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**NATIONAL PROGRAMS AND LOCAL RESPONSES:  
ENACTING THE NEW TITLE I**

**By**

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**A DISSERTATION**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department of Teacher Education**

**2000**



## ABSTRACT

### NATIONAL PROGRAMS AND LOCAL RESPONSES: ENACTING THE NEW TITLE I

By

Sue Poppink

The federal government program, Title I, was a supplementary pullout program for disadvantaged student in high poverty schools, in which a drill and practice form of pedagogy was used. Now Title I, particularly through the Schoolwide provision, urges schools to coordinate their efforts to enable all students to gain proficiencies in ambitious state standards.

The changes require technical and social changes for schools and classrooms. To understand if and how teachers and principals made these changes, I conducted an implementation study using qualitative research methods to investigate one district's response and examined how three schools enacted the Schoolwide program. I assumed the policy was a sort of "curriculum" and policy enactors were "learners." I sought to understand if and how enactors were "taught" the policy.

The schools in this study enacted the policy in isolation from the rest of the educational system. Nonetheless leadership emerged from within the schools and all three schools enacted aspects of the policy. One school relied heavily on its own Title I reading teacher for guidance, who encouraged the school to develop both the technical and social aspects of the policy. Another school relied nearly completely on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program for guidance, incorporating its technical aspects into the school's already enacted social planning time. A third school ignored the technical guidance of the state student content standards and developed little congruence around the content of the curriculum.

*Variation* at the local site is a central theme of the policy implementation literature, and the three schools in this study reflect that theme. One view of the implementation process is one of *mutual adaptation*, which suggests that schools adapt the policy to their local contexts, which accounts for the variation. This study adds to mutual adaptation the idea that variation may be due as much or more to varying sources of guidance within the decentralized and fragmented political system.

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**To Emma and Ken Brock**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

So many people inside and outside of Erickson Hall helped me complete this degree that if I were to thank them all I might double the number of pages in this dissertation. Instead I thank a few faculty, graduate students, staff and family members who worked with me over time.

First, I add my name to the list of graduate students who in their acknowledgements write that their dissertations would not have been possible without David K. Cohen. Our numbers are legion. I would not have conceived of and written this dissertation without him. As my dissertation director, he examined with me the issues presented herein, and his exacting guidance helped me see the elegance of the complex issues and the complexity of the seemingly simple issues.

David and Judith E. Lanier both encouraged me to pursue a doctoral degree. I worked with Judy for five years and her knowledge of teacher education and ways of seeing the relationship between the macro policy issues and micro enactment issues has been a constant source of inspiration.

Judy introduced me to Lauren Young and Gary Sykes who served on

my committee in a gamely manner. Lauren was my advisor and committee chair and took both responsibilities seriously. She always looked out for my personal and intellectual growth. I am indebted to her for serving as a quietly assertive committee chair. Gary's idea that teaching and learning about the new Title I policy is both a technical and social undertaking was central to framing this dissertation. There are more references in my dissertation to literature that I read in Gary's class than in any other single class I've taken.

Next I met Deborah Loewenberg Ball and Suzanne M. Wilson. Deborah played a central role in this dissertation by taking seriously not only my ideas, but also the way in which I thought about them. She cheerfully gave me feedback on papers, proposals and presentations throughout my studies. I took more courses with Suzanne during the course of my graduate studies than the university may allow all of which fed into this dissertation. She spent much time with me outside the classroom as well, reading books and writing papers.

David Labaree set a high standard not only as a committee member but also as director of the doctoral programs. The care with which he approached critiquing the essays I prepared for his class and my dissertation will be difficult to live up to.

Five graduate students were close friends and colleagues throughout the process, Carol Barnes, Jennifer Borman, Steve Mattson, Dirck Roosevelt and Kara Suzuka. Carol and I worked together every step of the way. She always took time out from her busy schedule to listen to my ideas and discuss the next aspect of my dissertation. I dare not say that Jennifer Borman is an editor without parallel because then I may not be able to selfishly keep her to myself. Steve Mattson, everyone's favorite spiritual advisor, taught me about educational theory and about approaching life in a cheerful and ethical manner. Dirck's East Coast sensibilities were just what I needed to help me see the other side of nearly any argument. Kara was a lifeline to me in the completion of this dissertation. She was always able to help me figure out what my research was about; and, better yet, how to format this paper to graduate school specifications. Lisa Roy, one of the secretaries for the Education Policy and Practice Study helped me through innumerable bureaucratic hoops, including typing the bookplate -- the last task to be completed.

Finally, my family. Though my father and my sister, Grace, wondered aloud if undertaking this project was the best thing to do, they were my staunchest supporters in the end. My mother and my other siblings, Martha, Dutch and Lyn were nearly as thrilled as I was to see this

project through. My in-laws supported me during this endeavor and supported my family financially by letting us borrow a car after both of ours wore out.

My husband and daughter, Ken and Emma Brock have lived with the pursuit of this degree day in and day out for the last several years. Though not without complaint, they encouraged me to keep at it even when I wondered if going on was the best thing for me and for them. Emma asked that this dissertation be dedicated to them, so it is.

I also express my appreciation to the people who toil in the public educational system every day trying to ensure that all children have exposure to high standards in a safe and humane environment. Though it is a system that is easy to critique, it is still quite remarkable that every day approximately 44 million students and their 2.5 million teachers come together under the banner of learning. Most of us in this system, like Dorothea in Middlemarch, live faithfully a hidden life.

Her full nature, like that river of which Cyrus broke the strength, spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive, for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts, and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.

George Eliot  
Middlemarch, p. 881



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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

The Title I Amendments of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA), and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act encourage high poverty schools to make significant changes in how a school's staff organizes the work of teaching disadvantaged students. The Title I program, a program for low achieving students in high poverty schools, was a pullout program in which Title I staff worked with a few students on a skills-based curriculum. Now, the Title I Amendments, particularly through Schoolwide programs, encourage schools to act collectively to ensure all children -- not just high achieving students -- learn to high standards. It is hard to underestimate the changes in knowledge and beliefs, as well as practices that these policies encourage.

The policy implementation literature indicates that making such changes will not be an easy or clear-cut process. Researchers have made many arguments as to why this is so. Recently, many researchers have argued that making the changes that policymakers ask for requires *learning* on the part of enactors (Berman, 1986; Cohen and Barnes, 1993; Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 12, 3; McLaughlin, 1978; Sarason, 1982).



To enact these policies, teachers and administrators could have both technical and social learning tasks ahead of them.<sup>1</sup> The Title I program is changing from a highly specified, drill and practice, pullout program, to one that is driven by ambitious student standards for all children including Title I students. Learning from and about the technical aspects of the policy would include learning the state standards, the state assessments, and how to align curriculum materials, professional development activities and classroom practices with the standards.

The social learning requirements embedded in the policy are also large. To enact these standards in classrooms, teachers might need to make changes, and help students make changes, around the social organization of classrooms. Teachers would need to ensure that students have more than exposure to ambitious state standards. They would need to understand how students are thinking about such standards, which means listening more frequently and more closely to students' ideas. It also would mean creating a classroom atmosphere in which students explain their reasoning to one another.

In addition, social change is expected between and among staff. The Title I program is to no longer be a program in which

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Gary Sykes for pointing out that this policy has both technical and social teaching and learning requirements

Title I staff are responsible for Title I students, independent of the general education program. Instead, teachers and administrators are to work together, as a unit -- not as individual classrooms -- to help all children achieve these standards. Historically, teachers have worked independently from one another, though within the same building. Now they are to coordinate school and classroom practices and coordinate both around student learning.

How to go about coordinating such efforts and creating such classrooms, especially in high poverty schools, will most likely be new territory for teachers and administrators to explore.

If enacting policy requires learning, then the *learning opportunities* that enactors have to learn about and from the policy might be of critical importance, perhaps shaping how they interpret and respond to the policy. These learning opportunities will need to encourage understanding the technical and social aspects of the policy.

Many researchers have examined enactors' responses to policies. A few other researchers have examined the learning opportunity enactors have or could have, together with their interpretations and responses (Cohen and Hill, 1998; Spillane and Thompson, 1997). None has addressed if and how policy provides

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embedded in it.

instruction for schools to learn about the technical and social aspects of the policy, and how schools respond to such instruction. This is such a study.

In this exploratory study, I used qualitative research methods to conduct a study of three schools within one district as they planned for, interpreted and responded to this federal level policy. In particular, I studied the opportunities the three schools had to learn about and from the changes in Title I, how the schools interpreted those changes and responded to them. I conceived of the relationship between policy and practice as a process of teaching and learning to examine enactors learning opportunities and their interpretations and responses.

Each of the schools took the learning requirements to enact this policy seriously, and worked to understand the technical or social, or both, changes specified or implied in the policy as they changed their school and classroom practices. The policy played out in idiosyncratic ways in the three schools. One school addressed the technical and social changes, one school highlighted the technical changes and one school highlighted the social changes.

One reason the responses varied was because the human resources available within the schools to provide policy mediation, and to interpret and enact the policy, varied. The study shows that

instructional leadership emerged from the schools and had a strong impact on the enactment of the policy. One instructional leader highlighted both the technical and social changes in the policy, one highlighted the technical changes, and one the social changes, and the schools' programs reflected this.

The instructional leaders in each school had varying knowledge and beliefs about the purpose of the policy and how best to educate all children. These varying interpretations of the policy were in part because the leaders worked in a fragmented and decentralized political system. In particular, the schools' district office was passive about instruction generally and Title I Schoolwides specifically. Therefore, the learning opportunities were constructed from within the school.

The idiosyncratic responses were also in part because the policy was, by design, not strongly specified and schools were given wide latitude in interpretation.

### Policy Background and Change

The Title I amendments of the IASA, together with the Goals 2000 legislation encourages both technical and social changes in what and how students are taught, and social changes in how schools coordinate instruction. States and localities are to make these changes in the hopes that all children will gain proficiencies in high

state student standards. Though both policies are voluntary, the incentives for states and localities to participate are strong because of Title I funding, which was over \$7 billion dollars at the time the data were collected for this study.<sup>2</sup>

The technical changes the IASA and the Goals 2000 legislation,<sup>3</sup> encourage are large. State Education Agencies (SEAs), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools and teachers are to align all instructional instruments and practices with high state student standards, making technical changes in understanding, and technical and social changes within classrooms. Schoolwide programs of the Title I amendments is social change strategy, which encourages high poverty schools to coordinate their efforts such that all students gain proficiencies in these same state standards.

Below I describe in more detail the state alignment strategy and changes required, and then the Schoolwide program coordination strategy and changes required.

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<sup>2</sup> At the time of completion of this dissertation, the amount was more than \$8 billion.

<sup>3</sup> I include Goals 2000 here because part of its purpose was to tie all federal legislation, including Title I, together around a systemic reform strategy. However the IASA is also a systemic reform strategy, so I use the IASA for explanation here.

## State Alignment Strategy

In exchange for Title I grant money, SEAs must write plans to develop within the state a systemic alignment strategy. As an alignment strategy, the policy seeks to ensure that what is tested is what is taught (S. Alan Cohen, 1987). As a systemic strategy it seeks to ensure that instruments within the instructional guidance system are created in support of this alignment (Smith and O'Day, 1991).

To comply with the IASA, states are to conduct three activities. One activity is to develop a set of high state student content and performance standards in at least mathematics and reading or language arts. The content standards are to “specify what children are expected to know and be able to do,” “contain coherent and rigorous content, and “encourage the teaching of advanced skills” (IASA, p. 3524). The performance standards are to describe three levels of performance, “advanced,” “proficient” and “partially proficient,” to determine how well children are mastering the material in the state content standards (IASA, p. 3524).

Another activity is to create assessments, which are aligned with the content and performance standards. The assessments must be administered at some time between grades 3 and 5, again between grades 6 and 9, and again between grades 10 and 12. They

should include “multiple, up-to-date...measures that assess higher-order thinking skills and understanding” and “provide individual student interpretative and descriptive reports” as well as disaggregated results within states, districts, and schools by gender, race, limited-English-proficient status, migrant status, disability, and economic status (IASA, p. 3525).

States are also to create a support system for teaching and learning including a system of school support teams to provide “intensive and sustained support for schools receiving funds” (IASA, p. 3548). However, this aspect of the policy was never funded.

Through Goals 2000, SEAs are also to encourage LEAs to align their curricula with the state content and performance standards. This alignment strategy, then, encourages the state to create a set of aligned content and performance standards, and state assessment. States are also to encourage the alignment of local curricula.

State standards and assumptions. Sykes and Plastrik (1992) note that reformers hope to change instruction through the use of curriculum standards. As they write, “The image of *directing or guiding instruction* relies on the alignment of multiple policy instruments such as frameworks, texts, tests, incentives and teacher training” (p. 12).

Through the ambitious state standards urged by the IASA, policymakers hope to change teachers' and administrators' assumptions about what economically disadvantaged children are capable of learning, how they learn, and therefore what and how they should be taught.

Before 1988<sup>4</sup> one Title I program assumption was that particular children need a skills-based curriculum. Put another way, low achieving students learn in different ways than high achievers. In addition, because of this difference, low achievers need a curriculum delivered in stages or steps, starting with skills and ending in more complex problem-solving activities (Rowan, Guthrie, Lee, and Guthrie, 1986). Over the last two re-authorizations, these assumptions have changed.

Cognitive and developmental psychologists who study thinking and learning have argued that the mind actively makes meaning (Bruner, 1990). Now many believe that learners, high or low achieving, young and old, build on their previous knowledge and beliefs to construct and reconstruct their understandings and misunderstandings. Resnick (1987) notes that this active constructing and reconstructing of knowledge is not limited to



advanced levels of development. As she notes, “ ...these activities are an intimate part of even elementary levels of reading, mathematics, and other branches of learning -- when learning is proceeding well” (p. 8).

Therefore, learning is best accomplished not in a lock step method, but by enabling children to grapple with complex problems which allow them to problem-solve and learn skills within applications (Lampert, 1990).

For Title I, this means that all children can learn to high academic standards, and that Title I children, like all children, learn through building on their own knowledge and beliefs and constructing and reconstructing their knowledge bases. As the IASA states, “All children can master challenging content and complex problem-solving skills” (IASA, p. 3520).

It also means that teachers might need to change their teaching practices so that all children have opportunities to construct and reconstruct their knowledge and beliefs.

The standards driven aspect of this policy is technical and social in nature because district and school personnel will need to know about the state student content and performance standards and

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<sup>4</sup> Schoolwide programs were originally introduced in 1988 legislation, the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary

the aligned assessments. They would also need to align the curriculum, curriculum materials, teaching practices and professional development opportunities to enact this aspect of the policy.

It is social in nature because teachers and their students might need to change classroom practices to ensure that students understand the standards. For example, a teacher might pose mathematical problems and create discussions in which all children can build their academic knowledge and develop mathematical understandings, as Deborah Ball suggests in Changing Minds (Featherstone, 1990). It might mean changing classroom practice such that teachers understand student thinking and use students' understandings of the subject matter as the material for discussions and as part of the curriculum (Peterson, Fennema and Carpenter, 1991).

The policy's call for social change goes far beyond classroom changes and extends into the way teachers interact to coordinate their activities as embodied in the Schoolwide programs.

#### Title I Schoolwide Programs

The Schoolwide program provision of the Title I amendments enable high poverty schools to transform their Title I programs from

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and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988.

Targeted Assistance programs that target Title I students only, to schools in which the Title I program, and its resources, are integrated into the fabric of school instruction for all students. In the words of the policy, the purpose is to “upgrade the entire educational program in a school” (p. 3534). The strategy enables educators the flexibility to create programs based on their local contexts in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance.

Starting in the 1995-96 school year, the first year for which I collected data, schools in which at least 60%<sup>5</sup> of the students lived in low-income families no longer needed to provide services only to children eligible for Title I. Instead, a school could use its Title I funding as the school sees fit. In exchange, the school is to be held accountable for students’ learning as measured by state assessments.<sup>6</sup>

The Title I amendments encourage all Title I schools, including Targeted Assistance Schools, to move Title I programs away from pull out programs in which Title I aides teach basic skills. Instead, Title I is now to lead a reform strategy in which schools create one

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<sup>5</sup>For the 1996-1997 school year and beyond, this percentage was 50.

<sup>6</sup> The policy encouraged the states to determine what it would mean for a school to make “adequate yearly progress” (IASA, p. 3524) on

harmonious effort to ensure that all students achieve in ambitious state standards. The IASA suggests at least five strategies for achieving this. They include professional development based on performance standards; an extended day or year school program; an accelerated curriculum; fewer pullout programs; and integration of Title I staff, teachers and aides, with the general education staff. In the words of the policy, one strategy is “professional development for teachers...and other staff to enable all children in the school to meet the State’s student performance standards” (IASA, p. 3537). Another suggested strategy is to “give primary consideration to providing extended learning time such as extended school year, before- and after-school, and summer programs and opportunities” (IASA, p. 3540). Two more strategies are to “help provide an accelerated, high-quality curriculum, including applied learning,” and “minimize removing children from the regular classroom during regular school hours for instruction.” (IASA, p. 3540.) Schools are also “to promote the integration of staff supported with funds under this part and children served under this part into the regular school program” (IASA, p. 3541).

To become a Schoolwide, schools are to conduct yearlong

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state assessments. At the time of data collection, this decision had not been made in Michigan.

planning processes culminating in written plans. The plans are to address, among other issues, how the school will incorporate the eight Schoolwide components into the school. The eight components are 1) a comprehensive needs assessment; 2) strategies for improving student learning; 3) high quality instruction; 4) professional development for teachers and others focused on enabling all students to meet the state performance standards; 5) strategies to increase parental involvement; 6) plans for assisting preschool children in transition; 7) measures to include teachers in decisions regarding the use of LEA student assessments; and 8) activities to ensure that students experiencing difficulty in mastering the standards receive additional assistance.

### Changes in Organization

Through Schoolwide programs, policy enactors are asked to make changes in the social arrangements of schools by coordinating instructional activities. They are to create schools in which the school, rather than the classroom, is the instructional unit.

Some have argued ways in which select schools offer a coordinated or coherent curriculum based on high academic standards.<sup>7</sup> For example, Bryk, Lee and Holland in their book Catholic

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<sup>7</sup> See for example Louis, K. S., S. D. Kruse, et al. (1996). Chapter seven. Schoolwide professional community. Authentic achievement:

Schools and the Common Good argue that the important components of coordination in catholic schools are a definition of boundaries, shared organizational beliefs and a set of shared activities. The shared organizational beliefs include an academic core for all students, the formation of personal character, and a school mission. The school mission included a strong commitment to their students' academic and social growth.

Gary Sykes (1990) in writing about teacher professionalism and coordination discusses the importance of schools coordinating their curricula, instruction and assessment. As he writes,

Agreements among school faculty members on matters of curriculum, instruction, and assessment are necessary and can be based on findings from research as well as knowledge of local circumstances. The second-grade teacher depends on the work of the first-grade teacher and may need to plan cooperatively with other second-grade teachers (p. 82).

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Restructuring schools for intellectual quality. F. M. Newmann and Associates. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers: 179-203; Newmann, F. M. and Associates (1996). The interplay of school culture and structure. Authentic achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality. F. M. Newmann. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, Inc.: 205-27; Newmann, F. M. and G. G. Wehlage (1995). Successful school restructuring: A report to the public and educators, Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Purkey, S. C. and M. S. Smith (1983). "Effective schools: A review." The Elementary School Journal 83(4): 427-452; Rosenholtz, S. J. (1991). Teachers' workplaces: The social organization of schools. New York, Teachers College Press; Rutter, M. J. (1982). Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effect on children. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

But few are coordinated in either mission as Bryk, Holland, and Lee describe, or in the concrete ways that Sykes mentions.

Therefore, schools are asked to organize in ways that are not typical in conventional public schools, and Title I schools in particular; yet this policy aims to change that on a national scale. Making such changes would mean learning about the technical and social aspects of the policy to create a harmonious effort to help children achieve high standards.

A break from traditional schools. Changing schools such that they coordinate across classrooms is a formidable undertaking, particularly because of the social changes required. To get an idea of the changes in school practices that Schoolwides ask for, I use the work of Daniel Lortie (1975). Lortie paints a radically different picture of school organization than that proposed by Schoolwide programs. Lortie writes that the attributes of the teaching culture are "individualism, "conservatism," and "presentism."

One social change is for schools to work as collectives, instead of as individuals. By "individualism" Lortie means that public schools are "staffed by people who have little concern with building a shared technical culture" (p. 67). He describes schools as places where teachers work independently of one another. They are independent physically from one another because of self-contained

classrooms. They are independent also by having control over what and how they teach students -- though this varies by state, district and school. Schoolwides ask teachers to build a shared technical culture. This means that teachers would need to build the social resources to enable them to build common understandings around what children can accomplish and how they learn.

Another social change the policy requests is for school personnel to embrace school and classroom innovations, rather than resist change. Lortie writes that "conservatism" is a strong attribute of schools. He uses "conservatism" to mean that "teaching...is more likely to appeal to people who approve of prevailing practice than to those who are critical of it" (p. 29). That is, those who choose teaching as a career do so because they like the way it is now organized in classrooms and in schools. The policy implies social changes by asking teachers and administrators not only to change the way they interact with students, but also with their colleagues.

A third social change for school personnel is to become future oriented. Lortie argues that the teaching culture embraces "presentism." By that, he means "the dominance of present versus future orientations among teachers" (p. 86). If Lortie is right, that teachers focus on today, rather than a long-term vision, the



Schoolwide policy asks them to marshal the social resources to conduct long term planning as a school.

A break from Title I schools. Though comprehensive school coordination is unusual for American schools, it is particularly unusual for Title I schools. Because of accountability issues with Title I funds, in the early 1970s Title I schools moved to providing remedial instruction for Title I students in pullout programs. As Cohen and his colleagues explain,

The combination of federal accountability requirements and state and local desires to avoid federal audits and orders to return misspent funds, encouraged localities to focus Title I projects on pullout work, which often centered on drill and practice. (Cohen, Cocoran, Ericson, Fuhrman, Janger, and Spillane, unpublished mss).

Pullouts tend to focus on low-level skills and not to be coordinated with a student's classroom instruction (Allington, 1989; Rowan, Guthrie, Lee and Guthrie, 1986). They also tend to be short in duration, lessening the possibility that they help students master even low-level skills (Rowan, Guthrie, Lee and Guthrie, 1986).

One way to move away from the lack of coordination and address the accountability issues in Title I schools, is to free schools from strict accountability measures that track resources through particular students, and instead hold schools accountable for student learning. Historically, schools have not been held

accountable for children's learning.

Experimental. Schoolwides are experimental for at least three reasons. First in part they build on research that has yet to make clear the relationship between school organization and what organizational theorist call the "core technology" (Meyer and Rowan, 1983) of schools: teaching and learning. Peterson, McCarthy and Elmore (1996) argue that changing teaching practice is a problem of learning, not organization. Others argue that organizational change or a change in school structure works in some situations and not others, depending on whether teachers focus on the quality of student learning (Newmann & Associates, 1996; Louis, Kruse and Marks, 1996). So the relationship between school organization and classroom practices is, at best, unclear.

Second, to reorganize schools into a tightly coordinated unit has not been tried on any kind of scale. Though the attempts to restructure schools are growing (Elmore, 1990; The Holmes Group, 1990; Lieberman, 1995; Newmann, 1995; Odden, 1996), how such policies will play out on a national scale and how teachers and administrators will choose to undertake this work and coordinate instruction is not known. Though some have conducted initial research on how Schoolwides work. For example, the U.S. Department of Education released a report titled An idea book:

## Implementing schoolwide projects (1994).

### Conclusion on Policy

The policies are not highly specified. States have wide latitude in interpreting and responding to the call for standards and aligned assessments. They also have wide latitude on how they will interpret and respond to the changes in Title I. The same is true of LEAs. They might further refine a state's approach to standards, assessments and Title I. The Schoolwide programs are defined only with broad parameters and schools might interpret and respond to them quite differently.

The purposes of the policies were not to provide specificity for implementation. On the contrary, they were meant to set a broad vision for all of America's schools; and to move the Title I system away from a set of highly regulated supplemental programs targeted at specific students, to a much less regulated system responding to accountability measures based on state standards.

Through the Schoolwide programs, the IASA and Goals 2000, policymakers ask teachers and administrators to embrace the purposes of providing a "high-quality education for all individuals and a fair and equal opportunity to obtain an education" (IASA, p. 3519).

The purposes shall be accomplished by (IASA, p. 3521):

- 1) Ensuring high standards for all children and aligning the efforts of States, local educational agencies, and schools to help children served under this title to reach such standards;
- 2) Providing children an enriched and accelerated educational program, including, when appropriate, the use of the arts, through schoolwide programs or through additional services that increase the amount and quality of instruction time so that children served under this title receive at least the classroom instruction that other children receive;
- 3) Promoting schoolwide reform and ensuring access of children (from the earliest grades) to effective instructional strategies and challenging academic content that includes intensive complex thinking and problem-solving experiences;
- 4) Significantly upgrading the quality of instruction by providing staff in participating schools with substantial opportunities for professional development
- 5) Coordinating services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with health and social service program funded from other sources;
- 6) Affording parents meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at home and at school;
- 7) Distributing resources, in amounts sufficient to make a difference, to areas and schools where needs are greatest;
- 8) Improving accountability, as well as teaching and learning, by using State assessment systems designed to measure how well children served under this title are achieving challenging State student performance standards expected of all children; and
- 9) Providing greater decisionmaking authority and flexibility to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance.

Together the two policies ask schools to make technical and social changes in their approach to educating all of American's children.

### The Problem

To enact the policy requires most schools to make social and technical changes. The technical changes include those aspects of the policy that need some sort of specialized knowledge or skill. This includes the alignment of state content and performance standards, state assessments, professional development, curriculum materials, and others. Other technical tasks include making assessments that measure as yet under specified ideas such as "higher-order thinking" skills.

But the technical changes are not the only changes enactors need to make. They would need to enact social change as well. Enacting the standards in classroom might require teachers to teach students new ways of interacting. Coordinating the efforts of whole schools to enact a comprehensive school program might be an enormous change. These social changes would mean mobilizing support for Schoolwide programs, and sustaining the cooperation and coordination required to make such programs work.

To study if and how schools and teachers make the technical and social changes called for in the IASA, I conducted an

implementation study addressing the following issues. Do schools have opportunities to learn about the large changes the policies suggest? And if they do, what are the qualities of such opportunities? How do schools interpret and respond to these policies? Do the schools' responses correspond to their learning opportunities?

Ideas about examining policy enactors as they learn from and about the policy, and the correlation of what they learned with their learning opportunities, evolved from the policy implementation literature.

### Policy Implementation

The early, assumed view of the policy process was that it was a rational process of mandate and implementation.<sup>8</sup> In this view, policymakers and analysts identified the correct policy goals and dispensed with any implementation issues through developing a set of rules, administrative structures, and incentives to encourage people to behave according to those goals. Many researchers have found that policy implementation is not a rational process (Allison, 1969; Hannaway, 1989; Lindblom, 1959, Majone and Wildavsky, 1977; McLaughlin, 1978; Sproull, 1981). The policy implementation

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<sup>8</sup> Others took exception to this assumed view. See for example Charles Lindblom, 1959.

literature suggests that even when policy is specified the policy process is rarely a matter of mandate and implementation (Brieschke, 1987; Malen and Hart, 1987; Shulman, 1983; Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977). The literature also suggests that large-scale policies play out differently in different local contexts (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988).

#### Policy Implementation as Mutual Adaptation

Many researchers have tried to understand the relationship between policy and practice, and to characterize the process of implementation. One particularly fruitful view of the process is one of *mutual adaptation*, which Berman and McLaughlin (1978) explain in the final volume of the report Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change. As they write,

Effective strategies promoted *mutual adaptation*, the process by which the project is adapted to the reality of its institutional setting, while at the same time teachers and school officials adapt their practices in response to the project (p. viii).

#### Policy Implementation as a Process of Learning

Mutual adaptation might imply that one must *learn* about the policy to enact it. After having participated in the development of the concept of mutual adaptation, Berman (1986) argued that learning is a better way of understanding implementation than is compliance.

Others have also noted that changes in school and classroom practices present challenges of learning for teachers and administrators (Cohen and Barnes, 1993; Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1982; National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, 1993).

It might seem obvious that policy enactors must learn, for in enacting policy they must change some habits, even if in small ways. Yet, learning on the part of enactors hadn't been studied explicitly in education policy implementation until the late 1980s when the Education Policy and Practice Study (EPPS) at Michigan State University began to examine what teachers learned from the California mathematics state curriculum policies. Policymakers hoped that the policies would have a direct impact on classroom practice. These policies included state-created curriculum frameworks, and state-created or selected professional development activities, texts, and tests. The policy instruments encouraged a kind of teaching associated with constructivists' views of knowledge (Peterson, 1990).

A host of books and papers from the EPPS, including one entire issue of the Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis journal (1990), showed that what teachers learned from the California mathematics curriculum framework policy changed their teaching practices in incremental ways. Their new practices were based on



their former practices with some assumptions about elements of teaching for understanding teaching included. Their interpretations depended on their prior knowledge and skill as well as their dispositions toward the frameworks. These could be influenced by their opportunities to learn about and from the policy, as well as factors such as time to learn.

To enact this policy, some might need to learn about and from the technical and social changes in the policy. Learning about technical is a social process. Teachers and administrators might need to learn what others mean by state standards thus meaning that learning about technical changes which is a social process. To do this, they could work together to understand the elements of the policy. For instance, teachers and administrators would work together (a social activity) to understand such ideas as “alignment” and “complex thinking and problem solving experiences” (IASA, p. 3521) and the like (technical ideas), thus making technical learning a social activity. When changing the social organization of the school or classroom, teachers and administrators (a social activity) would find they have differences in opinion about what such words as “alignment,” “complex thinking and problem solving experience,” (which are technical, though weakly specified, ideas), thus making the social activity an opportunity to learn about technical changes.

In the abstract, this interactive process between learning about the technical and social aspects of the policy seems not only plausible, but also perhaps ideal, implying that administrators and teachers will find this process of studying the student curriculum and the school organization a harmonious one. However, enacting such a policy might be quite problematic. In a school case study, Carol Barnes (1996, 1997) found that when a school enacted both the social and technical aspects of this policy, conflict ensued. The teachers and principal made decisions about the whole school's Title I resources that they thought would help all children in the school achieve high standards. But the school became deeply divided over these resources as they tried to live with the agreements and changes they had made.

### Teaching the Policy

If enacting the policy requires *learning*, then how a policy is "taught," or the instruction provided to enact the policy, might affect the responses to the policy. For Schoolwides this means the learning opportunities schools have to plan and enact the policy would help improve the policy's effectiveness, or the efficiency with which it is enacted.

To organize my study's questions I conceived of the policy process as a process of not only learning, but of teaching as well.

