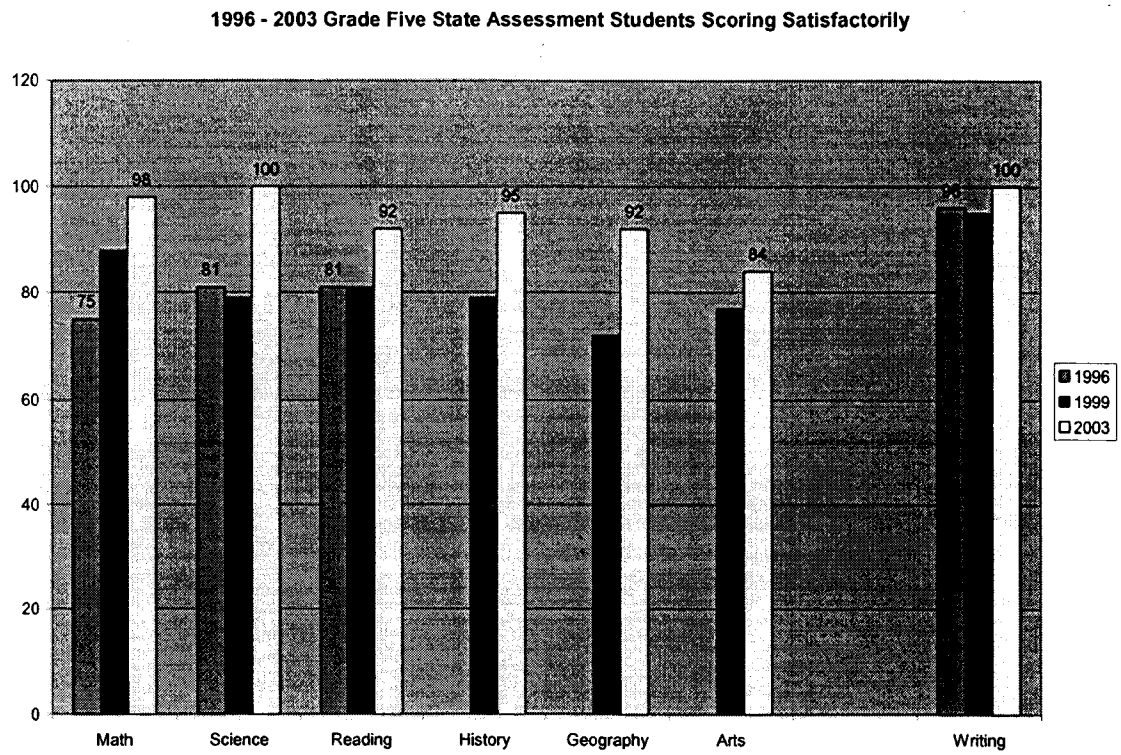


	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
FR Lunch		47.9	57.5	62.3	57.2	53	56	54	58	64
Ethnicity	32.4	32.4	39	33.1	33.6	26.6	32.3	33.3	31	31

Source: Red Bud, 1998-2003; Red Bud, 2003b

These data indicated that the students might perform poorly on standardized tests, yet Red Bud students' scores on the state criterion-referenced assessment showed steady gains. In fact, the school's scores were comparable to those considered "elite" schools in the area (see Figure 4). In 2003, scores soared and in reading, 92% scored satisfactorily; in math, 98% score satisfactorily; and, in science 100% score satisfactorily, with 50% of the 100% scoring in the advanced category (see Figure 4). See Chapter Four for a detailed description of the demographics and statistical data for the case study.

Figure 4. Per cent of Red Bud students scoring satisfactorily on grade five state criterion referenced assessments in 1996, 1999 and 2003



Source: Cisco District, 1996; Cisco District, 1999; Cisco District, 2003

Data Collection

To study the school community and *how* it changed over time, multiple data sources were collected and organized into four sets. The data sets included field notes, documents, interviews and a survey instrument. To protect the case study's confidentiality, the researcher referred to each set's category, rather than the individual sources that comprised it. Each of these data sets spanned the 17 years of the case through multiple data sources. Beginning in 2001, a purposeful study of the case commenced with document review, additional field study, selected interviews and the completion of a questionnaire. A description of the specific contents for each data set was provided in Appendix A.

Documents

The first set of data was comprised of the numerous documents of the case. These data included school, district and network artifacts that pertained to the case and school changes. The school maintained records of school improvement work and assessment data that were organized into notebooks and displayed for parents and the school community. The principal and staff used those notebooks to record annual events, leadership council and team meeting notes as well as evidence of school processes. University-school network notebooks contained agenda, meeting notes and even ballots from elections. District notebooks contained demographical, assessment and school improvement work. Also, the principal's and office files, which dated back to 1995, were made available and reviewed by the researcher. A list of the documents that were reviewed for a sample year was shown in Appendix A1. Documents from each year were organized and reviewed individually. The individual lists were then tabulated and the original documents remained in a set of boxes so that the researcher could return to them as needed throughout the study.

Field Notes

The second set of data was comprised of the field notes. These field notes spanned the full length of the case study and included a reflective journal derived from previous interactions that the researcher had had with Red Bud staff through school and classroom visits, supervision of the school and principal, staff development sessions, and informal conversations. This data set also included notes from frequent school visits in 2001 through 2003. See Appendix A2 for a list of the contents of this data set. The reflective journal was drawn from the researcher's work with the school staff and

leadership for over seventeen years and developed the historical perspective of the field notes. This work included coaching and supervising of the staff and school processes through several different positions held by the researcher in the Cisco district. The current field notes consisted of journal entries from regular visits to the school and work with the principal and teachers from the school over the past three years. Visits to the school in the past three years included attendance at faculty meetings, staff development meetings, parent nights, special events, informal conversations with teachers and the principal, university-school network meetings, and classroom observations. A formal walk-through structure facilitated data gathering during classroom observations. The researcher was a nationally certified trainer in the walk-through structure (Downey & Frase, 2001) and using this consistent lens of study, the curricular and instructional practices within a classroom were gleaned from snapshots of those classrooms. Through this process the researcher invited teacher discussions and reflections about their classroom practices. The walk through structure brought consistency to the observations and led to reflective dialogue with teachers about their practice. Samples of the field note data set were listed in Appendix A3.

Interviews

The third set of data were the 16 open-ended hour to two-hour interviews conducted with seven current and four former teachers, the current administrator, two district administrators and two university network representatives. The teacher respondents were drawn from a purposefully selected sample of 11 current and former teachers. The current teachers were selected because they were each unique in that they represented a span of the grade levels, special area teachers and school improvement

teacher leaders who had been at the school for over five years. Several of the teachers selected were chosen because of their role as site coordinator in the university network or had served off-campus as the university network coordinator for a year. The researcher attempted to select teachers who represented a variety of positions and perspectives and some who had been at the school for the 17-year timeframe. The sample was purposefully selected to provide differing perceptions of the case and span the study years. To address issues of validity the participants selected represented a range of traditional, constructivist, or eclectic educational perspectives. Four of the respondents had transferred or retired from Red Bud, but taught at Red Bud over five years and had served either under the former principal or in the early years of the current principal and yielded unique perspectives of the historical context of the case and its changes. Extensive and multiple interviews were conducted with the current principal. The outside representatives were selected because of their unique knowledge about the school improvement process through which the school had moved. Two central office administrators who have been involved with school improvement process of the case throughout the 17-year case study duration were interviewed as well as two university network representatives who had worked closely with the school staff throughout the tenure of the current principal. One of the university network representatives was the director of the network, while the other from a different state had served as a reviewer and evaluator of the network. These interviews were conducted and analyzed by the main researcher and a university professor. A description of the interviewees was shown in Appendix A: Table A3 and the interview protocol appeared in Appendix A: Table A4.

The interviews took place in 2002. The respondents were contacted through their school email or by phone and invited to participate. After the initial email, a phone contact was made to establish the exact time and location. The respondents were provided an informed consent form to sign (see Appendix C). The study was briefly described to the respondents at the start of the interview. The interviews were taped and lasted from one to two hours. Second interviews were held in 2003, with selected individuals to add clarification or additional insights after reviewing the transcripts. The teacher respondents were interviewed at the school by the researcher, a university professor or both. The interviews were transcribed and filed.

Survey

The fourth data set consisted of a survey to assess the school staff as a community of professional learners (Hord, Meehan, Orletsky & Sattes, 1999). See the survey instrument in Appendix A6. The survey was part of a larger research study that received Institutional Review Board approval in 2002 (see Appendix C2 for the informed consent letter). The survey was organized into 5 dimensions drawn from the professional learning community literature (Hord, 1997) with a total of 17 descriptors. The survey asked staff to differentiate the level of practice in the school on each descriptor from high, middle, and low along a 5-point Likert-type scale. The instrument had been pilot and field tested for descriptive, reliability and validity. Descriptive analysis was based on results of 690 cases and indicated that the mean scores did differentiate among the schools. Reliability analysis was run on both internal consistency (Alphas ranged from .62 to .95) and stability (n=23, .6147). Validity analysis was measured in three ways, content, concurrent, and construct. Content validity yielded three adaptations; concurrent

validity, comparison of the instrument with a school climate instrument, yielded a satisfactory correlation; and, construct validity, comparison of a known group to an unknown, indicated that the instrument did represent the construct of a mature professional learning community.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher was a life-long educator who had worked in Cisco district for over twenty-five years. She served as a science teacher, district technology director, science and health director, elementary principal, district curriculum director as well as staff trainer and supervisor. After completing her career in public education, she moved to the university as a graduate research assistant. Through all supervisory positions, she worked closely with Red Bud staff.

Just as research had an impact on theory, so the researcher's approach had an impact on the study (Langenbach, Vaughn & Aagaard, 1994). Schwandt (2001) described four philosophical approaches to qualitative research: naturalism, anti-naturalism, pluralism, and critical social theory. The approaches described the ontological, epistemological and axiological view of the researcher as he/she approached and framed the study. The philosophical approach of the researcher framed the meaning of the data that created an understanding of the case. Schwandt explained, "what we take as real...is based on our perspective" (p. 250).

Understanding the case required the researcher to be open, engaged and listening, which also entailed the possibility of misunderstanding (Schwandt, 2002). Understanding did not emanate from logical and empirical criteria, but rather from open dialogue and interaction. Schwandt described this relational and existential process as,

"when we genuinely seek to understand what others are doing and saying we are always standing in this in-between of familiarity and strangeness" (p.85). He continued that relational understanding meant that the researcher understood based on the relationship to him/herself and required the researcher to be open to challenges to his/her understanding. To attempt to understand also entailed the distinct possibility of misunderstanding, creating a hermeneutic circle. To search for understanding was to assist our quest for knowledge about our world.

The search for understanding in the context of the complexity of a living and vibrant system created additional challenges. Wheatley (1999) described invisible fields that connected and stretched across organizational systems forming connections and webs. Fleener (2002) proposed that the objective observer be replaced by the participant observer who could bring a new vantage point or frame of reference to the analysis. This view required the researcher to look for additional relationships within the system. Looking for perturbations, patterns of self-feedback and reorganization and dynamic processes with the system brought new insights to understanding and interpreting the case.

In addition to the how, the methodology included an ontology, epistemology and axiology. The research study was impacted by its philosophical underpinnings and how the researcher chose to understand the case. Case study was the examination of a bounded system that brought the researcher to move beyond what was illuminated, yet was dependent upon the philosophical and traditional underpinnings of the researcher.

Closeness of the researcher afforded many rich interactions, yet the ability to remain objective was continually tested. Throughout the study, the points made by

Merriam (1998) about the researcher needing to remain tolerant of ambiguity and indeterminancy, while communicating and listening with empathy and sensitivity, guided the work. Throughout the data analysis the researcher was cognizant of the need to remain vigilant of all potential biases. During the analysis, the themes were compared to what the researcher knew about school renewal and the processes so that each theme could be placed within the context of these issues. Bracketing of prejudices and hidden agendas was paramount for the researcher throughout the study, especially during the analysis phase.

Data Analysis

Data organization and management was complex and deriving meaning from the data followed several inquiry strategies. Data analysis transpired throughout the case study and was recursive at times. It began with the first interaction after the researcher selected the particular case to study and continued throughout data collection and reporting of the study. Two strategies for extracting meaning from a case were "through direct interpretation of an instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class" (Stake, p. 74). The data emanated in both singular poignant instances as well as in pattern-development. At times an observation seemed meaningless, yet after several observations, patterns began to fall into place. Through application of sensitivity and intuition when analyzing field notes and documents, the story unfolded (Merriam, 1998). Data analysis was explicit and tacit; singular and recursive; and, divergent and convergent. The researcher attempted to view the data through multiple lenses: through the feelings and hopes; the environment; the temporal

changes; and, future hopes of continual growth. Each data set was reviewed and themed in a reductive method, yet studied and compared in a holistic manner.

Analysis of the document data provided the primary data set. After the documents were reviewed, catalogued and organized, the document data were reviewed for themes and patterns. Lists were made of the themes and examples of the themes. Using the lists, the themes were compared and collapsed together to reduce the data to a manageable set.

Next, the variety of field note data were organized and reviewed for themes. Lists were made of the themes and examples of the themes similar to the process used with the document data. From the lists, themes and patterns converged and were constantly compared to the themes from the document analysis. Prior to coding the interviews, a historical narrative analysis was developed from the document and field note data sets. Subjectivity was part of historical narrative analysis that was created from the field notes and document review of the case (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This narrative analysis provided a constant comparison with the interview themes after they were coded.

Analysis of the interview data set was completed in two different methods with the help of another seasoned researcher. The main researcher conducted a content analysis, while the seasoned researcher created a historical narrative from the interviews. Following processes described by Patton (1987), words, phrases, references to instances, views and concepts were extracted during the content analysis, from which a system of classification emerged. A convergence of ideas created the system from which themes and concepts coalesced. Also, during the analysis, divergent ideas were viewed for

possible themes to be explored further. These led to a process matrix or pattern web (Patton, 1987). See Appendix B.

After reading the data sets individually, and studying the themes again and again, words and phrases collapsed into themes. Themes derived from field notes and document review. From reviewing these data sources, patterns and themes were sought, yet the essence of specific instances was held separate. The constant comparative method assisted in interpreting the data (Merriam, 1998) and patterns were analyzed as the comparisons continued. Tensions existed between descriptions and generalizations and between analysis and interpretation. The process was drawn from ethnography, narrative analysis and phenomenology and was interactive.

In the reporting of the case, pseudonyms were used for the school, the district and the principals. The school was called Red Bud Elementary and the district was referred to as Cisco district. The principal who served Red Bud from the 1970s to the 1983 was referred to as Mr. Simmons; the principal who served from 1983 until 1994 was referred to as Ms. Sarah Stone; and, the principal who served from 1994 until present was referred to as Carrie Phillips. The interview respondents were referred to by their position only. Teachers were referred to as a whole, differentiated only as former or current, to maintain anonymity.

The assessment of the school staff as a community of professional learners (Hord, et al., 1999) which comprised the fourth data set was analyzed through descriptive statistics and used to corroborate the level of maturity of the school staff as a professional learning community. This survey was employed to substantiate the selection of the case as a professional learning community.

The content themes derived from the data sets were condensed into a story. The story started from the first beginnings of the school being asked to change through district mandates and concluded with the present when the school was mandated to increase student achievement. The data were presented in a literary style and represented the educational culture and the discipline. The criteria on what to include and what to dismiss was the perceived inherent value to the change process and the school renewal process placed on each data point by the researcher. Through inductive processes, the researcher looked for critical changes in focus and control within the data to differentiate the themes. In reviewing the progression of learning and leading of the community being built, the locus of control of the professional growth and governing changed and provided the delineation between the stages. The presence and maturity of the communities of practice differed as the community evolved. These differences converged to create the themes of the evolution of the school's democratic learning community.

The data were analyzed through content analysis and literary analysis. The data were compared to primary data set of documents. Following the data analysis, the patterns and themes that emerged were interpreted against the interpretive framework. The interpretation brought deeper meaning and sense-making to the findings (Wolcott, 2001). The findings and interpretations therein were reported accordingly.

Interpretive Framework

The themes that emerged from the data were compared to the interpretative framework. The purpose of the investigation was to analyze the changes that occurred in the school as it developed into a learning community and instituted democratic practices and to understand *how* these changes occurred. The data were analyzed to see what

insights were present to indicate the relationship between the leader and staff that led to the processes of learning and distributing leadership within the community. The data were reviewed to determine how changes occurred and what impact, if any, these changes had on the processes of learning and leading to create a democratic learning community. The theoretical framework of professional learning communities was the original framework for the study, but as the analysis began to unfold, indications that evolution involved deeper undercurrents led the researcher to delve deeper into the literature. This created the need to change to an interpretive framework.

Originally, the metaphors for the stages were drawn from the biological models of diffusion and osmosis that corresponded with the biological model for evolution. This metaphor included the concept of equilibrium within systems. After further reading and study, the Csikszentmihalyi (1997) flow theory definition provided yet another dimension of the metaphor flow. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) described flow as "the source of mental energy" (p.71) and a sense of enjoyment and concentration that brings satisfaction. Flow theory "happens when a person's skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge...so it acts as a magnet for learning new skills and increasing challenges" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p.47). In the analysis of the data, the origination of flow fit the stages since this sense of fulfillment happened with varying perspectives of locus of control for learning within the school community. The directional metaphors that were applied to the flow of knowledge and locus of control applied previous ideas about teacher networks. Lieberman (1996) explained that teacher networks "negotiate between 'inside knowledge' and 'outside knowledge' [and] must decide what and whose knowledge should inform their work" (p. 54).

Through review of the literature on educational leadership, distributed leadership (Spillman et al., 1999) and Murphy's (2002) metaphors for leadership, that is, *educator*, *moral steward*, and *community builder* emerged as a means of interpreting the data for leadership. In addition, the school community's work with the O'Hair et al. (2000) continuum of community development and the IDEALS conveyed another lens through which to understand the development of the living democracy that became evident through the review of the data. The researcher returned to the literature and began to understand how the school, which had studied the democratic IDEALS, had implemented them and how they had moved along the continuum from a traditional school to a professional learning community and had transformed into a democratic learning community. The question of *what* changes occurred was being answered, but the question of *how* the school had transformed, beyond the stages of learning and *what* learning and leadership processes had lead to distribution of leadership continued to haunt the researcher until the theoretical framework of communities of practice was found to address this question. Communities of practice were comprised of small groups of staff who gathered with an interest to share a common set of practices, such as the fifth grade team, and to learn together, creating a bond and providing the potential for creating new knowledge and understanding. With the interpretive framework and its additions, the data finally began to make sense and provide new and deeper insight into *how* the community evolved. The data began to answer the research question and its various subcomponents:

How did a democratic learning community evolve?

a. How did learning impact the evolutionary process?

b. How did distributing leading change impact the evolutionary?

c. How did communities of practice impact the evolutionary process?

d. What changes occurred to move a traditional school and to create a high-achieving democratic learning community?

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research was based on a differing view of the world than was quantitative research, creating differing standards for reliability and validity (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research allowed the researcher to view the case from different vantage points to look for meaning. Meaning can be very different as considered from differing perspectives. Triangulation and the maintaining of accurate records provided a certain level of reliability, even though human interactions were difficult to replicate, because of their interactive, situational and contextual nature. To address the validity issue, the study included cross-checks of data and analysis of patterns by others, long-term observations, and open discussion of the emerging patterns. The assumptions and biases of the researcher were identified.

Because case study research often relied on tacit knowledge and interactions, opening the process of research was proposed to address external validity and generalizability. Merriam (1998) stated, "The idea that the general resides in the particular, that we can extract a universal from a particular, is also what renders great literature and other art forms enduring (p.210)." Stake (1995) called what individuals draw from their own connections with the experiences, naturalistic generalizations, "conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves (p.

85)" Stake provided a list of things that a researcher can use to assist in the validation, that is, by including things with which the audience was familiar; adequate raw data; description of methodology; identification of the researcher and data sources; reactions to accounts from the data; and, whether or not the instances were actually seen or inferred. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggested that case studies were valuable for their study of the particular and should be honored as such. Merriam (1998) suggested that rich, thick description can address the issue of over-generalizing as well. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) took it one step further by proposing that rich description can allow the reader to vicariously experience the case and thus draw their own conclusions.

Issues of ethics arose from the researcher-observer role (Merriam, 1998). The researcher's closeness to the case allowed greater access and a less contaminated case, yet the closeness raised issues of trustworthiness. The interview brought forth both positive and negative experiences and the researcher's involvement created occasional personal and research conflicts (Merriam, 1998). To address possible bias, the interviews were conducted and reviewed by the researcher and a professor. To maintain confidentiality, the data sets were referred as wholes, rather than as their parts and potential ethical issues of publication and dissemination were reviewed with others.

Chapter Summary

Qualitative research deepened our understanding of the meaning of shared experiences of school renewal that created a high-achieving learning community with democratic orientations. Although from qualitative research predictions or cause-and-effect relationships were not made, qualitative research brought new insights and views as to the possibilities of influences on events and highlighted patterns and relationships.

The case study unveiled new understanding in certain contexts and systems of the bounded system and illuminated their uniqueness. Through "intensive and interpretive study" (Stake, 1998, p. 46), the qualitative researcher attempted to bring new perspectives to our understanding of school renewal.

A case study was selected to find the *what* and *how* involved in school renewal. The three cumulative data sets provided a means for triangulation. The fourth data set provided confirming evidence for the selection of this case as a learning community. The case provided a rich, historical description of a school struggling to meet demands of increased accountability and then, NCLB. With renewed focus on student learning, the issues of equity, student achievement and opportunities to practice democracy converged to confront the school community. The case highlighted a school's struggles to develop a democratic learning community with increased student achievement. Although the case may not be generalizable to the greater community, by revealing their story and patterns of interaction that supported increased learning and democracy for students others may consider these as they plan their journey through school renewal towards increased student achievement and democratic learning.

CHAPTER 4

The Selected Case

Introduction

This chapter provided details about the selected case of Red Bud Elementary and indicated the purpose for its selection. A historical view of the school was portrayed and the state and district influences on the case were presented. Finally, a detailed description of four aspects of Red Bud included a deeper perspective for understanding the selection of this particular case: first, the recent demographics; second, the perceptions; third, the school processes; and, fourth, the student learning results.

Selected Case

Red Bud was selected because it was involved with a university-school network and the school transformed into a high-achieving learning community with democratic orientations. The school also showed remarkable student achievement as compared to other schools that had similar demographics. The school community was the unit of analysis and included those factors that influenced the teachers who worked together to create a professional learning community that resulted in increased student learning. The case study method was selected to expose the interrelationships of the teachers, the principal and the teachers, and the students and parents, as well as with outside influences. To do this, how the school was influenced by state and district mandates; a university network; and its unique position within the events, place, and time for public education were reviewed. The new accountability measures mandated by NCLB federal guidelines and implemented by the state and district were particularly evident in recent years. The school differed from the majority of the schools in the affluent suburban

district in the Midwest, because it had a higher level of poverty and diversity, and yet showed gains in student test results.

Red Bud had three long-term principals in the past three decades. A male, referred to as Mr. Simmons, managed Red Bud through the 1970s and into the 1980s, followed by a female in 1983, Sarah Stone. The third principal, known as Carrie, came in 1994 and served during the focus of the in-depth study of the evolutionary process. The longevity of the principal and the long career of many of the staff allowed time for the evolutionary processes to occur and resources to share those processes. The case study of this elementary school transpired over a 17 year history, from 1986 to 2003, and considered what occurred and how it evolved and changed to promote increased learning for students.

Outside Influences on Red Bud

During the 1970s, schools were concerned mainly with teacher's learning about curriculum and discipline, and the Cisco district was no different (Hale, 1996; Interviews, 2002). Red Bud's district began to provide workshops for teachers and generally teachers would return to their classrooms to experiment with the newly learned strategy on their own, with few opportunities for follow up activities such as discussion, sharing practices, reflection, or coaching available. Some teachers attended graduate courses at the local university. In science education a university partnership with the school district offered constructivist teacher workshops from which a district-wide inquiry-focused science curriculum was developed and spread throughout the state (Atkinson, 2001). The district also engaged in several other isolated experiments. Federal legislation recognized

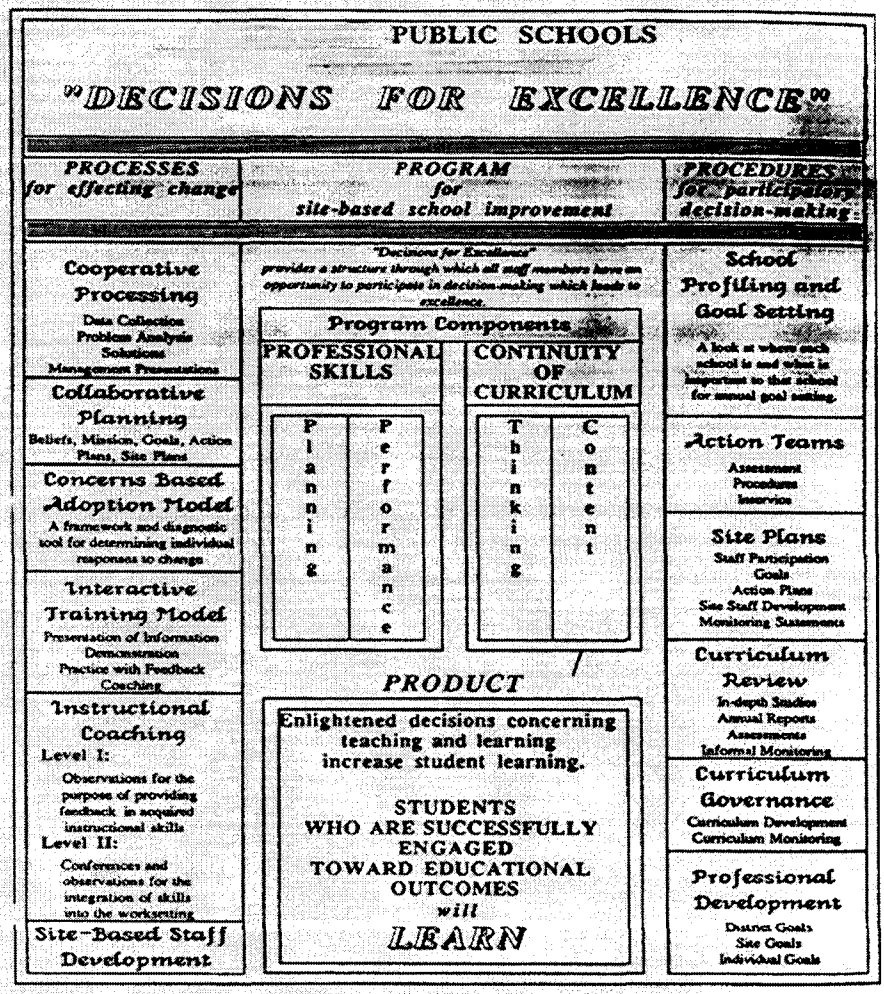
the need for professional growth for teachers and in 1979, the Cisco school district received a federal teachers' center grant.

In the early 1980s professional development remained the responsibility of the teacher, but Madeline Hunter's (1972) work served as a basis for staff development across the state and in the Cisco District. After funding for the federal teacher center ceased, the district gained state legislative approval for a professional development center in 1981 and was assigned the task of coordinating newly legislated state staff development and teacher certification. The effective schools research was influencing the district leadership, including research by Goodlad (1984) and others. The district began to approach staff training as a means for school improvement (Hale, 1996; Interviews, 2002).

Throughout the 1980s, rumblings about school improvement, state testing, and a common curriculum were heard at the state level. Study continued at the district level and leaders created and promoted a framework that collapsed the change process and procedures for school improvement into a working model (Fieldnotes, 1988-97; Hale, 1996; Interviews, 2002). The district reviewed the improvement process with school administrators and initiated a site goal-setting process accompanied by a district personnel site visit process to review the goals developed by each school. The district's school improvement model, known as Decisions for Excellence (see Figure 5), included processes and procedures used to review the curricular and instructional priorities of the district that focused on student learning. This model which was developed by the district staff from review of the literature on school improvement in1984, received the National Showcase of Excellence Award from the National Council of States on Inservice

Education in 1989 (Hale, 1996). This district model was shared with districts across the state through state department and university initiatives. This model guided the district school improvement processes and site-based goal setting. Principals were trained in the model and asked to begin the processes in their schools with support from the district. Despite the sporadic reform efforts, Red Bud remained relatively unchanged by the reforms (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002).

Figure 5. Cisco District school improvement model, 1989 version, that was used to provide training and support to selected processes for school renewal



Source: (Cisco District, 1989)

Following the oil bust of the early 1980s the region suffered severe budget crises, yet in 1989, the state undertook an education reform initiative that resulted in sweeping legislative-mandated school reforms that addressed consolidation of rural districts, district per pupil funding increases, increased teacher salaries, and new curriculum standards and assessments complemented by increased accountability (Oklahoma State Senate, 1997). The district leaders provided leadership in the formation and implementation of these new reforms for the state (Fieldnotes, 1986-97; Hale, 1996).

Cisco School District began to experience growth but the state was hit hard economically. The state suffered several financial crises over the past 17 years, especially in 1989 and again in 2002. Weighted average daily membership was used to determine per pupil state expenditures that ranged from $2,283 in 1989 to $3,532 in 2000 (Garrett, 2002). These expenditures landed the state in the lower percentages of the national ranking, ranging between 42nd – 45th (NCES, 2002) in the years before and after the year 2000. In the past several years, the Midwestern state received high rankings on national indicators of progress yet remained in the lowest quartile for school funding. The state in which Red Bud was located presented the following ethnic percentage changes between 1990 and 2001: Caucasian and other in 1990, was 74.2% and in 2001, was 63.7%; Black in 1990, was 9.9% and in 2001, was 10.8%; American Indian in 1990, was 12.1 % and in 2001, was 17.5%; Asian in 1990, was 1.1% and in 2001, was 1.5%; Hispanic in 1990, was 2.7% and in 2001, was 6.5% (McVey, 2003). The percent of students on free and reduced lunches was 49% (McVey, 2003).

History of Red Bud

Red Bud Elementary School was located in Midville near the center of the Midwestern state and 20 miles south of its largest metropolitan area. Midville grew from 67,996 in 1980, to 80,071, an 18% increase in 1990, to 93,759 a 17% increase in 1999 (SouthCentral-RTEC, 1999). In 2000, Midville's population was 95,694 and still growing (McVey, 2003). The city had almost 8% of families living below the poverty rate with a per capita income of $20,630 and a median household income of $36,713 (Indian Nations Council of Government, 2000).

As Midville grew, so did the Cisco school district. The district grew from 8,000 students in the 1980s to over 12,500 students by 2003, and became the tenth largest in the state (District Documents, 1989-2003). Red Bud Elementary school was built in the 1950s and reflected the architecture of the time with a long narrow school with semi-open classrooms. In 1989, additional closed classrooms, a teacher's work area and lounge, and a gymnasium were added to the west end of the building. Throughout the past 17 years, the district provided maintenance, new carpeting, media center furniture, and technology for Red Bud through general fund and bond issues. In the mid-1990s, Red Bud used Title I funds and business partners to fund additional technology and resources (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997).

Dating back to the 1980s, demographically, Red Bud remained somewhat consistent. It was located in a Midwestern state's city of about 95,000 residents, geographically isolated from other schools, the district office and downtown, and nestled within a comparatively old neighborhood of the city bordering a state university. Over the years, a result of war and political upheaval in various countries, international

students had flocked to the university housing near Red Bud from Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. While the student body and its families were racially and ethnically diverse, they hailed from under- to middle-class origins. Minority ethnicities at Red Bud had averaged over 30% since 1988, with 33% ethnicity in 2003 (see Figures 1 and 2). Based on government sponsored free and reduced lunch federal guidelines, Red Bud became a school wide Title I school in 1995, with 48% of the students qualifying for the federal subsidy and in 2003, 64% of Red Bud students qualified (Cisco District Title I, 1995; Red Bud, 1998-2003) as shown in Figure 3. One teacher commented that on more than one occasion she had taught children who forgot their names because they were in the federal witness protection program or part of a family on the run from rival gang members or law enforcement personnel (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002). During the 1990s, student demographics showed Red Bud as having the highest poverty level and the most diverse student population of any school in this suburban district. From a student population of 380 in1986, Red Bud's population reached 436 in 1988, and remained fairly consistent in size, throughout the 1990s. In 2000, with the addition of a pre-kindergarten program, Red Bud served 471 students and had a minority population of 32% and served 56% students at the poverty level (Red Bud, 1988-2003).

Red Bud had a long history of tradition enjoying the stability of school principals since it opened in 1953. Marvin Simmons, a white ex-military man, was principal of Red Bud during the 1970s. His role fit that of many principals of his time, i.e., largely managerial (Interviews, 2002). Known only as Mr. Simmons, he seemed to care about students but disciplined largely through punitive measures and felt that order in the halls, during lunch, and on the playground was paramount. Rarely did he involve himself in

teachers' professional lives by encouraging them to attend conferences, strive to learn alternative pedagogies, or update their knowledge base. Classroom teaching and learning styles of traditionalism primarily conformed to his leadership style in which he abdicated classroom practices to the prerogative of each teacher. He was hesitant to interfere with students' families as well. Once, several teachers insisted that Simmons call the police because a mother was beating her husband and her children, yet he failed to do so [*State Law* Chapter 7. Article I. Section 823.2 had not been passed that required such reporting]. Red Bud had no on-site counselors at this point. The building was dirty, and the wood floor-bathrooms smelled. Many teachers had complained at various times that Red Bud had been a dumping ground for inadequate teachers because the school community was largely poor to working class, and many families in the neighborhood were transient, causing constant turn over of students each year (Field Notes, 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002).

Sarah Stone became principal during the 1980s and established some personal connections with various teachers. Unlike Simmons, most teachers referred to her by her first name "Sarah," not "Ms." or "Mrs. Stone." She was an ardent student advocate. In the absence of a breakfast program she personally brought food to needy children and allowed students to take seconds at lunch, believing it might be the only meal they would receive in any given day. Once she called the parents of a child who came to school day after day, haggard looking and hungry. At 10:00 a.m. the student's parents were still in bed, to which Sarah responded, "I can't believe you are still in bed, and your child got up this morning and came to school!" Perhaps some of the license Sarah took with this couple was that both she and the parents were Native Americans (Interviews, 2002).

Sarah advocated for improved facilities and received support for the clean up process from the new superintendent. A longtime teacher shared, ""Things were cleaned up, just the physical look. We got color to make it more of a welcoming place." This teacher also reported that Sarah made you feel like "there were people out there who can help our school" (Interviews, 2002). In addition to providing a cleaner school, Sarah also included a few more people in a "broader participatory group" (Interviews, 2002).

Although Sarah was a student advocate and had begun to include some teachers in school decisions, when the district ushered in the goal-setting processes to lead schools in a renewal process, Sarah and her staff struggled (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002). Most schools eagerly delved into the process and focused on curriculum and instructional issues that they believed would impact student learning. In contrast, Red Bud school improvement processes were at first fixed on traffic issues, rather than dedicated to determining the source of various disruptions and lack of student learning (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997; Red Bud, 1992). Sarah and the Red Bud faculty proposed "To develop a safe, reasonable plan for traffic and safety before and after school" (Red Bud, 1992). Before and after school, traffic congestion had caused altercations among parents, children, and faculty and the actions they planned to take included, "Students walking home be expected to use east hall door, west hall door, and north door by office" (Red Bud, 1992). At first, district officials were taken back by what, on the surface, was not an academic issue. Deciding to reward initiative in whatever form, the administrators recognized the plan's merit as a school concern and approved it (Interviews, 2002; Fieldnotes 1988-1997). Even so, the district assigned a central office staff person (the researcher) to serve as a school improvement coach to the site. Red Bud teachers'

participation in district staff development was limited to the "board of directors" (Interviews, 2002) and there were limited structures through which teachers' learning was shared. Staff meetings were mostly perfunctory, and staff development occurred mostly on assigned district days and usually were conducted by outside consultants selected by the principal (Interviews, 2002). In the early 1990s staff development opportunities did increase and some time for staff learning was added into the site goal process (Red Bud, 1992), yet compared to other schools in the district, it remained limited (Fieldnote, 1986-1997)

Red Bud in the 21st Century

While Red Bud was influenced by external forces, it was the changes internally that were the focus of this study. A description of the case allowed a deeper understanding of the school that faced No Child Left Behind and other mandates. Victoria Bernhardt's (2002) school portfolio framework was used to explain the characteristics of the 21st century status of Red Bud. Bernhardt proposed that multiple measures of data built a composite of the school and showed the impact of the work of the school on students. The Bernhardt framework included data from four dimensions of a school that focused on demographics, student learning, school processes, and perceptions.

Demographics

The demographical data provided a view of the students who attended Red Bud Elementary. A 2003 snapshot of the students at Red Bud showed that it served 516 students, an increase because an off-site pre-kindergarten program was added to the roles. The poverty level of students as indicated by the number of students who were eligible

for free/reduced meals was 64% and the mobility rate of students as measured by the number entering and/or leaving the school was 40%. In 2003, the minority ethnicity was at 31 percent comprised of ten percent Black, eight percent American Indian, four percent Hispanic, and nine percent Asian or Pacific Islander (see Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4). The bilingual population in 2003 was nine percent of the total population, down from the early 1990s. The attendance rate was 96%. The state Academic Performance Index [API] was 1217, with 1000 was the state average. This API placed Red Bud, eighth highest school in the district, even though its ethnicity and poverty rates were higher than any of the other schools that were ranked above it.

Student discipline referrals in 2002, were similar those in 2003, with 13 students suspended, 1 female and 12 males; 8 of whom were white, 3 Black, 1 each Hispanic and Asian. Students involved in a peer mediation program provided 84 cases of conflict resolution around issues of name-calling, fighting, arguing, starting rumors, and disrespect (Red Bud, 2003). Gifted programs served between 14.2% and 16.1% of students from 1995, until 2002, but dropped to a low of 9% in 2003, (Red Bud Notebook, 2002). The Title I program became school-wide in the mid 1990s, allowing services to be provided to all students. Special education programs served between seven and ten percent of the students during the same time frame, and showed a drop to five percent in 2003.

Red Bud students were mostly served in self-contained classrooms except for physical education and music classes which they attended on alternate days of the week. The school was served by a full-time library media specialist, counselor, Title I reading specialist and learning disabled special education teacher. Part-time teachers provided

gifted resource services, speech and language, and special education evaluation services. The district began to house the English-language-learner [ELL] program at Red Bud in 2003. These teachers provided on and off-site ELL services (Fieldnotes, 2003).

Thirty full-time certified teachers were housed at Red Bud in 2003. These teachers had from one to twenty-eight years of teaching experience. These teachers had taught from one to sixteen years at Red Bud, nine of whom had taught at Red Bud for more than ten years. Since 1995, the student-to-teacher ratio ranged between 19 and 22, with an average of 20.4. In 2003, the student-teacher ratio was 22.43 to 1. In 2003, two certified male teachers complemented the mostly female staff (Red Bud, 2003). Three of the teachers were American Indian, two were Hispanic, and the rest were Caucasian. Four teachers spoke Spanish and three knew sign language. Twelve of the teachers held masters degrees and two doctorates.

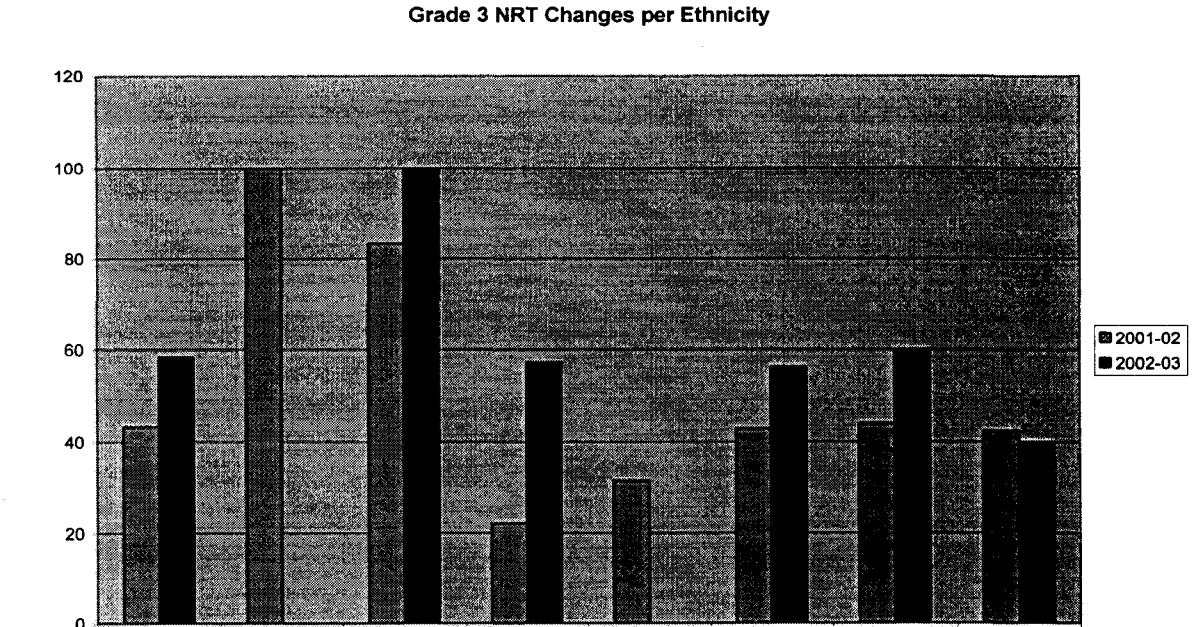
Student Learning

Red Bud students participated in state and district mandated testing (Red Bud, 2003). The district provided Otis-Lennon school ability tests that were administered each fall to primary grade students. The scaled scores in 1995, through 1997, ranged from 100.5 to 103.6, with 100 indicating an average score. The numbers began to drop below average or 100 in 1998, going from 98.2 to 96.8 in 2003 (Red Bud, 2003). Even with this drop in school ability index, Red Bud students continued to improve on the state criterion referenced tests. On the grade five, criterion-referenced test the percent of students scoring satisfactorily increased as follows: in math, from 75% in 1996, to 88% in 1999, and to 98% in 2003, an increase of 23% achieving a satisfactory score; in science, from 81% in 1996 to 79% in 1999, and to 100% in 2003, an increase of 19% achieving a

satisfactory score and 50% of these 100% of Red Bud students achieved the advanced ranking; in reading, from 81 percent in 1996, and 1999, and to 92% in 2003, an increase of 11% achieving a satisfactory score; and, in writing, from 96% in 1996 to 95% in 1999 and to 100% in 2003, an increase of 5% achieving a satisfactory score. Tests in history, geography and the arts were instituted in 1999, and since that time those Red Bud students scoring satisfactorily increased from 79% to 95% in history, from 72% to 92% in geography, and from 77% to 84% in the arts (see Figure 4).