These ideas build on a phrase Cohen and Barnes (1993) used, "the pedagogy of the policy," to examine the aims and methods of education policy. In this view, policy and program development or policy instruments are a kind of "curriculum" for those that would enact the policy. This curriculum is directed at classroom teachers and administrators, or those who are to implement the policy. The policy's mediators or agents are "teachers" who work with teachers and administrators to enact the policy. The teachers and administrators are the "learners" of the policy.

I investigated the learning opportunities schools had to plan for, study, interpret and enact the policy together with their interpretations and responses. Studying the learning opportunities highlights not only what content was used to represent the policy, but also the means of the teaching of the policy -- who taught, and how they taught -- to the fore.

To examine the learning opportunities or guidance created for teachers and administrators to learn about and from the policy I used Gary Fenstermacher's (1986) definition of teaching. Fenstermacher explains he is defining generic teaching, neither good teaching nor bad teaching, nor a particular school of thought concerning teaching.

Fenstermacher argues that teaching, all teaching, is the deliberate activity on the part of one person (a teacher) who tries (but doesn't necessarily succeed) to convey content to someone else (a learner). Content is broadly defined to include knowledge and skill, beliefs, emotions, traits of character and so on.

By applying Fenstermacher's definition of teaching to policy interventions, the *teacher* is the policy's agent, referred to in this dissertation as the *instructional leader*, or *mediator*, or *policy agents*, whoever that might be. And the *learner* is the person or people enacting the policy. The *content* is what they studied and how they studied it. This entire process is referred to as a *learning opportunity*.

Learning opportunities could generate from at least three sources: policy agents, the policy's curriculum, or other schools enacting the policy. One source of guidance for policy implementation could be policy agents that work with schools or districts. The policy encouraged federal agents working in the federal education technical and research centers to work with schools. The policy also encouraged state policymakers and officials to create state support teams for schools that would presumably be made up of state policy agents. However, this part of the policy wasn't funded. Policy agents could also be district

personal as the policy implies by encouraging LEAs to work in consultation with schools to enact the policy. Or policy agents could work in schools.

Learning opportunities could be constructed not by relying on an agent, but on the “curriculum” of policy, or policy documents. One can imagine schools studying the legislation, or regulations, or national or federal reports such as Making schools work for children in poverty: A new framework prepared by the Commission on Chapter 1 (1992), and Reinventing Chapter I: The current Chapter I Program and new directions: Final report of the National Assessment of the Chapter I Program (1993), or other documents. One could envision a school’s staff working together to understand the policy through joint readings and discussions. In addition, they could discuss their own school and classroom practices to understand what seems to help students achieve high standards.

A third learning opportunity that could enable schools to enact Schoolwide programs is through observing or working with other schools that have enacted the policy. That is, schools could use one another as resources for learning about and from the policy.

## Interpretations and Responses to the Policy

To get a sense of what enactors might learn about or from the policy, I examined how school personnel interpreted and responded to the technical and social ideas in the policy. I did not attempt to measure what or how much enactors had learned. Instead, I asked about enactor's interpretations and responses to the policy as schools planned for the Schoolwide program and made changes in school organization and classroom practices.

I used literature concerning school coordination, including the effective schools and restructured schools literature, to help develop categories to examine how schools coordinated their instructional programs. The categories I used include a *vision or common focus, professional relationships, and interdependent relationships*.<sup>9</sup> In addition, I asked teachers if they had *opportunities to observe or see classroom practices* based on the Title I reforms. I examined if and how schools *aligned instructional instruments internally*.

In addition to internal coordination, I also examined if and how schools *aligned externally with the state student content and performance standards*.

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<sup>9</sup>I am indebted to Carol Barnes for helping me make sense of the school and system-wide coordination literature.

Each of these potential responses contain technical and social teaching and learning problems. As technical problems the policy's "teacher" needs to enable learners to understand and use these responses. But enacting any of these responses would require much more than technical teaching and learning. They also require teaching and learning how to enact such responses. As Barnes (1996, 1997) has pointed out, there is much more to enacting these policies than technical aspects would indicate.

For instance, creating a common vision, working in interdependent teams, observing new Title I classroom practices and aligning curricular materials internally and externally could be viewed as technical in tasks. But each also has strong social teaching and learning components as well. For instance, a "vision" isn't *common* until all or most parties in a school hold this vision. The act of planning for a Schoolwide and coordinating activities such that all children have equitable opportunities to learn is a social as well as technical undertaking. Working independently can be as simple as one teacher pulling students out of an another teacher's classroom, but even this has social aspects. Teachers must agree on when children are to be pulled out and how often.

Common Vision or Focus. I used the idea of a common vision or focus because many researchers have argued that a common vision led by the principal or teachers leads to shared goals (Purkey and Smith, 1983; Newmann and Wehlage, 1995; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1984). Many argue that this kind of cohesion leads to a more coordinated curriculum for all students. While the vision itself could be considered technical, the development of such a vision is a social undertaking.

Professional and Interdependent Relationships. I used the ideas of professional relationships and interdependent relationships to begin to understand a school's culture and structure. Many researchers write about the importance of culture and structure in providing not just a coordinated curriculum but also one that is focused on high academic achievement for all children. But the evidence about the roles of culture and structure is mixed. Newmann (1996) argues that the structure of a school isn't what makes a difference between a school that pursues intellectual quality and one that doesn't. As he writes,

Separating school culture and structure analytically can help to explain why structural innovations work in some situations and not others. For example, a school's teachers may have access to teaming and common planning time (structures), but if they are not committed to using these structures to focus on the intellectual quality of student learning (culture), we would not expect to find much authentic pedagogy in that school (p.



206).

Others present mixed views of culture and structure. Judith Warren-Little (1990) in describing "joint work" shows how structure and culture interact as teachers share in defining what they want to accomplish and how to accomplish it. She defines *joint work* and having aspects of both professional and interdependent work relationships.

I reserve the term *joint work* for encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching (interdependence), collective conceptions of autonomy, support for teachers' initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice, and group affiliations grounded in professional work (p. 519).

To understand more about culture and structure, I used ideas concerning professional and interdependent work relationships. By *professional relationships* I mean those in which school personnel work to develop shared values or norms, particularly around *learners, learning and teaching* (Ball, 1988). I choose learners, learning and teaching because the Title I reforms are based not only on new conceptions of learning and teaching, but also different conceptions of learners. Though traditionally Title I students might have been thought of as less capable learners than their counterparts, through the IASA and Goals 2000 teachers are encouraged to ensure all students gain proficiencies in state

standards. The idea of professional relationships assumes that the social teaching and learning aspects of enacting the policy are central, because building relationships is a social activity. It also assumes that these social relationships will be centered on the technical understandings of the teachers and principal as they define learners, learning, and teaching.

By *interdependent work relationships*, I mean school structures or instructional programs that encourage or require school personnel to become familiar with one another's teaching practices. Team teaching is an example of this. Interdependent relationships could be enacted in technical or social ways or both. They could be enacted technically such that teachers merely split up the work, just as the research suggests pullouts programs were typically run (Rowan, et al., 1986); or they could be enacted in social ways as general education staff and Title I staff work together to coordinate the curriculum.

Images of the Reform. I also wanted to know if teachers had the opportunity to observe teachers teaching in ways encouraged in the policy. The IASA is replete with notions about what might help students "acquire the knowledge and skills contained in the challenging State content standards and challenging State performance standards" (p. 3521). These notions include "intensive

complex thinking and problem-solving experiences" (p. 3521); "advanced skills" (p. 3524); "higher order thinking skills and understanding" (p. 3525); "applied learning" (p. 3540); and others. Therefore, I asked if they had available to them *images* -- such as videotapes or other models -- of teaching Title I students in ways the reforms encouraged. This, too, could be either a technical or social undertaking. Observing images of the reforms could be a technical response to the policy. It could also be a social response if school staffs discuss these images and develop ideas about what the images portray about learners, learning and teaching, and how to enact the images.

Internal and External Alignment. Finally, I looked at *internal alignment* as a coordination strategy, and *external alignment* with the state student content standards. In the literature "alignment" is generally used to indicate that teachers' goals and practices are aligned with tests or assessments (S. Alan Cohen, 1987; Rowan, 1990). Schools can align internally by developing their own goals and tests and ensuring they match one another.

Schools can align externally by aligning their teaching, professional development, curriculum, materials or other instructional instruments with state student content standards or state tests, as policymakers hoped they would. They can also align

externally with instruments that are not governmental in nature, such as textbooks, if the SEA or LEA does not select textbooks. Alignment, though technical in nature, could highlight the social component of learning as schools decide as a collective what and how to align.

These five coordination strategies -- a common vision or focus, professional and interdependent relationships, images of teaching, and alignment -- are not mutually exclusive. Indeed in the literature, many researchers cluster together various strategies needed to enhance school coordination and students academic achievement (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993; Seashore-Louis, Kruse, and Lewis, 1995).

### A Complications in Enacting This Policy

An additional complication when viewing the enactment of this policy as a social and technical teaching and learning problem, is the lack of specificity in the policy.

Enacting weakly specified policies is quite different than enacting highly specified policies, especially those in which enactors will need to understand technical and social changes required and how to make those changes. To enact such changes would require that teachers and principals *accommodate* the policy, as well as *assimilate it*. As Elbow (1986) describes Piagets' terms,

In Piagets' terms, learning involves both assimilation and accommodation. Part of the job is to get the subject matter to bend and deform so that it fits inside the learner (that is, so it can fit or relate to the learner's experiences). But that's only half the job. Just as important is the necessity for the learner to bend and deform himself so that he can fit himself around the subject without doing violence to it. Good learning is not a matter of finding a happy medium where both parties are transformed as little as possible. Rather both parties must be maximally transformed-in a sense deformed. There is violence in learning. We cannot learn something without eating it, yet we cannot really learn it either without being chewed up. (p. 148).

One can imagine different scenarios of how this policy could play out as learners interpret and re-interpret their own conceptions and misconceptions of the subject matter, in which learners assimilate or accommodate the policy. For one, enactors could have learning opportunities that help them specify the policy, or provide highly structured guidance for enacting the policy. This might make policy aims and means clearer to enactors, or provide a sense of security about how to enact it, or both. It might also make it easier for them to assimilate and not accommodate the policy by merely putting the highly specified terms into action.

On the other hand, without learning opportunities that provide structure for enacting the policy, enactors might impose on the policy their prior knowledge and beliefs so strongly that the policy is assimilated and accommodated at all. This seems more likely to happen in the American instructional guidance system, which has

tended to rely on the targets of reform -- teachers and principals -- to also be the agents of reforms (Cohen and Ball, 1990; Fullan, 1991).

A third way learners could respond to such a policy is by trying to enact it. That is, they might interpret it in one way and respond to that interpretation by trying to enact it. They might find that their initial interpretation did not bring the results they hoped it would, and continue to re-interpret and re-enact it over time.

These three types of learning opportunities and interpretations and responses are meant to show that weakly specified policies present challenges of *learning* and perhaps *learning opportunities* for enactors and for those who are responsible for, or take responsibility for, their enactment. They are not meant to be exhaustive or mutually exclusive. One can imagine that schools could respond to a policy by incorporating all three kinds of responses. That is, enactors could respond to a policy that has been highly specified by a learning opportunity by assimilating or accommodating it. And they might continue to interpret and enact the policy in an interactive way over time, perhaps initially assimilating it and accommodating it over time.

Having defined how I examined the schools' teaching and learning of this technical and social policy, I now present the

research questions followed by how I conducted my research.

### Research Questions

I asked the following questions to describe and explain the learning opportunities available to those enacting Title I Schoolwide program.

- Was there an instructional leader or policy mediator? If so, who?
- What (if any) content and what process did the instructional leader use to convey or impart knowledge to others? How did the technical and social aspects of the learning opportunities interact?
- Who learned to enact the policy?

I asked the following questions in order to describe and explain the interpretations and responses to the policies.

- Did schools develop a Schoolwide focus? What was the focus?
- Did schools develop professional relationships? How?
- Did schools develop interdependent work relationships? How?
- Did enactors have exposure to images of the reforms?
- Did schools align internally? How?
- Did schools align externally? How?

I then asked if there was a relationship between the learning opportunities and the enactments of the policy. If there was, what was it?

In the next section, I explain how I explored these topics, or the research methodology and data analysis.

### Research Methods

Using the frame of the policy process as a process of teaching and learning, I now turn to the research methods.

I used a qualitative case study approach to answer the questions. Qualitative research is suitable for the research issues I have described because I wanted to examine a process of enactment. Also, I sought to understand the meaning that enactors up and down the system gave the policy. Various enactors (policymakers, state and district officials, and school staffs) are likely to have different perspectives on the policy.

In describing the qualitative tradition, John Creswell (1998) writes that,

Writers agree that one undertakes qualitative research in a natural setting where the researcher is an instrument of the data collection who gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language (p. 14).

My study has all five distinguishing characteristics. The natural settings in which I conducted this study were one central office and three schools. I was the instrument of the data



collection, refining questions to suit the context as I learned about the central office and the three schools. I gathered words through interviews and observations, and analyzed these inductively.

I focused on the meaning the participants made of Schoolwide programs. I sought to understand the knowledge and beliefs of the people who populated the three schools and the central office because those who work within the Title I system will enact policies according to the purposes they understand, the meaning and importance they give the task, and the various ways in which they envision the task. I described each school's process in this thesis.

Creswell distinguishes between five traditions of qualitative research -- biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. I worked in the case study tradition.

### Case Studies

The following is how Creswell describes a case study.

...a case study is an exploration of a "bounded system" or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. This bounded system is bounded by time and place, and it is the case being studied -- a program, an event, an activity, or individuals (p. 61).

I conducted three case studies of schools nested in a passive central office that responded to policymakers' requests to enact Schoolwide Programs. I studied the planning processes and the

interpretations and enactments of the Schoolwides. Therefore my study was bounded by place with the three schools and their central office, though I took into account the federal and state actions. It was bounded by time through the year of planning and first year of enactment. I also collected data over time using multiple sources of information, which is described in detail under the section on methodology.

#### Choosing a Site to Study Policy Enactment

Title I Schoolwide programs as a site. I chose the Title I Schoolwide programs as a site for studying policy enactment for three reasons, one practical and two more personal. The practical reason was I hoped to be able to observe policy enactment across levels of governance. I wanted to observe what McLaughlin argued would be the next wave of implementation analysis, the relationship between macro and micro (1987). I expected to observe one central office work with different schools. Thus, I thought I would see three schools interpretations and responses to the same learning opportunities.

This is not what actually happened in the field. Nonetheless, I had strong reasons for believing the policy might be enacted in this way. For one, the legislation asks central offices to work in consultation with schools as they create Schoolwide programs. For

another, the central office personnel assured me that they would be working with schools. For another, many researchers have argued that the Title I system is more tightly coupled (Cohen, 1982; Cusick, 1992; Kirst and Jung, 1981) than the larger formal system which is decentralized and lacks hierarchy (Cohen, 1982; Cusick, 1992) or perhaps doesn't even exist (Sarason, 1982).

A second reason I chose Title I Schoolwide programs as a site was the strong professional development component the legislation encourages. Demands on teachers and schools are growing. Teachers are now asked to respond to state student standards and the aligned assessments in a growing number of subject matter areas. My hope was to observe ways in which teachers received support or guidance for responding to these demands.

A third reason was my interest in how teachers teach higher-order-thinking skills to all students. Title I, tied to Goals 2000 legislation, is a vehicle for pressing toward ambitious teaching and learning for all students. Having once been an elementary school principal, I was aware of how difficult it is for teachers to meet the needs of a wide range of students. By range of students, I include those of varying achievement levels, racial and ethnic backgrounds, social economic classes, and dispositions toward school learning. I hoped to observe ways that teachers used to motivate and interest

students a range of students in academic subjects.

The state and district as sites. The state, Michigan, and the district, Mapleton,<sup>10</sup> were sites within the EPPS sample. Starting with the California mathematics curriculum framework research in the late 1980s, the EPPS researchers investigated the relations among state and district policies and teachers' classroom practices in three states -- California, Michigan and South Carolina. The states were selected because policymakers in each had undertaken substantive reform efforts, and the states represented an array of state and local governance arrangements (Spillane, Peterson, Prawat, Jennings, & Borman, 1996).

The EPPS researchers chose Mapleton as a site because it is a mid-size urban district with a high number of schools for disadvantaged students. Researchers on the project chose districts with somewhat high levels on poverty. The district had 34 elementary schools, 27 or nearly 80% were Title I schools.

The schools as sites. I followed three schools in one district in one state because doing so allowed me to hold some policy variables constant. All three schools had access to the same state content and performance standards and same state test, and worked within the same state's approach to Title I. The district's

curriculum, texts, tests, and union rules were the same across the schools. Each school worked with the same Title I central office.

Purposeful sampling is an important part of qualitative case studies. I chose these schools because they appeared to vary on the degree to which they were coordinated across classrooms within each school at the beginning of the Schoolwide planning process.

#### Methodology: How I Explored My Questions

Following in the qualitative tradition, I collected data through observations and interviews, as well as documents and reports.

Interviews and observations. Over an eighteen-month period, I interviewed central office administrators, principals, teachers, district-hired consultants, and others. I observed teacher's meetings within schools, and meetings between central office personnel and school personnel, and classrooms.

All together, I conducted 44 interviews and 50 observations. I conducted 25 interviews with school staff, 17 with central office staff, and two with outside consultants.

I observed meetings within schools 21 times, classrooms 14 times, meetings between school and outside consultants nine times, central office personnel working with school administrators and teachers four times, and school board meetings two times.

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<sup>10</sup> I used pseudonyms for the district, schools, and all individuals.

The issues I hoped to capture were the organizing principles of observations and interviews. In particular I wanted to examine the learning opportunities schools had for assisting them in this change. I asked school personnel when they would be planning for the Schoolwide program and joined them on those occasions. As I observed their planning times, I was able to determine other appropriate times to observe them.

By pursuing particular opportunities, I used an instrumental approach to case studies. Stake (1995) distinguishes between an intrinsic case study and an instrumental case study. If the focus is on the case itself, he refers to this as an intrinsic case. If the focus is on issues within the case, he refers to this as an instrumental case. I used an instrumental approach, choosing those opportunities to observe the school's change from a Title I Targeted Assistance School to a Title I Schoolwide program.

My interviews and observations were based on the Education Policy and Practice Study's spring 1993 interview and classroom observation guides. (See Appendix A.) These guides, created to gather qualitative data to explore the relationship between policy and practice, provided me with broad analytic categories. I used the classroom observation guides for not only the classroom observations but also for meetings between and among adults, in

keeping with my desire to capture interactions that might be opportunities for learning about or from the policy. The broad categories in this observation form included groupings of people, instructional materials, discourse patterns and conceptions of knowledge, coherence of instruction, and others.

I used the interview guide to begin to understand the meaning participants brought to the policy. The guide included several categories including the process of learning from the policy, the respondent's history with the policy, and others.

As the data collection progressed, I developed a separate interview guide for principals and teachers. (See Appendix B.) I made this guide in part because I wanted to learn if the principals and teachers perceived that the policy was asking for changes in classroom practices in addition to school practices and if they had opportunities to see or observe reformed teaching.

Documents. I also gathered from the central office and each school documents that they used to plan for or enact Schoolwides. These varied from formal documents such as the guidebook for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1987) to notes shared with me by instructional leaders. I collected each school's final application to become a Schoolwide program.

Timing of interviews and observations. In the late fall of 1995, I interviewed central office staff to ensure I understood the LEA's approach to Schoolwides.

In February of 1996, the central office began to work with schools that were to start their year of planning to become a Schoolwide. I attended all meetings each school had concerning Schoolwides.

I wasn't able to capture all the opportunities schools had to learn about the policy for a variety of reasons. Some opportunities were too informal, happening between classes. Some opportunities, such as learning about the MEAP, were not always viewed by a school as a Schoolwide learning opportunity, perhaps because the MEAP was in place before the policies. In one school learning about the MEAP was viewed as learning about the policy only in retrospect. Other opportunities were viewed as part of the policy, but weren't referred to as Schoolwide planning time.

In each school, I interviewed the principal, the Title I reading teacher, teachers who appeared to be instructional leaders, and the chair of the School Improvement Team (SIT).

I continued to interview central office staff, sampling widely as I was told that Schoolwides would mean involvement and decision making on the part of many central office administrators. To get



other views of the district's approach to Schoolwides, I interviewed two people who did not work within the district, but worked closely with central office staff and in the schools, one a curriculum consultant at the intermediate school district and one a strategic planning consultant.

In March of 1997 I returned to each school to learn how their Schoolwide programs worked and to observe classrooms. I interviewed teachers about if and how their teaching had changed due to the Schoolwide program. I interviewed the same people I had originally (the principal, the Title I staff, the SIT chair, and lead teachers), and observed at least three teachers in each school. I selected these teachers by asking others in the school to identify three teachers: one who had struggled with the changes, one who was doing what might be expected, and one who seemed to have developed new teaching capacities during the first year of implementation.

### Data Analysis

To begin data analysis, I examined and read the data both deductively and inductively. One deductive strategy I used was to read the data for instances of teaching and learning between and among those I chose to interview and observe.

As I continued with the data analysis, I developed the

categories for how schools coordinated, using three categories I found in the school effectiveness and school restructuring literature and two I created from my data.

An inductive strategy I used was to examine the data and code it by what Bogdan and Biklen (1992) call "coding categories," or topics and patterns. I gathered frequently used words, phrases and ideas and categorized them under topics and patterns.

After determining a first set of tentative themes from these three processes, I then examined the data again in a second inductive process. I read the data for recurring words, phrases and ideas, which my themes did not encompass. This process led me to further insights that reshaped and sharpened my themes.

I sketched tentative school stories. In sketching these stories, I continued to describe the patterns I observed across organizations, and made sense of these patterns. As I wrote the chapters, the themes were refined.

Before turning to each school's case study, the second chapter is background on the district's lack of attention to the Schoolwide process. It is an important piece because it shows that the schools were embedded in a decentralized and fragmented formal educational system. This is particularly important for Title I schools because Title I is a categorical program -- a virtual

entitlement for states and districts. It shows how each school was left to its own devices to enact Schoolwides, in part explaining how and why schools have widely varying interpretations of the policy.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE DISTRICT AND CENTRAL OFFICE BACKGROUND

The central office was largely passive during the enactment of Schoolwides in the spring of 1996 and the 1996-97 school year. The policy was not mediated by the central office, meaning that the schools had wide latitude for interpreting the Title I reforms that were to be embodied in Schoolwide programs. Though the IASA (p. 3530) encouraged central offices to inform schools of Schoolwide authority, to provide assistance in planning Schoolwides, and to work in consultation in enacting Schoolwides, this central office did none of these. The central office did not allow any schools to enact Schoolwides between 1988 and 1995.

Researchers have characterized the educational system as a fragmented and decentralized system (Cohen, 1982; Cohen and Spillane, 1993; and Cusick, 1992; Meyer and Rowan, 1983; Weick, 1976), and Mapleton's central office shows one way in which this is so. This central office was loosely coupled from the Title I state and federal programs, from Mapleton schools generally, and from the schools in this study as they enacted Schoolwides specifically.

At a time when the federal legislation was encouraging various levels of education governance to focus on the core technology of schools, classroom teaching and learning, this central office was divesting itself of providing instructional support.

### State Background

Before telling Mapleton's central office story, I include a bit of background on Michigan's Title I program and Goals 2000 developments. Michigan was a state of 9 million people with 84,000 public school teachers, and 1.5 million public school students (Poppink and Lanier, 1994).

At the state department level, Goals 2000 and Title I Schoolwide programs fell into rich soil.<sup>1</sup> The state had sought to provide technical guidance for schools long before this federal legislation. Though a local control state, it had produced since the early 1970s a form of student content standards referred to as the "Essential Skills and Objectives" and set of statewide tests referred to as the Michigan Educational

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the information concerning the state's response was taken from a report by Cohen, D. K., T. Corcoran, et al. (1998 Unpublished Manuscript). Initial state and local responses to the Improving America's School Act of 1994 and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Report to Policy Studies Associates.

Assessment Program or MEAP. Though not updated in tandem, the two have continued to be updated through the 1980s and 1990s.

In 1990, Public Act 25 put into legislation what could be thought of as district and school coordination strategies that encourage social interaction around the state's technical guidance system. These included requiring districts and schools to: (1) adopt a core curriculum; (2) develop and implement individual school and district-wide school improvement plans; (3) report students' progress annually to the public and the state department; and (4) seek school-by-school accreditation on the basis of adequate performance. Other legislation followed that mandated the use of the state's core curriculum. Though this mandate was later repealed, the Mapleton district counted the state's core curriculum as the district's curriculum. Taken together, these strategies can be viewed as the beginning of a state systemic reform package.

Therefore, the state was in some ways moving toward systemic reform providing technical guidance and enabling social guidance before the IASA and Goals 2000. As Goals 2000 was enacted into law, the state continued to be responsive to federal systemic reform requests. As of January 1998, Michigan was the only state that had received federal

grants to support the development of curriculum frameworks in four subject matter areas.

As to Title I, the state education department interpreted the 1994 legislation to mean that schools should integrate Title I instruction with regular classroom work. So they encouraged Schoolwide programs and discouraged pullout programs. If schools wanted to continue with pullout programs, they were to show they were successful.

The policy was mediated, at least technically, through the state for the three schools. All of the schools had School Improvement Teams (SIT) because of P.A. 25 of 1990, and two (Knightly and Brooke) of the three used the SIT teams as the basis for their Schoolwide program teams.

Two of the three schools in this study used the state's MEAP tests to mediate the policy. The Strether mathematics teacher attended an intermediate district workshop on the MEAP and shared the information with the other teachers and the principal. Knightly used the MEAP for guidance strongly. In addition, the state chose Knightly for extra support to understand the MEAP, and the entire Knightly staff attended at least one workshop on understanding how students could improve their MEAP scores. At least one teacher attended more than one workshop.

The state's approach to Title I also influenced at least one of the schools' enactments of Schoolwides. The Title I state director initiated a presentation on Schoolwides to Mapleton Title I teachers because she understood the district had none. Strether Elementary, one of the three schools in this study moved toward becoming a Schoolwide because the school's Title I reading teacher attended this presentation and thought Schoolwides sounded like a good idea.

None of the schools looked to the state's content standards for guidance. However the state did provide some mediation of the policy in different forms. They provided at least rudimentary social support by encouraging the formation of SITs. They provided agents who were able to work with schools in understanding a technical of the policy -- the MEAP tests. One policy agent, the state's Title I director, sought to increase knowledge about the Schoolwide option with the Title I amendments, at least in this district and perhaps others.

#### History of Schoolwide Programs in This District

Mapleton was a midsize district situated in an urban area of almost a quarter million people. Together, heavy manufacturing and public sector employment formed the principal economic base, and although unemployment skyrocketed in the early 1980s, as it did in other rust-belt



cities, unemployment at the time of this research was 6%. About one in five of the city's residents was African-American, approximately 5% were Latino. With 20,000 students, Mapleton was one the state's 10 largest school districts. Approximately a third of the students were African-American, over a tenth were Latino, and about half were white (Poppink and Lanier, 1994). A small percentage of the students spoke English as a second language; their primary languages included Hmong, Spanish, and Vietnamese. While the district was primarily middle class, as many as one third of the families lived in poverty.

In the 1995-96 school year, this district had 34 elementary schools, 27 of which were Title I schools and 20 of which were eligible to become Schoolwide programs. In the 1996-97 school year, four more schools were eligible. In other words, 80 percent of the 34 elementary schools were Title I schools, over half of the 34 schools had poverty rates of greater than 60 percent, and 65 percent of them had poverty rates of greater than 50 percent.

Schoolwides were first created as an option in 1988 when Title I was reauthorized through the Augustus F. Hawkins - Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988. Given Mapleton's high number of Title I schools and schools with high

poverty rates, it is somewhat surprising that this district had none. This was a decision the central office had consistently made since 1988.

Though the Schoolwide policy stated that schools and not the central office were to determine whether or not schools were to become Schoolwide programs, this central office had not yet “allowed” any schools to become Schoolwides. Two people I interviewed suggested this might be because Schoolwides would require more coordination among central office staff. That is, the offices of transportation, food services, Title I, special education, purchasing, and others would have to agree on how to treat these schools.

Soon after the 1988 legislation, the three highest poverty schools in this district, all with an 85 percent poverty rate or higher, had planned closely with Mapleton’s Assistant Director of Title I and another professional in the district’s Evaluation Services to become Schoolwide programs. But the then Director of Title I told the Assistant Director the timing wasn’t right. A few years later, the Director asked the Assistant Director and the same schools to prepare to present to the board of education proposals for becoming Schoolwide programs. After they wrote the proposals, the Director told the Assistant Director that the timing was not right. Thus, the central office withdrew political support

from these schools twice. In addition, they withdrew both technical and social support by withdrawing two policy agents, the Assistant Director of Title I and a professional from Evaluation Services. These two had helped the schools interpret the policy and prepare to make the transition to a Schoolwide program.

By the summer of 1995, Mapleton still had no Schoolwides. However, Sharon Wellborn was hired as co-supervisor of Title I, specifically to work with schools on becoming Schoolwides. Sharon (SW 8/8/95) was eager to work with schools in this capacity explaining Schoolwides would require “staff development,” which was her area of expertise. She also explained that Schoolwides were a philosophical shift for Title I with less emphasis on remediation and more emphasis on “a richer learning experience.” Coupled with this was more “leeway” in content, expanding content “beyond math and reading.”

But after starting this work in the fall of 1995, she was told by the former Director of Title I who was now the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction, that the timing wasn't right. Yet, through some fancy political footwork, the person who had replaced the Deputy as Title I director encouraged schools to become Schoolwide programs.

The three schools that had started their planning processes in 1988 chose not to start the planning year in 1995-1996. Many reported that when told they could now become Schoolwides, the principals said, "No way," reasoning that they could not trust central office to support them in this effort.

Many in central office reported that the personnel in those three schools had thought about the elements and processes of Schoolwide programs, and had upgraded the entire educational program as suggested by the legislation. So, while it is true that this district had no formal Schoolwide programs, it did have schools that had thought seriously about and planned for Schoolwides, and they might have been Schoolwides in spirit if not in name. None of the schools I investigated was among those that had done this preparation work.

So, though the legislation stated that the decision of whether or not schools were to enact Schoolwide programs was up to the school, in this district it did not work that way. The central office actively prevented Schoolwides for a time.

#### Schoolwide Program Planning in 1995-1996

In February 1996 schools were given the option to become Schoolwide programs, with a shortened planning year of one semester --

spring of 1996. They would receive an extra \$5,000 for the semester. Schools that chose to wait until the following year would go through a Schoolwide year of planning with Larry Lezotte, who had been officially designated by the state to help schools. Four schools conducted a year of planning. Their reasons varied, and while they self-selected into the process, they were not necessarily the schools that were the furthest along in becoming Schoolwide programs. As mentioned above, three other schools had planned to become Schoolwide programs soon after the 1988 legislation, and chose not to plan again in the spring of 1996.