Norm-referenced tests were administered to third grade students over the past decade. These scores did not show the degree of improvement that the criterion referenced scores did. These scores were reported using the national percentile rank. The national percentile rank scores for third graders in 1995, were: reading, 65%; language, 72%; mathematics, 70%; and, core, 70%. Since 1995, the reading scores ranged from a national percentile rank of 53% in 1997, to 75% in 2002. In 2003, the national percentile scores in reading were 69%. Language national percentile rank scores ranged from 53% in 1997, to 89% in 2002, but decreased to 57% in 2003 (see Figures 6 and 7). Mathematics and core national percentile rank scores followed similar trends (Red Bud, 2003).

Figure 6. Grade three norm-referenced national percentile rank test data for 2002 and 2003 for show performance disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and poverty level (F/RL).

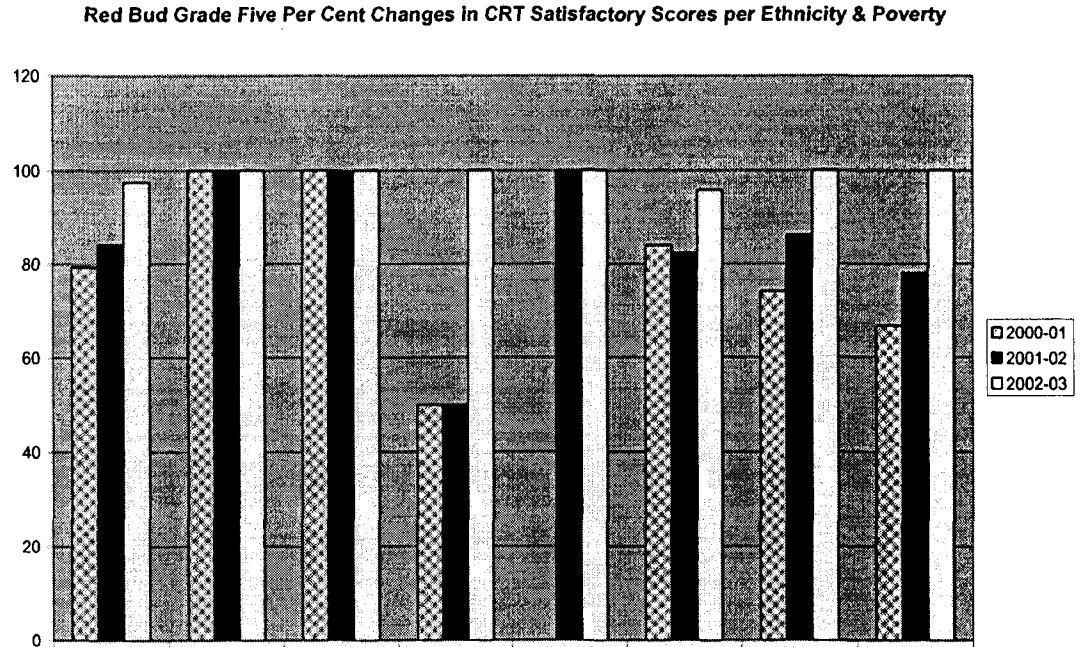


	Regular	Native Am	Asian	AfricanAm	Hispanic	Female	Male	F/RL
2001-02	43.3	100	83.3	22.2	31.6	42.9	44	42.4
2002-03	58.3	0	100	57.1	0	56.2	60	40

*** means fewer than 5 tested

Source: Red Bud, 2003

Figure 7. Changes in percent of grade five students scoring satisfactory or above on state criterion referenced test in 2001, 2002 and 2003 by ethnicity, gender and poverty level (F/RL).



	Regular	Native Am	Asian	AfricanAm	Hispanic	Female	Male	F/RL
2000-01	79.3	100	100	50	0	83.9	74.1	66.7
2001-02	84.1	100	100	50	100	82.4	86.2	78.1
2002-03	97.4	100	100	100	100	95.7	100	100

Source: Red Bud, 2003

School Processes

School processes changed when Carrie arrived and were influenced by the university network in 1997 (Fieldnotes 1988-1997; Red Bud, 1996; Red Bud, 1997; Red Bud, 1998). At that time, the school began to review its mission and core learning principles and embraced the district school improvement process. Individual grade levels selected goals based on the school goals and worked towards these selected goals during grade level meetings. Teacher leaders from each grade level shared their work with district administrators during the year-end site visit to review the school's progress on their site goals. Several of the school's staff served the university network as a coordinator and the school staff provided leadership in the university network.

The school began a school-wide Title I program in 1995. In 2003, the Title I teachers and others produced a new planning document and established goals for the school (Red Bud, 2003). The school expanded its business partners and opened its doors to mentoring and tutoring programs from student groups at the nearby university. The counselor and teacher leaders received training from which they developed a student assistance program and instituted a peer mediation program. A four-year old program was added in 2000, and a class for extended-day kindergarten was established in 2001. In 2003, the principal was assigned to supervise an off-site early childhood program.

The school continued to be involved with the university network, even as the network changed and transformed to a school renewal leadership and technology focus. The school wrote a grant to deepen the work of the university network in the school. Professional development played a central role in the school, with staff frequently taking responsibility for its planning and presenting. Teachers have completed 30 hours of arts integration, 22 hours of academic achievement, and 22 hours of integration of technology training this year. Through the efforts of the staff at Red Bud, tests scores increased.

The 2003 school improvement goals were listed on the website and the first goal was to show academic progress of seven percent in reading, language arts and math. The second goal was to raise all limited English students to proficiency in English and to the same seven percent increase in reading, language and mathematics scores. The third goal was to reduce suspensions, behavioral referrals and bus incident reports by ten percent. The fourth goal was to increase the attendance level at Red Bud by one percent to a goal of ninety-eight percent. Processes and procedures became open to discussion and review, and teachers were responsible for those processes and procedures.

In 2003, Red Bud formed a team of parents, teachers, community members and the principal to review their practices for parent involvement. After the team reviewed data and practices of parent involvement, a parent liaison was hired to coordinate these practices. Students participated and contributed to their school through student government, chess club, safety patrol, morning assembly production, technology cadre, peer mediation and class meetings. A before school program that was curriculum focused was offered by the staff each morning and the school served breakfast. A community-run before-and-after school child care program was hosted at Red Bud. Evening sessions for tutoring were held and university students regularly tutored students. Business partners were active contributors to Red Bud.

Perceptions of School

Perceptual data provided another lens through which to view Red Bud Elementary as a case. The School Professional Staff as a Learning Community questionnaire (Hord et al., 1999) was administered to the staff to ascertain that Red Bud was a functioning professional learning community. The instrument delineated five categories of the learning community that included: (a) democratic participation of staff; (b) sharing of vision of student learning; (c) collective learning by the staff focused on student needs; (d) peer review and feedback strategies; (e) school conditions and capacity building support. Each of these five categories have two to five rubrics that were described in a Likert-style matrix with scoring of five to one, five being optimum conditions for the category. See a copy of the survey in Appendix A6.

The instrument was validated (Hord et al., 1999) as a paper-and-pencil instrument, but for the purposes of this study and as a part of the university network

evaluation was conducted as an on-line survey. A pilot test of the on-line instrument was given to the Red Bud staff in May, 2003. The on-line instrument was administered through the university network in October, 2003, and the differences in the mean scores between the May, 2003 and October, 2003 administration were not significant, indicating that the sample was drawn from a similar population.

The overall mean score of the October, 2003 survey was positively skewed and was significant (μ= 4.05, on a 5.0 scale). The mean for each of the five areas were as follows: (1) democratic participation of staff (μ = 4.34); (2) sharing of vision of student learning (μ = 4.39); (3) collective learning by the staff focused on student needs (μ = 4.35); (4) peer review and feedback strategies (μ = 2.90); (5) school conditions and capacity building support (μ= 3.91). The means were each positively skewed, with the mean for vision, learning and democratic processes, being the highest, followed by the mean for school capacity and conditions. The mean (μ = 2.90) for the peer review category which was the category with the lowest mean was significantly above the normal mean ($t = 15.697$, $df = 18$, $p > .001$). These significant level data indicated that Red Bud was operating as a professional learning community. See Appendix A7 for the data from the survey.

Red Bud staff conducted informal surveys at the end of the year and shared the results with the researcher. The staff survey indicated that teachers felt that they cared about each other, respected the ideas of others, and were respected by their administrator. The teachers indicated that the administrator communicated well with the staff and supported the vision of the school. The staff shared a belief that they could increase

learning through hands on instruction, professional development and integration of the curriculum.

Parental perceptual data were regularly collected and these were shared with the researcher. The end of the 2003 year parent survey indicated that parents had a positive attitude toward the school and that their child was capable of completing assignments on time. The greatest need parents felt their child had was for the social side of school, such as building of self-confidence, while the greatest strength of the school was split among four categories, including teachers, communication, academics and university relationships. The survey indicated that parents felt that Red Bud's staff was caring and focused on academics. Suggestions for improvement were mainly related to building and grounds issues.

Parental involvement was assessed by a National Parent Teacher Association [PTA] instrument in 2003 as a part of the application process for certification as a school of excellence through the National PTA. The assessment measured parental involvement in the six standards for parent involvement: (a) communicating; (b} parenting; (c) student learning; (d) volunteering; (e) school decision making and advocacy; and (f) collaborating with community. The results indicated that parents ranked Red Bud excellent in each of the six areas. The only sub-categories in which parents ranked Red Bud low were "include parent involvement activities on the school's report card (...document on the school's performance)" and "provide parents with an opportunity to participate in professional development activities (i.e. workshops, technology training)" (National PTA, 2001-2003). See Appendix A7 for parental survey results.

Student perceptual data indicated that students did not like to miss school and that they enjoyed reading. What they indicated they liked most about Red Bud were the academics, and what they wanted to change were lunch menu items and recess. Academically, they indicated they would like to perform better in mathematics and receive more time in social studies and art.

Summary of 21st Century Red Bud

Red Bud Elementary was selected as the focus of this study because it was an anomaly. Red Bud was transformed from a traditional school to a professional learning community and implemented democratic strategies through its work with the university school network. Students at Red Bud Elementary were outscoring many of the state and district schools, despite their level of poverty and ethnicity of the school. The demographics of the school incurred some changes over the past decade and a half, but the school's poverty and ethnicity stayed stable. The teachers on staff remained relatively stable as well. School processes changed and these became part of the study of how school renewal occurred. Staff perceptions were measured by a survey to ascertain the maturity of the professional learning community. Parent and student perceptions of Red Bud were reported as positive.

Chapter Summary

The chapter highlighted the reasons for the selection of Red Bud as the unit of study. The process of school renewal at Red Bud offered insights into the transformational process. The historical influences on the school by state and district mandates were described. Historical facts about Red Bud were provided and the characteristics of Red Bud's three principals, since the 1970s, were compared. Data on

the case presented historical and recent demographics of students and teachers and student learning data. School processes were described. Perceptions of the staff towards the school and its level of maturity as a professional learning community were collected and analyzed. Parental and student perceptions were reviewed.

CHAPTER 5

Findings

Introduction

In this chapter the processes that led to the evolution of Red Bud were described. Those processes included the climate supporting deep learning, the distributing of leadership and how these processes evolved through communities of practice that lead to conditions for increased student learning.

The first part of this chapter was divided into stages through which the school community evolved as it changed from a traditional school to a democratic learning community (O'Hair et al., 2000). Each stage was reviewed through the perspectives of learning, leading and communities of practice. Learning within a stage included the main locus of control for staff learning, both individual and collective. Leading within a given stage demonstrated the locus of control for leadership within the community. Practices were those communities of practice that existed within the larger community, i.e., subsets of the larger community. These communities of practice shared a common set of practices, within which knowledge was shared and new knowledge was created. The first stage described was that of a traditional school with learning, leading and practices which occurred in *Isolated Pockets*. The second and third phases described were characteristic of a professional learning community and were called *Outside In* and *Inside Out*. The fourth stage described was characteristic of a democratic learning community and was called *Flows*. Each stage was characterized by changes in approaches of the community as a whole to learning, leadership and communities of practices, which was shortened to

'practices'. Next, the chapter described the findings for a living democracy through examples of the IDEALS that were practiced in Red Bud.

Building Community and Evolving Through Learning, Leading and Practices

The four stages explained how learning, leading and practices changed over time through the stages: (a) *Isolated Pockets* (b) *Outside In* (c) *Inside Out* (d) *Flows*. In each stage, learning, leading and practices were characterized through different orientations towards professional growth, control of knowledge and information, and the building of communities within the larger community that led to the sharing of practices, creation of new knowledge and development of new strategies for teaching and learning. The stages of evolution that took Red Bud from a traditional school that struggled to adapt to reform to a learning community that adapted to changes to a democratic learning community that accepted learners and others differences and integrated their needs into the community was described.

Red Bud as a Traditional School

Learning, Leading and Practices in Isolated Pockets

From the onset of this study in 1986, and into the 1990s, learning about ways to improve the teaching process that impacted student learning was occurring for some Red Bud teachers but generally through required participation or individual initiative. Leadership was tightly held by the principal and the sharing of practices was only beginning to occur and without an organizational structure to manage the flow of information, there was minimal enhanced capacity for supporting student learning.

Learning in Isolated Pockets.

Red Bud teachers were dedicated to students, collaborating on occasion in unofficial circumstances and serving on district committees. They attended staff development sessions, yet discourse about what they were exposed to and how they might implement it continued to be missing, unlike in other district schools. Early in Sarah's tenure, staff meetings were perfunctory, and staff development occurred on assigned district days (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997). In the last several years of Sarah's tenure, the staff began to consider some innovations, such as a new math program in which a Red Bud teacher served as a district trainer and provided staff development (Red Bud, 1992). Lacking the support of group sharing within a school site conceptual framework to guide their professional growth, some Red Bud educators felt overwhelmed (Interviews, 2002). A teacher reflected on the final year of Sarah's tenure, "...we were not talking about learning. We talked about rules and procedures, there was not 'meat'" (Interviews, 2002). The 1991-1992 Red Bud site plan was the first one to list a mission statement: "At Red Bud we shall strive to create an atmosphere which promotes lifelong learners" (Red Bud, 1992). Staff development was limited and teachers mostly were left on their own to share and collaborate as routines or structures did not regularly allow for sharing among the faculty.

Leading in Isolated Pockets.

In 1986, Sarah had served as principal for several years. She established an inner circle of teachers who were loyal to her. Generally, Sarah was unable to open lines of communication between all teachers and herself. She wanted "to keep her fingers in the pot and was not willing to give all the power away," one teacher explained. Ironically,

such behavior made other teachers feel secure because, "We knew what we could get away with and what would make her mad." She was "momma." Yet, certain teachers acknowledged they felt excluded from the inner circle. An insider admitted that Sarah treated him differently than many others, allowing him to enter her office at will "just to talk" while others were not welcomed into the inner office (Fieldnotes, 1988-1997; Interviews, 2002).

The school operated with a select group of teachers serving as the "board of directors" carrying out the wishes of the principal. One teacher described Sarah as "very authoritative," while clarifying, "she would stay involved, just more in control." Another teacher shared, "you knew exactly where you stood, because she had certain ideas of how things should be done...she may agree with you, but say, but it is going to be done this way" (Interviews, 2002). Teachers worried about their students and disciplined them, too often by being directive, loud and coarse (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002). Students were treated equally, not individually (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002).

Attempting to address school improvement, the district applied for and obtained a state department grant to fund alternative avenues to traditional leadership and curriculum. The district reviewed the improvement process with school administrators and initiated a site goal-setting process accompanied by a district personnel site visit process to review the goals developed by each school. In the process of goal setting for school improvement, Red Bud seemed to be fixed on discipline and other problems, rather than being proactive about finding solutions and focusing on student learning (Cisco District, 1989; Fieldnotes, 1986-1997). In response to the school improvement

process, Sarah and the faculty proposed to address its traffic problem. Before and after school, traffic congestion had caused altercations among staff, parents, children, and faculty. At first, district officials were taken back by what was not an academic issue. Deciding to reward initiative in whatever form, the administrators recognized the plan's merit and approved it (Fieldnotes 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002).

Practices in Isolated Pockets.

Seeds were planted at the district level and from fellow administrators which brought about a focus on student learning goals. In 1988, a Red Bud site academic goal stated that inservice in math manipulatives would be provided and in 1989, the academic goal stated that "teachers continue to share Math strategies individually and through inservice" (Red Bud, 1992). This goal was the first one that stated that teachers would share their learning. The school improvement process was led and monitored through site visits by the district. A district administrator recalled, "...when we went to site visits, [Sarah] had some selected teachers that she brought. She ran most of the meetings, but the teachers she brought in would add to some of the information...I didn't see them as a team, I saw them as individuals coming in to support one another in the building" (Interviews, 2002).

Towards the end of Sarah's tenure, she began to accept the need for discussion to ameliorate the school climate, and the 1990 site plan contained a goal to "improve the school climate among staff through effective professional communications" with an action plan that included "inservice on school climate...teams will work on cooperative decision-making in the areas of rules, schedules, and sharing information and resources" and "the staff will strive to structure faculty meetings in a more time efficient manner"

(Red Bud, 1992). In 1991, the site plan stated the "goal is a continuation of Dr. Jim Sweeney's School Climate Inventory" and included the terms "student-centered," "supportive, stimulating environment" and "communication and trust" (Red Bud, 1992). Even though the site goals proposed the need to move to effective professional communication and an inservice to develop school climate was held, the principal did not attend the session except to introduce the presenters and called separate teachers out of the session to check their class lists which she was in her office preparing the day before school started (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997).

Summary of Red Bud as a Traditional School

Between 1986 and 1994, staff learning occurred through efforts of a few teacher leaders, yet produced restricted impact on the staff as a whole. Professional growth at Red Bud sputtered with the flow of information and knowledge tightly held by the "board of directors" (Interviews, 2002). School leadership remained in the hands of a select few and Sarah's ability to share knowledge and control was confined. Although, generally Sarah enjoyed district support, she knew the district administrators had become reform-minded and, perhaps, was aware that she was not the person to lead Red Bud in that direction. Shortly before leaving, Sarah told her supervisors that Red Bud was like a "rough diamond" in need of polishing. With tears in her eyes, one long-time Red Bud teacher said, "like a loving mother, Sarah let go, so that her school could grow" (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002).

Sarah struggled with the new expectations to make improvements in the school climate and to move forward on school improvement. In 1993, Sarah retired. Into this traditional climate the new principal made her entrance.

Learning, Leading and Practices From the Outside In

In 1994, Carrie Phillips accepted her first head principal position and became the new Red Bud principal. A decade earlier, she had taught in an open school, staffed by progressive teachers and a leader who encouraged constant intellectual stimulation and dialogue. Carrie later moved to other communities and schools that had been more conventional. She learned to compromise, creating an inquiry-based mathematic curriculum in one school where she also tolerated its corporal punishment policy (Interviews, 2002). Then she became vice-principal in an elementary school with a traditional, authoritarian principal. During this time she did the best she could to deal with the manipulation and hidden agendas that manifested from this closed leadership climate. Always valuing loyalty, Carrie supported her principal, even though she had become "physically sick" from feeling torn between loyalty to the traditional principal and her own beliefs that learning was best fostered in a constructivist school environment (Interviews, 2002). Selected to lead Red Bud, Carrie brought with her new views on the role of professional growth, shared leadership and practices for building community to bear on Red Bud. Carrie was the third principal in the past two decades to lead Red Bud.

Learning from the Outside In.

Initially, the Red Bud staff was suspicious of Carrie. Faculty members were accustomed to being left alone. Carrie reported that she mostly listened to gain an understanding about Red Bud's staff and their processes. In Carrie's first year as principal the district supported a local university professor who obtained grant money to sponsor a school reform network. The network was modeled after Carl Glickman's

(1993) League of Professional Schools, Theodore Sizer's (1985, 1996) Coalition of Essential Schools, and other reform-oriented groups (Filednotes, 1986-1997; Interviews, 2002). The university network worked through cluster groups of six to eight district schools' teachers who shared best practices and worked on school renewal (Fieldnotes, 1988-97; Interviews, 2002). Although Red Bud teachers did not openly question the university professor who met with them to explain the project in 1996, they began their own underground investigation of Glickman's and Sizer's organizations. The principal allowed the open inquiry and discourse among the faculty. The fear of forced change motivated major movements of Red Bud teachers' learning (Fieldnotes, 1988-97; Interviews, 2002). From 1994 to 1997, Red Bud's 25 teachers logged over 3,800 hours of staff development through the district, the network and their own initiatives (Red Bud Title I, 1997). Learning was being shared and was creating knowledge and skills that led to leadership opportunities.

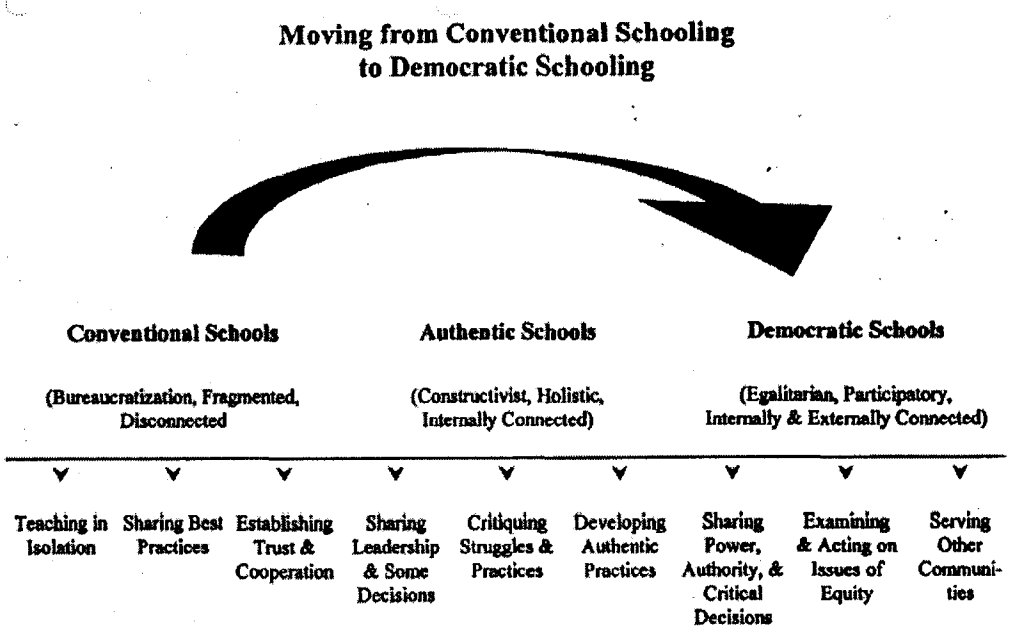
Leading From the Outside In.

With the new principal, sharing of leadership began. A teacher recalled, "In the summer, we got a new principal. It was so nice to have someone ask my opinion. It was scary, but empowering" (Interviews, 2002). There were some givens for Carrie, especially when it came to how students should be treated. The new leader confronted the coarseness of the student discipline and provided training in student support systems to equip teachers with skills to nurture students as they established firm expectations for behavior and respect for each other (Fieldnotes, 1986 – 1997; Interviews, 2002).

A continuum of strategies through which schools moved from conventional schooling to democratic communities as shown in Figure 8 was included in the Red Bud

Network Notebook (1996). Carrie continued to read, study, and share research about how to create an effective school, investigating alternative teaching philosophies and techniques during faculty meetings and putting handouts in teachers' mailboxes. She strategically posted articles in the restrooms and met informally with small groups and individual teachers to discuss research-based teaching and learning practices in all the elementary school content areas (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003).

Figure 8. Original continuum of practices in moving from conventional schooling to a democratic community distributed to network schools



Source: (Red Bud, 1996)

Carrie and some of the inspired staff were working together to develop a new vision for Red Bud. The faculty began writing its own school improvement goals; decided on topics that grade-level teams needed to discuss; and provided feedback loops for those discussions through written reports. Carrie initiated a leadership council and

opened it to all staff but required a representative from various teams to attend and to share the information with others. Nurturing many through failure when innovations were not highly successful and rewarding success, Carrie wrote encouraging notes to and regularly visited with teachers encouraging them to experiment with new approaches (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003; Lightfoot, 1983). Reflecting on the first few years, Carrie later wrote (Red Bud, 1997),

> When I first introduced to the staff the idea of joining a network of schools to share ideas, they immediately became suspicious of my motives and decided that I had a personal agenda. Only after careful examination of the original proposals and the reading of many related books and articles, did the staff 'buy in' to continued interest in the project...Ownership by the staff fueled our search for excellence. There is a feeling of increased personal power and that power is directed toward positive changes.

The university network professor recalled when she invited each network school to send two teachers to help her begin to plan network activities. Red Bud sent two negative teachers, but the network professor stated, "They didn't act that way to me. They helped us plan...our goals" (Interview, 2002). The network evaluator recalled that Red Bud approached joining the network differently than other schools, "at Red Bud there was an intensive inquiry" (Interviews, 2002).

Opportunities for leadership were being created (Spillane, et al., 1999) among the teachers as they moved towards the central focus on learning for all students. One teacher who had been at Red Bud since Sarah was there reflected on her own leadership development (Interviews, 2002),

> I started with my peers. There was a group of young teachers, we had two factions at that time, we had a group of young brand new teachers and one with more experience, like the 1980s versus the 1960s and we were quite different, so we would always argue, and it wasn't always positive, at first we were going along with things and then we found other like minded people and we started talking and saying, that's not the way I learned it was supposed to be...at first we started having conversations and collaborating – it wasn't always real good or quality, but it was organic, and we started pushing each other...we were organic with the kids...kids wanted to do a talent show, so we went to [Carrie], she's wonderful, she's this new principal and, I remember her telling me, 'you are like a breath of fresh air,' she loved my excitement, even though I was just stupid. She just let me do it...but you learn from your mistakes...She smiled and patted us on the back and told us we did a good job. She was just really supportive and let us reflect.

The principal described the beginning of student leadership at Red Bud in this way, "we began by letting kids work on their class rules, building leadership capacity" (Interviews, 2003). Thus, leadership was spread to students.

The network brought additional skills to the faculty that facilitated leadership development. After investigating and finding other schools and staff members who had successfully worked with Glickman's and Sizer's groups, Red Bud teachers voted to join the network, but they continued to question the new terminology about which they were hearing and reading. One educator found an example of a "democratic" school in which the students "ran the place" and circulated the example among the faculty. Later, Carrie

received a list of anonymous questions concerning the network: "Where has this program been implemented successfully? Is there a cluster group focused on promoting the academics of the student, or is it designed to be a self-awareness and self esteem program?" (Red Bud, 1996). Carrie openly responded to each of these questions and specifically addressed the democratic school flyer that had been shared among the faculty on which she wrote, "This is not what I had in mind! I think this is just something totally different" (Red Bud, 1996; Interviews, 2002) and re-distributed the flyer to the teachers. Information was shared and questions were answered openly.

A school counselor cogitated,

> The process of exploration about networking...resulted in many spirited and occasionally heated discussions. Fears, anxieties, biases, beliefs, dreams, visions and wishes all emerged as we formed, stormed, normed and performed. Sometimes it was not a pleasant or easy process, but it resulted in much deeper and more trusting relationships among the faculty. We learned to speak freely, to listen with respect to one another, to honor different perspectives, to challenge even our own basic beliefs upon which we had built our educational or even life philosophies. It was as though walls between us crumbled as we risked honest communication in a way we had not done before...Still, ...we are fledglings in the process." (Red Bud, 1997)

Changes were occurring at Red Bud under the new leadership and with the membership in the university school network. The opportunities afforded through the network were a main source for developing learning and sharing leadership. Teachers were beginning to connect their professional growth to their practices.

Practices From the Outside In.

During the mid to late 1990s, the district was becoming a state leader in staff development for quality teaching and learning, as it worked with the State Department to expand such opportunities to school faculties and administrators. A state curriculum was developed and state criterion-referenced testing began. Carrie and her fellow elementary principals in the district began to meet monthly--sharing research; studying books on leadership; and discussing each other's school progress. These gatherings created the basic structure of a community of practice, i.e., a domain of knowledge, a community of people, and a set of shared practices (Wenger, 1998). Carrie and the network membership supported the development of communities of practice at Red Bud.

Excited about their learning, teachers began to meet on Saturdays to discuss what they were doing. Other schools from the network came. A participating teacher recalled, "we became a shining star, we learned we weren't the only school with a challenge, we have something to offer." The teacher continued on about the network and how it supported their change in practice,

> The network began to spread out the leaders. We had money, we developed a protocol to spend the money from the Network. It was a challenge to decide...we used the money to attend local and national conferences, those who went were good about sharing [what they learned]. (Interviews, 2002)

Through Title I, district allocations and university network monies, Carrie sent countless teachers to local, state, and national workshops. Red Bud teachers, themselves, reviewed and allocated staff development grants to teachers who submitted well-thought-out proposals. Upon returning from a workshop, teachers were required to share what

they had learned with fellow faculty members. Topics ranged from teaching and learning in various subject areas to adapting the latest technology and strategies for teaching diverse populations (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003; Red Bud, 1998). Teachers were bringing back what they learned to their colleagues and working together in small and large groups to share and reflect on their learning, while developing a means to share their practices and build community.

With expectations to share what they were learning, the beginning of communities of practice was being established. A network evaluator described attending a Red Bud faculty meeting in which the meeting began with Carrie giving a brief update of things that had happened since they last met and recognizing a faculty member for an accomplishment. Next, a group of teachers who had attended a meeting shared what they had learned. After sharing, time was allotted for the small groups to meet. After a set time, the groups were invited back together to report their work to the entire faculty (Interviews, 2002). Through this process, communities of practice were being developed.

Summary of Outside In

In the first years of Carrie's tenure, the faculty struggled with a more constructivist learning philosophy and leadership style and an opening up and sharing of knowledge and information. Although teachers were encouraged to grow professionally, they struggled with how to incorporate the new freedom to learn into their school practices. With support of the network and school structures, they began to study and integrate new practices into their school, creating communities of practice.

Learning, Leading and Practices From the Inside Out

As the faculty began to enjoy their own learning and to feel confident in their learning, they began to provide professional development to others, especially within the context of the university network. They began to enjoy having access to knowledge and information and advance into leadership roles in the network and school. They were willing to share what they were learning and began studying their practice and creating new knowledge.

Learning From the Inside Out.

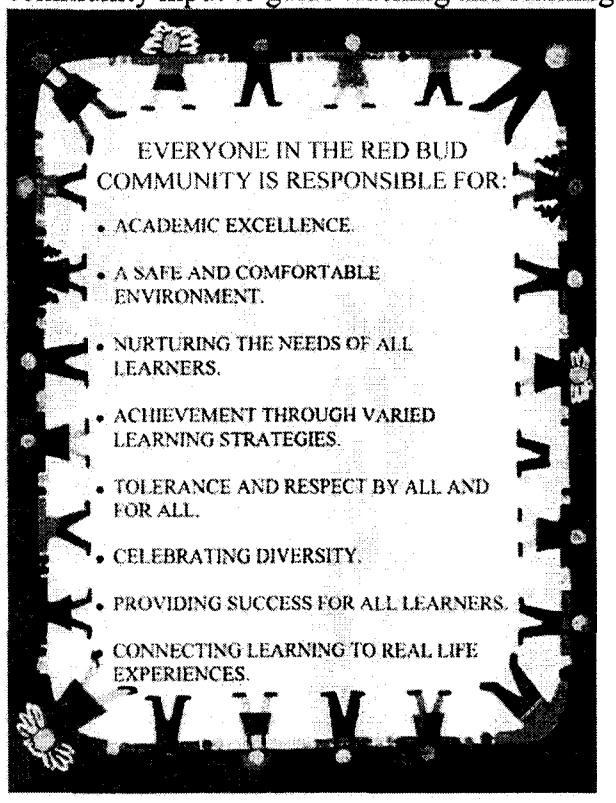
Red Bud teachers were teaching and presenting to others. They began to consider and comment on their school's facelift (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003). One penned,

> Many of the teachers...have presented at workshops at the summer and winter [network] meetings. Numerous teachers have attended self-selected workshops and conventions. The entire school benefits from this because teachers share the information with the entire faculty...reduced isolation has been very beneficial to the staff. (Red Bud, 1998)

As continuing members of the university network, Red Bud teachers participated in school site visits, attended meetings at other schools, and hosted them at Red Bud. Moving into the third year of Carrie's principalship, ideas for faculty book studies and team and all-school goals were being teacher-generated. Red Bud staff developed its own definitions of "democratic schooling," such as, "one in which everyone has an opportunity to participate and voice their opinion" or "shared leadership/communication within school/major decisions shared among...parents, faculty and students" (Red Bud, 1998). By 1998, a Red Bud teacher led the faculty, students and school community

through a process to develop a 'Covenant', which identified its core learning beliefs as shown in Figure 9, and a 'Charter', which outlined the shared governance plan, based on their understanding of Glickman's framework (1993) (Interviews, 2002; Red Bud, 1998).

Figure 9. Red Bud's covenant: renamed core learning principles developed with community input to guide teaching and learning



Source: (Red Bud, 1998).

With confidence from success evidenced in an excited group of students and improved scores on state and national standardized tests, teachers began to delve into tougher concepts, such as authentic teaching, equity issues, and service opportunities for students. They began to initiate book studies and collaborated to create portfolio assessments (Interviews, 2002; Red Bud, 1998). With increased knowledge and skills, teachers were differentiating their instruction and becoming responsive to student needs (Fieldnotes, 1999; Interviews, 2002). Student participation in school life became visible

through morning assemblies, book buddies, and activities such as family math and science night and close involvement with PTA activities (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003; Red Bud, 1998). As a result of such activities, a staff member penned, "our principal has been an active supporter of our school's participation in the democratic schools...she is constantly giving us data and research to read on current topics and issues in education" (Red Bud, 1998).

Leading From the Inside Out.

The Red Bud community held the leadership and was strong enough to withstand questions from the outside. Conflict emanated from faculty- not district-driven initiatives. During a district visit to review site goals, the teachers shared their work on the 'Charter' and 'Covenant' (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003). The district staff responded with concern about the teachers using potentially misunderstood language, such as 'covenant' and 'charter' in the greater community. (The district had been embroiled in several community battles about school practices and reforms including one over a drug prevention program and another about outcomes-based education. During those times, district personnel had become sensitive to "red-flagged" words that could be misunderstood by the public.) When district leaders confronted Carrie, she openly accepted their concerns and discussed those concerns with the teachers. She and the teachers worked together to modify the 'Charter' to fit into the district's school improvement format rather than to stand as a separate shared decision-making document while the school referred to the newly formed 'Covenant' as Core Learning Principles (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997; Red Bud, 1999).

The revised Red Bud mission statement was approved by the staff and appeared in the 1997-1998 site plan: "Red Bud Elementary School is a cooperative community that provides a secure setting for excellence in achievement, citizenship, and personal responsibility, and maintains an expectation of tolerance, respect and appreciation for all" (Red Bud, 1997-98). Carrie established goal-setting and regular meeting routines and provided feedback and support throughout the processes. Routinely, when she sensed that an individual teacher was struggling to find meaningful classroom lessons, she provided additional support and resources. She also dealt well with some teachers who resisted working as a team. One person had been a Sarah insider and chafed at being an equal among colleagues. Carrie encouraged him to self-nominate for head teacher. In so doing, Carrie successfully won over this highly talented teacher, who was then ready and willing to share his talents with other educators (Fieldnotes, 1997-2003; Interviews, 2002). Red Bud teachers were viewed as knowledgeable and were selected as network leaders on two occasions.

Opportunities to show leadership skills with others were developed multiple ways. In one instance, after teachers attended a district staff development seminar on ways in which brain research could inform teaching, Carrie invited the presenter to work with a Red Bud teacher who served on the district cadre to demonstrate an abbreviated version of the workshop for teachers and in an evening session for parents (Fieldnotes, 1999). Carrie nominated teachers for awards and promoted them among her peers (Fieldnotes, 1999).

Practices From the Inside Out.

Carrie continued to attend workshops and remained active in state administrative and community organizations. She and her fellow elementary principals continued to meet monthly and conduct book studies on topics of interest in education and leadership. Reading and discussing professional literature, especially focused on leadership literature, was a regular pastime for Carrie, and these resources served as a source of her reflective practice.

During the *Outside In* phase, Title I funds had helped to implement the newly developing community-based school. Although Red Bud had been receiving targeted assistance for several years, in 1995 the school qualified for expanded school-wide Title I services and the faculty was embraced for making decisions about how best to use the money. Carrie organized the school profiling data so that teachers could review the student testing information to determine the most pressing student needs, and the staff began to work together to develop new methods of serving the students. As a result of their work, Red Bud became a Title I distinguished school and received the state and national distinguished Title I school award designation. In the *Inside Out stage*, Carrie and the Red Bud teachers were invited to serve on state task forces and on committees that impacted other schools, districts, and networks (Red Bud, 1999).

The teachers who worked on the Title I plans and others who worked on the 'charter' and 'covenant' became communities of practice, and shared their new knowledge with the school staff. As these groups of teachers gathered information and perspectives on quality learning for students they were increasing their domain of knowledge around teaching and learning and sharing their practices. They grew as a

community as they shared their passion and purpose. New learning and a deeper commitment to each other and to the school resulted through this process. Through this work, a social structure was created for the sharing of new learning and producing change (Wenger et al., 2002). In this stage, the work was deepened and the new learning was shared with those outside of the school community.

Real participation empowered teachers who were reflective in their practice (Reitzug, 1994) and who began to develop communities of practice on their own. By design, communities of practice encouraged new leaders, built the culture and created momentum, yet the leader continued to facilitate the process so that these communities remained areas of positive energy that contributed to the whole. A specific example of how this happened at Red Bud occurred as a result of a book study of Cunningham and Allington's (1996) *Schools That Work: Where All Children Read and Write.* All teachers were provided the book to read over the summer, then in the fall, a group of teachers and the principal met to discuss the book. The group shared responsibility for leading the discussion of the various chapters over several months in open, voluntary before school sessions.

As the staff reviewed the book, they began to compare their school to the example in the book. As they discussed different examples of how schools were serving the needs of their students from the book, the teachers selected the practices that they thought might work for their students and began to investigate how they might implement an extended learning time in the mornings for students. Teachers answered questions such as: "How can we staff the project? How frequently can grade levels attend? Which activities should be available for students?" The result was a series of grade level

morning learning programs housed in the library and staffed by teachers and volunteers which has been operating since 2001. As one teacher reflected on the process, she lamented, "Our population is desperate for a restart to their day" (Fieldnotes, 2002; Interviews, 2003). Teacher leaders planned and staffed the morning extended learning time. The success from this project seeded other student intervention strategies, such as the evening parent-child opportunity for below-grade level students to work on software at their grade level. The book study example illustrated how a small group focused on a single issue, allowed ownership and leadership to emerge, created the momentum for change, and contributed to increased time for student learning.

Summary of Inside Out

Red Bud was a leader in the university network and was winning the respect of others in the district and state. Professional growth was being sought by Red Bud teachers; knowledge and information were shared across the community; and, communities of practice were impacting school change.

Red Bud as a Democratic Community

Learning, Leading and Practices Flow

Professional development was focused on student learning and was impacting students. Sharing of knowledge and information was becoming commonplace across the community of Red Bud. Examples of teacher and student leadership were beginning to bring a sense of pride and hope to the school. Learning and leading were becoming complementary processes. Communities of practice were established and impacting change within the school.