During the planning time in the spring of 1996, no one in central office was actively involved with the schools planning Schoolwides. Sharon Wellborn, the co-supervisor of Title I programs attempted to keep track of what the schools were working on, and the schools appreciated her input. She met with each school except one during the semester. But she, like the rest of the central office staff, was busy cutting the budget. Sharon was kept busy with providing information about the Title I office to make decisions about the budget.

### Waning Support for Instruction

In a 1993 article, Elmore argued that there is “little evidence that districts have played a constructive role in instructional improvement in

the past.” This district lends weight to Elmore’s suggestion at the time of data collection.

Elmore also pointed out in a 1996 article that there are reasons to believe that central offices can be helpful in improving instruction. By using District 2 in New York City as a case, Elmore argued that there may be natural reasons why districts are in a position to support sustained instructional improvement. As he wrote,

Furthermore, the case demonstrates that local districts may have certain "natural" advantages in supporting sustained instructional improvement through professional development: Districts can achieve economies of scale in acquiring the services of consultants, they can introduce strong incentives for principals and teachers to pay attention to the improvement of teaching in specific domains, they can create opportunities for interaction among professionals that schools might not be able to do by themselves, they can make creative use of multi-pocket budgeting to generate resources to focus on instructional improvement (p. 36).

Central offices might have at least two more advantages. They may be able to influence the culture of the district and to provide incentives in the form of recognition. Just as Purkey and Smith (1983) argue that the culture of a school can affect the classroom, the culture of a district, and its central office, might be able to affect the schools. If the central office message is that instruction is important, this could permeate the district.

In addition, though this central office and its schools were loosely coupled, the three schools I studied seemed to look to the central office if not for guidance, then at least for approval. This might be because of the traditional view in this district that the central office has control over schools. It appeared that even a little direction from central office could have influenced the schools' instructional decisions, especially in two of the three schools.

There is strong evidence that this district once focused on providing technical and social instructional support, but was withdrawing that support. For one, the district had in place what Archbald and Porter (1994) call "central curriculum control." Their model -- based on most systems with central curriculum control policies -- includes textbook adoption policies, curriculum guidelines, and testing. This district had technical supports in place for classroom guidance, including a district test, the Curriculum Monitoring System, and a standardized test, the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT).

Archbald and Porter note that these policies can be highly or little specified, and that it is unclear how they apply to practice. The three schools I studied did not use these for technical guidance. This might have been for lack of social support in using these technical tools. That

is, I heard neither schools nor central office speak of their importance.

However, one person in the Title I office who had joined the office from the Evaluation Services office thought that the scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) could be a helpful guide for teachers to improve their practice (TH 8/8/95).

Though the district had a textbook adoption policy, one school bought curricular materials that they felt were aligned with the MEAP. Another school added objectives to the district curriculum, but did not use it for guidance. The district test was not used as part of the baseline knowledge in any of the schools, though one instructional leader referred to the MAT when making the case that the school's students needed more work in communications. If these three cases are any indication, the relationship between having these control policies in place to school and classroom practices is weak, if the central office doesn't provide the social support for using them. Perhaps having these policies in place could have made a difference if the central office had been using them for either pressure or support, but it wasn't.

The only technical tool the central office did use was the MEAP. The superintendent informed the principals that they were responsible for MEAP scores. But no support for understanding the MEAP or how to



instruct students so that they might achieve on the MEAP was forthcoming from central office.

Simultaneous with the adoption of Schoolwide programs in the spring of 1996, the district cut from its budget nearly all instructional support staff from the central office. Though at one time there was instructional staff in central office, during this budget cut, those positions were cut first. In the few years surrounding this study the curriculum director; elementary school director; language arts, reading, mathematics, social studies and science specialists; the effective schools specialist, and the staff development specialist positions were eliminated. A teacher center located in one school near central office was eliminated. This might not include all cuts. Thus, technical and social support in the form of instructional agents were cut, and in the form of a teacher center.

What remained was the Secondary School Director, and he picked up the title of Elementary School Director as well. Principals with the smallest schools were assigned the administrative functions of the curriculum specialists -- especially the ordering of materials. All three of the principals in this study wondered aloud how principals could possibly serve in both positions. Several people mentioned that the principals

were letting their anger be known, one describing their expressions of anger as an "open rebellion." (SW, 3/29/96).

Though the district had gone through a series of budget cuts since the early- to mid-1980s, it had never cut resources from the central office. The central office and school board argued that this is what they were now doing. One principal pointed out to her staff that the cuts made by the school board, as recommended by central office, were not cuts to administrative positions. That is, though the positions cut were central office positions, they were instructional support positions rather than administrative. She argued this showed that they "devalued teaching." (LO, 3/15/96)<sup>2</sup>

The central office was also going beyond cutting instructional support. It was also sending the message that the schools were site-based managed and principals were to be held responsible for students' MEAP scores. Yet, more than one person in the study thought the site-based management was a way for the district to take less responsibility for the schools' actions. The principal of Brooke Elementary School pondered this with me and said,

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<sup>2</sup> As the budget cuts continued into the summer of 1996, the board cut some administrative positions.

I can't help thinking that, yeah, it's (site-based management) the best way financially. It's the way out for them. I really think that. When I sat there and realized that they're actually meaning this, I also felt it was almost a cop-out, really, because then there has to be no central direction, no central vision, no central philosophy. (GR, 3/18/97.)

Many respondents discussed ways in which the central office hampered not only instructional innovation but also strong relationships with the schools more generally. A clear case of this is the lack of Schoolwide programs until the 1995-1996 school year.

In another example, one professional in central office tried to create a flow chart for schools to show them who to work with in central office and how to obtain guidance on programs, changes in programs, materials, and budgeting. He began with the simple task of how to requisition a desk. After several months, and several meetings with various professionals in the transportation, food services, Title I, special education, purchasing, and other offices, he could not create the flow chart. The difficulty, he reported, was because most of his colleagues wanted to point fingers at one another for any problems rather than discuss the process, or what the process should be. He concluded that if the schools felt they were treated inequitably and in an almost whimsical manner by central office, they were right.

We've [central office] got major restructuring to do is what it comes down to. I think we're in a crisis, is what I think. I think we're in a serious crisis. (TH, 12/15/95).

As a second example, one of the schools in my study had asked central office for a waiver of the school schedule to enable teachers to meet on Wednesday afternoons. It was sent in one year and the request was denied. The principal sent in the exact same request the following year, not even changing the date of the original, and it was approved. She was given no feedback as to why one year it was rejected, and the next accepted.

This central office gave no direction to schools about the policy more generally. Not only were they not supporting Schoolwides, but they also pressed all responsibility for the MEAP onto the schools' principals. Also the policy asks that they "provide high-quality professional development that will improve the teaching of the academic subjects, consistent with the state content standards in order to enable all children to meet the State's student performance standards" (p. 3555). This district had an active summer professional development program that teachers could take part in voluntarily. During the summers of 1995, 1996 and 1997, there were no workshops about state standards or the MEAP.

So while the federal, state and central offices were increasing demands on schools, schools were receiving less and less technical and social support and guidance from the central office in general and instructional support specifically.

### Leadership

Interviewees offered many conjectures as to why the district offered little instructional leadership. Not one respondent offered that the district did provide such leadership. I tried to find someone in the central office, or the schools, or in positions able to observe the district from the outside such as the intermediate district, to say something positive about the central office involvement with curriculum or instruction, and couldn't.

They offered wide ranging explanations. Some thought no one had created a long term budget strategy in more than a decade. They pointed to a series of budget cuts that had taken place since the early 1980s and felt no one had looked strategically beyond then. One teacher, in talking about how the budget problems surfaced, said when referring to central office staff, "They just - they're reactionary. They're too big, they're cumbersome, they're - they're sloth." (KS, 6/26/96.)

Others thought the superintendent no longer had the will and capacity to lead the district. Some thought that there was no pay off for the superintendent to pay attention to instruction -- instead he understood that keeping his position required good relationships with board members. Some believed that the knowledge base around instruction had changed and the central office had not changed with it. Some thought that no one in central office had a vision of what the district could be.

Many laid these issues at the feet of the superintendent. Some quickly qualified their statements by mentioning that he had diverted the district from a crisis as it enacted a court ordered desegregation plan many years earlier. One of his sharpest critics at the time of my data collection said that during desegregation he was a "visionary." The former U.S. Congressman regarded him highly, as did the mayor, both of whom, like the superintendent, had cut their political teeth on civil rights issues, and had a history of working together well.

However, the mayor was losing patience with district leadership as he began to perceive that the quality or perception of the quality of the schools was a major issue for the city as he tried to keep and attract residents and businesses. The mayor asked aloud of those who worked in

the district why central office leadership didn't see or prepare for the changes coming. About the time I was studying this district, the mayor instituted a Blue Ribbon Panel to examine the city's schools.

Some thought the superintendent had been blind-sided by a series of events that he didn't know how to manage. Therefore, he put all his energy into saving his position by maintaining good relationships with board members. During the early 1980s this city's unemployment rate, like many rust-belt cities, began to skyrocket, putting the schools in a budget bind. At that same time, the district began to experience what many observers called "middle school flight." During this period, rather than during the earlier desegregation period, the following pattern emerged. Middle or upper-middle class students who attended the elementary schools either moved to other school districts, or enrolled in parochial or other private schools when they reached middle school.

The 1990s might have held more surprises for this superintendent. For one, in the spring of 1994, the state sales tax increased from 4% to 6%, and capped the districts' abilities to levy local millages. This formula changed the balance of who funded the schools, so that the state controlled more than 50% of school aide. In addition, in the spring of 1995 charter school legislation passed and soon thereafter countywide

schools-of-choice legislation passed. These made two more options open to parents and students of Mapleton schools. There were more charter schools in Mapleton than in any other district in the state.

Despite these blind-siding events many continued to marvel at how this central office took a somewhat difficult situation and made it worse. The city was a unique demographic blend socially, economically and ethnically. Though nearly a third of the families were officially defined as "in poverty," the city was middle class. The employment base was diversified. It is surprising that no visible effort was made to stem the flow of students out of the schools at the middle school levels.

The central office did not grapple with the policy much at all, nor did it mediate the policy for the schools. It did not determine a district-wide approach to Title I that could have specified Schoolwides for the schools. It did not provide scaffolding to learn about the new Title I or Schoolwides through providing an agent. Nor did it encourage schools to learn about Schoolwides by providing information about the Schoolwides, though each principal was given an Idea (1994) book. The central office also did not create between and among the schools ways of sharing information about how they were responding to the changes in Title I generally and Schoolwides specifically.



### Some Consequences of the Local Education Agency's Passivity

This passive response to the policy on the part of the LEA had consequences for the way the policy played out in the three schools in my study. It enabled these three schools to use their own resources for the development of Schoolwides. It allowed two schools that did not want central office help to put into place their program and curriculum based on their beliefs concerning their students, curriculum content, and teaching. One of these two schools had already put their program in place, but felt they needed to protect the program from outside interference. It enabled a teacher in the third school, who had had extensive experience writing curriculum in private schools and working through the pilot of the Michigan accreditation program to step forward, at least for a short time, as an instructional leader.

The flip side is, the policy played out in largely idiosyncratic ways in these three schools. These idiosyncratic moves might have made the curriculum the students experienced, more, rather than less, idiosyncratic. It also meant that one of the schools could misinterpret the policy to be only about one social aspect of the reform, school coordination, and not about state content and performance standards. Therefore, while this school took seriously the school coordination strategy, it did not do so

with the technical and social aspects of state standards. Both the varying curriculum and the lack of attention to the standards raises issue of the equity of learning opportunities among students across schools.

The district's actions also raise a larger question of what districts' responsibilities are to schools, particularly as schools are asked to assume more and more responsibility for direction and management.

This central office exists in a decentralized and fragmented system and behaved as such. Particularly, Title I is a categorical grant, a virtual entitlement for states and localities, meaning districts and schools receive funding regardless of their responsiveness to federal and state policy makers requests.

How Schoolwides played out in three schools will be explored in the next three analytic data chapters.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE CASE OF LAMBERT STRETHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: MEDIATING THE POLICY THROUGH THE TITLE I READING TEACHER

Researchers have noted that the Title I system is not as loosely coupled as the system writ large (Cohen, 1982; Cohen and Spillane, 1993; Cusick, 1992; Kirst and Jung, 1981), and this school is an example of that. The Title I reading teacher in this school exerted strong leadership, acting as the policy's agent while moving the school toward a Schoolwide program. She pressed the technical and social changes in the policy in ways mentioned in the legislation and other policy documents such as one by the Commission on Chapter I (1992) and the one released by the U.S. Department of Education (1993). She encouraged social interactions between and among the staff as they enacted the school coordination aspect, and she hoped that social interactions in classrooms would change as the teachers used "applied learning" (IASA, p. 3540). She and the principal pressed technical changes as they encouraged teachers to understand the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests, especially fourth grade reading and mathematics.

Ann DeBoer had been a Title I reading teacher for at least 15 years, the number of years she had been at Strether, and the school's

enactment of the policy was greatly influenced by her knowledge of Title I and language arts curricula and pedagogy. The goals she discussed included grouping students heterogeneously, putting an end to remediation, encouraging interactions between and among teachers and Title I staff, using applied learning opportunities in the communications room, and focusing the school on students' communications skills -- reading, writing, speaking and listening.

This case shows the power of a knowledgeable and trusted leader, and her ability to quickly begin to move a school toward the technical and social aspects of the policy, within a relatively passive school district.

#### The Setting: Tentative Steps Toward Coordination

Strether Elementary was the largest of the three schools in this study. It served approximately 400 students, with a staff of 27 including 18 general education and 2 special education teachers. As the largest, it had more Title I funding than the others. In addition to the staff mentioned above, Title I funded a reading teacher, a 1/2 time mathematics teacher, 3 instructional assistants, a counselor and a nurse.

The school was located on the north side of town, a side known as the lower income side. Seventy two percent of the students were eligible for the federal lunch program. Strether was a

majority-minority school by 1%, just as the district was. That is, 49% of the students were white. The largest minority group was African American at 32%. Hispanics made up 20% of the population, and Asian Americans 13%.

Like the other two schools, this school had recently changed principals. Genevieve Peterson was serving her second year as principal. She was a vivacious, African-American woman of about 44 years of age. Like the principal at Knightly, she had taught in the district for 19 years before she became a principal. In fact, she had taught with the Knightly principal for several years in a school that was not in this study. In reflecting on the principals that were planning Schoolwide programs, she made the observation that they were a "new breed" of principal. Teachers knew that these principals would "go to bat for them," and that they were interested in "trying new ideas." (GP, 2/21/96).

She had introduced some changes in the way the school conducted its work (GP, 6/21/96). Her goals were both social and technical. She wanted to influence the way that teachers interacted with one another so they were not in cliques, and align the school around grade level goals and the MEAP. She explained that in talking about the Schoolwide planning time with the reading teacher, Ann, they had decided that the Strether teachers didn't have the time or

the inclination to talk with one another about the school's program. Genevieve remembered that as a fifth grade teacher, she felt she was in a team of fourth and fifth grade teachers who shared information about students and thought Strether's teachers ought to have the same opportunities. She felt teachers at Strether needed a safer social environment to enact the alignment piece of the policy. As she said, "I just felt that how can you talk about improving your test scores and making some things happen at your school, if the teachers never have time to talk?" (GP, 6/21/96.)

She thought that part of the teachers' lack of inclination to work together was due to the cliques in the school, and that their formation might have been influenced by the way the previous principal had made student classroom assignments. The previous principal's policy was to allow parents to choose their children's teachers. Beyond this, he shared the letters of request with the requested teachers. Genevieve believed that teachers shared with each other the number of requests each received and judged one another by this.

She stopped this practice. She allowed parents to request teachers, but she made requests one factor in placement, and made no promises to parents. She did not share letters of request with

teachers. She wanted to send the message that all of the teachers at Strether Elementary were good teachers.

She also reported that in a meeting with the superintendent, principals were told that they were responsible for MEAP test scores. As will become clear in this chapter, she wanted to align the school around grade level goals and around the MEAP, though she did not lead this effort.

### Ann's Mediation

While Genevieve encouraged teachers to become a more cohesive group, Ann DeBoer, the Title I reading teacher, saw a way to address and change the entire school's program through Schoolwide programs. Ann's leadership capabilities and her knowledge of instruction and instructional programs served her well to lead the school through the changes it would undertake to become a Schoolwide program.

A reading teacher in this school for 15 years, Ann was always friendly, upbeat and excited about what the school would be able to do with a Schoolwide program. About 40 years of age, she was married and had two teenage daughters. Ann was 1 of 27 Title I reading teachers in the district. Of the 34 elementary schools in the district 27 received Title I funding and each had a Title I reading teacher.

### Trusted and Respected Authority

Those with whom she worked trusted and respected her leadership. Ann explained that she had decided to press the school to enact a Schoolwide program in part because Genevieve delegated work. The previous principal had been a strong presence in the district and in the school. He had worked in central office for several years before becoming a principal, so he was able to use his relationships there to help the school. He was seldom in his office because he spent most of his time in the hall, talking to the teachers. In contrast, Genevieve was absent frequently due to health issues and she delegated enough work to cause concern among the staff. By the time I observed the school in the spring of 1996, they had overcome this concern in part because of Ann.

The staff knew and trusted Ann, and she was willing to help provide instructional leadership. Genevieve didn't give up all instructional leadership. She continued to conduct teacher evaluations, which could be used as a lever for instructional change by leadership (Heller & Firestone, 1995). But she did allow Ann to press the staff to enact a Schoolwide program. Ann needed to encourage Genevieve into planning a Schoolwide program. Genevieve explained that at first she was reluctant to enact a Schoolwide because she thought planning the new program at the same time the



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school was enacting the present Targeted Assistance program -- the Title I program for those schools not enacting Schoolwide programs -- would be too difficult.

Genevieve was completely comfortable with Ann's instructional leadership of the Schoolwide program during the time I observed. During nearly every observation or interview she said, "I don't know what I'd do without her" (GP, 2/23/96; 6/21/96; 5/22/96) in reference to Ann.

That Ann was able to convince the teachers to enact a Schoolwide program is a testament to her instructional leadership. Every time I came to the school she was talking to teachers either in the hall or in one of their rooms. She wasn't interested in becoming a principal. That required too many meetings, too much work on budgets and other tasks that she saw as a distraction from working with the teachers, in the school, on student learning. She wanted to champion the teachers. She viewed Schoolwides as a chance for teachers to define how they were going to shape the school -- a refreshing change from having central office tell teachers and schools what to do.

The teachers returned her respect. Perhaps Ann's upbeat attitude was infectious, because the teachers were upbeat also. I observed three after school Schoolwide planning meetings. Everyone

appeared engaged in the activity at hand. During the first year of enactment, I interviewed several teachers and while they had some concerns about the program, they were all committed to making changes in their practices if those changes would help students. During one of the Schoolwide planning meetings teachers were working in grade level groups and Ann was walking from group to group, helping them work on the task before them. As Ann and Genevieve were talking in the corner of the library, one teacher shouted across the room to the principal, "If we lose Ann, all bets are off" (5/22/96) showing her confidence in Ann's leadership.

Ann was also well respected in the district. A principal at another school in this district, Brooke Elementary, told me her understanding was that Ann was Strether's instructional leader. As mentioned above, Ann was one of two people that the central office initially chose to be trained in Reading Recovery, though there were many applications. She mentioned more than a couple of times central office decisions she had influenced, including when to choose the reading series for the district and the budget allotted to each school for a reading teacher.

Ann was well positioned to lead the school through a transition from the Technical Assistance program to the Schoolwide program. She was well respected and trusted within the district and

the school. Her principal trusted her judgement and partnership in instructional leadership. She was knowledgeable about a number of school programs and instructional innovations that could help the teachers to plan and enact the program.

#### Knowledgeable about Education Reform

Ann first learned about Schoolwide programs from Michigan's state director of Title I. The director had organized a talk with the Mapleton reading teachers because she understood that Mapleton had no Schoolwide programs. Ann credited this talk for her knowledge of Schoolwides and desire to create one at Strether.

Generally, Strether's Title I program changed from a pullout program in reading and mathematics to one that encompassed the entire school and was not remedial in nature. Title I became an enrichment program based in encouraging teachers to create heterogeneous groups of students, to interact with Title I staff, and to focus on students' communication skills. Ann pressed the message that children should be working in heterogeneous groups in the classrooms, and the school created a communication center in which homogeneously based groups of students from each classroom worked with Title I staff who used authentic pedagogy.

The state had been discouraging pull-outs since the 1988 legislation (Cohen, Cocoran, et al., 1998), and perhaps Ann's press

for heterogeneous groups was based on the idea of eliminating pullouts. She might have learned about this in her meeting with the other Title I reading teachers and the state director of Title I. But there were other ways Ann could have learned about options within Title I as she was knowledgeable about Title I in ways that the other Title I reading teachers in this study were not. Not only had she been the Title I reading teacher for at least fifteen years, but also her husband was the reading and language arts coordinator, and director of Title I, in a neighboring district. Oddly, she didn't credit her husband with introducing her to the idea of Schoolwide programs, though she credited him for her knowledge of Title I more generally. He kept her abreast of what the state Title I office and other Title I programs in districts around the state were doing. As she explained, Mapleton central office staff could have been familiar with changes that were taking place in Title I, but school people often didn't keep abreast because information "didn't sift down." (AD, 10/05/96).

She was also knowledgeable about language arts curricula, particularly reading instruction. Other members of her family shared this interest. Her husband was a language arts coordinator as mentioned, and her father-in-law had been a reading professor for many years at a state university. Beyond this, also as mentioned

above, she was one of two teachers to be the first trained in Reading Recovery in this district.

Being steeped deeply in the Title I program and reading instruction helps to account for her knowledge base and the multitude of changes that Ann initiated within this school. But the changes she initiated seemed to be more than what can be accounted for by this background. She also pressed for “interactions” among staff and instituted what might be thought of as “applied learning” as called for in the legislation. Both of these are explained below. Ann routinely perused at least one teacher magazine. In explaining how she had learned about Reading Recovery, she mentioned the Reading Teacher magazine. She also said that she paged through catalogues to get ideas.

When pressed, she insisted that she had learned all she knew about Schoolwides at the talk. She had access to what she called the “green manual” which was An Idea Book: Implementing Schoolwide Programs (1994) published by the U.S. Department of Education. She used it as a reference book -- glancing through it when she had a particular question. She said her approach was eclectic and she wasn’t sure how she learned about the changes she hoped the school would and did enact. She explained that she didn’t have time to sit down and read anything. She was busy at school all

day and in the evenings was busy with her family. Nonetheless, Ann was a learner.

### Direct Leadership Style

Ann expressed the idea more than once that Schoolwides were an opportunity for teachers to create a program for the students. She was sure that the changes would not go as smoothly if they were viewed as a central office intervention. Though she claimed the program belonged to the teachers, and the teachers appeared to embrace the changes, she was the policy's mediator and a strong mediator.

She encouraged changes in both formal and informal ways. When not teaching, she was either in the halls talking with the teachers, or in a teacher's room. Ann was the leader of both the technical and social changes that took place in the school. She orchestrated professional development days, grade level meetings at her house, and three after school meetings to plan the Schoolwide program. These activities were determined and selected by Ann. Though she didn't lead the professional development activities, she selected the leader. She led the grade level meetings and the Schoolwide planning meetings.

She wasn't afraid to turn conversations away from topics that weren't within her vision. The school held three meetings after

school to discuss the new Schoolwide program and paid teachers to attend out of the \$5,000 grant central office gave to those schools planning Schoolwides. These meetings ran a total of about 5 hours. Half that time was used studying the MEAP as will be discussed below. The other half time was used discussing the Schoolwide program more generally, or breaking into groups to work on grade level goals.

Each time they met in the library, a large room that was half filled with books and long tables, and half filled with what looked like stuff they didn't know where else to put: a desk, an overhead projector, an easel, a rack of books. The meetings had a somewhat formal feel in part because the group was larger than those at the other two schools -- between 20 and 25 staff members usually attended.

Ann created a sense of formality not only by keeping the staff on task but also by directing the meetings from an overhead projector. She started each meeting by presenting something about Schoolwide programs -- though each time she appeared to be reviewing information, rather than presenting it for the first time. She never defined a Schoolwide program, but talked as if she was filling the staff in on the details.

One session (5/6/96) she opened with the following on her overhead: Expect (and do things that enable) all children to meet state standards. She explained that in Title I, "Our goal has been to do *remedial* work to catch students up to grade level. Now, we expect *all* children to do well." She continued by saying, "You need to be ready to change roles, to be retrained, to try new things. We had one idea in the past and now we must move on." The teachers did not seem confused or surprised with this opening.

In these meetings she often asked for input on decisions concerning what professional development strategies teachers would find helpful, such as inservice programs, but she didn't ask about what direction the school should take. If teachers suggested a new direction, she would listen to their opinions and move on.

During this meeting (5/6/96), she asked teachers what materials and equipment were needed to supply the communication center. One teacher argued that what the school needed was an Asian bilingual teacher, rather than equipment. She continued by explaining that the Hmong population was going to increase in the school. Ann suggested that an inservice on Asian, or perhaps specifically, Hmong, culture, would be helpful.

But the teacher did not want an inservice. She responded, "The thing of it is, to speak their language." Ann repeated that perhaps an



inservice would help them understand the Hmong culture. She then closed the conversation by saying, "Thank you for bringing that up."

She handled other situations similarly. She believed that she needed 70% of the staff to agree to become a Schoolwide. She mentioned this once to the teachers in a planning meeting and asked if everyone agreed. One person said yes, and that was the vote. Later, she mentioned to Sharon Wellborn, the central office person responsible for Schoolwides, that she didn't take a vote. Sharon told her as long as there were no objections, then she should proceed.<sup>1</sup> She didn't seek out objections and she seldom entertained them for long.

Ann was in a strong position to lead the school through both the Schoolwide Planning process and the first year of enactment. She had the trust of those she was leading, was knowledgeable about Title I and language arts curricula, and had a direct style of leadership.

Below is a section on internal coordination that shows how the school took up the technical and social aspects of the policy as they interpreted and responded to it in the planning year and first year of enactment. First I briefly explain one of the school's innovations,

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<sup>1</sup> The legislation doesn't specify that a percentage of staff must be in agreement.

the communication center. I explain this first because it shows a change in structure of the school's program that affected the entire school and an innovation that responded to three goals that Ann spoke about at length: heterogeneous based groups, more interactions among all staff and a focus on student communication skills. I then discuss other innovations the staff enacted to show how these strategies involved both technical and social changes.

#### Internal Coordination

Ann led what on the surface could look like an almost dizzying array of planning activities and programmatic changes. This could be in part because Strether was so little coordinated at the beginning of the planning year that all activities were new. Strether was in the beginning stages of any type of coordination and it undertook many activities.

#### Communication Center: Meeting Goals through Changing the Instructional Program

The communication center the school created was a structural change that enabled the school to address three goals that Ann discussed frequently. In the center Title I staff worked with students on communication skills in heterogeneously based groups using what some call authentic pedagogy. To create the center, they created a big, long narrow room out of two small rooms. At one end

was a stage and the room was outfitted with a video camcorder, tripod and big-screen TV. Students worked on plays, presentations, speeches and read-alouds. Some of these activities were recorded on videotape so students could watch and evaluate themselves.

This room was staffed by Title I instructional aides, and Ann at times. They worked with a group of four or five students from each classroom. The groups of students were not based on ability. Instead, each teacher divided his or her classroom into three or four heterogeneously based groups. Some teachers deliberately balanced the groups with high and low achieving students and some simply grouped students in alphabetical order.

This made at least three changes in the instructional program. One is that students were grouped in heterogeneous groups at least once a week, a change the policy encouraged. No longer were Title I students pulled out for remedial instruction. Ann pressed teachers to follow this lead within the classroom. This seemingly simple technical change might have required social learning on the part of teachers so that they understood the reasoning behind the change, and learning on the part of students to work in heterogeneous rather than homogeneous based groups.

Another is that Title I staff was used differently. Prior to the first year of enactment, they had worked individually with students

identified as Title I students. In the communications center they worked with all students in the school. Ann pressed the Title I staff and teachers to interact around the children's time in the center. The policy encouraged this kind of social change. The reasoning in the policy is that the entire school staff is responsible for Title I students and not just Title I staff. One way of showing this responsibility is to integrate Title I into the general education staff.

Three, this arrangement meant that all teachers had a different subset of students in their classrooms at least four or five times a week and needed to think through how they would work a curriculum around these pullouts. Ann thought this would give teachers a chance to know all students better.<sup>2</sup> Again, this is a social change the policy encouraged, to ensure the entire staff was responsible for all students.

Heterogeneously Based Groups. The communications center was viewed as an enrichment opportunity for *all* students. Ann's interpretation of what the policy meant by serving *all* children was unique among these case studies. For example another school, Brooke Elementary, interpreted *all* children to mean focusing on low

achieving students who had not traditionally been served by the educational system, particularly those who were attending high poverty schools. Strether's staff interpreted *all* children to mean high as well as low achieving students. Ann understood Schoolwides to focus Title I funding less on the lowest achieving students or to be less concerned with remedial instruction. Funding could be focused on "everybody," as she described the difference. (AD, 4/15/97). She explained that the purpose of the Title I Technical Assistance program was to help those in academic need to achieve more in various subject matters. Schoolwides, in contrast, were less remedial in nature and focused on all children -- meaning children who were not among the lowest achieving.

More than one teacher in this school reminded me, when I used the phrase "Title I student" that the school no longer had Title I students, that all students were the focus of the program. One kindergarten teacher asked, "Why shouldn't top children get some attention? So often in school these days it's only the at-risk kids that really are targeted" (JB, 5/2/97).

Ann's strategy of ending Title I as a remediation strategy and instead having the program lead the way for the rest of the school

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<sup>2</sup> Ann reported the teachers liked this arrangement, because it allowed them to work with smaller groups of students four or five

was one purpose of the federal policy. The policy also discouraged pullouts, and encouraged heterogeneously based groups. Title I schools are to move toward “an accelerated, high-quality curriculum” and are to minimize “removing children from the regular classroom during regular school hour for instruction” (IASA, p. 3540).

Interactions Between and Among Staff. Ann hoped that this structural arrangement would help teachers and Title I staff go beyond having students pass between classrooms. She wanted the Title I staff to interact with students in new ways. When she discussed the way she envisioned the school, she talked about the role of Title I much more broadly than only in the communication center. She once said,

And I guess I see lots more of the Title I staff in and out of classrooms as the classroom teachers have their children doing reports and working in small cooperative groupings and speaking in small groups and then coming back and reporting to the class. I see us [Title I staff] being a part of all that. You know, having the extra personnel and the resources. (AD, 5/10/96).