Learning Flows.

At Red Bud, job embedded staff development became the norm and involved reflective discussions of aspects of the school community. This reflective practice changed how teachers were working with students and parents (Fieldnotes, 2001; Interviews, 2002). Regularly scheduled cooperative planning meetings were held during grade level plan times and once a week faculty, team, and goal meetings were arranged to encourage dialogue with administrative business distributed in a weekly bulletin. On one visit in 2001, the researcher arrived at Red Bud early in the afternoon to attend a large-group faculty meeting. Carrie was in the library opening boxes filled with math books and resources. As teachers gathered she invited them to display the wide array of materials, including math manipulatives, dry erase boards with graphs on one side, colored blocks, balance beams, and resource texts. The teachers began to review the materials and discuss informally how they might fit them with their state/district math objectives. Carrie then commenced the meeting by checking with the teachers to determine whether or not they needed time to work on their site goals assignments. Affirming that the teachers were comfortable with their preparations for the district review team visit, Carrie moved into a discussion of the resources. To review the resources and consider how they might incorporate these materials into their lessons, the principal invited the teachers to work in grade level teams balanced with the special area teachers and report back to the entire staff at the end of the working session (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003).

On another school visit in 2002, the researcher found a teacher working on a computer in the media center and the teacher described the Internet skills she was honing

as a result of a recent staff development activity. New classroom projects were the result of her learning. She continued to explain that all of the staff development activities were meaningful because the teachers decided what was needed beforehand, helped plan them, and shared and supported the learning afterwards (Fieldnotes, 1998-2002).

Leading Flows.

Leadership was shared across the community through increased knowledge and skills and was extended to students and others. The teachers were keenly aware of how this happened. "If I look back I can see a lot of the changes since I have been at this school. The faculty has changed quite a bit," one commented. "Carrie does it in such a way that she is so positive. I want to change because I want to please her. She has never criticized me, and she should! But she makes me want to improve because she is such a good role model," another said. "She is a constructivist, but she doesn't force it on us. If Carrie makes a unilateral decision we know that it's something that just has to be done. I have learned from Carrie; the way she runs the school runs over into my classroom. I let the students make many of the decisions," a third teacher explained (Interviews, 2002).

Sharing leadership sometimes stimulated internal conflict. On one occasion, a committee of teachers decided to move a classroom, bringing together primary classrooms into the same wing of the building. One teacher complained that the decision was undemocratically made and voiced her displeasure to district officials. In an all-school faculty meeting, the issue was raised and each teacher agreed to respond in a forthright manner. When it became one educator's turn, she admitted to lodging the complaint and then revealed many of her other feelings of alienation since Sarah retired. On other occasions it was not possible to bring a teacher into the fold, and a few refused

to meet the needs of their students. Carrie documented such incidences, and when the problem became chronic, she encouraged the teacher to resign. During those instances, tensions were high at Red Bud. Some retired, while others transferred schools (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003).

Teachers continued to lead site goal teams, and with new district mandates for goal setting, the goals were more aligned to No Child Left Behind requirements. Grade level teams and site goal teams met regularly and submitted a written report after each meeting for feedback and accountability. Carrie described what she learned about goal setting in a session by Victoria Bernhardt at the National Association of Elementary School Principals' conference that really make a difference for student achievement,

> Per grade level we have narrowed the focus and matched our goals to our weaknesses. Ours have been too broad. We are using teacher generated assessments...They worked in teams and came up with a common measurement... Now [for example, in mathematics] they are teaching measurement all year, not just once. They continually look back at these areas (Interviews, 2003).

By 2000, renewal and leadership was distributed across the Red Bud community. Red Bud teachers and its principal were serving on state and district advisory committees. Carrie continued her own professional learning by meeting with the district elementary principals to study and share research and educational literature and attended state conferences. She volunteered to coach other school leaders, grant interviews and site visits from schools and community leaders interested in sponsoring various school projects. Through these efforts Carrie marketed the school to businesses and other

university alliances and brought external expertise into the building (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003). Teachers routinely reviewed school data, discussed its meaning, and annually responded with focused student achievement goals. The university network program had evolved into other reform efforts and Red Bud teachers continued some of its activities such as faculty book studies, selected to help address school needs. Grade level teachers collaborated to determine specific team actions from their goals. When the federal guidelines required improvement targets, teachers inquired about additional ways to enhance student learning, evidencing collective responsibility for all learning.

Practices Flow.

Teams met together to plan experiences for students. Instead of turning in lesson plans to the principal, teachers were developing lessons together and providing feedback to one another. The principal monitored the process for group accountability, rather than checking individual lessons (Interviews, 2003). Articles continued to be circulated in team meetings and teachers discussed their thinking either in faculty meetings or written feedback (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003).

Unfortunately, groups were not always successful in incorporating new teachers into the process of sharing learning and building shared practices. One teacher described a situation in which a new hire was having difficulty, but was unwilling to open up and accept help to address the problems. Since students in this classroom were not being adequately prepared, the teacher was not rehired after the first year at Red Bud (Fieldnotes, 2001; Interviews, 2002). The teacher went on to share that in most instances, teachers were eager to help or be helped, stating, "We jump in and say, 'I have this book or this lesson'" (Interviews, 2002) if someone was having a problem. The grade level

teams who gathered regularly to work on their goals and to share their lessons formed communities of practice.

The sense of ownership and pride about Red Bud came through, "We are very proud. It is like a community. The parents feel a part of this school; the children feel that they are important." For their 2003 year-end professional development day, thirty parents joined with the teachers to discuss ways to increase parent involvement and student achievement to meet the mandates of NCLB (Interviews, 2003). One teacher described the school community and the leadership involvement of teachers and students in this way:

> If there was something [Carrie] knew was going on that was not okay, she would do something, like if children were not being treated nicely...she would intervene, she would not allow that. As a school we are expected to set classroom rules...the kids write these...then they write their goals for the year (Interviews, 2002).

Wenger et al. (2002) described how healthy communities of practice created a rhythm for the community, moving knowledge throughout the organization. Through the processes of committee work, grade level teams and vertical teams, information flowed across the community. Small communities included grade level teams that shared practices and learning focused on addressing grade level goals with built in accountability (Fieldnotes, 2001; Interviews, 2003; Red Bud, 1995-2003;). The principal monitored and encouraged grade level teams informally and formally to review their progress and processes. They implemented numerous interventions targeted to students who were performing below grade level and these interventions yielded their high test scores and

API scores. Formal and informal processes shepherded information throughout the organization. The school's connectedness was described by a long-time teacher:

> Each classroom does not stand alone, but that we are all connected, and that the success of fifth grade relies upon what was done in kindergarten and what was done in first grade and what was done in second grade, and if there's a teacher in third having a problem, it's going to affect the kids and teachers in fifth grade and we'd better go help out and make sure this is something that doesn't happen (Interviews, 2002).

Communities of practice offered an open forum for collective inquiry and a place to explore new meanings and ask the difficult questions. Another longtime teacher described Red Bud as having, "a steady heartbeat" (Interviews, 2002).

The shared belief about the students at Red Bud allowed teachers to address student needs and interests and, in turn, to develop a school community and a community of practice within a classroom. One experienced teacher illustrated her beliefs and expectations as she spoke with pride about the students at Red Bud:

> These kids learn just as well, I believe. They want to learn just as much, if not more, than the kids that are from higher socioeconomic areas...Just because their parents are not as educated some believe that they are going to be harder to teach...in this school...these kids thirst for that knowledge (Interviews, 2002).

A third grade teacher described how she allowed student interest to drive her teaching by sharing this example from her class,

> They wanted to write this mystery, I didn't think they would get as involved in it, but they did so I got my eraser and erased [the plans in my plan book] and they are

learning probably 20 [state mandated curriculum] skills. It wasn't what I planned on doing, but they need to feel that ownership...(Interviews, 2003).

Learning, Leading and Practices Flow Summary

Red Bud's processes for learning, leading and practice began to flow as book studies and teachers' work focused on school goals and began to change school and classroom practices. Leadership was deepened and extended to students and parents. The interaction of teachers collaboratively learning was shaping their practice.

Building Community and Evolving Summary

Red Bud teachers, students, parents and school community were sharing knowledge and information among themselves and with others as they grew professionally and searched for research-based ways to support increased learning for all students. Red Bud teachers were in control of their own learning and structures existed for the sharing of knowledge and information. Teachers felt confident to successfully address mandates through supporting one another and were assisting others in the process. As the Red Bud Staff deepened their learning, the leadership began to move away from the principal and a small group of teachers. At first, this process disequilibrated the staff, then as they began to make sense of it, it later empowered them.

Teachers led the development of the school core learning principles and facilitated the development of a student pledge, while Carrie provided support when requested (Field notes, 1997-2003). Teachers were recognized for their contributions and encouraged to share their expertise. For example, Carrie noticed a fifth grade teacher involving students in setting benchmarks and gauging their progress and invited her to present these strategies to her colleagues. Learning, leading and communities of practice

were converging to create a community with a steady rhythm for the support of democracy, social justice and increased learning.

A Living Democracy at Red Bud

As a university network member, the Red Bud faculty was introduced to the IDEALS (O'Hair, et al., 2000), and by 2001, had integrated them throughout the school. The IDEALS provided processes that supported shared learning, leading and practices across the community. The first section of this chapter described how these processes evolved through four stages. This section of the chapter described examples of each of the IDEALS in practice that contributed to Red Bud being a living democracy.

Inquiry and Discourse

The theme *the learning, leading and practices flows* described an evolving democratic community as indicated in the IDEALS literature (O'Hair et al.., 2000). Through *Inquiry* and *Discourse*, community members reviewed and analyzed data to find strengths and weaknesses and determine which students might need additional support. In repeated observations within classrooms, hallways, and the teachers' lounge, the researcher noted that the staff regularly posed questions, although worded differently, that were similar to: "What is best for our students?" Teachers based their discussions and answers on core principles, developing a collective sense about the students and their learning. Under the previous leader, such dialogue had often focused around topics such as discipline. But now it had moved beyond discipline to practices that had the potential to impact student learning and teachers' understanding of differentiated learning (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003; Interviews, 2002).

Red Bud teachers knew and acknowledged students who were not in their classroom or grade and interacted with them. A teacher explained that Carrie was "a strong believer in what is best for our children should come first...she will say these are my expectations...if you have a problem with a child you can't stick the child in the corner and pretend they don't exist, you need to suck it up and work it out..." (Interviews, 2002). Another teacher described her initial reaction to faculty meetings as, "I was really intimidated at our faculty meetings. We had some really strong personalities and they came out...defensive with one another, issues around reading...but she [Carrie] worked very hard on having the faculty respect one another. Discourse did continue to stimulate internal conflicts between what teachers knew they should be doing and what they were not doing adequately, as one teacher expressed, "we are not having as many conversations about student work...we have to work to have conversations about what's important...we challenge each other" (Interviews, 2003).

Equity

After opening up *Inquiry* and *Discourse* around tough issues, issues of *Equity* were addressed. Despite the rare failures, *Equity*, having participatory roles in decision-making, became crucial at Red Bud (O'Hair, et al.., 2000). Although diversity among the staff members had failed in some respects to mirror the larger community, school-hiring practices had been expanded to search specifically for those who welcomed teaching a multicultural group of youngsters. Faculty and other staff members had been included in the hiring process. On other occasions, all teachers were openly invited to attend team leader meetings held in the media center. Carrie and the teacher's colleagues all accepted, and even expected, this inclusion (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003).

By the turn of the 21st Century, the curriculum included multicultural themes and literature in addition to regularly scheduled events. Parents of students who hailed from over twenty different countries with non-English home languages were involved (Red Bud Notebook, 2001). A few parents were suspicious of Red Bud teachers' strong sense of efficacy, feeling perhaps, their power to influence their child's teacher diminished. For the most part, parents felt welcomed and were involved. The parent teacher association membership focused on parents' personal growth and developed an understanding of the school's vision and how it was translated into action (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003). As a result, a Middle Eastern parent asked for permission to present a slide show at an all-school International fair. In the slide show he highlighted historical sites that included Islamic, Jewish, and Christian cultures because he was dedicated to promoting peace and understanding in the Red Bud community. During the event, the area was filled with children and adults from various ethnicities engaging in friendly dialogue. A business partner representative served food beside teachers and parents. The event was a microcosm of the productivity in the school, not an activity multiculturalists described as token (Bennett, 1999; Fieldnotes, 1997-2003).

Authenticity

Moving towards *Authenticity* occurred within the context of opening up practices and encouraging action. A focus on *Authentic* teaching, learning, and assessment deepened participation and lead to enhanced learning for everyone involved and was apparent at Red Bud by the late 1990s (O'Hair, et al., 2000). Classroom activities included a range of activities from traditional (spelling and other paper-and-pencil tests) to authentic (real-world based and group projects). In increasing numbers, university

students were solicited as tutors to assist pupils. On a typical day in 2002, when visiting classrooms as part of the walk-through structure (Downey & Frase, 2001), students were engaged in learning centers, using the computers, working in small groups and completing math assignments from a textbook. In eight of the nineteen classrooms, one or more computers were integrated into the lesson. In one setting computers comprised a learning center to practice math, in another classroom students were searching for resources from approved Internet sites to complete classroom projects and prepare power point presentations. Ten out of the nineteen classes were working either in learning centers or in small groups. In three of the classrooms a teacher leading the activity or discussion was observed; in four others students were working on group projects; and in two, students were working individually to complete assignments from the math textbook. Six out of the nineteen classrooms were engaged in authentic tasks or assessments (Fieldnotes, 1998-2003). One third-grade classroom revealed pairs of students performing plays they had created to re-enact what they had learned from their study of Africa.

Leadership and Service

Sharing information and ideas, engaging in *authentic* practices, and learning through *inquiry* and *discourse* had built *Leadership* and *Service* at Red Bud (Lambert, 1998). Teachers and students served as leaders. Teachers led their grade level meetings, provided peer professional development, served as committee chairs, and conducted action research on their goals. Student leadership was also quite evident by the year 2000. With teacher guidance students led the morning assembly, and designated student leadership roles rotated among grades one through five and within classrooms. Students

conducted regular class meetings to address issues of peer mediation, rotating as peer mediators. Student council was active in sharing ideas with the faculty leadership council, creating a Red Bud pledge recited during the morning assembly (Fieldnotes, 1998-2002). An action research *Service* project was initiated after third grade students visited a nearby park and pond, home to many ducks. Students were so disturbed by the amount of trash and debris in the duck's habitat that they decided to address the deplorable conditions. With teacher guidance the students returned to school and investigated the issue. The students contacted a volunteer organization that managed the park and in a class meeting the students decided to submit their questions to the volunteer group. After completing their research on the habitats best suited for ducks and other park animals, students organized an afternoon of cleaning up the park and pond. Red Bud third grade students celebrated by inviting everyone who helped accomplish their cleaning up the park mission to a picnic at the park (Fieldnotes, 2002; Red Bud Notebook, 1999).

Being a contributing member of a community and providing opportunities for construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry through authentic experiences were these young leaders' trademark (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Similar to other schools that promoted a strong focus on student needs, a culture of learning, and shared decision making with democratic processes (Fullan, 2003; Wood, 1992; Joyce, Calhoun & Hopkins, 1999), Red Bud developed into a democratic learning community that supported increased learning.

In addition Red Bud supported involvement of community members. When the researcher attended a 2002 year end faculty meeting, teachers who were planning the next

year's lunch schedule, invited the cafeteria staff to attend and share in the planning process. Besides being a supportive environment for students and for personnel, Red Bud possessed "family" atmosphere that served and nurtured its community members in time of need. "When there are problems in my life, everyone gathers around and helps me out," a teacher commented. Another repeated that when one teacher's son was in a car wreck, everyone was at the hospital and ready to take her classes. "People ask me why I don't move to Chesterton, where my parents live, another faculty member said, and I say, 'my support system is here'." Another teacher explained, "Each classroom does not stand alone. We are all connected...There are no secrets. We know what's going on and what each person needs...And we make mistakes, and no one holds a grudge" (Interviews, 2002).

Summary

Red Bud actively pursued democracy, by incorporating the IDEALS that they had learned from the university-school network into the life of the school. They created a support system that nourished and supported the on-going experiment with the living democracy.

Chapter Summary

This chapter was divided into two parts. The first part delineated the four stages of learning, leadership and practices: (a) *Isolated Pockets*; (b) *Outside In*; (c) *Inside Out*; and, (d) *Flows*. This section demonstrated how theses processes of learning and leadership combined to create communities of practice which supported the evolution of community. The communities of practice provided the conjoining that led to a passion for student learning and knowledge about how to support increased student learning.

These stages described how the school changed from a traditional school to a community to a democratic community. The second part of the chapter explained the characteristics of a living democracy that existed at the end of the fourth stage of the evolutionary process through the flow of learning, leading and communities of practice.

CHAPTER 6

Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter the findings were linked to the interpretive framework. How Red Bud moved through four distinct stages to transform from a traditional school to a professional learning community through learning, leading, and development of communities of practice and with the outside assistance of a university-school network was explained. The significance of the study and implications for educational leadership were proposed. Possible future areas for research were suggested.

Evolving Through Learning, Leadership and Practices

The transformation of Red Bud from a traditional school, to a professional learning community, then to a democratic community based on the IDEALS was explained. The links between learning, leading and practices demonstrated the building of the foundation for a living democracy and increased student learning.

Traditional Schooling with Learning and Leading In Isolated Pockets

In traditional schools there was not a collective sense of purpose or structures for collaboration, shared practice or increased participation for stakeholders. Evidence showed that Red Bud existed as a traditional school through the 1970s and 1980s. In the last half of the 1980s the district leaders began to apply pressure for school leaders to promote shared goals and structures for shared learning, still Red Bud seemed stuck in traditional leadership with closed doors to the new emphasis on teacher learning and shared leadership. Red Bud norms held tight to the status quo and power rested with a selected few. With the leader and teachers possessing a limited skill set to promote new

strategies, few changes gained ground at Red Bud. By 1990, as Red Bud staff watched other schools change, they began to attempt isolated improvements. Those attempts created little advancement because the learning remained in *Isolated Pockets* and structures and conditions to move the learning across the community did not exist. Leadership remained in the main office and was shared mostly with selected power brokers. The leader remained a manager and did not begin the shared collaboration with the staff. In fact, she unwittingly performed acts that sabotaged the efforts, such as requesting various staff to leave an inservice on team building to fulfill managerial duties (Fieldnotes, 1986-1997). With only rudimentary structures for shared learning, shared leadership and communities of practice were not evident. The *Isolated Pockets* stage of Red Bud's development corresponded to characteristics of conventional schools (Darling-Hammond, 1997; O'Hair et al., 2000). Although attempts were made to change through goal-setting and creating a school vision, the event that allowed Red Bud to change from a conventional school to a professional learning community was a new principal with a new set of skills and beliefs about schools and students.

Building Communities Through Learning, Leadership and Practices

Recent school reform efforts suggested that organizational and structural characteristics of schools showed positive results for student learning through increased teacher collaboration and the creation of a climate for learning (Crowley & Meehan, 2002; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Lee et al., 1996; Schwartz, 2000; Smith et al., 2001). These studies added credence to earlier findings (Hord, 1997; Joyce & Calhoun, 1996; Joyce et al., 1999; Louis et al, 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995) about increased learning and indicated that professional learning communities provided hope for narrowing the

achievement gap. The two middle stages of evolution of the Red Bud community, *Outside In* and *Inside Out*, represented the professional learning community component as described by O'Hair et al. (2000) and was similar to other researchers' definition of a professional learning community (Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002; Hord, 1997).

Outside In.

At first, in the *Outside In* stage, the locus of control for learning and leadership was a function of the leader and external entities, including the network and the district. Even with questioning of external mandates and potential saboteurs of the new processes, the network took hold and the school began a rapid change process. As shown in Figure 12, this deep questioning and inquiry suggested a new step in the process of moving from a conventional school to a professional learning community as presented by O'Hair et al. (2000). The questioning and inquiry at Red Bud was intense. Teachers were suspicious of outsiders and responded accordingly. This questioning accelerated the change process at Red Bud when the principal accepted the questioning and allowed the inquiry and discourse to fuel new learning. The beliefs and knowledge of the new leader, the participation in the network, and district support for school changes fostered teacher learning. Even with deep inquiry and heated discussion, the innovative principal held high the teachers' and students' dignity as a guiding principle. The network afforded increased opportunities for teacher learning and allowed Red Bud teachers to see additional perspectives of schooling than they had previously seen. The fast pace of Red Bud's learning catapulted the school into a leadership role within the network, which in turn, deepened the teachers' learning across Red Bud. Teachers allowed students to develop their own classroom rules. A morning assembly was added (after much

questioning and heated discussions among the faculty) in which students participated and presented with their classmates. The change in the locus of control for the staff was fortressed by the development of a shared vision and teacher responsibility for their grade level goals that marked the onset of the integration of communities of practice into the school culture. Working together in the creation of a shared vision and the meaning of democratic school coalesced the group. The Title I school-wide review process was transforming and the beginning of the development of Red Bud's covenant and charter created additional momentum to thrust the community into its next stage.

With the enhancement of learning and feeling of confidence resulting from the learning within the network and shared responsibility for small group learning at the school, the locus of control for learning shifted to the *Inside Out*. The staff had a clear purpose and was able to judge outside influences against its purpose and goals. The teachers' and students' dignity remained a guiding principle within the community. Teachers became increasingly reflective and staff development more job-embedded, peer-to-peer, and systemic. Teachers were in control of their own learning and were decision-makers about how to integrate the new learning into their school and classrooms. Leadership was becoming stretched across the community and teachers viewed themselves as possessing the power to establish their own course, within the parameters of their mission and goals. Routines were established that supported shared learning and communities of practice.

In this stage, Red Bud staff was trying out its newly learned skills and sharing what they were learning with others, especially through the network. Supported in their efforts to try new things and venture out, Red Bud staff began to make presentations at

conferences and meetings. The teachers were becoming empowered and the school was becoming more autonomous from the district, structures that supported a professional learning community as suggested by Kruse et al. (1994). The site visit incident in which district officials questioned the language of covenant used to describe the product demonstrated the struggle for autonomy.

Inside Out.

During the *Inside Out* stage, learning was applied to classroom practices as teachers struggled with how best to serve students. The teachers were being nurtured in their learning and beginning to nurture the learning of their diverse population of students. As members of the Red Bud community deepened their learning and experimented with their new voices, leadership roles were being stretched and shared across the community.

Teachers learned new ways to discipline and support students. A commitment to service learning and increased mechanisms for student leadership were further evidence of a more evolved school. Job-embedded staff development and open dialogue, symbolic of a developing democratic learning community, encouraged school growth that was free flowing and focused on students' needs. In the *Inside Out* stage, the event that bolstered the community growth and moved them into the next stage was the development of successful communities of practice, i.e., the book study that created the morning program for students.

Building a Democratic Community Through Learning, Leadership and Practices

Red Bud was transformed into a democratic learning community as participation broadened. Community and parents were invited to join with teachers to provide a

supportive learning environment. Authentic and democratic experiences were availed to students and families alike as they developed a collective identity, examined issues of equity, and served others (O'Hair et al., 2000). Achievement increased, creating a high-achieving school.

Flows.

The final stage of evolution at Red Bud was called *Flows* and described a state of ongoing learning, facing of new challenges, and adapting to the complexity and change from school reculturing. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) explained that flow "can transform a routine job into one that makes a difference" (p.48). Red Bud's mission nurtured flow and allowed knowledge and information to create flow across the school. Reflective practice was common place. Teacher learning and leadership were reciprocal within communities of practice.

Communities of practice were nurturing learning and generating new practices and knowledge through being shared both explicitly and tacitly. Buoyed by the work of the community of practice that developed such student-centered practices as the morning program, community members sought additional strategies to support the learning of all students. Accommodations were made for the diversity of the learner, responding to their needs, rather than the needs of the adults. Authentic teaching, learning and assessment provided deeper learning for students.

Leadership was distributed across the community. Teachers were presenting for peers across the nation and state, as well as for each other. Teachers planned professional development and were responsible for grants and programs, with accountability to their colleagues. Parents were meaningfully involved in the community and were supported

through the addition of a parent liaison funded through Title I funds. Students led assemblies, set learning goals, produced works that they shared with their colleagues and served on a leadership team.

Shared decisions were derived from reviewing school data and on the regularly revisited and communicated shared vision and core learning principles. A sense of collective responsibility and collective accountability for each student's learning fostered connections across the school community. Regular on-going job-embedded staff development and investigation of research-based practices informed the community of learners; sharing and reflecting on practices sustained the collegial relationships within the communities of practice. These foundational processes served them well when faced with new mandates and policies.

The community responded to the mandates with heightened concern, but met the challenge by adapting their practices to incorporate the new requirements. With new mandates, came new challenges and the staff worried about its ability to address and incorporate the new requirements. Although this high functioning staff did worry, they were able to successfully meet the NCLB challenge as evidenced by their 2003 test scores (see Figures 6 and 7) and examples of the living democracy at Red Bud.

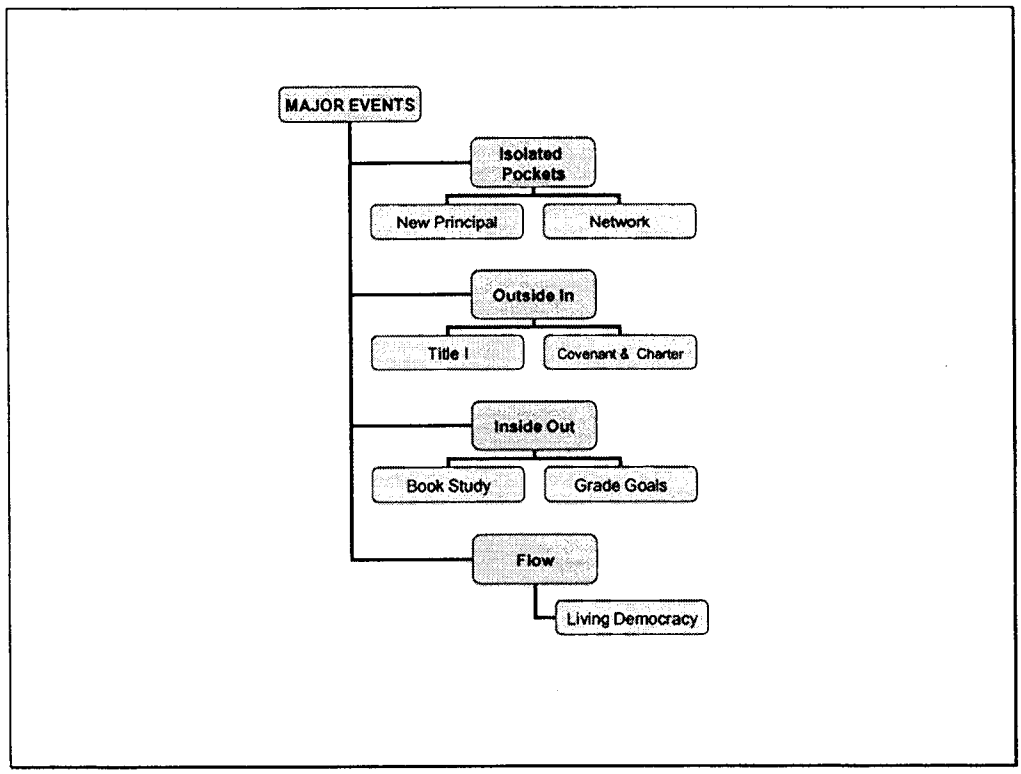
A Living Democracy.

Through the network, Red Bud staff studied democratic schools and the IDEALS. In 1989, Sergiovanni suggested that schools develop a covenant to focus on its purpose. Glickman (1993) built on Sergiovanni's work and proposed that schools adopt three strategies to further democracy in schools: create a covenant of learning principles; produce a decision making charter; and, conduct critical studies. The teacher-led work

on the Red Bud covenant moved their vision and mission inside the school and classrooms and gave a foundation upon which to base decisions and actions. Furman and Shields (2003) explained how the participation in democratic processes, the ongoing communication about the democratic processes, and cross-cultural cooperation around the democratic processes solidified the democratic principles into the culture of the school and this happened as the covenant and charter were developed at Red Bud. These processes continued and deepened as the vision was revisited and school decisions were revised.

Lappe and DuBois (1994) described requirements of a living democracy. These requirements included: enabling relationships, with a commensurate expansion of power tempered by self-interest, embedded in the common good; and, opportunities to experience democracy through discourse, diversity and conflict, listening, judging and reflecting. Relationships were enabled and opportunities to experience democracy were advanced through the communities of practice that functioned at Red Bud. Each community of practice provided self-governance within the boundaries of the larger charter of the learning community. Accountability and feedback loops served as regulatory systems for the communities of practice. In addition to the work on the covenant, examples of a living democracy were provided in the book studies and through the 30-strong parent participation in the in-service to name a few. As shown in Figure 10, major events within each stage facilitated the movement from between stages. These major events provided the impetus for the changing the locus of control as the system evolved. Although these events were portrayed in a linear design, they occurred as non-linear perturbations across the community, and sometimes in synergy with other events.

Figure 10. Major events that created momentum and moved Red Bud to another stage: Moving to Flow: A linear representation of the non-linear complex process of school renewal.

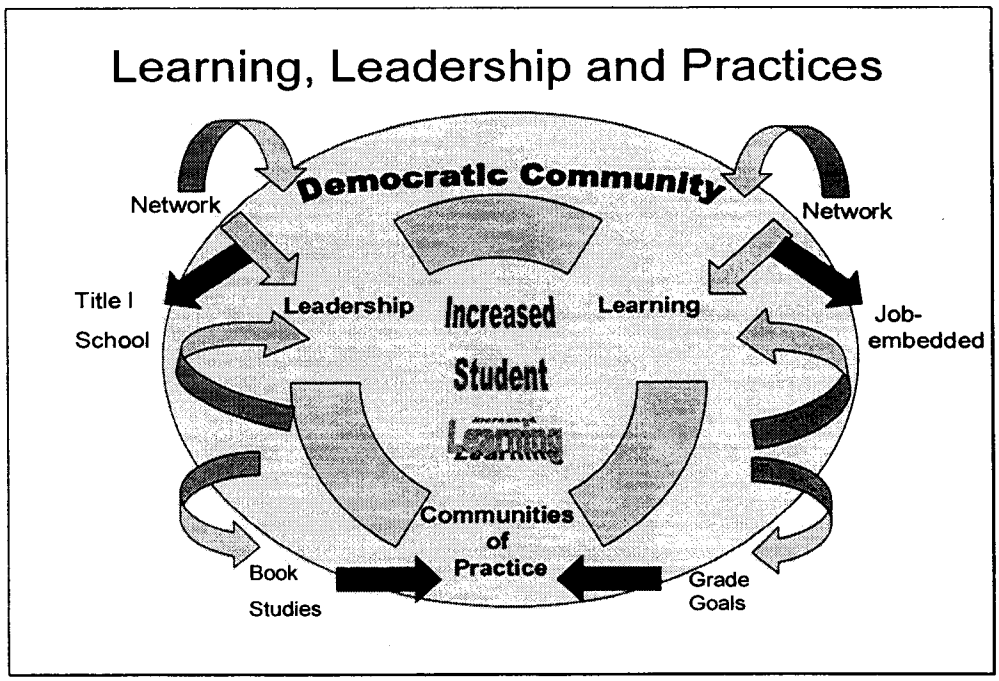


Learning and Leadership Impacted Evolution

Learning and leadership worked together to impact the evolution of the school community. Distributed leadership was reciprocal with the process of learning. Learning together transformed into leading together when learners reflected critically on the experiences of their school and its students and experienced the rich discourse about their meaning. Leadership was expanded and teacher leaders interacted with the community, creating a web of leadership. As leadership expanded to include parents and the community, democratic principles transpired into more school processes and procedures, diffusing into the interactions with students. Issues of equity were addressed as the school collectively sought to serve the community. Democracy permeated the school and

the members of the community continued to consider additional ways to embed the dynamic of democratic IDEALS (O'Hair et al., 2000). As shown in Figure 12, multiple influences and interrelationships created the evolution of Red Bud through learning, leadership and communities of practice.

Figure 11: Representation of the relationships among learning, leadership and practices



Source: Cate, J. (2004)

Communities of Practice Impacted Evolution

Learning and leadership within a school community were the focus of other studies and they were interdependent with communities of practice in schools. Creation of multiple communities of practice facilitated the learning of both explicit and tacit knowledge across the Red Bud community and supported conditions that encouraged the use of new strategies for addressing students' learning needs. Printy (2004) suggested that "participation in productive communities of practice appears critical to the ability of a faculty to capitalize on members' knowledge, and to improve, adapt, their instructional

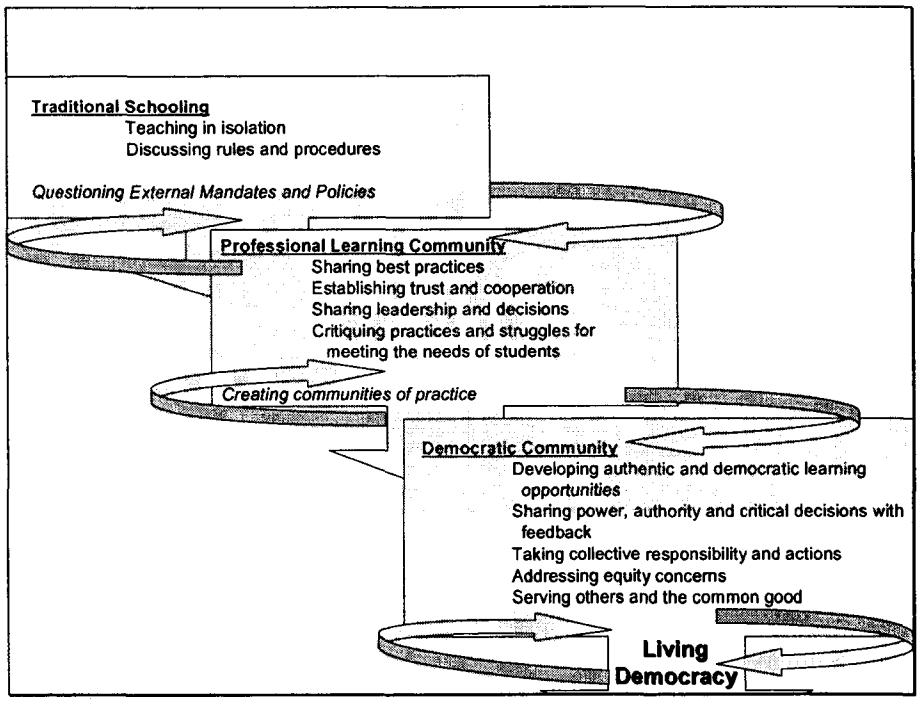
practices" (p. 23) and this study supported those findings. Through the grade level communities of practice teachers learned new strategies, analyzed how their learning fit with their current classroom strategies and adapted them to address student needs.

Communities of practice created new opportunities for learning and leading. Through book studies, site goal teams, grade level planning and vertical teams led by teachers, teachers' skills and knowledge were increased approximating Lambert's (2003) level four schools with high degrees of skill and high degrees of participation. As teachers learned from others, both externally and internally, their understanding of students' needs and how to meet those needs was enhanced as was their openness to inquiring about their practices to address those needs. Through these practices, leadership capacity was built.

The leader was open to new learning and risk-taking, judiciously applying pressure and support to the fledgling communities of practice, until the members were skillful enough to gain control of their own learning. She developed mechanisms for the learning from within the various communities of practice to be shared with the whole, which served to open up the individual work of each community of practice. The school leader created conditions and support structures that built leadership capacity and distributed leadership (Spillane et al., 1999) through the development of communities of practice among teachers (Wenger, 1998). These communities of practice facilitated the sharing of explicit and tacit knowledge and learning (Nonaka, 1994) based on their common commitment to addressing the emotional and academic needs of Red Bud students. Communities of practice through focused goal setting, increased teacher learning, sharing, and distributed leadership fostered the evolution of a high-achieving

democratic learning community. On the continuum of practices in moving from conventional schooling to a democratic community (OHair et al., 2000), communities of practice established a cycle between "critiquing struggles and practices" and "developing authentic and democratic practices," (p. 57) that created a synergism for deep learning and application of that learning (see Figure 12). Communities of practice explained *how* the change occurred.

Figure 12. Moving from traditional schooling to a learning community to a democratic community with the questioning phase and communities of practice



Source: Adapted from O'Hair, et al. (2000).

Communities of practice were embedded within the learning community. As shown in Table 2, these communities of practice held self-similar characteristics of the larger democratic learning community and contributed to a complex adaptive system (Fullan, 2003). Fullan suggested that powerful social attractors support individuals through change and afford support mechanisms when faced with external mandates, such

as NCLB. The learning within the multiple communities of practice was coordinated throughout the learning community creating a coherent system. The communities of practice were self-similar, creating recursive patterns and diffusing new knowledge throughout the process (Wheatley, 1999). The equilibrium created in a well-functioning, adaptive community produced flow. As shown in Figure 14, communities of practice converged within the system to build coherence. As the communities of practice were, so was the learning system and as the learning system was, so were the communities of practice. For each facet of the learning community, there existed a comparable aspect of the communities of practice. The learning community produced changes within the organization to support student learning, while the reflective nature of the communities of practice created conditions for changes in practice in individuals for supporting student learning. See Table 2.

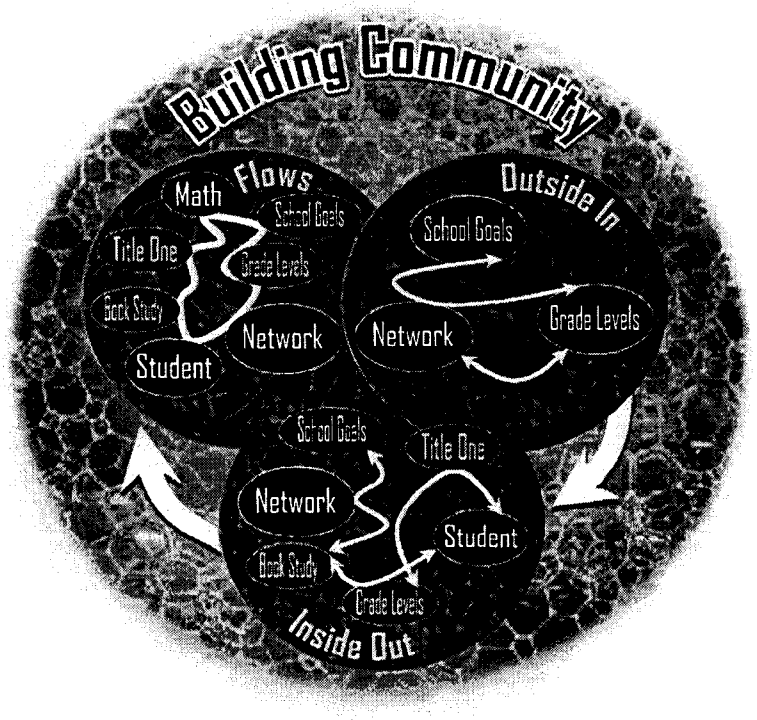
Table 2

Comparison of self-similarity between schools as learning communities and the communities of practice which comprise the learning community

LEARNING COMMUNITIES	COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE
Shared values and vision	**Domain of knowledge or shared purpose**
Shared personal practices	**Common practice**
Peer review and feedback	**Peer interaction forms a bond**
Supportive conditions	*Value times, set routines and plan interactions*
Supportive and shared leadership	*Involve and support each other*
Hord, 1997	**Wenger, 1998**
Change organizations	Change individuals

As the school organization changed from a learning community with several communities of practice to a democratic learning community with multiple inter-related communities of practice, an increased ability to address challenges was generated. During the *Outside In* stage, individual communities of practice included a leadership team, grade level teams, a technology committee, and Title I planning group, that worked independently. As the Red Bud community, took control of their own learning and planning in the *Inside Out* stage, multiple communities of practice worked together and began to among each other. During the stage of *Flows,* the community was comprised of multiple communities of practice that coordinated knowledge, built coherence and facilitated change throughout the communities. This inter-related web allowed the non-linear, complex organization to adjust as to outside influences and external mandates. See Figure 13.

Figure 13. From individual communities of practice to a coordinated democratic learning community.



Changes in Conditions Increased Learning for All

With increased pressure for results in student learning coupled with increased demands for environments that support and nurture students' emotional well-being, the challenges for public schools were mounting. The achievement gap between rich and poor, ethnic minority and majority continued to defy reform efforts across the nation. Traditional schools seemed to harness students in the gaps as they existed. Educators continued to search for mechanisms that could support both the emotional health and the learning needs of students. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) indicated that improved student learning occurred when schools were organized as learning communities as did others (Hord, 1997; Joyce & Calhoun, 1996; Joyce et al., 1999; Louis et al., 1996).