She frequently used the words “interactions” when referring to students, teachers, parents, Title I staff. When I asked who in the school and how the school would have more “interactions,” she said, “Within a classroom, between the classrooms, teachers going back

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times a week.

and forth between rooms, bringing kids together, sharing.” (AD 05/10/96). The changes she mentions here could take considerable social and technical learning for teachers. First Ann mentions social classroom changes that some teachers might not have tried before. Enacting cooperative learning would at least in part mean that students would work together sharing ideas. This might take considerable learning on the part of students, and of teachers who are responsible for teaching students how enact such sharing. The interaction of the Title I staff with the general education staff and working alongside teachers in classroom could also mean social changes. Title I staff might have to learn how to work along with teachers with quite different classroom practices, and teachers might have to learn how to effectively use a second teacher in the classroom.

This integration of Title I staff into the entire instructional program, and away from pullout programs was also encouraged in the legislation. The IASA states that one purpose is “to promote the integration of staff supported with fund under this part and children served under this into the regular school program” (p. 3541). So staff as well as students were to be integrated into the larger program.

Focusing on Communications. It is unclear how much input the teachers had in determining the school's focus of communications. In the early 1990s, the central office had encouraged a small set of schools to become "focus" schools. In the mid-1990s the central office requested that all schools develop a focus with the explanation that they needed to do this for the inter-district schools-of-choice program. At that time this school chose to focus on communications which in this school included reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Ann conducted a needs assessment as required by Schoolwide legislation by surveying the staff about the school children's needs. The need staff identified was "academic" which was not defined. Perhaps because of this lack of definition, Ann decided that because the school's focus was already communication skills, the school would continue to have this focus.

Part of her rationale for communication skills was that they could be integrated across the curriculum and day. Perhaps Ann was referring to the idea of "writing across the curriculum" to use writing to learn across various subject matters. If so, this kind of intensive writing across subject matter would require considerable technical and social knowledge of the various subject matters and



writing, and of how to critique such writing as Zinsser's (1988) book Writing to Learn indicates.

Another part of her rationale was that students scored low in reading on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) -- a test required by the district -- and the MEAP. Focusing on communications was not a part of the legislation, in fact, the policy encouraged a focus on all subject matters as encouraged through Goals 2000, but the IASA required tests in at least reading and mathematics. But historically Title I has been focused on reading, which is part of the reason why every Title I school in the district had a Title I reading teacher. Perhaps that is another reason Ann focused on communications, because of the history of Title I.

Ann's Concerns about Heterogeneous Groups. Ann was the guiding light behind this innovation. She wanted the school's instructional program to be less remedial and less directed at a few students; and to use Title I staff across the full spectrum of students, not just in pullout programs with a few students. She also wanted more interactions between and among school staff.

At the same time, she was concerned about how creating a new organizational arrangement -- one with fewer pullouts and less time for Title I staff to work with students one-on-one -- could have drawbacks. She bemoaned the fact that the Title I staff couldn't do

everything and would no longer have as much one-on-one teaching with students who really needed that type of attention. She reflected on what could be the drawbacks of the new program,

...you can't do pullout all day [as we do now]. If there are some children who come in and there always are, who lack... You've got a 4th or a 5th grader who is at the 1st grade level. And they really need somebody to pull them out and go back through some of the math or some of the reading skills that they lack. And part of that needs to be done in a pullout that isn't part of that classroom. (AD, 5/10/96).

Nonetheless, Ann moved the school toward heterogeneously based instruction and eliminating pullouts together with using Title I staff to enrich the entire school program as a way of moving toward the policy. In addition, the Michigan Department of Education pressed schools to eliminate pullouts as well as the Title I legislation.

### Coordination Categories

One way to examine internal coordination is through the goals Ann set for the school, which I did above in discussing the communications center and how it addressed Ann's goals, which were one and the same with the policy's goals.

Another way to examine internal coordination is to use ideas from the research literature on school coordination. As I have mentioned in the first chapter I used five ways to examine internal coordination. One was a common focus or vision. As I explained, the

school's focus was communications. Another two internal coordination strategies were two types of staff relationships: interdependent and professional relationships. Another one was images or opportunities to observe teaching in ways that the Title I reforms encourage. And finally, is internal coordination, a category I created in response to this school's new organizing strategies.

Interdependent and Professional Relationships. The coordination literature discusses two kinds of interactions. Those that are created by the instructional program or school structure (Newmann, 1996), I refer to as interdependent relationships. Those that are created by teachers and other school staff as they develop shared norms and values around learners, learning, and teaching, I refer to as professional relationships.

The change in structure due to the communications center is an example of interdependent relationships between Title I and general education staff that Ann hoped would foster social change within the school. She hoped staff would interact around students' learning. There was no guarantee in developing this structure that a change in social relationships would take place. That is, general education teachers could simply run their classrooms without paying much attention to the communications room. But Ann was encouraging the staff to take responsibility for all students'

learning. Her desire for more interactions between the Title I staff and the general education teachers was a move in this direction.

Ann helped to foster potentially stronger social relationships through creating opportunities to enhance professional relationships. This building of professional relationships had the potential to make the school less of a collection of individual teachers working with individual students and more of an opportunity to think about how the whole school could enhance the achievement of all students. She orchestrated professional development days, grade level meetings and Schoolwide planning activities. During these activities school staff came together and had the opportunity to develop their expectations concerning students, learning, and teaching. The Schoolwide planning meetings were an instance of this, though the grade level planning meetings and professional development activities probably were too.

In the Schoolwide planning meetings, the staff worked with three different sections of the MEAP in their time together. They worked with the informational and story sections of the reading MEAP for about two hours, and the mathematics MEAP for about half an hour.

The work conducted on the MEAP can be viewed as an opportunity to develop common understandings about children's

abilities and children's learning. It can also be viewed as an opportunity to align instruction around the MEAP. Therefore, these meetings are an example of a school working on both the technical and the social aspects of the policy, as they worked together to improve their knowledge of the MEAP.

I use the work the staff conducted on the MEAP *reading* tests as examples of staff developing common understandings. I use the MEAP *mathematics* tests as an example of staff aligning with the state student content standards. I do this in part because the purposes for reviewing these sections of the MEAP were different. The purpose of reviewing the MEAP reading tests was to explore how all students could perform better on the MEAP. The purpose of reviewing the mathematics MEAP test was to improve the scores of those students who performed well, but had not yet scored "satisfactory." But, in fact, the review of both the reading MEAP test and the mathematics MEAP test were both social and technical in nature, as staff worked together to understand how students could interpret the MEAP.

Ann administered to the staff the fourth grade reading MEAP including the informational or expository selection, and the story selection on May 29, 1996. Atypical of her style, she left the

questions and answers that came up during this session on the table, without addressing them -- though she provided leadership.

In studying these tests, the staff addressed ideas concerning student thinking, understanding and learning as they are implicitly defined in the MEAP tests. Thus, they began work on developing shared norms and values around these ideas. The two vignettes below show how Ann orchestrated this social and technical learning opportunity and how the teachers used the MEAP to think about students' understandings and learning.

The first example shows that staff discussed how students and adults might best read and understand a selection. The second example shows that the staff tried to determine how students might fail to understand a selection.

Ann had only enough tests to administer to half the teachers at the time, so half took the informational test while the other half the story selection. As Ann passed out the tests, she encouraged the teachers to share answers, not to see who got them right or wrong, but to see if they could figure out how students could interpret them.

The teachers took the tests and immediately began to discuss their answers. Some seemed confused as to the correct answers and Others said that some questions were ambiguous -- that one answer

was just as good as the other. On completing the two sections, one third-grade teacher said, "I'm not going to say it's a terrible test or anything." No one argued that the test was not a good measure of what children should or could learn.

Ann called the entire group together and distributed answers to some questions. On the answer sheet she had marked the answer most frequently chosen by children who marked the incorrect answer. For example, using the story selection, she used the following example.

3. What important idea does this story tell about?
  - A. To be a success, you must practice and take control of the situation.
  - B. To get something you want, you must show responsibility.
  - C. Everyone needs someone or something to take care of and love.
  - D. When someone says no, you should accept his/her decision.

The correct answer was B. Of the students who did not choose B, they most frequently chose C. So, the teachers were to figure out why students didn't choose B and did choose C.

Also on the answer sheet was the percent of Strether students to answer correctly, the percent of students in the district to answer correctly, and the percent in the county.

<u>Strether</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>County</u>
70%	71%	80%

They discussed a number of items and how students could have misinterpreted them.

Then one teacher brought up the idea that there could be a better way to read these kinds of selections, a way which might help students comprehend the answer better, though the teacher herself was not settled on what the way might be. The teacher said,

This is a question. I mean, I just want your reaction to it. How about if we taught the kids to read the questions first? How about reading the questions first and the selection second?

Genevieve, the principal, said, "Yes," enthusiastically.

Another teacher nodded her head expansively in a yes motion and said, "Purposeful reading."

Others though, didn't appear to like the idea. The same teacher who said she wasn't going to criticize the test said, "That works on the CMS (the Curriculum Monitoring System, a district test), but here there are 34 questions" -- implying that 34 questions were a lot to read through before hand.

A male teacher said, "I'd have them read the selection first," though he didn't elaborate.



Genevieve said loudly, "I always read the questions first." She was the only person in the discussion to discuss how she read text. No one in the discussion mentioned that they could read differently for expository and story questions.

As they examined the other questions, they continued to ponder the idea of reading the questions first. One teacher pointed out that many of the questions were about the meaning of the story. She said, "But a lot of the questions are about the main idea. You need the big picture to answer them. But, there is something to test taking skills." She appeared to have not made up her mind as to whether the teachers should encourage students to read the entire text for meaning, or read the answers first to improve their test taking skills.

Here was an opportunity to discuss how children might better understand the selection and its questions. In exploring this item, the teachers questioned the way students might read and understand an item. The principal, Genevieve, brought up a way that she would read and understand the selection, though others did not follow suit. This opportunity created discussions for teachers to think about different approaches to these MEAP selections.

Working with the MEAP together as they did, contributed to developing in this school more social interaction around the

children's curriculum and around a technical aspect of the policy, the MEAP.

In this second example, they explored how children could misunderstand or misrepresent a test item. The potential answers to the fifth question from the expository reading test were,

5. Many forms of transportation have developed because
- A. People need easy ways to carry goods.
  - B. People are unhappy with automobiles and traffic conditions.
  - C. Countries have not been able to agree on the best way to move products.
  - D. Each country or area wants its own form of transportation.

The correct answer was A, and most students who marked an incorrect answer, chose D. The percent correct by various levels of aggregation were as follows.

<u>Strether</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>County</u>
52%	64%	79%

At first, no one could think of a reason why most of those who got the answer wrong, chose D. Finally, the same teacher who asked if they ought to have students read the questions first said, "Because the question and the chosen answer contain the same

words.” The words, “form(s) of transportation” were in both the questions and the answer.

Around the room there was a nodding of heads, agreement and some gasps of “ah ha.” Here was an opportunity that allowed teachers to think about miscues children could have when taking this test.

Ann did not suggest what she wanted to achieve or know or understand from taking the test. She only added that when she was taking the test there was one question she didn’t want to answer. But as she thought about it she realized she might be embarrassed in front of the teachers not to have answered it. She said that students might feel the same way. Thus she implied that the social nature of the test might be important to student and adults. Beyond this, she closed by asking them to think about how they could use the MEAP.

This discussion concerning the reading MEAP tests allowed the teachers to form tentative questions and answers to how students might best read test selections, and to how they might interpret reading materials. It also enabled them to share with one another ways they thought about how students might interpret the text and test questions.

The policy encouraged programs to become

“...even more effective in improving schools in order to enable all children to achieve high standards and in order for all students to master challenging standards in core academic subject...”(IASA, p. 3520).

To the degree that the story and informational MEAP were aligned with the state student content standards, this school was moving toward the policy while conducting this work. The Michigan Department of Education at the time was working to align the MEAP with the state student content standards. The Department’s official stance was that following the high state student content standards would not adversely affect achievement on the MEAP (Rodriguez, 1998). The Department did not state whether or not following the MEAP would adversely affect achievement on the standards.

This work moved toward the policy in that school personnel were sharing their ideas and perhaps becoming more cohesive in their delivery of instruction for all students. They also were attending to ambitious state content standards as represented in the MEAP. Thus, they were attending to the social and technical aspects of the policy.

This exploration of the MEAP seemed tentative in contrast to the work that another school, Knightly Elementary, did with the MEAP. Nonetheless, they began to understand a piece of the state’s framework concerning high student content standards. Beyond this,

the act of discussing how students could best read the selections, and how they could interpret or misinterpret selections moved the school toward a more coordinated effort in teaching students. This exploration of student ideas, tentative though it was, was the beginning of shared norms and values concerning students' capabilities and learning. And show one way the school dealt with the social changes in the policy.

Applied Learning: Images of the Reforms? Several activities undertaken during the planning year and first year of enactment moved the school in the direction of providing guidance for classroom practice in what might have been images of the reforms. In particular, Ann introduced activities that could be viewed as representing applied learning. Newman and Wehlage (1995) offer a definition of "authentic pedagogy"<sup>3</sup> based in realistic problems that might be helpful in understanding what the legislation means by applied learning. They write authentic pedagogy is "...teaching that requires students to think, to develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, realistic problems" (p. 3).

The communication center was an example of pedagogy that creates "realistic" problems for children to solve. Students were to

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<sup>3</sup> This is Newman and Wehlage's summary of the definition. The full definition is quite detailed.

work on plays, presentations, speeches and read-alouds. Some of these activities were recorded on videotape so students could watch and evaluate themselves. Ann suggested that children often saw something they could improve in their performances. As she said, "Every child tells something that they did well, something they want to improve on the next time, and then we'll refer back to those before the next speech" (AD, 4/15/97).

These activities can be considered applied because a speech, and presentation and a play are activities one might perform outside of school. They demonstrate more than a textbook knowledge of the subject matter or discipline. They also show that the school was moving toward the changes in social aspects of the classroom as children learned to critique their own work.

There were other authentic tasks added to the curriculum. During the professional development days, the staff learned about portfolio assessments and added it to the instructional aspects of each classroom. Students participated in portfolio assessment by examining their writing samples and selecting those that showed growth to place in their portfolios. Students were to learn to analyze their writing skills through the use of rubrics.

Ann and Genevieve bought each child in the school a bound journal. Each teacher used the journals differently, depending on the

grade level of the students and the teacher's interests. One kindergarten teacher had the students create an A-B-C journal, in which students drew and labeled various animals.

They created an internal postal service, used by students, teachers and parents to write back and forth to one another.

In the first year of enactment they also created a publications center. As Ann said when discussing the communication center,

We're doing the same thing in terms of the publishing center. Everybody can create pieces, and we're going to publish them, and we're going to put them out for each other and read each other's work. (AD, 4/15/97).

Ann and the half-time Title I mathematics teacher were available to model classroom practice, thus adding to the images of the reforms that could have been available to the teachers.

It isn't hard to imagine that these activities had social and technical learning components as students learned to critique their own work, share it with others, and use the post office for sharing their written work.

Communication Skills: Focusing on Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. In the communication center, as mentioned above, the aides and students worked on plays, presentations, speeches, and read-alouds. This was one of many ways in which the school focused on communication skills for students. In addition to the

communication center, staff created grade level goals, an internal post office and a publication center. They participated in five professional development days focused on communications activities for the classroom. They used portfolio assessments and journals in their classrooms. Finally, Ann, the reading teacher, was available to model lessons in their classrooms.

They met by grade level during the planning year in Ann's home to create communication goals, and -- though spending less time on them -- goals for mathematics, social studies and science. They also created grade-level evaluations for teachers to send to parents monthly concerning children's communication skills. Finally, they discussed grade level instructional activities for communications.

They spent their professional development days during the planning year and first year of enactment with the district's former language arts consultant. During these five days, they developed literacy portfolio assessments and writing activities for children.

Again, Ann led this aspect of the Schoolwide program, and pressed on those aspects of communication skills she felt important.

The focus of communications expanded the traditional focus of Title I from reading to include speaking, spelling and listening. In choosing "communications" as a focus the school developed a



decidedly different kind of focus than the other schools in this study. Brooke's focus was "developmentally appropriate practice" which covered all academic subject matters, and Knightly's focus implicitly became the MEAP which also covered most subject matters; the fourth grade tests were reading and mathematics, the fifth grade were writing and science, and the state was creating a social studies test. But Strether Elementary chose one subject matter as the focus, which became a concern of some teachers as discussed below.

### Internal and External Alignment Activities

The school paid attention to both internal and external alignment strategies. By alignment, I mean taking measures to ensure that what is taught is what is tested (S. A. Cohen, 1987). Others have included instruments that need to be aligned such as professional development, curriculum, standards, texts, and others (Smith and O'Day, 1991).

This school aligned internally with Reading Recovery strategies in the K-2 curriculum, and created grade level goals to align between and among grade levels. They also conducted work to align externally with the MEAP.

### Internal Alignment: K-2 Curriculum with Reading Recovery

This discussion of the Reading Recovery program is included because Ann used it within the school to align reading strategies in the early grades.

Ann was enthusiastic about Reading Recovery. She explained that, "The goal of Reading Recovery is to bring the lowest children up to level with average readers." (AD, 96/05/10). She was enthusiastic about the program's success. At some point during every interview or observation, she talked about the results of the Reading Recovery work. Each time she showed me a particular student's work, the number of students who had finished the program, or another indicator of the program's success. She expressed excitement that every teacher in the school with one exception, and many in the district, had made arrangements to observe her teaching through the Reading Recovery method.

She spoke at length about Reading Recovery and its importance to her thinking about and understanding of children's learning and in particular learning to read (AD, 05/10/96). She explained that the purpose of her teaching was no longer to help students throughout their academic career at Strether, but rather a way to enable them to become independent of her.

I guess in the past my experience would be you usually started with a child who looked like [a] remedial reader and writer in the lower grades and most of the time, followed all the way through.

Prior to Reading Recovery she didn't know how to teach children in ways that helped them learn independently of her.

You always had those kids. I felt there were some good lessons I had taught. They learned a lot of neat things. I saw a growth, but always somehow, there was a dependency on me to provide the growth....They were always dependent on me - you learn it from me, you make this growth but now you're dependent on me for the next step.

By using Reading Recovery, students learned to use strategies and problem solving that enabled them to learn to read independently. As she said,

And the thing that's different about Reading Recovery is you're training children to be independent problem solvers, so it isn't like I'm teaching a reading curriculum...What you're training them to do is [to] be problem solvers and you're giving them strategies that are useful.

As an internal alignment strategy, Ann worked to coordinate the early grades so that all teachers were teaching students to read through Reading Recovery strategies. As she explained,

We have looked at a lot of different issues in terms of reading. What we're looking for [is] more strategy based than skill based and more problem solving and skill item analysis type of thing.

She thought this alignment strategy a success. She continued by explaining how the kindergarten and first grade teachers are more "in line" with one another,

...The way the early reading skills are taught, they all of a sudden are more in line, because I shared with the kindergarten and first grade teachers, "This is what we're looking for. This is what I'm checking on with these kids. How do they compare to the other kids in the room?"

She thought that by sharing with the teachers, they were thinking differently about their teaching. As she said,

And all of a sudden they're thinking, "Am I looking at these skills? How do the other kids do on these skills? Maybe I better check these skills." And there are some adjustments and shifts in what's being done. (AD, 5/10/96).

Reading Recovery is a program that enables students to learn to read by continuous interaction with text and word-solving strategies. The job of the teacher is to,

...help children become interested in words, become effective and fast at solving, and be able to use word-solving skills while reading and writing meaningful messages, stories, informational pieces, and other kinds of written language. (Fountas & Pinnell, p. 13)

As I discussed in the first chapter, many researchers argue that learning comes from constructing and reconstructing knowledge (Resnick, 1987). To help students accomplish this, teachers enable children to grapple with complex problems which allow them to problem-solve and learn skills within applications (Lampert, 1990).

The kind of work Ann hoped to enable students, particularly formerly Title I students, and teachers to undertake moved this school toward the policy. The legislation stated that schools should “encourage the teaching of advanced skills” (IASA, p. 3524).

#### Internal Alignment through Grade Level Goals

As mentioned above, staff met by grade level during the planning year to create communication goals, as well as mathematics, social studies and science goals. By all accounts they spent more time on the communication skills. In addition, for communication skills they developed evaluations to send home monthly to parents and worked on instructional activities for these goals. During the first year of enactment, the evaluations were taken seriously by all of the teachers and were sent home monthly. The teachers were to get one hour of release time a month to work on these evaluations, but they learned that to do them well took much longer.

Genevieve Peterson was proud of this internal alignment strategy and mentioned that the idea to write grade level goals for the school was not something the district required of the school, but an internal decision.

They [the teachers] are planning on using all the objective sheets that they have by grade level. Each grade level has

made up this. This is not something the district has made for us. We are talking about what we see as a problem. (6/26/96)

This, too, was a movement toward the policy, helping teachers and other staff to understand what students were to achieve at each grade level.

Internal alignment is unusual in schools in the United States and a key goal of the policy. I created the category of "internal alignment" when I realized this school had gone beyond what the other two schools in this study did to align. This school aligned across classrooms within grades through grade level goals and across the early grades through the Reading Recovery program. This not only as a technical change in the school's program, but also as a social learning process which Ann DeBoer led.

#### External Alignment: The MEAP

In addition to studying the two reading MEAP tests, the staff also spent about a half an hour studying the fourth grade mathematics MEAP test. The purpose of this session was quite different than was the session on the reading MEAP, though the staff went through the questions in similar ways. The purpose was to increase the scores of a few students and to align language in the classroom with language in the MEAP.

Jill McNamara, the half-time Title I mathematics teacher and half-time general education teacher, led this occasion. She explained the purpose of the meeting was to ensure that more Strether students scored "satisfactory" -- the highest level of proficiency-- on the MEAP. This MEAP session was "not about remedial students, but the high achieving students (JM, 5/6/96).

At an intermediate school district conference,<sup>4</sup> she learned how the MEAP, a criterion-referenced test, was scored. For students to attain a "satisfactory" score they had to answer a certain number of items correctly. For example, if a student attained correct scores on 16 out of 20 items, the student received a "satisfactory" for one strand of the mathematics MEAP. But 15 out of 20 would not merit a "satisfactory."

The goal of the talk was to discuss a few test items that if answered correctly, would mean students would attain "satisfactory" scores. She told the teachers that Strether Elementary students might be able to catch up with the other schools in the county by increasing correct answers on a few problems. She then showed the satisfactory scores of Strether students and the students countywide.

Percent of Students with "Satisfactory" Score on the 1996-97  
Fourth Grade MEAP

	<u>Strether</u>	<u>County</u>
Mental Arithmetic	45%	82%
Calculations with No Calculator	47%	67%
Problem Solving	12%	62%

They discussed a few problems that would change the percent of students who scored a "satisfactory." These problems led to discussions about how students use manipulatives and rulers and the use of the metric system.

She mentioned throughout the session that the teachers needed to use the MEAP vocabulary in class. In one case she explained that some time during the students' school careers the vocabulary and problem solving process would click with students so that they would do well on the MEAP. In closing she said, "I know it is discouraging, but keep using that vocabulary." Though this school approached learning about the mathematics MEAP as a technical activity, they used it as a social activity by discussing how students understand the questions, how they use manipulatives, and how they might understand the language of the MEAP.

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<sup>4</sup> Intermediate districts in Michigan are roughly county districts. They do not have oversight of the entire local school districts' curriculum.



Ann's Stance toward the MEAP. Ann felt that students needed to perform well on the MEAP (AD, 4/15/97) and thought it was a good indicator on how well students understood expository readings. In fact, when she received the expository reading scores, she re-tested some of the students to understand more about why they didn't do as well as she expected. However, she said that the "bottom line" was that students were getting the skills they needed, such as the Reading Recovery strategies.

Genevieve's Stance toward the MEAP. Genevieve Peterson thought that administering the MEAP to the staff was an important part of becoming a Schoolwide program, in part because the superintendent had told the principals that they were responsible for MEAP scores.

She also saw the MEAP as an alignment tool, though she didn't use the word "alignment" (GP, 6/26/96). She explained the teachers' reactions to testing themselves on the MEAP.

I think when they took the MEAP test it really showed them. They're still buzzing about that. They're still -- they couldn't understand at first -- why in the world is this woman making them take this test?

In particular, she discussed how a kindergarten teacher could have reacted to taking the MEAP and what she might have learned about the wider school curriculum.

[One] of the kindergarten teachers, Jane Barnes, one of them who thought that she had her own agenda. And now Jane's thinking "OK, I really have to look at my kindergarten curriculum". And, "Yes, I do some of these things, but am I doing them in the sequence I should be doing them in?"

And, she argued, Mrs. Barnes was thinking about what she should be teaching in kindergarten to fit in with the school's program.

"Am I just randomly pulling from the air?" And I think she's really thinking now about how she's teaching kindergarten. She's a good kindergarten teacher, but [I hypothetically ask her], "Are you cognizant of all of the skills that we need to teach?" And [Jane might ask] "Are my kindergartners really ready when they leave me to go to first grade?" (GP, 6/26/96).

The series of questions the principal hypothetically asked the kindergarten teachers and suggested the kindergarten teacher could ask of herself are important questions for a school attempting to provide a Schoolwide Program. That is, for kindergarten students to be prepared for the fourth grade assessments: (1) What is the best sequencing of lessons? (2) What activities should be in the curriculum? (3) Are those activities now in the curriculum the best ones? (4) Are students learning skills they will need? This series of questions shows how teachers are dependent on one another for ensuring that students achieve to high standards, and how coordinating the entire school is a social activity.

However, this series of questions was not the focus of the after school session, nor were they at any time made explicit while I observed. When I asked Mrs. Barnes, the kindergarten teacher, if taking the MEAP had changed what or how she taught, she said that it made her more aware of the areas the MEAP covered.

The staff had two opportunities to examine the MEAP together. During one they took a couple of hours to administer to themselves the story and informational MEAP tests. During another they took half an hour to discuss how students could interpret the mathematics test. Ann and Jill suggested they were attending to reading and mathematics MEAP test for different purposes; though some of the same types of issues came up in both sessions. In particular they discussed how students were interpreting the questions and answers concerning the reading MEAP tests and the mathematics MEAP test. When discussing the reading MEAP, they discussed the best way to encourage students to read the story and questions.

The principal found this work on the MEAP very important and Ann thought it important, though not the most important issue facing the school. Though I had the opportunity to observe as this school worked with the MEAP, it is important to note that the staff spent only two and a half hours on the MEAP. Another school in this

study, Knightly, attended at least one workshop and analyzed every MEAP item in staff meetings, which was a stronger alignment strategy.

Nonetheless, the teachers in this school believed the time spent on the MEAP was important. I observed and interviewed four teachers in this school. Of the four, three thought the MEAP was very important, including the kindergarten teacher who claimed she did not align her teaching with the MEAP as Genevieve had hoped. She said the most important part about it was understanding the position the kids were in. A third grade teacher told me that he thought reviewing the MEAP to be very important for understanding how children might interpret it. He also thought it influenced his work in his classroom, and showed me some mathematics problems he used that he thought resembled the MEAP questions. A third teacher thought the MEAP was important, and a fourth teacher thought it to be somewhat important.

This school's MEAP scores reflect the school's time spent on the MEAP in comparison to the other two schools. Over a four year time period -- the year proceeding the planning year, the planning year, the first year of enactment, and the year following, or the school years 1995-96 through 1998-99 -- Knightly scored the highest, Brooke the lowest and Strether between the two. Knightly

spent much time on the MEAP, Strether two and half hours, and Brooke not much time at all.

### Conclusion on Coordination and Alignment

To coordinate internally and externally, then, in the early stages of planning and enacting the policy, Ann swiftly introduced many internal coordination strategies. She hoped the school would move toward heterogeneously based groups of students in both the communications room and classroom. She hoped to focus on communication skills. And she hoped for more interactions between and among teachers, Title I staff. She led the movement toward these activities by encouraging teachers to work together under her guidance, utilizing a full staff social strategy for learning about and from the technical changes.

The Title I staff and teachers worked interdependently in their work relationships, if only because of scheduling. Teachers and others had more opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships through sharing ideas about children and children's learning. The school's new instructional program featured applied learning in communication skills, the school's focus. They also aligned internally through Reading Recovery strategies and schools goals, evaluations and activities.

They used the MEAP, the policy instrument that is most closely associated with state student content standards, an important piece of both the IASA and the Goals 2000, for an external alignment. This work probably helped them to be aware of what was contained in those two tests. The Title I mathematics teacher encouraged them to align themselves with the language of the mathematics MEAP for students to achieve more correct answers.

### Staff Reactions to this Schoolwide Program

Unlike the other two schools, in this school, I didn't hear teachers mention one another's classrooms. Perhaps Strether teachers didn't talk of one another's classrooms and classroom practices because this was the first year they were moving ahead toward internal coordination. However, they did all mention some of the same issues when I interviewed them about the Schoolwide program.

### Benefits

All staff I asked believed that mixing students of varying achievement levels was beneficial to both high and low achieving students. The kindergarten teacher mentioned that some of her students had transferred from districts using developmental kindergartens -- that is, districts that had a kindergarten preparation program and a regular kindergarten. Her experience was

that when students came from developmental kindergartens, they tended to have a hard time fitting in. She was concerned about how students from developmental kindergartens were to catch up. She believed strongly that all students should have a strong academic kindergarten experience. The fourth grade teacher thought that the high achieving students were learning as much in homogeneous groups as in any other groups, including those students that attended Mapleton's gifted and talented programs.

All the teachers applauded Ann's and Genevieve's efforts to make the Schoolwide program possible. They mentioned the support and efforts to encourage teachers to support one another. They also talked about the open communication they fostered with the teachers. One teacher suggested that teachers tend to work in isolation and believed that Ann and Genevieve had worked hard to make the work less isolating. One mentioned Ann's availability to work with teachers. A couple mentioned that the two of them were a good pair and had worked hard to accomplish the Schoolwide.

When asked about how their teaching had changed, three of the four teachers said they were trying new activities. One fourth grade teacher said that she was rethinking how to organize her work because of the communications focus. That is, how to use communication skills in science and other subject matters. Another

fourth grade teacher said he was trying more activities. The kindergarten teacher definitely thought her program was more academic and had many more activities.

### Drawbacks

Despite this, they had two related concerns about the changes. All the teachers expressed concern about the pace of change and the number of activities they were undertaking. They wondered aloud how well they were enacting these changes, and they were concerned that important pieces of the curriculum were getting lost as they took on more and more communications activities.