The entire democratic community of Red Bud was committed to increasing learning opportunities that met the needs of the individual students. This included additional support and strategies for reading, reorganizing Title I resources and teachers, changing how technology was used, changing practices with non-English language students, staying abreast of research and best practices through reading and studying, attending conferences, working on curriculum and instruction, setting goals for teachers and students, i.e., Strategic and specific Measurable Attainable Results-oriented Time-bound and targeted (SMART) goals (Eaker et al., 2002), attendance goals, morning learning program, evening parent-child sessions, providing opportunities for parents to learn and for their meaningful participation, and student intervention work, to name a few. Red Bud was a community dedicated to working together to provide systemic support for learning at all levels and for all community members and focused on the

Table 3

Characteristics for Learning, Leadership, Practices and Student Learning for Each Stage in the Continuum of Moving from a Traditional School to a Democratic Community

Learning for Teachers

Isolated Pockets

Viewed and occurred as a requirement

Outside In

Questioned and investigated network

Attended network and other conferences and shared with others

Inside Out

Self-selected learning opportunities and shared with others

Led learning for others

Flows

Planned and presented professional development at school

Worked in small interest groups to learn more

Teacher Leadership

Isolated Pockets

Principal and a select group of teachers made decisions and focused on rules

Outside In

Principal established structures for sharing leadership

Network facilitated the sharing of leadership and building of leadership skills

Inside Out

Teacher accepted leadership roles in the network and at Red Bud

Teachers shared decisions and leadership skills were built

Flows

Leadership arose as needed with shared responsibility for grants and programs

Teacher Communities of Practice

Isolated Pockets

Did not exist at Red Bud

Outside In

Began with voluntary groups and with network

Inside Out

Organized around group goals and book studies

Flows

Self-initiated and organized as interests or needs arose

Changes that Impacted Students

Isolated Pockets

Students treated alike and teachers worked alone to intervene

Outside In

Standard for student treatment established and intervention training provided

Inside Out

Students afforded leadership opportunities

Teachers held a collective responsibility for student learning

Flows

Students democratically engaged and capable community members

results for all students. Red Bud nurtured the emotional and academic side of students by schooling them in a living democracy. A summary of the characteristics for learning, leadership and practices and the changes that impacted student learning in each stage was depicted by Table 3.

New mandates were creating new challenges for the school and the public was holding schools accountable for student learning (Elmore, 2000). School leaders, principals, teacher leaders and others at Red Bud continued to struggle to make sense of the increased challenges. They had produced high test scores, but there was an undercurrent with changes they were experiencing at the district level, at the state level, and at the federal level. The politics of accountability were impacting their classrooms and the school in a very real way, bringing new challenges to schools. Recently, a teacher leader bemoaned the impact of the mandate stating, "the mandates we can deal with, it is the overall philosophy that is not congruent with what we learned" (Interviews, 2003).

Effective leaders strived to build coherence to fit initiatives into the context of their school, understand change, build knowledge, build relationships, within the frame of a moral purpose (Fullan, 2001) and No Child Left Behind challenged Red Bud to create a high-achieving school that fostered learning for all students. Red Bud was meeting the challenge and nurturing their students in learning and leading for a democracy, but democracy was messy and required constant tending.

Red Bud functioned as a democratic community with leadership spread across its members, reaching out to the community and including students (Spillane et al., 1999). Communities of practice nurtured the learning and leading throughout the community

(Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice focused on the needs of students. Red Bud nurtured learning of all members of the community through meaningful involvement in learning about democracy and in practicing democracy. Through a mix of authentic and traditional teaching, student achievement improved. Thus, Red Bud became an example of what Kati Haycock (2001) described as a school that had closed the gap and provided a model for others to follow and adapt.

Although Red Bud's classroom practices moved along a continuum from traditional to authentic, by no means had Red Bud become a school dedicated solely to constructivist education and authentic pedagogy. But this merely indicated its democratic nature, reflecting how the interactions of state, district and school processes each contributed to the school community's evolution. The result was a school, communally judged how best to serve its students and patrons. If Red Bud remained true to its democratic nature, it will never remain the same.

Implications for Educational Leadership

School leadership studies (Copeland, 2002; Cotton, 2003 Waters et al., 2003) suggested several means through which schools increased student learning and decreased the achievement gap. Learning communities in which leadership was distributed across the community (Spillane et al., 1999) created conditions that nurtured new strategies for addressing students' learning needs. In traditional schools leadership resided in the principal's office. Leadership was applied to manage facilities and schedules and to set routines, rules and regulations, not for teaching and learning. In this hierarchy, teachers were dependent on the school leader and the students were dependent on the teachers.

Murphy (2002) proposed that social justice, school improvement, and democratic community were themes around which reculturing school administration could occur. To this reculturing proposal Murphy (2002) applied the metaphors of *moral steward*, *educator* and *community builder* to leadership and these metaphors fit Red Bud's leader as well as others in the community with whom she shared the leadership. As Red Bud restructured to become a professional learning community, the role of the principal and teacher leaders was to nurture learning, keep the focus and build community. From the outset of her tenure, Red Bud's principal based decisions on her strong belief about the capability of the individual, creating situations for teachers to learn and confronting teachers who harshly disciplined and yelled at students. Through the increased opportunity for learning through the network, teachers were becoming more independent. The principal established small group meeting times, provided feedback mechanisms for accountability, and shared the learning with the entire community. As the community progressed as a learning community, the Red Bud principal's role was to facilitate the making of connections between their learning and school practices so that the knowledge of the entire community was enhanced. As the community progressed, teachers became more independent and the principal was required to facilitate cross-community communication, continue to focus on the school mission, find additional resources to support their new practices, and advocate for the teachers and the school, even against the district if the situation required.

The communities of practice theory suggested that the leader was instrumental in providing structures for the communities to commence, accountability and feedback systems to monitor the direction of the communities, and flexibility to progress through

the stages of development as an individual community. The leader also had to nurture the leader of each of the communities of practice for the vitality of the community leader was essential to the success of the community (Wenger et al., 2002). This leadership required differing skills in the early stages of community development, the potential and coalescing stages, than it did in the maturing stages of development (Wenger et al., 2002). As well as managing the information flow into and from communities of practice, the leader had to manage the possible community disorders throughout the process. Wenger et al. described the temptations of ownership and boundaries and the liabilities of rigidity and complexity. For communities of practice to be effective, the leader must manage these potential temptations and liabilities in the midst of complexity. Wenger et al. stated, "Communities can be instruments of agility in the face of change just as they can be sources of inertia" (p. 159). Carrie questioned the status quo, asking: how can we better meet the needs of our diverse population? Through challenging and supporting, she encouraged the communities to do likewise.

In a democratic learning community, the role of the Red Bud principal became more complex in that an interdependent web provided the foundation of the community. Murphy's (2002) metaphors suggested: (a) *moral stewardship* with a deep understanding and commitment to a common good coupled with skills and knowledge to steward it when confronted with many challenges; (b) *educator* with a theory base for student learning that allowed the leader to support and nurture teachers as they changed their practice and required a knowledge of adult learning to facilitate the learning process through building confidence, i.e., the principal was the lead learner; (c) *community builder* with a principal open in her own practices, inviting to others, even when they

held different opinions or ideas, and who could connect the multiple relationships and initiatives to build coherence (Fullan, 2002).

With added complexity created by the messiness of the democratic learning community, a continuum of leadership development was required. The mature school leader continued to learn and reflect both with other leaders and with the community. An effective leader understood the paradox of understanding and accepting complexity and ambiguity, and of relying on simple principles of leadership, such as focused on shared vision, shared values, common purpose (Fullan, 2003; O'Hair et al., 2000; Wheatley, 1999). A continuum of leadership development that ranged from pre-service, internship, entry year, first three years, five years, and in increments of five years thereafter was suggested by these findings. Experiences that allowed for near-transfer and job-embedded learning with supportive networks were also suggested. The study suggested that leaders need to understand (a) learning and professional development standards; (b) leadership standards and distributed leadership, and (c) democracy's role in schools. Lastly, the study suggested that leaders should possess the skills, knowledge and dispositions for establishing, nurturing and maintaining communities of practice, since evidence showed that they served as a supportive mechanism within a democratic community.

Significance of the Study

With public scrutiny focused on schools and the negative press about school failures (Berliner & Biddle, 1996), cases of successful schools that analyzed the methods for creating high-achieving schools were needed. With the NCLB mandates, requiring adequate yearly progress for all schools, understanding how a school changed into high-

achieving schools can add to the current knowledge and help to build theory and inform leadership practices. Elmore (2003) stated, "The best solution to the problems of NCLB, in the short term and the long term, is to focus state, local and school resources and effort on the development of strong theories and practices of school improvement" (p. 9). Elmore (2003) lamented the weak knowledge base for how to turn failing schools around and how to sustain the progress. Furman and Shields (2003) proposed a research agenda for answering the question: "How can educational leaders promote and support social justice and democratic community in schools?" (p.5), but suggested that democratic community was an illusive concept. This study addressed the issue of democratic community and how it functioned and evolved into a high-achieving community with democratic orientations.

This study applied the theory of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) to demonstrate how these communities of practice within the elementary school developed leadership capacity of the stakeholders, leading to a more distributed leadership (Spillane et al., 1999) and transformed the organization into a high-achieving school with a collective responsibility for learning for all students. Applying this theory to turning around failing schools can add new insights that can be further investigated and, if the pattern becomes generalizable, applied to the theoretical models of school renewal that could be studied as a part of a pre-service school leadership program.

This case study was significant in that it analyzed the processes of learning and leadership flows over 17 years, revealing the interrelationships within the school community and proposing a theory of evolution for a professional learning community struggling to create a living democracy. The study provided additional diagnosis of the

process through which a school transformed from a traditional school, to a professional learning community that was striving to practice the IDEALS of democracy (O'Hair et al., 2000). The study analyzed the interrelationship of the roles of learning and building of leadership capacity. Few studies had previously applied the theory of communities of practice in the school setting. This study documented instances of communities of practices, how they worked and their results.

The study combined the Murphy (2002) metaphors for leadership and the Spillane et al. (1999) distributed leadership theory of the practice of leadership. This combination of leadership theory supported the deepening of understanding of the roles, acts, and practices of leadership. To this deepened perspective of leadership was added the concept of communities of practice as a means to transform learning and leadership within a community. With the application of the theory of communities of practice to leadership theory, another set of multiple lenses through which to understand the complexities of school leadership for change emerged.

Implications for Future Research

Wenger et al. (2002) discussed the challenges of distributed communities as they related to distance, yet many of these challenges were apparent even in the local communities of practice. These challenges included the potentials for conflict, jealousy, stratification and dependence, as well as dogmatism and mediocrity. Spillane et al. (1999) described the challenges of distributed leadership practices as situational with cultural, historical, and institutional underpinnings that must be mediated. Further research was needed to analyze the acts, roles and practices of leaders of systems that encouraged successful communities of practice and distributed the leadership throughout

the community. The knowledge, skills and dispositions of the leader needed to be more fully analyzed and tested in a variety of settings to develop patterns that could inform the practices of leaders and the pre-service preparation needed for these leaders to be successful. Further analysis is also needed at the university level as we consider what we teach through modeling and how we best provide learning for pre-service leaders. How could a learning community function with university faculty? The success of learning communities in common education might have similar impact on how we educate teachers and leaders. Koss (2003) documented the existence of learning ties, similar to small learning communities, within doctoral cohort groups.

The relationship between school communities of practice and teacher learning that improved their capacity to impact student learning needed to be further investigated. First, the teachers reported that their participation in the school community impacted their learning and their leadership knowledge and skills. Since the communities of practice was a new lens applied to this study, the impact of this practice on teacher learning that impacted student learning needed additional testing. Second, this theoretical framework provided a process for creating school change that could be further analyzed and tested. Third, analyzing communities of practice through organizational theory was suggested as needing further study as well. Fourth, communities of practice provided implications for pre-service teacher education. Fifth, the need for teachers to understand that their role in the school as a model for learning in addition to their classroom role has impact for pre-service teacher education.

Continuing the study to analyze how the federal and state mandates impacted the school community would provide additional insights as would the study of what

evolutionary changes occurred in the community when a new principal arrived at Red Bud. The ability of the staff to integrate and educate a non-democratic principal into the school community would provide insights into their level of understanding of democracy and provide a test for depth of the democratic community.

Chapter Summary

In the final chapter, how learning, leadership and communities of practice created a web that transformed a school's processes and practices was interpreted. With high levels of teacher learning that focused on ways to increase student learning, student learning increased. With the help of a university-school network, the school community transformed from a traditional school making insignificant changes to a democratic learning community addressing tough issues of practicing democracy and learning for all students. The community evolved with a focus on teacher learning through intentional establishment of communities of practice each with a domain of school improvement focused on student learning, a community that was interconnected with mutual respect, and a common practice that supported teaching and learning. Increased learning facilitated the stretching of leadership across the school community. The school was a microcosm of a living democracy with the higher purpose of providing rich learning experiences for all students. Red Bud's evolution provided one example of how learning and leading converged to create a high-achieving school through development of communities of practice with increased learning and shared leadership.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Documents Reviewed

Table A1. List of documents reviewed for 1996

Table A2. Composition of Fieldnotes

Table A3. Fieldnotes sample

Table A4. Interviewee Descriptions

Table A5. Interview Protocol

Table A6. Assessing the Professional Learning Community Instrument

Table A7. Assessing the Professional Learning Community data

Table A8. Parent Survey Data

Table A1
Sample of Documents Studied per Year
(List of Reviewed Red Bud Documents from 1996)

Cisco District Comprehensive Local Educational Plan
Cisco District Testing Report
Cisco District Title I Plan
Hale, E. (1996). *Staff Development School Improvement: Program Evaluation.* Cisco District
Red Bud principal's working files on school improvement
1996-97 Red Bud Site Plan
Red Bud State Accreditation Report
Red Bud Title I plan
Red Bud Network Notebook contents:

1. Flyer of 'Moving from conventional schooling to democratic schooling': conventional → authentic → democratic schools' continuum
2. Educational Excellence in Schooling
3. School as professional learning community
4. Networks of Democratic Schools: Purpose, Focus, Action Plan (fall, 1995, Spring 1996, Fall, 1996, begin the network, Spring 1997 and Summer 1997, Principles
5. Agenda from The Network of school leadership for democracy: Annenberg Institute for school reform visitation: Elementary School Cluster meeting
6. Flyer with note from principal from: http://www.microserve.com/~circle/kidsrun.html
7. Chapter from Horace's Hope (Sizer, 1996)
8. Title I School wide Five year-plan

Each area included consisted of goals, action plan, & monitoring statement. The areas included are : community, assessment, technology, & academics

9. List of questions the principal found in her mailbox 3/20/96
10. Example of a charter from Putney Central School, faxed from Windham Southeast Supervisory Union, Ray McNulty , Brattleboro, VT
11. Danforth Proposal submitted by university's Network of Democratic Schools
12. Summer Institute at OU June 17-18, 1996 handouts
13. O'Hair, MJ & Bastain, K. (1995) Principal Empowering Behaviors, Obstacles, and Stressors Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of American Education al Research Association
14. Lieberman, A. (November, 1996). Creating intentional learning communities. *Educational Leadership.* 51-55.
15. Evans, R. When teachers resist reform: constructive coping for change. The Human Relations Service, Inc. Wellesley, MA Handout
16. The Crefel School Retrieved on 3/07/96 from http://www.libertynet.org/~crefeld/#overview about an alternative private school in Philadelphia
17. Breakfast Meeting Notes of counselor from presentation from Annenberg Institute

for School Reform March 5, 1999

18. Fullan, M. (February, 1996) Turning systemic thinking on its head. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 420-423. (copied)
19. Voting Ballots for university network Elementary Site Coordinator and Site Coordinator Eligibility & Responsibility handout
20. Wasley, P.A., Hampel, R.L. & Clark, R.W. (November, 1995) The Puzzle of Whole School Change. *Studies on School Change* (3). Brown University, the Coalition of Essential Schools.
21. RedBud elementary document containing, core learning principles questions and examples. (copied)
22. The Danforth proposal: leadership in facilitating school renewal and professional communities. With note from principal asking team leaders to share with teachers.
23. Handwritten notes of principal's:

(1.) describing the school & questions to be answered...mentioned "how we got here; tying initiatives together (assessment, service learning, site-based management, Danforth, collaborative process, participatory management); concern for citizenship

(2.) notes from presentation to those joining the university network that reviewed the school's process of change.

Red Bud 1996-97 Yearbook

Table A2. List of Field Notes Data

	Field Notes List
	1. Researcher's historical reflective journal from the various roles she served that brought her insights into the changes at Red Bud that spans 11 years (1986 – 1997). 2. Reflections from roles as district central office director, site visitor, supervisor of Red Bud principal and school, and professional development presenter (1998-2001). 2. Notes from informal conversations from school visits (2001 - 2003) 3. Walk-through notes (2001 - 2003) 4. Notes from observations of faculty meetings, school events, and faculty professional development (2001 - 2003). Included artifacts such as agendas, flyers, and handouts at meetings. 5. Professional development presenter reflections (2001 – 2003) and data gathered during presentations.

Table A3. Field Note Sample Entries

	2001 Field Notes Sample Entries
Walk Through Data	Grade 3 – Classroom B – non-interviewee Small group work Working on folk tales about Africa. Students assigned roles. One student said, "It's about my country and it's fun" Teacher, monitoring groups, said, "You're being a good friend" when she saw one student helping another.' Content objective derived: To create a play based on what you have learned about Africa Context: Work in a small group to write a play based on your research about the country Cognition: Application Authenticity Level: 4 – Students had deeply inquired about the continent of Africa and had selected a particular region. They had analyzed the area and created a play for their fellow students based on their learning.
School Visits	While in the library, I stopped to look over the shoulder of a teacher on the computer during her plan time. She shared that she was reviewing a web site that they had found during their inservice day on Friday that was focused on technology. She was reviewing it in more detail so that she could use it in an Earth Day lesson. Moving on to the computer lab, I listened as a teacher talked with the students about not going to any site other than those told to view by the teacher. She said it very reassuringly. Another teacher with whom I visited stated, the inservice on technology was very informational, then added…"all of our inservices are good because the teachers decide what we should do."

Table A4. List of respondents and their relationship to Red Bud

Position	Red Bud Tenure	Respondent	1988-1990	1991-1993	1994-1996	1997-1999	2000-2003
Principal	*9 years*	*Principal*	Sarah Stone (not available for interview)		Carrie – Interviewed (#15)		
		District	Central Office Administrator				Retired
		District	Central Office Director				
Professor		*University Network*			Directed Network/Red Bud		
Professor		*University Network*			Network Evaluation		
4th grade	*16 years*	*Current Teacher*	Taught at Red Bud				
3rd grade	*12 years*	*Current Teacher*		Taught at Red Bud			
3rd grade	*9 years*	*Current Teacher*			Started teaching career at Red Bud Network Coordinator		
Reading	*9 years*	*Current Teacher*			Within district transfer		
2nd grade	*9 years*	*Current Teacher*			Forced within district transfer		
5th grade	*8 years*	*Current Teacher*				Forced within district transfer Network site coordinator	
Media Specialist	*7 years*	*Current Teacher*				Within district transfer	
5th grade	*12 years*	*Former Teacher*		Taught at Red Bud Network Coordinator			Accepted another position
1st grade	*30 years*	*Former Teacher*	Teacher Retired				
4th grade	*17 years*	*Former Teacher*	Transferred in District				
Counselor	*2 years*	*Former Counselor*				Leave of Absence	

Respondent's tenure in years at Red Bud and relationship to school and timeframe of connection to Red Bud Elementary School.

Table A5. Interview Protocol

Initial interview with principal

1. How do you view your role in supervision of the curriculum and instruction?
2. How do you currently supervise your teachers?
3. How else do you work with teachers to promote curriculum and supervision?
4. What role do classroom observations play in your supervision of curriculum and instruction?
5. Would you give me some examples of feedback that you might give teachers about curriculum and instruction?
6. What has your role been in creating a culture in which reflective practices are promoted?

Follow-up interview with principal

1. Tell me about yourself and how you came to be a principal.
2. Tell me about your school and how it has changed since you have been principal.

Teacher interview

We are studying the changes at Red Bud and trying to learn more about how the changes occurred.

1. Tell me about yourself and how you came to be at Red Bud.
2. What was Red Bud like before Carrie came?
3. What changes have you seen since you have been at Red Bud?
4. Tell me about how you see Carrie's leadership and how it has changed Red Bud.

Table A6. Questionnaire: School –Professional Staff as a Learning Community

School Professional Staff as a Learning Community

DIRECTIONS: This questionnaire concerns your perceptions about your school staff as a learning organization. There is no right or wrong responses. Please consider where you believe your school is in its development of each of the five numbered descriptors shown in bold-faced type on the left. Each sub-item has a five-point scale. On each scale, circle the number that best represents the degree to which you feel your school has developed.