One teacher said that the grade level goals were written in a couple of hours and wondered if they were the best goals available. She also was concerned that though they had written grade level evaluations in alignment with the goals, she wasn't sure how she was to assess if students had attained the goals. She thought that the pace of change didn't allow teachers to know what they hoped students would achieve and how teachers would know they had achieved it.

The teachers expressed the most concern not about what was in the curriculum, but what wasn't. One teacher said that when teaching science, social studies and mathematics he raced through or barely covered them due to all the work he and the students were



doing in communications. That is, the communication center, publishing center, journals, and the like were using most of the time he had during the day. Others echoed this sentiment.

They expressed concern that communications work was the entire curriculum. One teacher thought that this would take care of itself over time. Two teachers were clearly frustrated with the arrangement. And the fourth, the kindergarten teacher, felt that she had to fit the curriculum in around all the communication work, though she thought that communication skills were perhaps the most important part of the kindergarten curriculum.

The focus on communications in the school was a decidedly different kind of “focus” than the other two schools. Knightly focused on the MEAP, and used that as guide across subject matters areas Brooke Elementary focused on “developmentally appropriate practice,” a way to teaching with particular qualities. Strether chose to emphasize one subject matter, which might have been due to the Title I program’s historical press on reading skills and Ann’s knowledge of the reading.

### Conclusion

Strether Elementary enacted a Schoolwide program through the vision of one person, the Title I reading teacher, with much support from her principal and the other teachers in the school. She did this

by ensuring that teachers learned the technical aspects of the policy and using a social strategy for doing so. Teachers worked together under her strong mediation as she directed them in what technical changes they would make and how they would make them. She provided the learning opportunities in which teachers learned to change the school's instructional program and teaching practices.

The reading teacher, Ann DeBoer, was deeply steeped in the Title I program, she was also deeply influenced by her knowledge of teaching and learning communication skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. She claimed to get her ideas from multiple sources: her husband who was the reading and language arts coordinator and ran the Title I program in an adjoining district, the other teachers, catalogues, talks she attended, and others.

Through having an eclectic way of collecting ideas, Ann developed multiple initiatives for the school to pursue in their Schoolwide program. They amounted to a fairly comprehensive change in the school and used the elements of coordination that are typically identified in the research literature.

She created a communication center in which homogeneously based groups of students from each classroom worked with Title I staff who taught applied learning skills. This change in structure was well understood among teachers as they explained that there

were no longer Title I children, but that the whole school was a Schoolwide Program. This meant that all children were receiving an enriched curriculum including the high achieving students. She encouraged teachers and Title I staff to interact around this new structure.

A second way Ann encouraged teachers to interact was through developing and sharing ideas, values and norms around teaching and learning -- what I refer to as *professional relationships*. Most notably, this was done through creating grade level goals, evaluations and activities. But there were many more grade level and whole school meetings than the school had ever had before, more than I probably have knowledge of. They had at least five days of professional development and three after school meetings during this time.

Third, teachers had examples of applied learning in the communication center, but technically they could have ignored this and treated the activities there as quite distinct from the activities in their own classrooms. Ann developed other initiatives that kept the school focused on applied learning, particularly in communication skills. During the professional development days, the teachers developed student portfolios and discussed writing activities. In conjunction with the grade level goals, they wrote

evaluations forms to be sent home once a month. These forms were teacher explanations of student progress, rather than letter grades. In addition, each student was given a journal.

The school, through Ann's guidance, focused on communication skills. These included any number of activities mentioned above from the communication center to the writing of goals to the purchasing of journals.

Ann provided leadership for these changes and the principal supported this leadership. The staff was enthusiastic about her leadership and ideas. But she was also the source of ideas for this school to become a Schoolwide. This meant that she could make changes within the school rapidly.

Though this school was nested in a relatively passive district and was loosely coupled from the central office and the other schools in the district, the instructional leader was knowledgeable about Title I, both its history and its current movements. She was also knowledgeable about other trends in education such as applied learning in communication skills, and Reading Recovery. Positioned as she was and knowledgeable as she was, she could speed the pace of reform within this school.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE CASE OF GEORGE KNIGHTLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: ALIGNING WITH THE STATE'S STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

George Knightly Elementary School operated within the same relatively passive district instructional guidance system that the other two schools in this study did. Unlike the other two schools, however, this school activity sought guidance from the central office. They received none, and leadership in this school passed between two staff members. The principal and the fifth grade teacher provided leadership at different times during the planning year and first year of enactment. The principal tended to look for guidance from within the instructional guidance system while the fifth grade teacher tended to look both to the instructional guidance system as well as her own history of school coordination.

Ultimately, led by the principal's desire to comply with the letter of the law and with the fifth grade teacher's support, this school looked to the technical aspects of the policy for guidance. They aligned the school's curriculum with the Michigan Educational Assessment Program or MEAP. This school's efforts was a strong external alignment strategy.

This school's story is instructive in at least two ways. One is the strength of leadership. The changes in leadership and of leadership's

prior knowledge of comprehensive school reform show the importance of leadership or guidance in two ways. One, the differences in the two leaders' mediations, in substance, style and trust in authority, and the way the school followed each, shows the strength of leadership. It shows the importance of the *means* of learning. That is, the importance of *who* guides as well as *what* guides enactment and *how* enactment is guided. The mediator's prior knowledge and beliefs shaped the interpretation and enactment of the policy as each assumed leadership. Two, the principal's lack of knowledge about internal coordination is important because, perhaps not surprisingly, the school sought guidance outside itself. In this case that guidance became the strongest policy signal available to the school: the Michigan Educational Assessment Program.

Second, this school's story calls into question what it means to "coordinate" instruction, professional work and school organization. As explained in the first chapter the policy encouraged schools to align externally with state standards, and determine how best to coordinate internal efforts around the students in the school. The research literature on school coordination presents several means of doing such. At the end of the first year of implementation, this school displayed less movement toward any of these types of internal coordination that I used to look at

coordination than the other two schools. But they had moved from a school that tended not to discuss classroom practices to one that did, and they aligned strongly with the MEAP. By using the MEAP as the focus and working through what students would need to know and be able to do to score well the MEAP, this school coordinated.

It scored consistently higher on the MEAP in all subject matter areas than the other two schools that had either achieved or attempted to achieve more formal internal coordination.

#### A Small Inner City School

Knightly Elementary School was located in what was once one of the most affluent neighborhoods in this city -- a city that due to its early entrance into the automotive industry, boomed before the stock market crash of 1929. This beautiful old school with marble floors, and marble staircases with wooden banisters, sat on a hill. A split-level school, the side facing the street sat on the top of the hill, while the backside sat in the dale. In the back of the school was an acre of yard, which ended in Knightly River. And in that acre was a round swimming pool that was a popular spot for young people during the city's hey day and now. The nearby railroad depot, defunct and over grown with shrubbery, showed that it was once a major crossroads of the city. The houses nearby were

nearly stripped of paint and had rotting porches; but one could imagine street upon street of unique turn of the century houses that showed this city and particularly this neighborhood were once affluent. Not far from this neighborhood was the most affluent neighborhood in this aging city, and this pattern of affluent abutting run-down neighborhoods was characteristic of the older parts of the city.

The reading teacher told me to drive -- it wasn't safe to walk she warned -- through the neighborhood to get a feel for the kind of poverty the students live in. A school of about 200 students, nearly 70% of the children in the spring of 1996 were eligible for the federal lunch program. The school was 56% minority, the largest group of which was African-American at 38%. The principal told me that many students' parents lived on Aid to Families with Dependent Children, making it possible for her to contact a least one parent or guardian most any time.

When entering the front door of the school, there were offices off to each side. On one side there was a large, glassed-in office with a second, also glassed-in office behind it. On the other side was a small, closed-in office. Typically the principal would sit in one of the larger offices, but in this school the secretary sat in the outer one and the large



office behind her contained the teacher's mailboxes and places for the teachers to sit.

Laura O'Connor, the principal, occupied the other, smaller office. A 46-year-old white female, Laura was in her second year as principal. She had worked in the district as a teacher for the previous 22 years. Laura might have chosen this office so she could easily see and talk to the students from here. A large woman, she was not as mobile as the other two principals in this study. From this small office, she could and did summon students, particularly those who had been sent to her office for disciplinary reasons, to her as they walked by her office.

This staff was small and the majority of members had less than 5 years teaching experience. Knightly had one teacher for each of the kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms and one split-grade classroom. During the Schoolwide planning process, the entire professional staff sat around the table. This included 11 people, 10 teachers and the principal. The teachers included 7 general education teacher, one Title I reading teacher, a half-time Title I science teacher, and one special education teacher. Of these, 7 were white women two of whom were veteran teachers, 2 black women -- both veteran teachers, and 1 young black man. Occasionally, a part time French teacher and a

part time librarian sat in, as well as the school's secretary. Though the custodian did not sit in the meetings, he interacted with the group a couple of times about the repairs he was making on bicycles donated for the raffle the staff had created.

### Coordination before the Planning Period

Before the Schoolwide planning year, this school had far less internal coordination when examined by using the school coordination literature as described in Chapter 1. That is, the school had no *focus*; on the contrary, it had multiple seemingly disparate foci. It lacked an internally coordinated program with no *interdependent work relationships* that I could detect. They had the beginnings of what I've defined as *professional relationships* through a Wednesday morning staff meeting. However, the meeting was not used to discuss instructional practices, though the year before the planning year, they had used some of this time to create a whole school discipline policy. They had not had *images of classroom practice* that were in the direction of the reforms. They were not *internally aligned* around goals or in any other way. They had not *aligned externally* with the district curriculum or the state student content standards.

At the beginning of the Schoolwide planning period the school was a traditional Title I school. The Title I program consisted of a full time reading teacher who taught a pullout remedial reading program, and a half time science teacher who taught in each classroom at least once a week.

### No Focus

As a bit of context, in the early to mid 1990s the then district Deputy Superintendent of Instruction asked a handful of schools to become “focus” schools. Among other foci, one school chose to focus on a discipline (mathematics), another chose to focus on an educational philosophy (developmentally appropriate practice), and another chose to focus on culture (multicultural school). The district had offered a few schools extra funding to implement these.

Subsequent to enacting these pilot focus schools, the other district schools were encouraged to develop a “focus,” but Knightly school chose not to. The principal said that she and the teachers considered having a health focus, but decided that really wasn’t what they wanted. In one interview shortly after she notified the central office that the school was considering becoming a Title I school (LO, 2/3/96), she told me her desire for the school’s faculty members was not to have a focus, but to behave like a family. That is, she hoped they would develop amongst

themselves a trust that would enable them to create a support group for one another. This indicated her desire for the school to develop social support to improve teaching practices.

The number and variety of projects and teaching techniques she mentioned also suggested a lack of a focus. She named at least 15 ideas, programs, or teaching techniques, which she and the teachers had brought into the school or learned about during their two-hour weekly meetings, from Reading Recovery to peer mediation to the Internet. This suggested that the school not only was not a focus school but also had many disparate ideas and activities, none of which were examined closely or looked to for guidance.

At the same time, however, she talked about three aspects of the curriculum that could have served as a technical focus or as guidance for the school. In one case the district curriculum could have been the school's focus. She mentioned that the school needed a Schoolwide program because it had a curriculum -- set by the central office -- but not a "how to." She hoped the Schoolwide planning would lead to the "how to." Though, as this chapter will show, the rest of the faculty did not consider the district's curriculum a source of guidance for instructional practices or school organization.

In another case, academic learning goals could have been the technical focus. As I was sitting in her office, she copied for me an article from Principal magazine (1996) by Mary Jean LeTendre, the U.S. Director of Compensatory Education Programs. The article was bulleted to highlight important aspects of the new Title I program. Some of these, Laura explained, she was aware of and understood, while some were new to her. For instance, she did not know that assessments should address higher-order thinking skills (p. 30). She did understand, however, that the program was about “academic learning goals.” Yet, the faculty members, as I will show in this chapter, did not feel the school had clearly defined academic learning goals.

Finally, she mentioned the importance of the MEAP, making note that the school would be judged by it. In the spring of 1996 the MEAP was gaining prominence in the state. Schools were ranked in one of three categories based on the MEAP: summary, interim, and unaccredited. This school, like the other two in this study, had interim status, which was neither the highest nor the lowest ranking available. Laura noted that the reason the school’s MEAP scores were not higher was because the language used on the MEAP was not the language used in the classroom.

She suggested that she and the faculty needed to disaggregate student results to understand where and why the school was weak and strong.

Laura did not mention the curriculum, the MEAP and the academic learning goals packaged together as they are here. Instead, they were mixed in with talk of the school's budget, the attitudes of particular teachers, the school carnival, and the need for help in evaluation. She didn't view any one of these as the school's focus. On more than one occasion she told me that the purpose of Schoolwide programs was to give principals more flexibility in their accounting procedures (LO, 02/23/96, 03/28/96, 03/25/97).

The district curriculum, a set of academic learning goals, and the MEAP, taken together, or singly, could have been used as a technical focus for a Title I Schoolwide program. To comply with Goals 2000 the state was to create student content and performance standards, which could have been considered academic learning goals. In addition, district curricula and the MEAP were to be aligned with the state standards. So not only could any one of these been used a focus, they could have been used in concert with one another as guidance for enacting a Title I Schoolwide program. But this school at the beginning of this planning time did not view them as a focus, nor did they use them for guidance.

In the spring of 1996, this school could be characterized as what Bryk, Easton, Rollow & Sebring (1993) refers to as a “Christmas tree school.” The Christmas tree image might evoke the idea that the school had a number of programs and ideas that are ornamental in nature. In this school there were many programs, each embraced equally, and each implemented not in depth but rather in a way that made the program or project ornamental in nature, and not salient to the core instructional program. The principal endorsed this approach.

She also ran the meetings to plan a Schoolwide program in a way that contributed to making the programs, ideas and techniques disjointed. This will be taken up in the section on the first stage of planning.

#### Few Interdependent Work Relationships

The school did not have a comprehensive program as in a shared curriculum or goals by grade. The classrooms worked in relative isolation from one another. No effort to work in interdependent work relations, such as team teaching, was evident. In the words of the fifth grade teacher, who had just arrived at the school that year, “Earlier in the year, when I first got there, I realized that teachers weren’t teaming. People were basically working as islands” (SH, 6/11/96).

### **Budding Professional Relationships**

However, it would not be correct to characterize this school as having no school coordination, or social resources to start a Schoolwide program. The faculty had chosen to meet together on Wednesday mornings for an hour and a half, and had to rearrange their schedule to do so. Also, they chose the school's professional and staff development activities at these meetings. These common experiences and opportunities could have created some shared understandings that differentiate this school to some degree from conventional schools.

One subject they had pursued the year before their Schoolwide planning meetings was to create a shared school discipline policy. They chose staff development providers who could help them with behavior and discipline issues and wrote a school discipline policy. More than one teacher and the principal referred back to this work in talking with me, indicating that this school had developed some social resources.

The teaching practices could have been somewhat similar, because the teachers were exposed to the same professional development or faculty development opportunities. The teachers seemed to have some familiarity with one another's practice. Both the second grade and third



grade teachers told me with some pride that they ran their classrooms as Susan, the fifth grade teacher, did. They told me this as I was observing to assure me that the students' sometimes rambunctious behavior was out of character. Neither of them, however, had ever observed Susan's classroom, so they might have formed their images of Susan's classroom in discussions with Susan about student behavior.

However, these discussions did not lead to talk of classroom practices having to do with children's learning academic subjects, at least not with the group as a whole. This is made clear in the section titled "Opportunities Not Found."

#### Images of Classrooms in the Direction of the Reforms

Teachers in this school had no opportunities to observe teaching in the direction of the Title I reforms, or to observe one another.

#### Internal and External Alignment

There were no obvious internal or external alignment strategies, though the principal had mentioned to me the need for the staff to understand the MEAP better.

In conclusion, the school's organization was what Lortie (1975) referred to as "cellular" or the "egg crate" model in terms of the interdependent work relations. The school did not have a strong

academic focus, or a few academic goals that could provide teachers with at least technical guidance. In fact, their principal seemed to discourage them from developing shared understandings around their teaching practices as will be demonstrated below.

At the same time, however, the teachers and principal had been meeting every Wednesday morning for a couple of years and had most likely developed some common understandings through the meetings and their shared staff development opportunities. While these meetings alone did not necessarily change each teacher's practices, the fact that they had talked about a comprehensive discipline policy seemed beyond discussions that more conventional schools have had, and indicated that social resources were available in the school to begin a Schoolwide program.

They were enthusiastic about teaching and saw the Title I Schoolwide program as an opportunity to enable them to better serve this high-poverty school.

#### Act I: Planning Under the Principal's Leadership

For this case study, I describe more extensively than in the other two cases the process the school used in developing a Schoolwide plan. I do this because this school, unlike the other two, took many twists and

turns in its decision making and implementation processes. Examining these processes shows *who* mediated the policy and the means she used to mediate in both process and content. This also shows the school's lack of focus and internal guidance and how eventually, one technical aspect of the policy -- the MEAP -- provided guidance and helped the school to organize itself using an alignment strategy with the state test.

### The Principal's Leadership Style

The Schoolwide planning time was during the Wednesday morning meetings. Laura tended to use the meeting as opportunities to gain input on school decisions. On the one hand, she brought the teachers into many decisions that the teachers at Strether Elementary would not have been privy to. Thus she was creating social resources that would later allow the school to take up technical aspects of the policy. She believed that principals need teachers to buy in to the school's program. In her words, "As a former staff person I know that unless you get the staff involved and have a commitment, you're gonna lose" (LO, 3/28/96). On the other hand, the list of items she opened up to teachers meant they didn't spend much time in creating a comprehensive school strategy.

She opened and led discussions with a list of issues she wanted to discuss including the eight components of Schoolwide programs. For

example, she would ask the faculty for input on the discretionary budget. As they worked in this way, often they didn't reach closure on a topic, or if they did reach closure, she would put the same topic on the discussion for the following meeting.

In the same way that they addressed each issue in a serial fashion, they also wrote the Schoolwide plan itself as if it were a list. They spent their Wednesday mornings not making a strategic plan, but using the eight components of Schoolwides to describe different aspects of the school's existing program. They used this process almost as if the eight components were something they used to justify what they were already doing.

The initial plan read like a list. Genevieve, the principal at Strether Elementary, worked with Laura in a school in Mapleton for many years when they were teachers. She commented that she and Laura were going about the planning for the Schoolwide in quite different ways. Genevieve told Laura that at Strether faculty was first talking about what they wanted to accomplish and then writing the plan. She suggested to Laura that she might like to do the same. Her sense was that Laura was eager to finish the task of writing the plan and was writing it rather than

using the planning time to help the staff consider what they wanted to do or accomplish with a Schoolwide program.

This school approached the plan like a task, rather than an opportunity to make decisions about how to build a comprehensive instructional program.

#### Looking to Central Office for Guidance

At the first meeting, Laura invited Sharon Wellborn from central office to explain Schoolwide programs to the faculty. Laura told the staff they would choose whether or not the school was to become a Schoolwide both at the beginning of the meeting and during the meeting.

The faculty was enthusiastic the day Sharon (3/3/96) met with them. She told them a bit about Schoolwides. When she was done with a short presentation, they asked many questions concerning the purposes and definitions of Schoolwides, the availability of model programs, and other topics.

At one point Sharon explained that each school would have a unique program, based on the needs of the students. The reading teacher looked across the table at me and said, "That's very exciting." There were many nodding heads.

At the same time that they were enthusiastic, they were apprehensive about who or what would help them become a Schoolwide and what it would entail.

Laura asked whether or not the central office had the staff to help schools enact Schoolwide programs, and if central office would provide a framework for schools to work through.

Sharon replied that this was about building what the school faculty wanted for the students' needs. She suggested they might want to start by defining their staff development needs. For example, she suggested, "Who is going to help you?"

Laura said, "You."

Sharon, who knew her position in central office was at best tenuous due to budgetary problems, replied, "I will try."

Laura said, "Who is left to help [in central office]?"

Sharon smiled wryly and says, "Me."

One of the teachers, Kathleen said, "How could you not help us?"

They remained enthusiastic about Schoolwides throughout the meeting. After Sharon left they voted to implement a Schoolwide program with only one faculty member, the fifth grade teacher who later would provide instructional leadership, wavering.

After this meeting the school would have welcomed central office guidance with open arms, but central office had very little contact with

any of the schools writing Schoolwide plans. The principal and the Title I teacher repeatedly called central office to ask for help. In particular, they wanted a framework to help them write the plan.

They gave up calling central office and called the state Title I office, and received a list of the eight Schoolwide components in the legislation as the “framework.” They used this, together with a list of 80 items that central office had had prepared for them<sup>1</sup> to work through the plan. The list of 80 items ranged across all kinds of ideas presently floating in the education arena. As an example, it began with the following:

#### **An agreed-upon Vision**

- Mission - a well-defined academic mission that challenges all students to be academically successful in meeting high performance standards and achievement goals.
- Mission includes goals that upgrade the instructional core for students by developing or adopting academic programs with these characteristics:

Focus on early childhood intervention

Use of systematic, research-based academic programs

Instruction in thematic units; integrated disciplines and specializations

Expanded use of technology

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the items were gathered from the Idea Book, 1994.

Emphasis on building student self-concept, cultural pride and community identity

### Using the Eight Components and the 80-item list as Guidance

They embraced the eight components and the 80 items indiscriminately, the way they embraced anything they thought could help their students. During one planning meeting they went through the 80 items, discussing whether or not they had each item in place.

All new teaching ideas and techniques seemed to be embraced, though not necessarily thoroughly, with equal vigor. Talking about coordinating the foster grandparents program used as much or more faculty time and energy as decisions concerning whether or not to fund a reading teacher full time. Yet, the foster grandparents were not prepared to work with students, rather they helped to clean blackboards and sat near students as they worked.

Addressing the planning of the Schoolwide program as a list of 80 seemingly disparate items could lead to a disparate rather than coordinated program. That is, rather than contributing to harmonious actions on the part of teachers and principals it could lead to more disjunctures rather than fewer.

Also, approaching the Schoolwide plan so that the foster grandparents program was equally as important as instruction could have



pushed the school staff away from focusing on children's academic knowledge and skill.

### Opportunities Not Found

There were many opportunities in these free flowing discussions to focus in on the technical aspects of the policy. The talk about classroom practices could have helped them create what I have termed "professional relationships," or relationships that help teachers develop common understandings about learners, learning and teaching. These opportunities, however, were discouraged. Perhaps they were not viewed as learning opportunities; or perhaps they were seen as too time consuming to attend to because of the attention to finishing the plan. Nonetheless, questions emerged concerning learners, learning and teaching but were not pursued.

Below I use an example of a discussion concerning "developmentally appropriate" as an example of questions teachers raised that might have, if guided skillfully, helped them develop professional relationships around classroom practices. Discussions of these issues, however, were set aside or ignored. The principal, who was a strong presence at the meetings, often brushed aside these issues.

A discussion concerning developmentally appropriate practice soon after the school had written an initial draft of their plan (5/15/96) shows one opportunity not taken. In the context of discussing the state's proficiencies for the fifth grade writing MEAP, Michael, the resource room teacher, asked about, "developmentally appropriate." He appeared to try to change the course of the conversation from writing the plan, to a discussion about the capabilities of the students in the school. A key point of the policy is that all children can learn to high standards, which means a discussion about what developmentally appropriate means and how to interpret the concept in light of ambitious standards for all students an important point. Thus Michael is grappling with the assumptions teachers had about learners, learning and teaching in relation to one of the policy's technical points.

He said, "Isn't our job to catch up kids to where they should be? I thought that was the whole purpose of this. What is this about developmentally appropriate?" (5/15/96). Michael appeared to argue that "developmentally appropriate" weren't useful words to describe what they hoped to achieve, because the point of Schoolwides was to ensure all students are working at grade level.

Michael was a young man, perhaps 24 years of age, and other staff members appeared to like and respect him. In an interview after this incident, he explained that he and the staff were not like-minded. He pointed out that the staff was mostly white women who had grown up in rural areas. In contrast, he was a young black man who had grown up in inner city Detroit. He felt this gave him a different understanding of the black, urban children in the school, and a way of talking with students that the other teachers did not possess. (ML, 6/5/96).

Dee the reading teacher said, "We can't raise them above their developmentally appropriate level." Dee appeared to argue that students have limits on what they can achieve academically, perhaps by age.

Dee had suggested in an interview (5/17/96), prior to this meeting, that Michael was the least experienced teacher in the school. She explained that he wanted to save all the kids, while the more veteran teachers realized they couldn't save them all. She could only hope that during the time she instructed them, she helped. She explained the students' futures were in their own hands and they had a destiny. When she was Michael's age she wanted to save everybody, too.

A second teacher suggested that there is a contradiction or tension in the curriculum itself. Susan, the fifth grade teacher said,

"It's a huge contradiction in the school curriculum."

Later she explained to me what she meant (6/11/96). The contradiction concerned assessing students' progress by their own accomplishments and efforts as opposed to assessing them by a standard program. The fifth grade report card (though not the fourth grade) was structured such that teachers were to give students a letter grade based on the fifth grade program. She explained that if she used a standard of seventy percent as a C, 5 or 6 of her students would fail fifth grade. She resolved this conflict by noting on those 5 or 6 students' report cards that their grades were derived from a modified fifth grade program.

A third teacher, Amanda, appeared to take a different tack. She said, "You have to start where the kids start." Starting where a child starts isn't necessarily contradictory to Michael's idea of helping students to reach grade level. However, she, too, seemed interested in talking Michael out of his position in a respectful manner.

Amanda and Michael were two of the three African-American teachers in the school. They nearly always sat next to each other during the planning time and I frequently saw them conversing in the hall and parking lot.

Susan repeated her comment about the contradiction in the curriculum.

The principal, who tended to lead the discussions, thought it was time to move away from the topic. She said, "I feel we should leave it for now. I mean the people who write this...That's a utopian ideal." Her comments suggested that those who wrote the policy either wrote something they don't believe possible to achieve; or else they thought possible, but because they didn't work in schools, didn't have an understanding of what schools and classrooms could do or achieve.

Others seemed to agree with her. While agreeing, they also seemed to want to ensure that Michael understood why they were moving on and that they respected his ideas. Someone mentioned one of Michael's students who apparently had academic learning issues.

Michael said, "If anybody knows the difficulty of this, it would be me."

Those around the table appeared to interpret this remark to mean that Michael agreed that one can't raise students beyond their developmental levels and that they should leave this idea for now. My interpretation was that Michael was saying nobody knows the academic difficulties of some of these students in the way he did, therefore his

desire to help students achieve at grade level was a well reasoned, legitimate concern. However, the conversation moved back to commenting on the document as it was written.

To recap, Michael first asked what the words “developmentally appropriate” mean. “Developmentally appropriate” suggests that students go through stages of cognitive development. This could lead one to ask what that means for the nature of learners and what they are capable of. It could also lead to asking how they learn, given a particular stage of development. Or it could lead one to ask how best to teach them. But these issues weren’t discussed.

A teacher mentioned that you “can’t raise students above their developmentally appropriate level.” The teachers could have discussed what this said about which students can learn what and when. But that discussion was not pursued. Another teacher suggested that she and her colleagues needed to “start where children start,” an idea that touches on how best to teach children. Another teacher mentioned a contradiction in the curriculum. She needed to accomplish two seemingly contradictory goals within her classroom curriculum. One goal was to assess a student’s progress against a classroom norm. The other was to

assess a student's achievement by his or her own progress. Here are issues wrapped up with teaching and assessment.

Through language and action, teachers can develop and reaffirm their common assumptions about children, learning, teaching, teachers' roles, the importance of interpersonal relationships and commitment to the collective good (Bryk, Lee, and Holland, 1993). In the teachers' discussions of developmentally appropriate practice were opportunities for teachers to talk about or create common understandings on the issues such as those discussed by Bryk, Lee and Holland that were not taken up.

Developmentally appropriate practice was not the only topic left unexamined that could have led to discussions about teaching and learning or about the key points of the policy. Other topics were treated in similar ways. Someone would bring up an issue that could lead to discussion of classroom practice and the issue would be ignored or answered quickly.

For example during one discussion (3/15/96) the issue of pullout programs as the staff was reviewing the 80 item list. One teacher pointed out that "We pull out right now." Laura replied, "It is impossible to do all the serving within the classroom." The discussion was left.

Later in that same meeting, Michael mentioned that among the list of 80 items were two that canceled each out. One item said “Pullout programs are eliminated;” while another one was “Special student groupings are made for more effective classroom practices.” He wondered aloud why this was so. No one responded to this issue. Either of these comments about pullouts could have led to discussions about why the policy seemed to urge schools to move away from pullouts, and the pros and cons of pullouts. Yet this technical change that the policy encouraged so students in pullout programs would not be exposed to a curriculum that would ensure they did not achieve high standards, and so that general and Title I staff would coordinate their efforts was not discussed.

In this same discussion, a teacher gave an example of her teaching and asked if it addressed issues of “traditionally underserved populations, including girls and women.” Laura told her that Knightly Elementary teachers address the issues of girls and women, and that if they didn’t, they could certainly be brought up to speed. That was the end of the discussion. Another wondered what “goals” referred to in the statement “goals are aligned with the mission.” She asked if this was in reference to the “three school improvement goals” (required by the School Improvement Plan). No one answered this question. Each of these topics



could have led to discussions about academic learning for children, and central issues in the policy, but none were taken up.

This meant that at this point the school, though they had the beginning of what I've called professional relationships through the school's discipline policy, had yet to discuss classroom academic practices and had yet to look closely at the technical aspects of the policy.

### Act II: The Fifth Grade Teacher's Guidance: Planning and Early Enactment

May 29<sup>th</sup> was to be the last meeting to complete the Schoolwide planning document. Instead, it became a time when the fifth grade teacher encouraged the staff to think about the school program as a whole and to enact a program quite different from the one they had. In this case the policy provided a chance for the full staff to hear a different perspective than they had considered before and enabled the fifth grade teacher to become the policy mediator.

### Shifting Direction: Making the Case for Coordination

As they gathered in the library, the principal came with a draft of the plan and began the discussion by saying in a somewhat discouraged manner that they had a number of topics they needed yet to address. She included the preschool program, assessment and a number of others. Some discussion took place concerning whether or not they needed to

address all the topics on the state's list, where they could find more time to work together, and what to address first.

They decided that the most obvious weakness in the plan was the lack of assessment. This allowed Susan, the fifth grade teacher, to press her ideas concerning full school reform or coordination efforts and use her prior knowledge to assert leadership or influence in the planning process, and begin to mediate the process for the school. I have in my notes,

Susan said, "I have a hard time talking about assessment without K-2, and 3-5 plans." She went on for some time, quite articulately, about how they needed this. She talked quickly about what they needed to do. She used several arguments and several types of arguments: they couldn't assess in a vacuum, other schools had these plans, and a plan would help them know what they needed to do. She concluded by asserting the group needed to decide what it was they were assessing.