1. School administrators participate democratically with teachers sharing power, authority, and decision making.

5	4	3	2	1
A. Although there are some legal and fiscal decisions required of the principal, school administrators consistently involve the staff in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.		Administrators invite advice and counsel from the staff and then make decisions themselves.		Administrators never share information with the staff nor provide opportunities to be involved in decision making.
B. Administrators involve the entire staff.		Administrators involve a small committee, council, or team of staff.		Administrators do not involve any staff.

2. Staff shares visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning, and are consistently referenced for the staff's work.

5	4	3	2	1
A. Visions for improvement are discussed by the entire staff such that consensus and a shared vision results.		Visions for improvement are not thoroughly explored; some staff agrees and others do not.		Visions for improvement held by the staff is widely divergent.
B. Visions for improvement are always focused on students and learning and teaching.		Visions for improvement are sometimes focused on students and teaching and learning.		Visions for improvement do not target students and teaching and learning.
C. Visions for improvement target high quality learning experiences for all students.		Visions for improvement address quality learning experiences in terms of students' abilities.		Visions for improvement do not include concerns about the quality o the learning experience.

3. Staff's collective learning and application of the learnings (taking action) create high intellectual learning tasks and solutions to address student needs.

5	4	3	2	1
A. The entire staff meets to discuss issues, share information, and learn with and from each other.		Subgroups of the staff meet to discuss issues, share information, and learn with and from each other.		Individuals randomly discuss issues, share information, and learn with and from each other.
B. The staff meets regularly and frequently on substantive student-centered educational issues.		The staff meets occasionally on substantive student-centered educational issues.		The staff never meets to consider substantive educational issues.
C. The staff discusses the quality of their teaching and students' learning.		The staff does not often discuss their instructional practices nor its influences on student learning.		The staff basically discusses non-teaching and non-learning issues.
D. The staff, based on their learnings, makes and implements plans that address students' needs, more effective teaching, and more successful student learning.		The staff occasionally acts on their learnings and makes and implements plans to improve teaching and learning.		The staff does not act on their learning.
E. The staff debriefs and assesses the impact of their actions and makes revisions.		The staff infrequently assesses their actions and seldom makes revisions based on the results.		The staff does not assess their work.

4. Peers review and give feedback based on observing each other's classroom behaviors in order to increase individual and organizational capacity.

5	4	3	2	1
A. Staff regularly and frequently visit and observe each other's classroom teaching.		Staff occasionally visit and observe each other's teaching.		Staff never visit their peers' classroom.
B. Staff provides feedback to each other about teaching and learning based on their classroom observations.		Staff discusses non-teaching issues after classroom observations.		Staff does not interact after classroom observations.

5. School conditions and capacities support the staff's arrangement as a professional learning organization.

5	4	3	2	1
A.	Time is arranged and committed for whole staff interactions.	Time is arranged but frequently the staff fails to meet.		Staff cannot arrange time for interacting.
B.	The size, structure, and arrangements of the school facilitates staff proximity and interaction.	Considering the size, structure, and arrangements of the school, the staff are working to maximize interaction.		The staff takes no action to manage the facility and personnel for interaction.
C.	A variety of processes and procedures are used to encourage staff communication.	A single communication method exists and is sometimes used to share information.		Communication devices are not given attention.
D.	Trust and openness characterize all the staff.	Some of the staff are trusting and open.		Trust and openness do not exist among the staff.
E.	Caring, collaborative, and productive relationships exist among all the staff.	Caring and collaboration are inconsistently demonstrated among the staff.		Staff are isolated and work alone at their task.

*Hord, Shirley M. (1996). Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Table A7. *Assessing the School Professional Staff as a Learning Community Results*

Data from October, 2003 survey

Descriptive Statistics for each question on the survey are listed below.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALLDATA	19	3.06	4.53	4.0521	.4512
Q1.A	19	2.00	5.00	4.4211	.9612
Q1.B	19	2.00	5.00	4.2632	.9912
Q2A	19	1.00	5.00	3.9474	1.1291
Q2B	19	3.00	5.00	4.5789	.6925
Q2C	19	3.00	5.00	4.6316	.6840
Q3A	19	3.00	5.00	4.1579	.7647
Q3B	19	2.00	5.00	4.0526	.9703
Q3C	19	1.00	5.00	4.2632	.9912
Q3D	19	4.00	5.00	4.6316	.4956
Q3E	19	4.00	5.00	4.6316	.4956
Q4A	19	1.00	4.00	2.5789	.7685
Q4B	19	1.00	5.00	3.2105	1.1343
Q5A	19	2.00	5.00	4.1579	1.0145
Q5B	19	3.00	5.00	3.9474	.8481
Q5C	19	3.00	5.00	4.4737	.6118
Q5D	19	1.00	5.00	3.1579	.8983
Q5E	19	3.00	5.00	3.7895	.7133
Q4A.B	17	1.50	4.00	2.9412	.8078
Valid N (listwise)	17				

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ALLDATA	19	4.0521	.4512	.1035
Q4A.B	19	2.8684	.7966	.1827

One-Sample Test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
ALLDATA	39.148	18	.000	4.0521	3.8346	4.2696
Q4A.B	15.697	18	.000	2.8684	2.4845	3.2523

Table A8 Parent Involvement Survey Results
Conducted by Red Bud staff

Fall, 2003: Assessment for Schools to Evaluate Parent/Family Involvement						
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Possible	Rating
I. Communicating	39				39/39	Excellent
II. Parenting	15	2			17/18	Excellent
III. Student Learning	18				18/18	Excellent
IV. Volunteering	24	2			26/30	Excellent
V. School Decision Making & Advocacy	18	4	1		23/27	Excellent
VI. Collaborating with Community	18				18/18	Excellent

Spring 2003 Parent Survey
Greatest needs:
building social side of school
academics - more math understanding
reading area of least concern
Strengths:
teachers
communication
academics
OU connections
multicultural is a bonus
Improvements:
building & grounds
security for before & after school

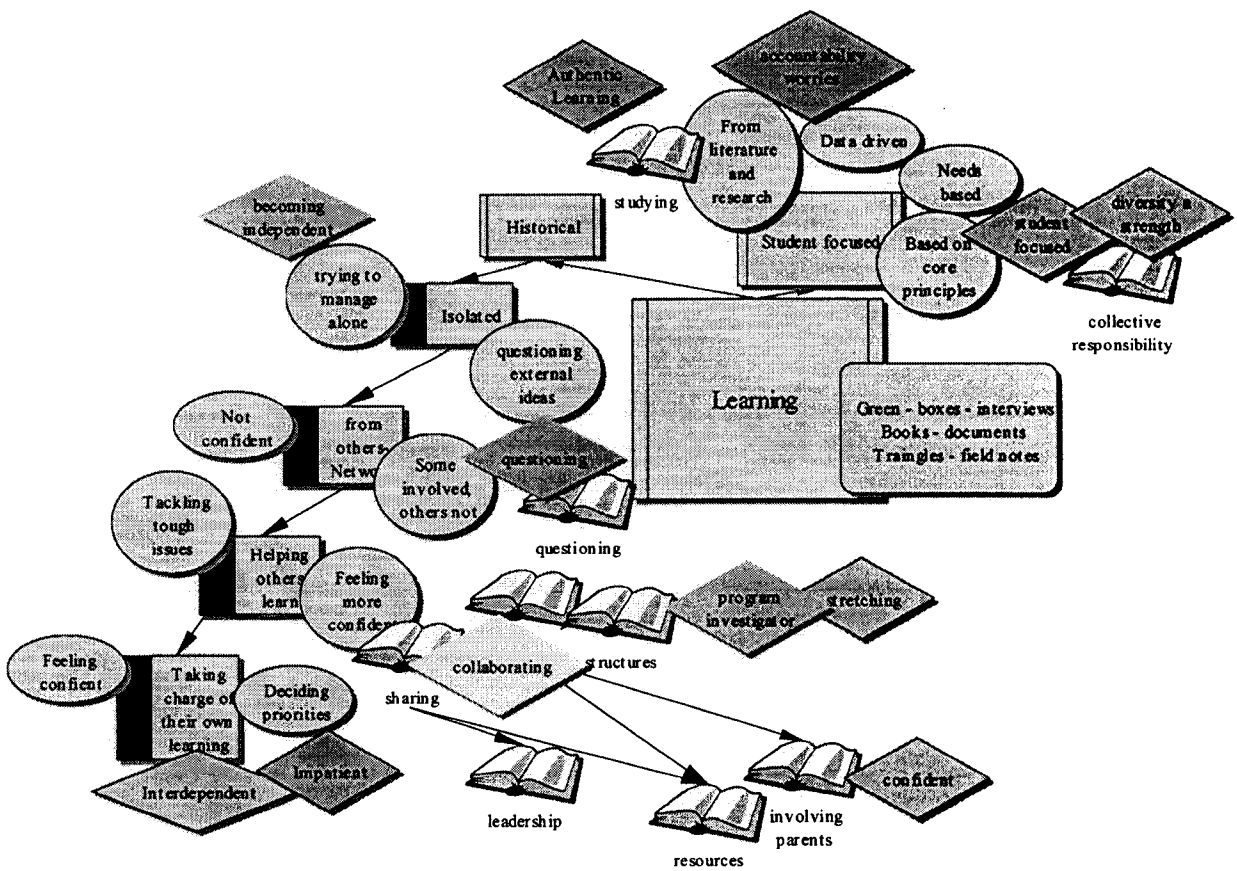
APPENDIX B

Appendix B

Theme Concept Map

Appendix B. Figure: Learning Themes Concept Map

Learning Concept Map: Devised from the three data sources: field notes (diamonds), documents (books), and interviews (circles).



APPENDIX C

Appendix C

Institutional Review Board

Appendix C1. Original Approved Institutional Review Board Study

Appendix C2. Revised Approved Institutional Review Board Study with Informed Consent

Appendix C3. Institutional Review Board Informed Consent for Survey as a part of another study from the K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal

Figure C1. Original Research Proposal

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION
FOR APPROVAL OF THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN AN INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED ON THE NORMAN CAMPUS AND/OR BY THE UNIVSERSITY OF OKLAHOMA FACULTY, STAFF OR STUDENTS

PART I. APPLICATION FORM

1. Jean Cate, EACS Department of Education

Norman, OK

Faculty Sponsor: Courtney Ann Vaughn 325-
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator _____ Date: _____

2. STUDY:
This proposed research study will be a phenomenological study. The researcher will select administrators who value collaborative and reflective practices in their schools. The researcher will investigate the perceptions of the selected administrators as to their roles and practices in supervision of the curriculum and instruction. A follow-up study may be conducted after the administrators attend a training in a reflective supervision model. The follow-up study may include several teachers who are supervised by the selected administrators.

3. TIME: June, 2001 through September, 2002

4. This project has not been previously reviewed.

5. No funding support is requested. This project is to fulfill course requirements.

6. HUMAN SUBJECTS:
Ages 25 - 55 Males and Females
2-5 administrators from area suburban schools who agree to participate
4-10 teachers who are supervised by these administrators
No protected groups will be included in this study.

PART II – DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

A. Purpose/Objectives
The purpose of the study is to investigate the perceptions of the selected principals' roles and practices in the supervision of the curriculum and instruction and any changes in

these perceptions or practices that might occur following a training in a reflective supervision model.

B. Research Protocol

Two to five principals who meet the criteria of ones who promote reflection and value collaborative processes will be interviewed. The researcher will interview the principals about their perceptions of their roles and practices related to supervision of curriculum and instruction. A follow-up interview may be conducted after these principals complete additional training in a reflective supervisory model. At that time, the researcher may conduct interviews with several teachers who are supervised by those principals.

C. Confidentiality

The identity of the subjects will remain confidential. Numbers will be assigned to the subjects so that data from each source can be tracked. The number assigned will have no traceable connection to the source. Raw data will be stored in a separate file located in a private home and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

D. Subject Benefit/Risk

The benefits to the subject will be to reflect on attitudes and practices that may inform their practice. The study may add insight into practices that encourage teachers to reflect upon their own practices.

PART III: CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA - NORMAN CAMPUS

This study is being conducted by Jean Cate as a requirement for coursework through the University of Oklahoma's Department of Education. The title of the study is "The Perceptions of Administrators of Their Supervisory Roles and Practices in a Collaborative, Reflective School."

The study will establish the principals' perceptions of practices and roles as they relate to the supervision of curriculum and instruction. Selected principals will be interviewed several times during the course of the study. Teachers supervised by these principals may be interviewed at some point in the study. The length of the interviews will be about an hour each. These will occur several times during the course of the study. All interactions will remain confidential and the participants may withdraw at any point of the study without loss or penalty. Notes will remain in a secure location and the identity of the participants will remain confidential. Each individual's participation is strictly voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. All participants in the study will be 18 years of age or older.

Potential risks include an intrusion into the highly personal supervision perceptions and practices of the administrators and their teachers. The investigator will exercise sensitivity to this situation, being present only when absolutely necessary for the study and working with the needs of each participant.

Each participant will be contributing to the knowledge-base into principal's supervisory behaviors that occur in the development and sustaining of a reflective learning community.

I HEREBY GRANT MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE *"Principals Supervisory Perceptions of Roles and Practices in a Reflective School"* STUDY BEING CONDUCTED BY JEAN CATE.

NAME _____ DATE _____

Interview Protocol for Study of Supervision Perceptions
Project:
Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewee:

INITIAL INTERVIEW

7. How do you view your role in supervision of the curriculum and instruction?
8. How do you currently supervise your teachers?
9. How else do you work with teachers to promote curriculum and supervision?
10. What role do classroom observations play in your supervision of curriculum and instruction?
11. Would you give me some examples of feedback that you might give teachers about curriculum and instruction?
12. What has your role been in creating a culture in which reflective practices are promoted?

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

1. How have your perceptions changed, if at all, about supervision of the curriculum and instruction?
2. What changes, if any, have occurred in how you supervise?
3. What role do classroom observations play in your supervisory practices?
4. Share some examples of feedback that you might give teachers about curriculum and instruction?
5. What changes, if any, have you made in your perceptions about how to create a culture in which reflective practices are promoted?

TEACHER INTERVIEW

1. How does your administrator supervise curriculum and instruction at your school?
2. How does your administrator work to promote curriculum and instruction?
3. What are your administrator's beliefs about curriculum and instruction?
4. What changes, if any, have you noticed in the supervision of curriculum and instruction by the administrator?
5. What part do classroom observations have in the supervisory practices of your administrator?
6. How do you believe an administrator who wants to promote reflective practices in their staff should supervise in the areas of curriculum and instruction?
7. How does your administrator promote reflective practices in the teachers at this school?

Appendix C2. Revised Approved Institutional Review Board Study with Informed Consent

PART II - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

To assist Institutional Review Board members in conducting their review of your application, please prepare a brief (1-3 page) description of the study you plan to conduct, including the following information:

A. Purpose/Objectives

Explain the overall purpose of your study and its primary objectives, including the importance of the knowledge expected to result.
The purpose of the study is adjusted to include the development of the entire professional learning community, not just the principal's role in developing and supervising in the school community, and should read as follows:
To highlight the processes and roles involved in the development of a professional learning community. A professional learning community is one in which teachers and students learn, leadership and decision making is shared, and authentic teaching and learning occurs. Objectives of the study include the following:

To identify and highlight the processes that occur and the sequencing of them;

To understand the roles of the administrators and the teachers?

To understand the relationships among the processes and the participants.

Student achievement is enhanced in a professional learning community school and this research will add to the knowledge about the processes that lead to a professional learning community and how these processes can be developed and supported.

B. Research Protocol

Describe the study and procedures you will use, including a step-by-step description of the procedures you plan to use with your subjects.

The case study will include an interpretive and sociological framework that will highlight the processes that lead to and occur during a school change to a professional learning community. Three data sets will allow for triangulation of the data. These data will cover approximately the past fifteen years. The study will rely on three data sets:

(1) Interviews: representative sample of current and past administrators and teachers (see protocol approved)
(2) document review: review of such things as school site plans, school profiling data, memos to all staff, staff meeting agendas, presentation

notes and school award notebooks. Most of these are kept in the library where they can be accessed by parents. Some are the notebooks that were kept when the school was a part of the University of Oklahoma, Center for Educational and community Renewal, O.N.E. Network.

(3) Observations and personal narratives: The personal narratives are from my recollections as a district staff administrator about the changes that have occurred at the school and what the university liaison recalls about the school's process of change as a member of a O.N.E. cluster. Observations may include highlights or summaries of descriptions of staff meeting topics as well as data gathered from classrooms about the curriculum and teaching methodology. Repeated observations will add to the consistency and dependability of the data. Many of the observational data were collected as a part of the investigator's role in the district and the professor's role in the network.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

INTRODUCTION: This study is entitled *"The Perceptions of Administrators of Their Supervisory Roles and Practices in a Collaborative, Reflective School."* The person directing this project is Jean Cate as a requirement for coursework through the University of Oklahoma's Department of Education. This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY: The study will establish the principals' perceptions of practices and roles as they relate to the supervision of curriculum and instruction. Selected principals will be interviewed several times during the course of the study. Teachers supervised by these principals may be interviewed at some point in the study. The length of the interviews will be about an hour each. These will occur several times during the course of the study. Notes will remain in a secure location and the identity of the participants will remain confidential.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Potential risks include an intrusion into the highly personal supervision perceptions and practices of the administrators and their teachers. The investigator will exercise sensitivity to this situation, being present only when absolutely necessary for the study and working with the needs of each participant. Each participant will be contributing to the knowledge-base into principal's supervisory behaviors that occur in the development and sustaining of a reflective learning community which leads to higher student achievement.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: Participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled. Furthermore, the participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. All participants in the study will be 18 years of age or older.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Findings will be presented in aggregate form with no identifying information to ensure confidentiality.

AUDIO TAPING OF STUDY ACTIVITIES: To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. Participants have the right to refuse to allow such taping without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

[ ] I consent to the use of audio recording.

[ ] I do not consent to the use of audio recording.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: Participants may contact Jean Cate, 405.325.0547, jcate@ou.edu with questions about the study.

For inquires about rights as a research participant, contact the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405/325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

PARTICIPANT ASSURANCE: I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this study and I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research study. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature of Participant	Date
Printed Name of Participant	Researcher Signature

Appendix C3. Institutional Review Board Informed Consent for Survey as a part of another study from the K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal

Individual Informed Consent Form for Research
University of Oklahoma, Norman

This survey is part of research being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus. This document is intended to provide information so survey and interview respondents can acknowledge informed consent for participation in a research project.

Title: OETT and OK-ACTS: Partnering for Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
Principal investigator: Mary John O'Hair, Ed.D., Center for Educational and Community Renewal

This research is designed to understand perceptions and change processes that are involved within a school community following their one to three-year engagement in 10 practices designed to increase student learning and foster democratic citizenship. Participants agree to complete the Rubric for High Achieving Schools. The Rubric consists of the 10 practices linked directly to improved student achievement and involves the participant to give examples of each practice, describe obstacles to each practice, and develop an action plan to overcome obstacles. Practices focus on the following: core learning principles; authentic teaching and learning; shared leadership and decision-making; teacher collaboration and learning; inquiry and discourse; supportive administrative leadership; caring and collective responsibility for students; connection to home and community; concern for equity; and access to external expertise. Time required to complete the Rubric will vary by school. Most schools connect the Rubric to school and district goals and devote professional development days (approximately 4-8 days per year) to identifying, analyzing, and implementing the Rubric's 10 practices. In addition to completion of the Rubric, selected participants from OK-ACTS Phase II schools and districts agree to a follow-up interview (approximately 1-2 hour) based on practices described in the Rubric. Participants will be asked to describe the process involved in developing the practice, the obstacles encountered, and how they plan to or have overcome obstacles.

Please read the statements below:

1. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty.
2. I understand I am entitled to no benefits for participation.
3. I may terminate my participation at any time prior to the completion of this study without penalty.
4. Any information I may give during my participation will be used for research purposes only. Responses will not be shared with persons who are not directly involved with this study.
5. All information I give will be kept confidential.
6. I understand that there are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study.

The investigator, Dr. Mary John O'Hair, or other key personnel are available to answer any questions regarding this research study and may be reached by phone at (405) 325-1267, by e-mail (mjohair@ou.edu), or by contacting the Center for Educational and Community Renewal, 640 Parrington Oval, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, 73019.
For inquires about rights as a research participant, contact the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405/325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this study and I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research study. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.
If selected to be interviewed, I consent to being audio taped. (Please check: yes ___ no ___)

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Participant _____ Researcher Signature _____

APPROVED
SEP 16 2003
OU-NC IRB

APPROVAL
JUN 26 2004
EXPIRES