About half the teachers nodded or concurred. One said, "I agree." About half seemed confused or surprised. One argued they had agreed to keep the plan simple.

Susan turned to this teacher and said, "So you would leave it like this?" She then continued that they had to be clear about their expectations in order to assess students.

Laura argued, "The expectations are in the district's curriculum guides."

Susan asked, "What kind of assessments we are making? How will they be used in placement? How will we measure progress and achievement?"

Again, some teachers strongly agreed by saying "yes" or nodding their heads.

Susan said that they needed locator tests for their multi-age groupings. They needed strategies, plans, and tests.

Until this interaction multi-age grouping had not been mentioned to the full group nor was it mentioned in the draft of the Schoolwide plan. The principal had told me in an earlier interview that multi-age groupings would mean restructuring, so perhaps the staff had talked about it prior to Title I Schoolwide planning. But it was clear they had not thought through what it would take to enact multi-age groups the way Susan envisioned them.

One of the surprised teachers, Kathleen, said, "This is a surprise to me." She then asked if Susan was talking about a specific test and continued to ask questions until she appeared to understand.

Kathleen said, "This is new to me. Are you talking about a pre-test? A post-test? Do you re-administer the exact same test? Or a similar test?"

Susan said that they would re-administer the same test. Kathleen asked if they would do this for each subject matter area, like mathematics, and so forth.

Susan said, yes, probably the same thing for reading and each of the subject matters.

A couple of the veteran teachers and the principal suggested that they had conducted this kind of pre and post-test earlier in their careers. There were several side conversations while Susan continued answering questions about the tests.

It might be because Susan was answering specific questions, or because some of the more experienced teachers were familiar with some of what Susan was suggesting, or some other reasons; but the group seemed intrigued with the idea.

Laura who had mentioned that the district curriculum was already in place seemed reluctant at that point to entertain Susan's ideas. But as the conversation progressed, she warmed to the idea. She suggested that they might be able use packaged assessments from various reading series, or even to repackage them so that the school staff could make up K-2 and 3-5 tests. She asked if Susan thought this was true and if they could get these tests together in the next 45 minutes.

Susan and the enthusiastic teachers said they could. The staff divided themselves into a K-2 team and a 3-5 team to work.

#### **Susan's Background: Writing Comprehensive School Programs**

Susan had had a couple of fairly extensive opportunities to think about and observe creating and enacting comprehensive school programs. She was a teacher in the Mapleton district, then taught at a private school in Florida, and came back to a school in Mapleton that served as a pilot for the state's accreditation program before coming to

Knightly. She had also worked on the curriculum in the district in which she lived, a district adjacent to Mapleton.

In Florida, she had worked in a Country Day school. Her perspective was that because private schools didn't have much money, the school staff had to do much work that wasn't expected of the Mapleton teachers. The school had to be approved yearly by the Florida Independent Schools Association. This meant the staff had to write the school curriculum and justify it. She felt she had learned much from this, particularly from other staff who had worked in American International schools. They also had to conduct work such as checking the students' standardized tests by hand, work that Mapleton teachers assumed someone else would perform.

When she returned to Mapleton, she accepted a position in a school that piloted the state's accreditation program. The piloted accreditation program had many of the same components as the Schoolwide program. She believed that the pilot program required much more documentation than the Schoolwide program.<sup>2</sup>

I asked what they were doing for the Schoolwide program and she explained, (numbering the author's, not Susan's).

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<sup>2</sup> The state later decided to base accreditation on the MEAP.

That's what we're doing and that's basically the Schoolwide plan was to evaluate (1) where we're at, (2) where we need to go, (3) how we're going to get there and (4) different strategies and ways in which we can work with a team of teachers in the building to make it happen.

This explanation fit with her understanding of the purpose of Schoolwide programs. As she said,

We're trying to put together a cohesive, academic plan that is consistent, K through 5, such that there's consistency from one level to the next. And that the expectations, there's a standard from which we work.

When I asked her what she meant by expectations or standards she said that teachers need to know the standard for assessing students, and parents deserve to know that standard. She said,

"But what does exceptional mean? What does satisfactory mean? What does needs-to-improve mean? Where are your standards? What are you operating from?" So Susan wanted to enact a program that had technical aspects such as grade level goals, standards and assessments, though at this point it wasn't clear if these were aligned with the state standards and assessments or not.

### Planning a Multi-age Program

The teachers met in the K-2 and 3-5 teams creating pre- and posttests for the two sets of grade levels in reading and mathematics over the next week. They got substitute teachers -- one day for the 3-5

team and the next for the K-2 team -- to meet together. Susan met with the K-2 team during this time. Though their draft plans had not mentioned multi-age groupings, their final plan made them the centerpiece. That is, heretofore multi-age groupings had not been mentioned, but their final plan was based on multi-age groupings.

I asked Susan about this and she said that she had been talking to the third and fourth grade teachers about how they needed to work together since she had come in the beginning of the year. She was concerned about their lack of coordination, and also wanted to plant some seeds for change. In her words,

I had to talk to some of the teachers and said, "We can't do this anymore. You guys are going to have to prove yourselves to the state. We're in the at-risk category in terms of receiving unaccredited status. We have to change the course in which we're operating to make sure that we're all working together and towards the same goal." And so early on, I kind of planted the seed with some of the staff that if we did multi-age grouping, it would be a way to meet the needs of the kids in a better way (SH, 6/11/96).

She told me that they had coordinated the cross-grade curriculum by creating standards for grade levels and creating tests to administer to their students at the beginning, middle and end of the year to determine where students would be placed in their new program. These tests were created by using tests and materials that teachers had either used before or had available to them through the reading and mathematics series they

had. The standards appeared to be one in the same with the assessments they created.

At first, Susan explained, she was surprised that none of the other teachers had argued in the planning meetings that their plan was not a comprehensive school program. As she went on to help the teachers, however, she realized that none had done this before, including the veteran teachers. In her words,

...they're blind. They've never been through this before...I worked with the K through 2 teachers to show them. They didn't know what a rubric was. They don't know what a benchmark is. These are things that they're learning. They're fantastic teachers, it just that nobody has ever taken the time (SH, 6/11/96).

Though, she went on to ensure me, they were an enthusiastic staff.

And this is a real eager, motivated staff and they're open to new ideas. They want to do it better. They don't like these low scores. They teach, you know basically, they'd stand on their heads to do anything for these kids (SH, 6/11/96).

She defended the fact that the Laura didn't know much about how to make a comprehensive school plan, by suggesting that she had recently become a principal and the district didn't provide administrators with much support. In her words,

When you were sitting there the other day, there wasn't a plan of action. I think that the administrator...is...probably thinking there is a plan of action, but there isn't.



She continued, "She's new [to the principalship]. [In this district] we have administrators that...never get trained in curriculum. So you're on your own."

Susan's proposal was a strong internal coordination strategy. The plan was to have K-2 and 3-5 teachers work together as a team, creating goals, activities and assessments for the two levels and also grades within these levels. So Susan led them to conceive of and respond to their own technical guidance and worked with them to develop the necessary social relationships.

What this strategy did not take into account was external alignment. Though Laura suggested that the district had a curriculum that defined goals (and was, at least in name, aligned with the state standards) in this initial work, the school did not align externally.

They began the work, however, of talking about what should be taught and how to determine if it had been taught. One veteran teacher of 25 years told me that she was embarrassed to admit it, but she had never thought about the school's program as a whole (LT, 5/29/97).

#### Enacting and Discontinuing a Multi-Age Program

The next fall, the staff team taught by sharing students across classrooms based on the results of the pre- and posttests they had

created. They referred to this as the students' developmentally appropriate levels. In the new program, they tried to place students K-2 and 3-6<sup>3</sup> in what they referred to as ability groups for mathematics and reading through the tests. For mathematics, they divided the 3-6 grade by ability groups with each teacher teaching an ability group. The K-2 teachers traded more informally. For all grades the multi-age reading groups were instituted more informally than the mathematics -- individual teachers arranged to move individual students among themselves -- and that seemed to work better for the school.

They also created a "lunch bunch" program, in which any students could go for extra help during the lunch hour. Sometimes the teachers would suggest they go, and sometimes the children went on their own. This is both an "extended school day" strategy and an opportunity for those not mastering the standards to get extra help. The IASA encourages schools to "increase the amount and quality of learning time, such as providing extended school year and before- and after-school and summer programs and opportunities" (p. 3536). It also states that schools should include in their plans "activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering any of the standards required during

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<sup>3</sup> The central office decided that Knightly Elementary would provide a K-6

the course of the school year shall be provided with effective, timely additional assistance” (p. 3537).

Also, the Title I funding for this school was more plentiful in this school year than it had been in the previous year, so they were able to hire two aides. The principal believed the lunch bunch program and the aides helped them improve their academic program.

In the spring of 1997 the school decided to drop the scheduling changes they had created. They changed back to the egg crate model for several reasons. Scheduling was a problem. The school and the teachers found it difficult for everyone to have mathematics at the same time. For the school, this meant that no assemblies or other work could be done during this time. For the teachers, this meant their classroom schedules were less flexible. Two, they decided the test they had created wasn't accurate enough to place students in flexible or ability groups. Three, the principal told me that an inexperienced third grade teacher wasn't meeting the needs of the upper grade students who came to her classroom.

Susan, the fifth grade teacher, reported that throughout the year she continued to call and hold meetings with the third, fourth, and sixth

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program as part of a district and state schools-of-choice program.

grade teachers to continue to develop consistency in program and in instruction.

Susan felt that this group of upper elementary teachers had also begun to implement the "writing across the curriculum" idea, though the constructed responses of students hadn't gone as far, or as deeply, as she had hoped. This concern had to do with her growing interest in ensuring the students performed well on the MEAP. As she explained, to use constructed responses students were given a situation, investigation, or problem. The students then needed to state the situation, investigation or problem in their own words, and then answer by providing evidence from the text. She thought her students might have performed well on the MEAP science test because the test used constructed responses extensively.

She believed that unless the principal started pushing for more cohesiveness and stress on academics, the Title I Schoolwide plan would become just another process that the teachers walked through. She was concerned that the K-2 teachers weren't meeting to think about how

they could work together, nor were they developing the cohesiveness to enable them to share students.<sup>4</sup>

She also wondered aloud why it was that central office didn't provide oversight for principals and encourage them to encourage their staffs to move toward the statewide goals. She felt the principals in this district needed more oversight. She thought it would be a good idea to have a teacher go with each principal to the central office principals' meetings, and have them report what was going on in their schools concerning these goals. But as noted, this central office was loosely coupled from the schools, especially concerning school programs and instruction.

### Act III: Using the MEAP for Guidance

During this first year of the Schoolwide program enactment, the 1996-97 school year, the MEAP gained prominence in this school. By the end of the year, it provided a focus for the school and the school organized their curriculum around this technical aspect of the policy.

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<sup>4</sup> The second grade teacher told me the K-2 staff traded students more informally for both reading and mathematics, which might have caused some interaction among those teachers.

### Role of MEAP during the Program Planning Year

The faculty did not discuss the MEAP during the Schoolwide planning time. The principal mentioned it a few times. She suggested that raising scores was an important part of continuing to be considered a Schoolwide program. The MEAP was important to both leaders, Laura and Susan, during the Schoolwide planning time -- though it became important to the entire school during the first year of enactment.

As discussed above, during my first conversation with the principal in February of 1996, (LO, 2/23/96) she told me the staff needed to disaggregate the MEAP scores and figure out which questions or types of questions they had to do better on. She also told me that the staff needed to use the same language the MEAP used in classrooms to improve scores. In a planning meeting she told the staff that the MEAP would determine whether or not the school would be allowed to remain a Schoolwide under Title I.

Also during the planning and enactment years Susan was increasingly focused on the MEAP. As the fifth grade teacher, she administered the writing and science MEAP tests. When the faculty discussed what professional development activities to undertake the

following year, she pressed for help with writing, particularly constructed responses.

### The State and the School Emphasize the MEAP in Enactment Year

In the 1996-97 school year the state decided this school should be a part of a special program for improving the school's academic achievement, particularly achievement on the MEAP. The state provided a consultant to work with the school to decide on academic achievement goals, which were defined by the MEAP; and the faculty was a part of a MEAP workshop.

As mentioned above, state accreditation was based on the MEAP. Schools were classified in one of three classifications: the highest was "summary status," the middle was "interim status," and the lowest was "unaccredited." Knightly was neither in the top rung, nor in the bottom. Nonetheless, the state decided this school should be a part of the program.

Both of these efforts could have been a teaching and learning opportunity for the faculty, though Laura explained that only the workshop was helpful. Ironically, she claimed the retired superintendent who was the school's state consultant sought to learn how to raise MEAP scores from her.

However, she found the workshop helpful. In the workshop they worked with university people on an item by item analysis of the MEAP. They examined each MEAP question to determine if it was “easy” or “difficult” to answer based on the percentage of students in the state to answer the question correctly. They compared that item to how Knightly students responded to that item. That way, if a answer was “easy” for the state , but “difficult” for Knightly, the staff tried to think about why their students had not done well on that item and considered ways to improve their score on that item or a similar item. This is much the same strategy that that Strether Title I mathematics teacher used with the teachers, though in that case, the Strether teacher, rather than university faculty, worked with the school staff.

They were encouraged not to try to tackle those that were “difficult” for the state as a whole, but to work on those that should have been “easy.”

Laura explained that there were about six to eight questions or types of questions and the school could raise their test scores to the 66<sup>th</sup> percentile or above, which would make a student’s score “satisfactory.”

As she said,

There was an analysis sheet that the teachers that went to this workshop analyzed; and they have the test questions. And we



have like six questions that we really need to hone in on in both reading and math.

The most we had were like eight questions. And if we just, you know, really hone in on just a couple, we feel we could raise those scores above the 66 percent, which is everybody's goal.

But the school went beyond attending the workshop and examining what types of questions the students needed to improve on the MEAP.

They also aligned the MEAP with the curriculum and curricular materials.

As Laura states,

We took our curriculum statements, and textbooks, and tradebooks and those types of things that we use, and the MEAP assessment to make sure that we had something that would align with everything. (LO, 3/25/97).

They bought curricular materials that they believed were in alignment with the MEAP. For example, Susan had been using Writer's Express in the fifth grade and they purchased it for the entire school.

They also purchased Scholastic Science for the entire school.

The fifth grade teacher, Susan, had gone to a series of MEAP workshops and she felt the workshops were of importance both to the school and to herself. She felt that what she learned there was in concert with what she believed students needed to know and be able to do. She explained that the MEAP required students to write constructed responses.

She had begun having students develop constructed responses across subject matter areas --literature, science, mathematics and social studies. She told me that though earlier in her career she would have been embarrassed to say it, she now was teaching to the test -- the MEAP. (SH, 5/29/97). I asked her why she was embarrassed and what she made of the MEAP. She said,

When I look over the MEAP, I think, "Certainly, our kids should know this." To me, that's a reading test. They should be able to read through this, and we should give them the skills to be able to take this test and do well, and I feel like we did that. And so, yeah, that probably determined how I taught. And it determines what I do now, because I teach from a constructed response format for any reading that we do.

The fourth grade teacher also told me that the MEAP was important. She mentioned to me that Michigan history was going to be very important on the MEAP social studies test. She also told her students (5/11/97) that they were skipping around a bit in the social studies text because she wanted to determine if it was a good text for the MEAP.

As the principal discussed the MEAP and its importance in the school, I asked her what she made of it. Her response was equally as supportive as Susan's was, but not for instructional reasons. Instead her response came out of a concern for how the school was judged.

What I make of the MEAP doesn't matter. It runs the school. It's from the State. It determines funding. It determines whether we get a good or bad rep[utation] (LO, 3/25/97).

The principal was very happy with the alignment process. In her words, "It walked us through aligning the MEAP with the curriculum, and it made us all very cognizant of what it is and what it says..."

The fifth grade teacher and the principal felt strongly that there was much more consistency across the grades during the first year of enactment than previously. They agreed that this was truer for grades 3-6 than K-2. This could have been in part because the MEAP is administered in the upper elementary grades. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade MEAP was reading and mathematics, and 5<sup>th</sup> writing and science.

The MEAP is certainly a large part of the federal Title I and Goals 2000 legislation. The states are to create state standards and align state tests with those standards. At the same time, the MEAP has a long history in Michigan, beginning in the late 1960s. At this time it was gaining prominence in state policy as well as federal, particularly through the state accreditation program.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> During the 1996-97 school year the reading and mathematics versions were not yet updated and therefore aligned with the 1995 state student content standards. The reading and mathematics MEAPs at this time were first implemented in the 1989-90 school year. However, the

### Aligning with the State Proficiency Test: Providing a Focus and Helping to Define the Content of the Curriculum

This school's story calls into question the nature of what it takes to coordinate a school's academic efforts. At the end of the first implementation year, this school displayed less coherence around the programmatic or horizontal coordination efforts of a Schoolwide program compared to the other two schools. They had tried interdependent work relationship and had decided not to pursue them at this time. They had no images of new Title I classroom practices. They had dropped the internal coordination piece of their program when they dropped the multi-age groups. That is, after having worked briefly on goals and assessments by multi-age groups, they did not continue with this work although the fifth grade teacher continued to press the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to do this.

But perhaps what they had done was equally as significant as the multiple ways that Strether had coordinated. They hadn't developed an internal focus, though through alignment, they used the MEAP as an implicit focus. They had recognized the technical aspect of the policy and decided to coordinate around that. They also had jointly interpreted

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Michigan Department of Education felt the earlier MEAPs were close enough to the state content standards to be viable tests.

the MEAP during their staff meetings, which might have helped them develop professional relationships and address at least some of the social aspects of the policy.

While conversations about the Schoolwide program introduced conversations that could have led to discussion of learners, learning and teaching were not pursued, the use of the MEAP made it much more likely that they would have these kinds of conversations. The IASA and Goals 2000 legislation encouraged states to test most students, which Knightly did. The state workshops led them to talk about how the students understood MEAP questions, and could have led to discussion about teaching. This shows one way in which the state attended to the social and technical aspects of the policy, by providing workshops in which teachers could work together.

The MEAP scores were higher than the other two school's scores during the year of planning (1995-96), and they continued to climb through the 1997-98 school year. Indeed, it scored higher, across all subject matter areas, than the district-wide average, and increased this difference over time.

The two leaders, the principal and the fifth grade teacher, both believed the school was more consistent across grade levels. By

consistency, they might have meant that what was taught was more consistent, or how it was taught. I presume they focused on what was taught because of the discussions concerning the MEAP, and what to assess as they tried to coordinate their multi-age grouping program in the first year of enactment.

However, they might have developed more strongly a sense of how to each teacher taught. I observed five classrooms in this school: the second, fourth and fifth grade, resource room and reading classrooms. At first blush, these classrooms were managed more like one another than they were like the classrooms in either Strether or Brooke. They were strongly teacher-controlled and led. The teachers tolerated very little student talking except with the teachers themselves. The students sat in rows in the all of the classrooms except in the small reading classes, and during mathematics in the third grade classroom.

Each teacher mentioned to me that she felt the students needed a structured classroom. The resource room teacher told me that resource room students need fewer, not more distractions. Students in his room sat in rows. The shades were often drawn, and there were no decorations on the walls (ML, 6/5/96).

The second grade teacher told me that she had been teaching for 26 years and she knew the students needed structure. When I mentioned to her that Susan, the fifth grade teacher, also told me the children needed structure, she responded that she and Susan taught a lot alike. Yet, she had not had the opportunity to observe Susan's teaching.

The fourth grade teacher, who administered the reading and mathematics MEAP tests, spent much of the time I observed her explaining to me what she was doing and why. She mentioned the MEAP frequently, discussing which tests (mathematics, reading and so forth) the state was emphasizing and what students needed to know to prepare for the various tests.

So there is strong evidence that this school coordinated around the MEAP, that the staff used it as both a focus and as a determination of at least the content of the curriculum for Knightly students. There is also evidence that though teachers did not directly discuss how to teach the content, in fact, were discouraged by their principal to discuss their respective practices in much detail, they had a sense of how each taught.

They had opportunities to understand one another's discipline policies. During the staff meeting held on Wednesday mornings they had developed a school discipline policy. Also, during the time they semester

they tried the multi-age grouping strategy they might have learned about one another's practices. And finally, though their discussions of the MEAP during the first year of enactment.

### Conclusion

This school was nested in the same relatively passive district as the other two, and left to its own devices to interpret and enact the Title I Schoolwide program. Its student population was similar though not identical to students in the other two schools due to bussing. But it was quite different from the other two schools in the way they enacted a Schoolwide and in what the Schoolwide looked like. While Strether attended to the social and technical changes in the policy through the strong leadership of the Title I teacher, this school ultimately attended to the technical aspects and worked socially to understand them.

This school's leadership was not the strong, direct leadership like Ann DeBoer's at Strether Elementary. Instead Laura's leadership was focused on the formal educational system for guidance and she enabled teachers to help lead the school's instructional program. Susan's leadership was strong, however, the principal did not view her as someone with whom she shared instructional leadership, and her influence over the entire school was short lived. The adult learners were enthusiastic and in



the beginning phases of learning about comprehensive school reform.

The content of the policy was not fully explained to the faculty by outsiders. This combination ultimately led the school to invest deeply in the aspect of the policy with the clearest and loudest message: the Michigan Educational Assessment Program.

The Schoolwide planning process provided opportunities to discuss instruction, though initially these discussions were discouraged. However, they began to discuss what should be taught, if not how it should be taught, when they planned for the multi-age group strategy. This was discussed in creating an assessment for multi-age grouping. The MEAP appears to have opened up both a discussion of the content as well as the process of the curriculum.

For a short while the school coordinated around multi-age groups. This coordination was abandoned after one semester. The principal told me she would like to see the staff again try a school program. But, as the fifth grade teacher noted, without stronger leadership from the principal, it is unclear how this could happen.

The learners were early in their understanding of whole school reform, and the MEAP had strong influence. Susan's mediation of the MEAP was strong and Laura supported it as well. The attention they paid

to the MEAP probably came from several sources. The principal felt strongly about the reputation the school would have due to the MEAP and believed the school would need to improve MEAP scores in order to remain a Schoolwide project. The fifth grade teacher thought the MEAP a good assessment of what teachers should be able to teach. Unlike the fifth grade teacher, the principal tended to judge the MEAP not by qualities that she determined as good or strong for student learning, but rather by what was required of her school in the public's eye. The MEAP was such an instrument guidance, and for strong reasons. The MEAP had growing prominence in the state and this school in particular as the school was selected to go through an intensive MEAP analysis course.

The strength of the MEAP, together with the instructional leaders' willingness to use it for guidance and enactors who were relatively new to the concept of comprehensive school reform, meant that the MEAP gained even more prominence in this school.

CHAPTER FIVE  
THE CASE OF DOROTHEA BROOKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:  
MEASURING THE POLICY BY INTERNAL STANDARDS

Dorothea Brooke Elementary School was working on coordinating the school's instructional program before the school staff decided to become a Schoolwide program. The school's program was remarkably organized, making this school unique. The classrooms' rhythms; and the interactions between and among the principal, the teachers, the students and the parents were not what one would expect from having read the literature on school organization or the culture of teaching (Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1982) or from having examined the other two schools in this study. The classrooms were organized in groupings of grades K-2 or 3-5, and the teachers team taught. The staff had organized itself around *developmentally appropriate practice*, which they spoke about it at length, between and among staff and parents. The teachers spoke with one another not only about teaching practices in a general sense, but also about one another's teaching practices in particular.

The principal and teachers in this school referred to their school as a Developmentally Appropriate Practice school, or a DAP school. DAP was a set of principles about how to teach and organize

the school. Their source of guidance was not a policy instrument but rather a set of prior knowledge and beliefs that a set of teachers and the principal held, together with guidance from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

That this school's interpretation of and response to policy was unlike the other two schools would come as no surprise to policy researchers as they would expect variation in implementation, (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988). But its response was unlike others described in the literature. It was not a case of mutual adaptation, (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978), or co-optation, (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978), or an embellishment of the policy (Furhrman, Clune and Elmore, 1988). Instead this is a case of a school having such a clear vision and methods of operation that it imposed that vision on the policy, seeing the social aspects of the policy but not the technical alignment with the state standards.

The Title I program was another label to put on their highly coordinated program -- a label they hoped would provide political cover for the program. The policy's press for internal social coordination was enacted. But the press for external alignment with the technical aspects of the policy such as state student standards or the assessments were not. In a twist on what it means to "align" curriculum, tests and texts, this school aligned the district's

curriculum with the their definition of DAP, rather than aligning their program with the policy instruments. While they were aware of the policy's technical instruments, they did not view them as a part of Schoolwides, nor did they enact them.

As with the other two cases in this study, the teachers and principal were left to their own devises to mediate and enact the policy. They did not look to policy agents outside the school, to another school, or to the policy's legislation and attendant documents. That is, no person or ideas that the enactors were aware of, or structural constraints or support, suggested that there were technical aspects of the policy that could be implemented more fully. They didn't look beyond their definition of DAP. The school changed very little during the planning and early implementation phases, because the educators didn't or wouldn't entertain other ways of interpreting the policy.

#### Background and Setting: Atypical for American Schools

Brooke Elementary School, though part of Mapleton's inner-city school system, was located in the outskirts of the city, making it appear from the outside like a rural school. Though directly off a highway, it sat on a road of farmhouses lined with lilac bushes, and in May the blossoms framed a brilliantly colored path to the school. But the setting belied this school in two ways.

One, it was an inner-city school in all its manifestations. Of the 300 students, 60% were eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program. The student minority population was strong, though unlike this district,<sup>1</sup> it was not majority-minority. Twenty-four percent of the students were African-American, eight percent were Asian, four percent Hispanic, and two percent Native American. All students were bussed to the school from the inner city -- the result of a Department of Justice desegregation order that the district implemented in the 1970s.

Two, the principal and in the spring of 1996 at least half the teachers, preached and practiced what they called Developmentally Appropriate Practice, or DAP. DAP was a set of school and classroom practices that was aimed at focusing on the individual child.

### Defining DAP

Many of the ideas and practices that Brooke Elementary School used to guide the school's program were also promoted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, by other educators, and by colleges or schools associated with early childhood education.

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<sup>1</sup>The district's minority population was a small majority at 51%.

In the spring of 1996, the first full year the entire school implemented DAP, I asked the principal and the nucleus of teachers to define DAP. There were elements of DAP that all respondents touched upon -- though not surprisingly none defined it the exactly the same and each emphasized different elements of what follows.

Overall, DAP meant that teacher were to understand each child's knowledge, beliefs and stage of development; and then create opportunities which would enable the child to develop more knowledge, deeper understandings, or move to the next stage of development. These beliefs and knowledge were based on ideas that the teachers had read in texts by Jean Piaget, Arnold Gesell, Howard Gardner, and others. The main concerns of this group were stages of child development, multiple intelligences, learning styles, and developmental domains of learning.

These ideas concerning child development, learning styles and intelligences had implications for (1) how one ought to teach with regard to how children's learning, and (2) how a school's program ought to be organized for students. DAP then, was a set of practices at the programmatic and instructional levels based on strongly held beliefs and knowledge. As the principal said in defining DAP, "Well, developmentally appropriate means that you're going to, first of all, set the environment so children are learning in a manner that's

appropriate for their stage of development” (GR, 3/18/97). More will be explained on how they set the environment in the section on internal coordination.

So, DAP was strongly about *how* to teach, but not so much about *what* to teach. This kind of approach could have gone hand in hand with the state standards, core curriculum or the MEAP, but as will become clear this school did not focus on the technical content of the policy.

#### The Decision to Become a DAP School

The decision to become a DAP school started in the 1992-93 school year when the district’s then Deputy Superintendent of Instruction thought some schools ought to become focus schools. Initially, she encouraged Gretchen Ramone, Brooke’s principal, to make Brooke a bilingual English-Spanish school. Gretchen liked the idea, in part because she was Hispanic and bilingual herself. But as she spent a summer researching bilingual schools, she developed concerns about the logistics. How was she to hire an entirely new staff and where would she find a group of unemployed bilingual teachers?

Then she talked to the teachers about making this change. She found they had additional logistical concerns. They assumed that they would continue teaching and Gretchen would hire a few



bilingual teachers, but weren't sure how the new teachers would rotate through the classrooms. As Gretchen pondered these issues, the Deputy Superintendent decided, together with other central office personnel, to open an entirely new multicultural school and no longer wanted Gretchen to open a bilingual school.

Nonetheless, the Deputy Superintendent continued to press Gretchen to create a focus. Gretchen turned to the teachers for direction and as they talked, she realized that a handful of them -- at least three of the twelve general education teachers -- had been educated in early childhood education. Gretchen had completed her teacher preparation courses many decades earlier but remembered the principles of developmentally appropriate practice the teachers were discussing. To her DAP meant that individual children were the foci of instruction. She explained that it was very difficult to practice this in a conventional public school in a conventional district. Nonetheless, she wanted to give these practices a try at Brooke Elementary.

One teacher, Marilyn Lancaster, urged Gretchen to allow her to pilot a DAP program with two other teachers, which she did the following year. Therefore, during the 1993-94 school year, at least three teachers worked with K-2 classrooms and with one another. In the 1994-95 school year the entire K-2 program moved to DAP. And

in the 1995-96 school year the full program of K-2 and 3-5 classrooms was implemented throughout the school. This first year of full implementation was also the year they planned for the Title I Schoolwide Program. I observed during the year of planning and the following spring (1996-97 school year).

Therefore, in the beginning a fourth of the twelve teachers in the school were actively seeking to create a DAP school. As Gretchen recruited teachers new to the school, she recruited teachers interested in DAP. By the time I initially observed there were six teachers committed strongly to enacting a DAP school. These six teachers and Gretchen formed a nucleus of those interested in continuing to enact a DAP school and were the most active.

### The School as a Learning Organization

As discussed in the first chapter, to examine the process that teachers used to plan and enact the policy, I examined the sources of guidance that school personnel had or used to enact the policy. Specifically, I used Fenstermacher's generic definition of teaching to describe and interpret the processes and content those in the schools utilized to implement the policy. I drew on a triangle of "teacher," "content," including substance and process, and "learners." Therefore, who was the teacher or mediator or

instructional leader of the policy in this school? What was the content and process used to learn and enact the policy? Who were the learners or the enactors?

### The Principal: Gatekeeper and Instructional Leader

During school, the principal, Gretchen Ramone, was generally either standing just outside her office talking with a student; or talking with her secretary in her office's glass-enclosed foyer. An Hispanic woman in her late fifties, Gretchen was always manicured -- trim, clean, and polished. She wore dark suits and tinted wire-frame glasses; her short hair was always in place. Even her jeans and tee shirts, which she wore only when school was not in session, looked as if they'd been freshly pressed. A soft spoken, reserved woman, she often talked with a knitted brow. But just as the school's country setting belied an inner city school, Gretchen's conservative look belied an innovative educator who was deeply committed to change, to improving her own practice and those of the teachers and to making children's learning needs the determining factor in organizing the school.

At first it was difficult to determine who mediated the policy because of the way Gretchen called on teachers to determine the focus of the school and because she pointed to Marilyn Lancaster as an exemplar of DAP. Yet, as the literature concerning principals

suggests, she was the gatekeeper (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 1991) for enacting the DAP in this school. She decided to have a focus, and she chose to seek out the teachers' expertise in choosing the focus. After the school had chosen a focus, she ensured that all school activities built toward that focus. She told me that she spent much of her time identifying appropriate professional development activities for the teachers (GR, 5/28/96). Over time, she selected teachers new to the school by ensuring that they wanted to work in a DAP school.

She decided whether or not teachers were going to lead and whether or not they had input into the direction of the school, and whether their ideas fit into the school's framework. In her words,

I like everybody to have the opportunity to lead. If they have something that fits within the framework of what's best for kids or the philosophy that I understand, or as a group we understand, I'm ready to support it. And I'm ready to let them take a spotlight or lead into or if they -- whichever piece they want to play in it. (GR, 3/18/97)

Through identifying and choosing the professional development activities, she was also the instructional leader. In addition, she encouraged teachers to read particular books from a professional library she had created that were in keeping with the school's focus. When I asked teachers about professional books they were reading, they invariably mentioned books they had from the library. She was

a voracious reader and had read far and wide in the education literature. She believed her job was to help the teachers do their jobs. For this reason, she read many books about teaching practice and stocked the professional library with them.

She also mediated the policy through her leadership style. She drew upon educational literature to guide her practice as a principal. She explained she used a vision-oriented, instructional leadership style. On her door was a laminated sign that read, "Head Learner." She explained to me that in reading the school administration literature for her master's thesis, she learned about three different types of leaders: a leader, a boss and a manager. Though the leader-type was the most difficult to achieve and the most unusual, she was determined to be a leader and measured herself by a definition of leadership. As she said,

A leader thinks about vision, interacts with the teachers and talks about curriculum and talks about programming and talks about new learning and discusses books, authors. And I think that's what a leader really does (GR, 3/18/97).

She constantly measured what she might do to be a leader,

In the back of my mind - I'm always measuring what I'm doing as a leader. All the leadership concepts and ideas that one studies, ... I ...keep those in the back of my mind. I kind of measure myself by them. (GR, 3/18/97).

She didn't mediate the policy in the way she described a "manager": one who provides only the structure of the work. Nor

was she a “boss,” that is, she didn’t tell teachers what to do. She likened the “boss” to the “teacher controlled classroom.” She believed the role of manager or boss was much more typical of principals, and believed that some of her teachers expected and wanted her to behave as a manager or boss. Though this made it difficult for her to be the kind of nontraditional leader she wanted to be, she persisted just as she persisted in making the school a DAP school even in the face of opposition, as discussed below.

As the mediator of implementing DAP and later the Schoolwide program, she became more inclusive and democratic in her decision-making. She worked to develop consensus, due, in part, to the books she had read. She was eager to share work that she thought teachers might enjoy. The year I observed the Title I Schoolwide planning, she was surprised that the teachers on the School Improvement Team (a team required by law through Public Act 25 of 1991) wanted to write the school improvement plan. And she was eager for a particular teacher who pressed to share instructional leadership in the school to work with other teachers.

About one third of teachers left the school over the first three years because of the decision to become a DAP school. In the 1995-96 school year, the first year the 3-5 grades were required to institute the DAP program, one male teacher left the school. This

teacher had caused much turmoil in the school by openly working against the program and organizing other teachers, parents and one school board member to work against it. The year he left was the first year that the school put into writing the DAP program and had the teachers and parents council sign it. Perhaps he became convinced for the first time that the school was to be organized as a DAP school.

One irony of her democratic leadership was that as she became more democratic there was more conflict within the core group, and between the core group and her. The last time I was at the school in the spring of 1997, she had made a decision that was in opposition to those who were a part of the core DAP group. She decided to override their decision of adding a Reading Recovery teacher at the expense of an aide for kindergartners. The teachers told me that this lack of consensus in decision making threatened the integrity of the program.

Gretchen had strong influence in this school, though she willingly shared her work as an instructional leader with other teachers who agreed with the school's focus. She pressed the idea of going to a Schoolwide program to protect their very fragile DAP program. Her explanation of why they moved to a Schoolwide was because the school board did not support focus schools, so she

wanted the DAP program to go on regardless of whether or not the district had focus schools.

She also had influence on how teachers interpreted the purpose of Schoolwide programs. She explained to me that Schoolwides were an attempt to reach more children than those that schools have traditionally reached. In her words,

What I get from Schoolwide projects is they want people in schools to try innovative strategies. Look at the research and apply the new ideas so that children will be more successful, and it will also help more children because now we teach specifically to one group of the population. (GR, 5/28/96).

Teachers in the school also mentioned the idea that Schoolwides enabled them to reach more children through innovative strategies.

### The Enactors: Prior Knowledge and Dispositions

The policy enactors in this school included the principal and about three-quarters of the teachers at the time of this study. Half of the school's twelve teachers were in the core decision making group and another quarter were willing to learn about DAP and try to enact it in their classrooms.

Of the seven enactors who led the way, all of them used for guidance their prior knowledge, one another's knowledge and practices, their knowledge of the NAEYC, and particular authors quoted in the NAEYC documents. They used their prior knowledge to



bring them closer to the NAEYC positions and their own prior knowledge -- or perhaps dispositions -- to lead them away from government sources of authority.

All of those in the leadership group claimed to have undergraduate training in DAP, though two of them in a limited way. Most remarked how they had never been in a school that actually practiced it, though. The principal said that was because schools hadn't taken seriously the notion of educating all children before now.

Nearly everyone I interviewed mentioned that Marilyn Lancaster was a good role model for DAP. Almost all seven mentioned having read books by Susan Kovalik and Alfie Kohn. And they all had copies of and referred to the NAEYC report, Developmentally Appropriate Practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8 (1987).

They brought and then continued to develop strong dispositions toward a certain kind of teaching and schooling that encouraged choosing particular sources of guidance.

#### Internal Coordination: Setting the Environment for DAP

This was clearly the most coordinated school in the study at the programmatic level. Almost every interaction appeared to be an opportunity to advance the cause and understanding of DAP, from

their classroom practices, to their professional development, to their work with parents, to their attempts to provide guidance for other district schools, and to the writing of the Schoolwide plan.

Through the DAP program, the teachers and principal coordinated their efforts internally to address the learning of all students in the school. In fact, coordination took place in many of the ways I've chosen to examine that are more social in nature: through a common focus, through interdependent work relationship and through professional relationships. They did not have opportunities to see teaching practices in the direction of the Title I reforms, and they did not align internally or externally, exactly; though they did align in an unusual sort of way: they aligned the district's curriculum to the developmental domains.

So, the school's focus on DAP and the school's interpretation of what that meant, dovetailed with one aspect of Title I Schoolwide programs, the social coordination aspect, and strategies associated with this.

They decided to become a Schoolwide program, in part, because they believed their school to already have a Schoolwide program. They believed that some populations were under-served in conventional schools and they wanted to address this. They took seriously the aspect of the policy that concerned under-served

students. They took responsibility for all children's learning. The also wanted to create classrooms in which children of all performance levels participated. As the policy would have it, they made an effort to ensure that all students were served within the classroom. Their School Improvement Plan made this one of the major principals of DAP. It contained the following two statements. (1) "Students with special needs will remain within the classroom setting for all instruction, unless otherwise specified." And (2) (We will strive for) "inclusion of all Title I and Special Education services for students within the classroom when appropriate for student" (6/96).

The work of planning this highly coordinated school took place in the School Improvement Team. This team then took ideas to both the full teaching staff and a parents' council for approval.

### A Strong Professional Culture

The process the teachers and principal used to write the Title I Schoolwide program plan was different than the other two schools in this study. This group discussed multiple tasks using multiple leaders simultaneously. The group was composed only of teachers who supported the DAP approach.

I first watched the School Improvement Team work together in June of 1996. The team was composed of the principal and 4 female

teachers, 3 of whom were white and 1 who was African-American. They had all chosen to work together on a clear, 75-degree, June day to complete the School Improvement Plan, which also served as the Title I Schoolwide Program plan. Gretchen, the principal, later told me that I was observing “the change process” and that it was “an example of what should be happening in the classrooms.” (GR, 3/18/97).

As they got started they expressed concern about the format of the prototype plan they received from the district office. They felt the format made it unclear and confusing as to what “they” wanted. Then they moved to asking who “they” were, wondering aloud who the audience for the plan might be. They had several potential audiences, groups to whom they might need to explain their plan: the other teachers, parents, the central office, the board, or the Title I state or federal office.

They explained to me that they were in the third year of the program and they had attempted or accomplished so much that it was hard to know where to begin to explain and how best to explain themselves.

Ultimately, they made a set of matrices. I explain a bit about these here because they give a sense of the kinds of issues they were debating on that Sunday in June. The plan was a set of five

matrices, each two to three pages. The first matrix had a set of 14 general DAP principles down the first column such as “Principle 1: Teacher teams will offer parents educational activities about DAP and be considered partners in their child’s education.” Across the top row were a set of commitments to that principle including professional development or another activity they would undertake to address the principle. Across the top was following information concerning each activity within the principle: when it would begin, how it would be monitored, and when it would be complete, who was responsible for it, how the activity would be funded, and the evidence of success of an activity. Each box in the matrix was filled with something. Professional development was a central activity for four of the fourteen principles.

In addition to this matrix concerning the principles, there were three matrices addressing academic goals, goals required by state law. They included reading, mathematics, and science. Finally, there was a matrix concerning social goals and student behavior.

As they were making these matrices, there were at least two conversations going on, though there were times when Gretchen asked everyone to listen to a particular point a teacher was making. Often, they turned to me to explain what they were talking about.

The conversation ranged from the differences between multiple intelligences and various learning styles, to the need for research writing, to the “cognitive hunger” that teachers experienced in students as they worked on service learning projects, and other topics. At one point, a teacher explained to me ways in which she was in disagreement with Gretchen, the principal, as Gretchen listened in.

This same teacher abruptly left the room at one point. No one appeared to notice; the teachers continued debating and talking. When she came back she was rolling a computer desk with a Macintosh. She began writing the matrices described above and she called out questions concerning when they were going to do what, and appeared to have some luck getting responses.

This was the working group and they shared their ideas with the full staff and the parent’s council. They had been working with the full staff and the parents’ council over the full three years, but were somewhat anxious about the next few meetings because they wanted to have the next steps of the program in writing.

They worked together much more than simply preparing the Schoolwide plan. They had spent countless hours over a three-year period in program planning and enactment. During this time, they took the staff and parent meetings seriously. Each School

Improvement Team member teamed up with a parent to explain to him or her what they were doing and why they were doing it. They spent one summer aligning the Mapleton curriculum to the developmental domains. They did this by subject matter and by grade level. Marilyn Lancaster and one other teacher taught other teachers about DAP in a weeklong, district-sponsored summer program.

These professional relationships extended far beyond the core group, as all teachers were involved in extensive professional development activities. The work was much more than the efforts of the core group. All teachers were asked, to varying degrees, to change their teaching and this meant extra time and work for all. I was told about a kindergarten teacher who was from all reports a good conventional teacher. She was reluctant to change, the story went, because she had a horse farm and didn't have the time. Still, she and others claimed she changed her practice, and when I spoke with her, she did not complain about the time involved.

The core group persevered in building professional relationships. The core team estimated that in the beginning about 1/3 of the teachers were for the changes, another 1/3 accepted the program and wanted to learn more, and 1/3 didn't want the program instituted. The latter 1/3 grieved or threatened to grieve through

their union every time they were asked to attend training that required more time than the union contract specified. But by the end of the third year and certainly by the end of the fourth year, most people in the school were supportive of the program, though with varying degrees of engagement.

#### The School's Instructional Program: Interdependent Work Relations

At the programmatic level, two practices that affected all teachers in this school, whether or not they closed the proverbial classroom door, were multi-age grouping and team teaching. Each teacher had a classroom of what would have traditionally been kindergarten through second-grade children, or third- through fifth-grade students. This alone required all teachers to change their teaching to a degree. The principal thought this the most important aspect of DAP, in that multi-age classrooms "forced" teachers to focus on individual children and their growth and learning as individuals. It also allowed children to go through the three grades at their own pace, and eliminated grade retention.

As to the team teaching, each team of two teachers could be as much of a self-contained classroom as the two desired, although the school's Title I plan specified that they would be teaming 60 percent of the school day within two years, and the teachers understood that they were to team. The team teachers were housed next to each



other, and each had a door connecting their rooms so students could pass back and forth quickly. One teacher told me that team teaching was a very important aspects of DAP because it allowed two teachers to get to know a child well--a "second pair of eyes" (LG, 5/5/97).

Marilyn Lancaster who was eager for Brooke to become a DAP school, and her teammate made extensive use of individualized instruction and center activities. They worked with students one on one or in small groups as the others worked at centers. Another set of teammates used cooperative learning techniques for literature and individualized instruction for mathematics. This latter team, interestingly, divided their mathematics students by those students who worked well with manipulatives and those who worked well with written symbols.

This was the only school in the study that clearly had interdependent work relationships through team teaching. However, there was a great deal of discussion in the school about *how* to teach children, though not nearly as much on *what* to teach them. So while the professional relationships in this school seemed strong, because the teachers frequently talked about learners, learning and teachers; there were differences in *what* teachers taught.

All the discussion about good teaching could lead one to believe that classroom practices were similar. So, I spent a good bit of time in this school trying to figure out what teachers made of particular words and phrases they used to describe DAP. In particular, I sought to understand the meaning of “individualization” because more than one teachers suggested that individualization was the key component of DAP.

### Individualizing Instruction

These teachers individualized the curriculum in different ways, examples of which are included here. Aspects of their teaching appeared to be in concert with the assumptions in the policy while others did not. Those aspects were different by teachers and the teaching itself, at least in those snippets of classroom teaching I share.

I argued in the first chapter that before the 1988 amendments, one assumption in the policy was that different students learn best with different types of teaching. That is, that some students need a skills-based, lock step method of teaching while others do not. In Marilyn and Liz's classroom, all students were taught using the same methodology. That doesn't mean that all students were exposed to the same content, for they were not. But students were not taught in different ways.

I also argued that learning occurs by building on previous knowledge and beliefs as learners construct and reconstruct their understandings and misunderstandings. Therefore, teaching needs to enable students to grapple with complex problems which allow them to problem-solve and learn skills within applications (Lampert, 1990).

So, what was the content the children were exposed to in these two individualized classrooms, and how were students taught, and what did it mean to individualize?

Marilyn Lancaster: High Individual Standards. Marilyn Lancaster's classroom practice is an example of DAP at the classroom level. To Marilyn DAP was an individualized curriculum based on students' developmental stages. The teachers and principal report that Marilyn's practice is not only an example of DAP, but was an exemplary practice.

Marilyn was a tall, slim woman with dark brown hair. She obtained both her undergraduate and master's degree in early childhood education. In her mid-thirties, she had no children of her own. She referred to herself as the school's "visionary." Her principal, many of the other teachers, and perhaps those who observed her classroom, did as well. Gretchen, the principal, learned in her early discussions with teachers about becoming a focus

school that Marilyn was already using DAP techniques, and saw her as the model. Gretchen told me,

Marilyn Lancaster, she really is the expert in all of the teaching strategies and activities. And if you were to observe her, you would be absolutely amazed. She is so good. (GR, 3/18/97).

Marilyn recruited two teachers to pilot the program with her in the 1993-94 school year. Each had a K-2 classroom. Eventually, there would be six K-2 classrooms and six 3-5. Her principal was pleased that she wanted to move ahead, and encouraged her to conduct the pilot. Gretchen credited her with making the ideas become a reality. As Gretchen said, "Marilyn really led us in a wonderful direction, which was just excellent and really all put together" (GR, 3/8/97).

Marilyn's spent a great deal of time planning and preparing for each student's learning. She mentioned to me how much work and energy it took, telling me as she was in her mid-thirties, she was beginning to slow down. She also mentioned that her teammate who was close to retirement no longer had the high energy that DAP required.

Students in this classroom were on task most of the time. Visitors did not distract them and she explained that this was in

part because she frequently had people observing her. They were used to being observed.

In teaching, she used learning centers and small teacher directed groups. Though she occasionally conducted whole group lessons, she explained that she wanted to conduct more of her teaching in centers, particularly mathematics; in part because this allowed her to individualize the content of the curriculum.

As she worked with a small group, the other students worked at centers. The students in centers worked from worksheets that Marilyn had prepared. Each week she prepared a master worksheet with Monday, Tuesday and so on across the top row. On the side columns were various activities that students could undertake on a given day. Then, she tailor made each worksheets by circling in crayon what activity she wanted each student to undertake. She had activities in mathematics, language arts and so on. So, though there was a master worksheet, at a given time each student could have been conducting different activities in different academic areas. So each student was working on different activities though they could have overlapped with other students.

In addition to the center work, individualization also occurred when she worked with groups. The reading groups she worked with were based on achievement. Some groups were as small as one. For

example, each child in the room has his or her own spelling list. I observed one child's spelling test. When I later mentioned I had observed the spelling test, she said, "Yes, that is completely individualized." She explained she individualized the spelling words based on where she believed the child was in his or her developmental stage. She continued that she couldn't arrange it such that they were all learning the same words, because some of the students were working with a fifth-grade vocabulary and they would be "bored to death" if they were doing first-grade-spelling words.

As I watched the spelling test, she presented the second word, and then said to the boy, "Did you study this at home?" The student looked down and mumbled.

She said, "Well, I don't think you studied this at home. And I'll tell you the reason, because here's how that word is spelled." She showed him on his paper how to spell the word. "I don't think it makes sense for you to take this spelling test. Why don't you study these words at home?"

She then went on to explain to him what he was capable of by referring to his age. "The more you write it, the more you'll know it. You're getting old enough that you can see those words in your head. I know you can do it." She mentioned a couple more times that he was at an age where he can see the words in his head, varying her

wording slightly. She repeated that he needed to make an image of the word in his head.

This example of the spelling test is not only an example of individualization, but also of her belief of what children can accomplish by particular ages and the stages of child development. In explaining DAP, she discussed the work of Piaget and Gesell, particularly concerning the stages that children go through and what stage a child could be in, such as pre-operational.

She was not locked into children's ages to determine their various stages. She stressed that children don't all learn at the same rate or pace and felt strongly that not all children read by the first grade. She believed that most children read between kindergarten and second grade though mentioned that some are not reading until third. She did not read until second grade and is now, like her principal, a voracious reader. She said she hates it when people say, "Well, if they aren't reading by first grade, they're out of it." (ML, 4/24/97). She did not find it problematic that not all are reading by second grade. But she did find it problematic that the boy described above did not know his spelling words and that by a certain age he should be able to make images in his head of particular words. This is an inconsistency in her practice. What if

children aren't reading because they haven't practiced enough like the boy and his spelling?

The belief that children learn to read anywhere between the ages of five and eight or nine might naturally lead one to group children by multi-age groups. This enables the teacher to group children together by achievement within an age range.

The beliefs and knowledge concerning child development and learning that provided guidance for Marilyn's practice are at least twofold. One is that children go through sequential stages of development, and that children progress through these stages differently because of their rate or pace of learning. However, there are certain expectations that one should hold for children by age and what a child can do cognitively at particular ages. So, in her classroom, children progress at their own rates through individualized lesson plans within subject matter areas. However, this doesn't mean that each child isn't pressed to advance to the next stage of development.

In Marilyn's practice each child's learning is fluid. The child progresses at his or her own rate, which is some combination of innate ability and learned achievement. In contrast, the nature of knowledge in this classroom is static, and the teacher strongly mediates that knowledge. Mrs. Lancaster had the correct answers



and in addition to providing a fluid curriculum for each student, her job was to ensure that students knew those answers.

One time I observed Mrs. Lancaster working with the entire class, reading a story. She did not ask interpretive questions, but instead she argued with students about the meaning of the story if their interpretations did not match hers.

She read to the students a large book titled Company's Coming that was about three bears that are preparing for a visitor. She mentioned that it was a lot like Goldilocks and the Three Bears. At the end of the story the three little bears greeted a blonde girl with long, curly locks. Marilyn said, "Oh, I can't imagine how that happened. What happened here? This isn't the story of Goldilocks. But what's this story about?"

In answering this question she overrode one girl's interpretation that this story wasn't about Goldilocks at all. She enthusiastically responded to one boy's idea that the author had used the Goldilock's story as a starting point, but changed it. She instructed the students on the best comparisons between the two stories.

These examples show some ways in which Marilyn individualized her practice. Each child was exposed to the same teaching processes, but not the same content. Students did not

grapple with complex problems, rather she held and told them the correct answers. How does this square with Liz Grant's practice and with the policy? Below is a peek at how Liz taught literature and then a discussion of the differences.

Liz Grant: Providing the Structure for Heterogeneous Grouping.

Liz was a 48-year-old black woman, though she looked much younger. She always wore a baseball cap -- in and out of the classroom. She came to teaching later in life after having been a counselor and social worker for a number of years.

To study literature, Liz created a structure for students to learn from one another. She created small groups of students whom she deliberately mixed by achievement levels and age. She assigned each group a reporter, scribe, discussant, and summarizer; and rotated these roles among the students.

After Liz set up the structure, students were in charge of their own learning. Each group was to choose something to read from the third, fourth or fifth grade Houghton-Mifflin textbook. As they worked, Liz walked around the room from group to group ensuring that all students were participating and that students were behaving appropriately.

I sat with a group that chose to read the story Jumaji. The group was composed of 2 white boys, 1 African-American boy and 2

white girls. One white boy decided to explain to me what the group doing. After he explained the roles, the students took turns each explaining his or her role to me. They took turns reading a page and included me in the round robin. When they finished, the scribe asked the group to discuss their observations, using OWL, which meant O for observations, W for wonderings, and L for links to other ideas. Liz did not participate in the content of these conversations, though she did walk around the room ensuring that students were on task.

Liz also described her classroom practices as individualized. In this example, it was individualized in that students choose the content of work through a group process. Also, it was individualized in that even if two groups of students chose the same selection to read, each group was left to its own devices to determine what content to discuss and how to discuss it.

In both rooms, then, the teachers individualized instruction. As the assumptions in the policy would have it, they did not assume that some students learned in one way and others in another. Marilyn's examples show that if students learned at different rates and paces, they could be held to high individual standards. In Liz's room they could have learned at different rates and paces, and within heterogeneously based groups, they were exposed to the same content.

As to the policy's assumption that students construct and reconstruct their own knowledge, Marilyn did not provide these kinds of opportunities in the classroom because she posed the problems the students grappled with and had the correct answers to them. For Liz on the other hand, with some structuring the students posed the questions and answers without much adult intervention. In these examples, Liz did not ensure that students were grappling with issues, questions or problems that would enable them to understand the various interpretations of an author's meaning in the story.

In these examples, Marilyn and Liz show quite different ways to individualize literacy lessons and what DAP might entail. They enabled students to work at their own rate and pace. Beyond this they differed from the policy's assumptions, as well as differing from one another in practice. While in Marilyn's classroom, students did grapple with complex questions and the teacher's mediation of how and what understand was strong, in Liz's classroom they could have grappled with complex questions, though this wasn't assured by the teacher's mediation of the literature.

Marilyn and Liz's practice give a sense of how difficult coordination across classrooms can be. These two women had worked together on a school focus of DAP for perhaps as long as five years, and had talked through their assumptions about learners,

learning and teaching base on DAP. But yet their classrooms were quite different.

#### Internal and External Alignment: Leading the Policy

This school's understanding of what it means to align the curriculum was quite different from the other two schools'. This school aligned the district curriculum to their ideas concerning child growth and development. These ideas were not necessarily under the rubric of the policy. This is easiest to understand when contrasting what this school did other two schools. Strether Elementary aligned to the MEAP somewhat and they also aligned internally by creating grade level goals and aligning the early elementary grades to reading strategies based on Reading Recovery. Knightly Elementary aligned their curricular materials and teaching with the MEAP. The MEAP was not only external to the school, but also a large piece of the policy. Brooke did not align externally to the district's curriculum, nor did it develop an internal alignment strategy that enabled the teachers to align with one another. Instead they aligned the external policy to their ideas.

#### Aligning to Ideas Concerning Early Childhood Education

The school aligned the district's curriculum with early childhood ideas concerning developmental domains; they did not align their curriculum with the district's. During the summer of

1996, the summer after the writing the Schoolwide plan, the core leadership team spent many hours aligning the district's curriculum to six domains: the cognitive, social, language, aesthetic, physical and affective domains. As they stated in the School Improvement Plan, "Mapleton School District has aligned its curriculum with the State Core Curriculum...Brooke School further aligns the curriculum with the six developmental domains." The developmental domains come from early education literature concerning educating the whole child. Alignment, as it was used above, meant that the teachers ensured that each of the six domains was represented in the district's curriculum objectives across subject matters and across grade levels.

This group felt that for schools in the district to serve the whole child, they had to fill in the "massive holes" (LL 7/26/96) in the Mapleton curriculum with each domain. One teacher explained that as they read the mathematics curriculum, they learned it had many cognitive objectives, but few or no aesthetic objectives; "So you aren't doing the whole child justice" (LL, 7/26/96). In art, they found the opposite issue. That is, the art curriculum had few if any cognitive objectives. They created a matrix with "subject matter" across the top row and domains down the first column. In the matrix, they wrote curriculum objectives in the heart of the table.

The teachers saw their work as helping the entire district, though the teacher referenced above claimed it made her a better teacher in addition. She reasoned that as the district-wide steering committees re-wrote curriculum guides, they could "just plug in new information [with the addition objectives based on the developmental domains] and erase the old," (LL, 7/26/96) in the various matrices by grade level.

As they expanded on the district's curriculum, they perhaps learned about the curriculum itself. But their intent was to change the curriculum to meet DAP standards and to help inform others in the district as well, not to align their work with the district's curriculum.

They also attempted to align the entire district's report cards with their ideas concerning DAP. First they petitioned the central office to allow them to deviate from the standard district report card, and use the Work Sampling System. As one teacher explained, the Work Sampling System was a type of reporting system that would allow parents, teachers and students to determine a student's cognitive growth, as well as how he or she compared to students

nationwide.<sup>2</sup> Central office declined to make the Work Sampling System the district wide reporting system, though Brooke used it.

They paid little attention to the MEAP. They tended to judge it, rather than letting it judge them. They weren't completely adverse to it. Having gone through some iterations since when it was first administered in the early 1970s, three teachers told me the MEAP was "getting better." They particularly liked the new science MEAP that they described as having hands-on activities.

It was clear from their test scores that they were not teaching to the test. In fact, this school improved little in the MEAP test scores over the year before my first observations (1995-96) and the following three years (1997-98). The MEAP was a criterion referenced test and state policy makers hoped that students would improve their test scores over time. However, this school's scores did not improve through the 1998-99 school year, while the other two schools in the study did improve their scores.

It is somewhat surprising that they didn't pay more attention to the MEAP. The state used the MEAP scores to classify schools in the state accreditation process by using three categories: summary,

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Work Sampling System see Meisels, S. J., F. Liaw, & A. Dorfman. (1995). "The work sampling system: Reliability and validity of a performance assessment for young children." Early Childhood Research Quarterly 10: 277-296.



interim, and unaccredited. This school was classified in the interim category, as were the other two schools. The other two schools were not necessarily trying to achieve summary status, but they also did not want to be in the unaccredited category. This school appeared to be unconcerned with its categorization.

I asked Gretchen if academic standards get lost when the school has such a strong philosophy of focusing on each child and promoting that child's growth. She responded that I didn't understand what they are trying to do. As she said,

I think I know what it is you're saying, but you're coming from the perspective of this is how high everybody should be and if you're not this high, then you're just not achieving. But that's not true because children and human beings develop at different rates. And they learn in different ways. So if they're not up here, right now on June 5th, that doesn't mean they can't learn...that just means that they haven't had enough time. So coming from that thinking, that's why maybe I think you have trouble understanding this and that's very common. That's the first thing parents and other people think. (GR, 6/5/96).

So while this school coordinated internally, it did not coordinate externally with the policy, nor take seriously the technical aspect of the policy. They tended to believe that they needed to educate all external forces, including parents, which they spent many hours doing.

### Leading The Policy

The policy enactors in this school believed they were on the cutting edge of the reform, leading the way by showcasing the DAP school -- an innovation for children who had formerly been underserved by schools, which was a purpose of the policy (IASA, p. 3536). But the schools were to do this through the state content and performance standards. In this school the content of the policy was a set of ideas concerning developmentally appropriate practice.

The lead enactors also lacked trust in policy makers and officials for several reasons. One, they found the guidance and ideas weak or wrong. Two, they found policy guidance contradictory. And three, they felt the central office -- one potential source of guidance -- did not provide the kind of political resources and other support they believed it should for their innovative program.

One teacher summed up both her distrust of policy makers and her belief that the teachers in this school knew more than policy makers did by saying, "When was the last time some of these policy people taught Johnny how to read?" (KS, 6/26/96).

Distrust in Policy Guidance. One telling statements in the conversations I conducted with these teachers about their lack of trust concerning policy and policy makers was: "Government people don't know how to get at children's learning directly, rather than

indirectly,” (LL, 6/6/96). This remark was made during a SIT meeting while teachers were explaining the forms the central office and intermediate district suggested they use to show their Schoolwide plan. The forms led them to believe that policy makers and officials didn’t understand schools. On the heels of the statement, a second teacher jumped in to say it is important to explain to policy people that books and lessons plans aren’t as important as instruction. Instead “Instruction, and what you do, and how you spend your time is more important.” (KS, 6/6/96).

They found policy guidance contradictory, in part because they didn’t conceive of policy as coming from multiple sources in a fragmented and decentralized system. They didn’t consider that different directives could come from different and loosely-coupled organizations (Weick, 1976) within the system -- the central office, the board of education, the intermediate district office, a state office, or a federal office. Beyond that they often lumped their own teachers’ union policies in with governmental policy. They thought of policy makers as contradicting themselves -- and though policy makers are not immune to contradicting themselves, a complication to this in the education system is that different sets of policy makers might contradict one another.

The principal, knowing my interest in policy, pointed out to me several times how policy makers send the schools conflicting signals. She pointed out that (1) policy makers talk about “consensus” and then ask in legislation for teachers to “vote,” and (2) policy makers seem concerned with violence and then require only academic, and not social, goals in the School Improvement Plan.

Concerning Schoolwide programs, she described to me how the programs were meant to spark innovation, yet the format for writing the plan did not allow schools to describe their innovations.

But then when you get these requirement forms and how to describe your program--they're very narrow and very specific and actually don't leave any room for you to put in any innovative ideas and to work them through this form. So I find that's not congruent (GR, 5/28/96).

As pointed out in chapter two, this was a passive central office, and passive might be too benevolent a term. As one teacher in the school pointed out to me, the massive budget cuts the central office imposed on the schools year after year meant that leadership hadn't been thinking comprehensively about the future.

These enactors felt their work history with the central office was particularly sour. They believed that once central office had encouraged them to become a focus school, central office should have then supported them and promoted their program. Initially, the central office gave 3 of the 34 schools in the district \$60,000 to

become focus schools. This school spent most of the money on furniture that reflected particular beliefs about teaching. There were no traditional student desks in the building. All classrooms had tables with one straight side and one round side. That way, two tables could be put together to make a circle, or students could sit against the straight side of the table and use it as a more traditional two-person table. Having carefully crafted their program and even the furniture for it, they felt the central office should be showcasing the school.

But beyond this, many in the school felt the central office was detrimental to the program because it not only did not showcase their school, it also didn't protect it from the political process. The male teacher who left the school after the first year of planning, seemed to have caused much conflict within and outside the school. He left the school after the DAP program was in writing and approved by parents as the Title I Schoolwide program document. During the three years he was there, he battled the principal, the program and the other teachers in any way he could to change the school back to a more conventional configuration. He brought together a parent group that opposed the program. He also talked to one board member repeatedly about what he saw to be the problematic aspects of the program. This board member asked that

Gretchen Ramone attend a board meeting and decided to use the board meeting to tell Gretchen what a poor job she and the teachers were doing.

The teachers didn't understand why central office staff didn't prevent this from happening. They also felt that central office should have taken on the teacher's union and enabled Gretchen to empty the school of staff and staff it with teachers dedicated to DAP.

When I asked what central office could do for them, they responded that it could provide political cover for program, and central office staff could write grants that would enable them to try more innovative practices. They never suggested that central office would or could provide instructional guidance for their program.

External sources not knowledgeable. This group questioned the knowledge base of others in the central office and the district through pushing for a different report card, and through rewriting the curriculum. Beyond this, they also questioned the knowledge authority of the state, district and federal levels. I asked Marilyn Lancaster if she knew of or had observed teaching that reflected the goals of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) curriculum (1989) or professional (1991) standards. She responded

that the NCTM was so "cognitive" it didn't provide for the whole child. I also asked her about another DAP school that had won state, and to some extent national, recognition for their developmentally appropriate practices. Her response was that they were not practicing DAP correctly.

When discussing the Schoolwide policy with the principal, she suggested that it was an effective schools policy which was out of date. She said, "Well, see, they might just be a little behind, just catching up with it, don't you think? Especially if it's coming from federal government" (GR, 3/18/97).

The principal, in explaining to me what I was watching as I observed the School Improvement Team writing the Schoolwide plan, declared that I wasn't watching anything that had to do with the policy, but rather I was observing the change process. In her words,

The Schoolwide thing is really, in the end like today; it's been nothing. Nothing different than what we were already doing. Nothing added extra. Nothing that taught us anything. Okay? In that sense, it wasn't anything as far as concepts or philosophy or approach. That was already in place for us. We were already struggling with what we had chosen. So I would think what you really observed had nothing to do with Schoolwide (GR, 3/18/97).

### Conclusion

The change process in this school, as was true for the other two schools, was led by a mediator who came from within the

school. This meant the policy's only agent came from within the school. The school did not look outside the school for guidance, not to the legislation, other schools, someone in central office, or the policy's instruments such as the state standards or assessments. They did not look to any part of the formal educational system. They looked to their own prior and present knowledge and beliefs, as well as an organization outside the formal governance system -- the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In part, they were predisposed to look to this organization because of their beliefs concerning learning and child development.

The principal was the mediator in this school and she interpreted the policy as enabling schools to try innovative ideas for serving traditionally under-served populations. She and a core set of teachers were committed to the ideas of developmentally appropriate practice, and over time most of the school became committed to enacting such a program.

DAP, as they referred to their classroom and school practices, contained beliefs and knowledge about learners and learning, and guidance as to how to organize classroom instruction and school organization. They pursued this content by creating a set of formal and informal understandings among themselves. They put enormous energy into making this happen. The content of the policy in this



school did not include any of the technical policy instruments such as the state standards, the district's curriculum or the Michigan Educational Assessment Program.

This school was socially coordinated by having a common focus (developmentally appropriate practice), interdependent relationships (team teaching), and professional relationships that were based on how students learn. In these three ways, the school was remarkably coordinated.

The policy, however, was more than a social coordination effort. So, while they enacted a coordinated school -- one that was coordinated around a certain type of teaching, it was not a Schoolwide program that was closely aligned with technical aspects of the policy.

What makes this school unique in the policy implementation literature is that enactors used their prior knowledge and beliefs not only as a filter through which to interpret the policy -- as might be true in the case of mutual adaptation -- but as the policy itself. The enactors held their beliefs so deeply and strongly, they believed the school's DAP program to be the policy. Mutual adaptation suggests that this school moved slowly toward the policy's goals as they shaped the policy to their own context. But this school's story

isn't a case of mutual adaptation. It was a case of not hearing or seeing aspects of the policy.

This school also wasn't a case of policy co-optation. The core leaders assumed they were enacting the policy. They didn't deliberately subvert the policy. They believed they were leading, not following, the policy. Nor did they embellish the policy, taking it further than policymaker's requested. They became a Schoolwide because it would allow them to protect and promote their politically fragile, prior school program by putting it in writing. Thus, this allowed them to keep their DAP program.

## CHAPTER SIX

### COMPARISON OF THE THREE SCHOOLS

Enacting Title I Schoolwide programs requires changes in knowledge and beliefs, as well as practices, for most schools' staffs. For one, a staff would need to change their knowledge and beliefs about learners, learning and teaching. Previously Title I was a remedial education program based on teaching isolated skills to low achieving students in high poverty schools. Now, Schoolwide programs and the policy generally encourage schools to ensure that all students gain proficiencies in ambitious state standards. This would mean a change in technical views of what certain learners are capable of learning, how they learn, and what and how to teach them. It would also mean changes in social understandings as teachers and students incorporate one another's understandings into the classroom curriculum.

For another, a staff would need to change the way they work together as a faculty unit, changing the social arrangements among them. A school may believe that Title I programs are ancillary or separate from the school's instructional program. Historically, it has been common for Title I teachers or aides to work with a few students in a pullout program that was not viewed as part of the

common curriculum of a school. Since the 1988 amendments and more clearly since the 1994 amendments, the Title I legislation encourages schools to create a harmonious or coordinated effort that will enable all students to achieve ambitious goals; and to organize themselves such that all staff take responsibility for the learning of all children. Coordination of instructional efforts among staff is unusual for most American schools. Coordination between the Title I program and a school's general education program is even more usual. Yet, policymakers are asking schools to do just that: coordinate the entire school's program, including Title I, into one harmonious effort.

Berman (1986), Cohen and Barnes (1993), McLaughlin (1978) Sarason (1982) and others have argued that *learning* is required on the part of those enacting policies or making changes in practice. This indicates that school staffs would have much to learn to enact Schoolwide programs due to the large changes. Beyond this, Cohen and Barnes (1993) suggest in their book chapter A New Pedagogy for Policy? that if learning is important, then perhaps the instruction available to school staffs is an important piece of enabling schools to learn to make changes, or to enact policies or other changes.

If learning is required to enact this policy and if instruction makes this learning more effective or more efficient, then this

policy, and others, have embedded in them a particular teaching and learning problem. That problem is that the changes require teaching and learning about both technical and social matters.

At the classroom level, the technical changes that enactors need to learn are state content and performance standards, and the aligned state standards. Also, at the classroom level, enactors would need to learn how to organize classrooms socially in ways that enable teachers and students to understand one another as they work to ensure that students achieve state standards. This could include teachers listening to students' ideas in order to understand students' conceptions and misconceptions of the subject matter. It could also include students listening to one another's ideas as they work to understand a mathematics problem, a piece of literature, or a science experiment.

At the school level, changes enactors might need to make are also both social and technical. For example, they might need to work together to build a common focus. Creating or having a technical focus might require technical learning, depending on the focus. Constructing such a focus so that it is truly common could require a change in social arrangements as teachers work together in ways that they might not have had the inclination or opportunity to do in schools heretofore. Other technical and social school coordination

activities could include creating relationships in which teachers work together, as in team teaching, to improve children's achievements; creating professional relationships in which teachers come to agreement about the nature of learners, learning and teaching; and agreeing on a curriculum including how to teach and what to teach.

I conducted this study to find out *if* learning opportunities exist for schools to enact these technical and social changes. And if they do, *what* sources of guidance are available for those opportunities and *how* that guidance is communicated. I also wanted to know *if* and *how* schools interpret and respond to the technical and social aspects of the policy at the school level. I wanted to conduct provisional work on *how* these learning opportunities changed the practices of teachers in their classrooms. My rationale was that understanding *if* and *how* opportunities to learn affect the enactment of Title I Schoolwide programs as apart of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA) and coordinated with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act legislation would further the research knowledge concerning policy implementation in light of ideas concerning instruction for teachers and principals.

This study suggests that the schools in this passive school district generally moved in the direction of the policy, while

enacting programs that were largely idiosyncratic across schools. One school responded to both the social and technical aspects of the policy. Another used the technical aspect for guidance. A third organized themselves socially around children's learning without enacting an important technical aspect of the policy, the state standards. Beyond this, the schools actively chose a policy mediator to help them determine a source or sources of guidance for implementation. These mediators looked both inside and outside the formal educational system for direction. And the source of guidance greatly influenced how the schools interpreted and enacted the policy.

### Sources of Guidance

I used a teaching and learning frame to interpret organizational change. To find out *if* learning opportunities exist for schools enacting programs and the content and process of these learning opportunities, I used ideas from the teaching literature. I used Fenstermacher's (1986) definition of teaching to help guide what I defined as a learning opportunity as I observed schools planning for Title I Schoolwide programs. Fenstermacher argues that teaching is a deliberate activity on the part of one person (a teacher) who tries (but doesn't necessarily succeed) to impart content (knowledge and skill or both) to someone else (a learner).

Therefore, in looking at schools as they planned to enact Schoolwides I asked three sub-questions about the guidance available to them. 1) *Who* (if anyone) tried to impart content to enable them to learn about Schoolwides? 2) *What* content and process was used to convey knowledge of Schoolwides? And 3) *Who* was the intended learner?

I used teaching to examine or frame what learning opportunities, or professional and staff opportunities, teachers and others had to understand and respond to Title I Schoolwide programs. The word “teaching” evokes the classroom so strongly, that in discussing “teachers” and “learners,” at the organizational level, I used words that are more familiar or in the education vernacular. Therefore the “teacher of teachers” could be called the “policy mediator” or “instructional leader” or “policy agent.” The “learner” I generally refer to as the “enactor.” In this case, I asked the following questions concerning the sources of guidance. 1) Who was the instructional leader? 2) What content and what process did the instructional leader use to convey or impart knowledge to others? 3) *Who* learned to enact the policy?

### Interpretations and Responses

Rather than attempt to measure what, if anything, was imparted or conveyed to those enacting Schoolwides, I examined how



they interpreted and responded to the sources of guidance. That is, I did not measure what or how much enactors had learned. Instead, to learn about enactor's interpretations, following the qualitative tradition, I interviewed them.

To learn about how they responded, I observed organizational changes and classrooms during the first year of enactment. The policy asks schools to coordinate internally to upgrade and enrich the entire school program (IASA, p. 3534), and to align their curriculum with state student standards (IASA, p. 3537). I used ideas from the school restructuring and school coordination literature, as well as ideas generated by my data, to examine how schools responded to coordinating themselves internally in five ways. The first was to determine the explicit or implicit *vision* or *focus* of each school's curriculum. Many researchers have argued that a common vision will lead to shared goals as Purkey and Smith (1983) explain in their review of the effective schools literature. The second was to examine attempts to create *professional relationships*. Many researchers have argued that the most important aspect of a school is its culture (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993; Newman and Wehlage, 1995; Seashore-Lewis, Kruse, and Marks, 1996). The literature contains many definitions of culture and suggests various ways to examine it. For this study, to specify

culture, I used professional relationships to mean that schools attempted to create shared norms, values and understandings among school staff concerning learners, learning, and teaching. Another kind of relationship often explored in the literature is *interdependent relationships* or relationships that are created by a school's structure. A clear example of this is team teaching. This was the third way I examined changes. A fourth way I looked at changes in school and teaching practices was to determine if visual guidance for changes in classroom practices was available. By visual, I mean teachers opportunities to see different ways of teaching, through modeling or videotapes or another way. This emerged from my data because the reading and mathematics teachers at Strether Elementary were available for modeling teaching practices within classrooms.

The fifth way I examined how schools coordinated internally was through *internal alignment*. Alignment means that tests measure what students are taught (S. Alan Cohen, 1983). The activities undertaken to align internally could include writing school goals, creating tests, trying to teach in ways that ensure that students achieve on aligned tests, and ensuring that curriculum and curricular materials help to promote the goals and tests. This category, too, emerged from my data, especially at Strether

Elementary. To sum up, I examined these five responses during the first year of enacting a Schoolwide program: a common focus, professional relationships, interdependent relationships, visual guidance for teaching practice, and internal alignment.

In addition to coordinating themselves internally, the policy pressed schools to align with state content standards. This could include trying to teach toward those standards and attendant tests, or other activities such as developing or using curricular materials or activities that are aligned. I call this strategy *external alignment* and looked for examples of this in schools as a whole.

I now turn to summarizing the schools' learning opportunities and each school's interpretations and responses to the policy. I then compare and contrast the schools around their learning opportunities and reactions to them.

### Strether Elementary School Summary

Strether Elementary School's Title I Targeted Assistance program was a pullout program in which Title I aides worked with students in reading and the Title I reading teacher worked with first grade students using the Reading Recovery program. A half-time Title I mathematics teacher also worked with students in a pullout program. To create a Schoolwide program, the school's staff, led by the Title I reading teacher, reorganized the instructional program by

eliminating most pullouts and creating a communications center in which Title I staff worked with all students -- not just those identified as Title I students -- using what policymakers might mean by “applied learning” (IASA, p. 3540). They also studied the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), particularly in reading, to bring up the scores of all students.

These actions -- upgrading the entire program (IASA, p. 3534), eliminating pullouts (IASA, p. 3540), creating heterogeneously based groups for instruction (IASA, p. 3541), holding all students to the same high standards rather than focusing on remediation (IASA, p. 3521), and encouraging the entire staff to be responsible for all children’s learning (IASA, p. 3521) -- were ideas pressed either in the federal and state Title I programs.

This school’s story shows how quickly a school is able to begin to change from a Targeted Assistance program to a Schoolwide program when the instructional leader is knowledgeable about the Title I program and its changing purposes and goals.

Like the other two schools, this school had no outside leadership or input to help the school enact a Schoolwide. That is, neither the structure of the school system nor guidance from the central office helped the school. Nor did this school look to other schools for guidance, to professional organizations, or use federal

legislation or regulations. However, the instructional leader was inspired by the state's Title I director to become a Schoolwide, and they used a technical state policy instrument, the MEAP, for direction. But generally, the Title I reading teacher, Ann DeBoer saw this as an opportunity for schools to take the lead.

Ann was more knowledgeable than any one person in the three schools about Title I and the social and technical changes in program and ideas embodied in Schoolwides. The combination of her knowledge and leadership enabled her to move the school swiftly toward an internal coordination and external alignment strategy that was pressed by the Title I and Goals 2000 legislation.

She learned about Schoolwide programs from a talk the state's Title I director gave for Mapleton Title I teachers. She claimed to have learned all she knew in that one talk. But she had an avenue for learning about Title I more generally. Her husband was the reading and language arts coordinator, and director of Title I, in a neighboring district. She said that information about Title I didn't sift down from the Mapleton central office, but she kept up through her husband. She also learned about education reform more generally. She perused many catalogues and magazines for ideas for the school, though she stated that she didn't have time to read.

Ann had to encourage her principal to allow her and the rest of the school's teachers to enact a Schoolwide. Her principal was at first reluctant to plan for a Schoolwide program because she thought that having a Targeted Assistance program together with planning for a Schoolwide program would be too much work for the school. But Ann persevered and talked her principal into letting her provide leadership for enactment. So, though the principal was the gatekeeper, she was not the instructional leader. The principal said several times, concerning Ann, "I don't know what I'd do without her" (WG, 2/23/96; 6/21/96; 5/22/96).

The teachers also trusted Ann. When she wasn't in her classroom, working with a student through the Reading Recovery program, she was usually in a teacher's room talking about instruction. During a more casual moment in a full staff meeting, one teacher shouted across the room to the principal, "If we lose Ann, all bets are off," (5/22/96) showing the staff's confidence in Ann's leadership.

The teachers were enthusiastic enactors of the Schoolwide. They weren't required to attend the three after school programs that Ann planned for them to learn about Schoolwides, though most of them did.

Ann determined the overall strategy for coordination with input from Genevieve, the principal. She also coordinated the efforts for doing so. For instance, she hired a professional development provider to work with the staff on literacy activities for the classroom. She brought staff together at her house by grade level to work on communication goals and activities to achieve those goals. They also wrote goals for mathematics, science and social studies, though they spent less time on these goals and did not work on developing activities. She ran the Schoolwide planning meetings, though in one she turned over leadership to the Title I mathematics teachers to work with staff on the mathematics MEAP. She also was available to model classroom teaching if teachers requested that she do so. She orchestrated many other activities, but these were the most obvious during the planning time.

The data I collected indicate that the school not only enacted the technical and social aspects of the school level policy, but most staff also enacted changes in the classrooms. They coordinated in all the ways I discussed in the first chapter concerning “coordination.” Ann encouraged them to work together or created a social environment for them to create a focus, professional and interdependent relationships, images of reformed practice, and internal alignment. They also aligned externally with the MEAP.

Their focus was on communications, which they defined as “reading, writing, speaking and listening.” And these four skills were highlighted in nearly all of their other coordination activities. They built professional relationships through determining grade level goals and activities, particularly in communications. Whether or not they developed true interdependent relationships I did not determine, but Ann pressed the teachers and the Title I staff to develop them through the communications room. They were able to get visual guidance for classroom practice by having the Title I reading and mathematics teachers model lessons in their classrooms.

They aligned internally and externally. To align internally, among other strategies the early grades ensured that the students were able to use reading strategies as defined by the Reading Recovery program. They also wrote grade level goals, particularly in communications and activities to accomplish those goals. To align externally, they used the reading and mathematics MEAP tests.

This case shows the power of a knowledgeable and trusted leader, and how this leader was eager to act as the policy’s agent. In fact, she was so steeped in Title I she might have overplayed the prior role of reading in the Title I program through her emphasis on communication skills, of which reading was a part. In general this



school moved quickly and clearly toward the technical and social Title I goals, because they had a knowledgeable and trusted leader.

### Knightly Elementary School Summary

In the spring of 1996, Knightly Elementary School's Targeted Assistance Program had a full time reading teacher who taught a pullout program in her room, and a part time science teacher who taught science in the classrooms. During the planning time and first year of enactment, how the Schoolwide program was defined shifted as different people stepped into the leadership. They also were coordinated socially: on Wednesday morning they met for an hour and a half. However, they had yet to discuss the technical aspects of the policy in these meetings.

At the end of the first year of enactment of a Schoolwide program they had the same reading and science arrangements, but had added to the whole school's program. They added two instructional aides. The principal argued, based on her assessment as well as the teachers' evaluations of the program that the aides greatly enhanced the program. The aides were in charge of a "Lunch Bunch" tutoring program that teachers recommended to students to attend, and they also assisted in classrooms. The Lunch Bunch program extended the day for some students, an idea highlighted in the Title I legislation (p. IASA, 3536).

Knightly had changed in one other significant way as well: they scored amazingly well on the MEAP and had clearly organized themselves around this technical aspect of the policy. In fact, 100% of their fifth grade students had received a “satisfactory” on the MEAP writing test, which was unusual in any school and almost unheard of in an inner city school.

This school’s story shows the importance of leadership as a means of enacting policy, as the school’s leadership and definition of a Schoolwide shifted over time. It also shows that aligning externally with state standards can be an organizing principle for coordination.

During the planning period, first the principal led the process. The way the enactors constructed this initial environment, the school’s meetings and instructional program were distinguished by a lack of focus. The principal led the meetings with lists of issues she wanted to discuss with the teachers including everything from a list of computer programs available in the school to budgeting for Title I reading and science teachers. She would cut short discussions that concerned instruction. And the Schoolwide plan reflected her leadership: it was a list of activities.

The second person to lead the process was the fifth grade teacher. She thought the school ought to enact multi-age learning

groups in kindergarten through second grades, and third through fifth grades in mathematics and reading. She envisioned a school with a strong internal alignment strategy in which pre and posttests, grade level goals, and curriculum were aligned. She thought these alignment strategies worked in concert with developing interdependent teacher work relationships through the multi-age groups of students in reading and mathematics.

With Susan, the fifth grade teacher as instructional leader, the school enacted her vision of a Schoolwide program for one semester. They then decided to go back to self-contained classrooms for the time being. The principal and teachers felt they needed to regroup for several reasons. They hadn't thought through the difficulties of scheduling, of differences in classroom management, of the preparation required to work with wide ranging age groups, and of how to ensure the pre and posttests measured the appropriate knowledge and skill to group students by achievement.

So, through two different leaders, Laura O'Connor, the principal and Susan Harpins, the fifth grade teacher, they had two different leadership styles and two definitions of a Schoolwide program. Laura's definition was to list out the eight components of Schoolwide programs and what the school was doing to achieve them. Susan's was to develop an internally coordinated and aligned

strategy. The teachers, having enthusiastically helped to create the list for the initial Schoolwide program, just as enthusiastically followed Susan's leadership.

During the one semester of enacting Susan's vision of a Schoolwide program, another force was beginning to guide this school: the MEAP. That is, during the first semester of the first year of enactment the teachers became involved with the state program to improve the school's MEAP scores.

Though the MEAP was not discussed in the Schoolwide Planning meeting, both Laura and Susan had mentioned its importance. Laura thought it important because it reflected on the school's reputation. Susan thought it important because it could be helpful in improving teaching practice. Susan said that though she should be embarrassed because she taught to the test, she wasn't. Instead, she thought the MEAP's emphasis on constructed responses was a good learning tool. (SH, 5/29/97). She taught students to write constructed responses across the subject matters.

They became involved with the MEAP because the school was selected by the state for extra support. Laura wasn't sure why they were selected because the school was not in "unaccredited" status, nor was it necessarily in danger of becoming unaccredited. Nonetheless the state selected some schools for extra support. This

extra support included a state consultant to help them write their school improvement plan and a MEAP workshop to work through an item by item analysis of the school's MEAP.

This school's alignment with the MEAP became stronger as they dropped the internal coordination piece -- the multi age groupings -- from their instructional program. For instance, they bought curricular materials aligned with the MEAP.

The case of Knightly Elementary School holds two lessons for examining the enactment of Schoolwide programs. One concerns the means or the learning opportunities the enactors had for learning about the policy and the other raises questions about the nature of school coordination.

In this small elementary school one striking attribute concerned the means of enacting the policy or *who* taught the teachers' opportunities to learn. The teacher or leader or person who provided guidance for policy enactment shifted back and forth between the principal and the fifth grade teacher. This process clearly showed that the content and process used to enact Schoolwides changed as leadership changed. This shows the importance of the means, especially the *who*, as well as the *how* and *what*, of the learning opportunities the teachers had. Leadership emerged, though the school had no guidance from the outside.

There is a second lesson in this school's story. After the first year of enactment, this school hadn't coordinated in some of the ways that are viewed as important in the school coordination literature. Neither the principal nor a teacher had pressed a particular vision or focus, though the school had implicitly focused on the MEAP. The school did not coordinate activities between and among teachers and students. The school had no visual models for classroom practice.

Yet they had some strong elements of school coordination, and these elements played out in organizing themselves around a technical aspect of the policy, the MEAP. All teachers -- kindergarten through sixth grade -- had taken a workshop on understanding the MEAP though the MEAP was administered in the fourth and fifth grades. They also had interpreted how their students were understanding the MEAP together -- indicating that they were developing professional relationships that focused on learners, learning and teaching that had not been apparent during the planning time. They also developed professional relationships around the MEAP

The work with the MEAP showed in their test scores. They increased the percentage of students who achieved satisfactory starting in the school year 1994-95 (the year before I observed their

planning) through the 1997-98 school year (the year after their first year of enactment). They outperformed the other two schools in this study, though the poverty rate was as high as or higher than others. They outperformed the district average during this period.

This school received guidance from the state, and brought a willingness to use the MEAP for guidance. Unlike the other two schools, guidance did not come almost solely from within the school; but like the other two schools they chose their source of guidance. The teachers continued to strongly support this movement toward the MEAP, just as they had the work conducted under Laura's leadership and under Susan's leadership.

This school's enactment of the policy shows that schools can coordinate by aligning themselves with a policy instrument and enjoy success in raising their students test scores. It suggests that the state tests need to be developed with care, ensuring that what they measure is what students need to know and be able to do.

The case further suggests that technical strategies, such as alignment strategies, can be helpful in enacting Schoolwide programs, particularly if the school has opportunities to learn about the policy instruments to which they are aligning, thus using a social strategy to learn about a technical aspect of the policy.

Opportunities to discuss this alignment can lead to the beginning of *professional relationships*, or shared norms and values.

This school used the MEAP to align both externally and internally. They planned their curricular materials around the MEAP. Their implicit focus became the MEAP. Their professional relationships were developed around the MEAP. They dropped their interdependent relationships; nonetheless, they continued to learn together about constructed responses.

### Brooke Elementary School Summary

Brooke Elementary School changed neither its internal coordination strategy nor its response to the state content standards much during the first year of planning and enactment. This is because the enactors believed they had already enacted the policy by creating a Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) school, starting two years before the Schoolwide planning year. They took the opportunity to become a Schoolwide program to put in place a three year written plan, which they hoped would ensure that the school's DAP program would not be questioned or attacked by others.

This case shows that a school enacting a weakly specified policy in a decentralized and fragmented political system might not see parts of the policy. Brooke Elementary had such a clear vision



and method of operation that it imposed an already developed vision on the policy, seeing only the part of the policy that was congruent with their program. The policy's press for internal coordination and the social aspects of classroom practice had been enacted. But the press for technical knowledge and external coordination through alignment with state standards was not pursued. Not only did the school not align their curriculum, tests and texts with the state student standards, but staff interpreted "alignment" to mean that the district's curriculum should be aligned with ideas concerning DAP. No person or ideas that the enactors were aware of, or structural constraints or support, suggested that the policy could be implemented more fully.

While the lack of attention to the alignment piece of the Schoolwide strategy was in part due to the weakly specified policy and the decentralized and fragmented political system, it was also due to the enactors. The enactors used their prior knowledge and beliefs not only as a filter through which to interpret the policy -- as could be true in the case of mutual adaptation (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978) -- but as the policy itself. Mutual adaptation might suggest that this school moved slowly toward the policy's goals as they shaped the policy to their own contexts. But this school's story isn't a case of mutual adaptation. It was a case of

not hearing or seeing aspects of the policy. This school also wasn't a case of deliberate co-optation (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978). The core leaders assumed they were enacting the policy. They weren't subverting the policy in a deliberate way, they believed that they were leading, not following the policy.

The principal, Gretchen Ramone, was the policy's mediator. In the spring of 1996, four teachers and the principal routinely met to write the School Improvement Plan, a whole school plan required by Public Act 25 of 1991,<sup>1</sup> which was one and the same with the Schoolwide Plan. They all played a leadership role by working with other teachers and the parents' committee to help them enact a DAP school. But it was the principal who chose the content of the school's program and the process through which it would be enacted. She made the decision to become a DAP school by asking teachers what they thought the school's focus should be. A small group of teachers encouraged her to make the school a DAP school.

Gretchen pressed the school to become a DAP school in subtle and obvious ways. Gretchen not only determined the focus but also championed the ideas of DAP as they were enacted in one teacher's,

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<sup>1</sup>Sharon Wellborn, the person in central office in charge of Schoolwides, encouraged the schools to think of their School Improvement Plans as their Schoolwide Program Plan and that is what these schools did.

Marilyn Lancaster's, classroom. She also encouraged those who believed in or understood DAP to be active on the School Improvement Team and shaped the way they worked together. She encouraged the School Improvement Team to define and extend their ideas concerning DAP. She created a professional library based on DAP ideas. She chose the professional and staff development activities that teachers would attend. By the fourth year of enactment (the first year the program was referred to as a Title I Schoolwide program), she had hired many teachers in the school with the explicit understanding that the school was a DAP school.

But Gretchen wasn't the only person in a leadership position in this school. All four of the teachers on the School Improvement Team and two others were strong advocates of DAP, and saw themselves as a cohesive group in advocating for the program they had crafted, and the practices they encouraged in classrooms. This doesn't mean that there were no differences of opinions or conflicts among them. As might be expected, there were. Still, they were cohesive in focusing on DAP.

This school did not look to the central office, federal or state policy documents, other schools, or any other part of the formal educational system for guidance. They felt they had good reasons not to trust policymaker's ideas and this central office. Beyond

this, they looked to themselves for direction, and the guidance they sought was from an organization completely outside the education governance system -- the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and some ideas associated with early childhood education.

DAP was a set of practices at the programmatic and instructional levels based on strongly held beliefs and knowledge. To use DAP, teachers were to understand each child's knowledge, beliefs and stage of development; and then create opportunities which would enable the child to develop more knowledge, deeper understandings, or move to the next stage of development. The main concerns of this group were stages of child development, multiple intelligences, learning styles, and developmental domains of learning. This was the policy in this school.

As the principal said in defining DAP, "Well, 'developmentally appropriate' means that you're going to, first of all, set the environment so children are learning in a manner that's appropriate for their stage of development" (GR 3/18/97). They set the environment as much as they could to reflect their beliefs.

Of the five ways that I have suggested might make a coordinated strategy for schools, they were coordinated with each of them in social ways, but had not decided the content of the

curriculum nor to align with state content standards. That is, they had determined how to work together as a Schoolwide program and discussed how to teach, but not the content of the curriculum. They had agreed on a focus of DAP, but, by definition, what students should accomplish by grade was left open. They had professional relationships based on how to teach, at least philosophically, and how to work together as a school to ensure that all children would achieve. They discussed in small and large meetings that they discussed what learners were capable of, how they learned and how they should be taught. They had interdependent relationships through team teaching. They had some images to guide their practice through the NAEYC and much discussion. They aligned internally on how to teach. Again, however, their professional relationships, images of the reforms, and internal alignment did not focus on what to teach.

They aligned an external instrument to their internal beliefs. As to an alignment strategy, they appeared to use one that enabled at least those in the core group to know what was in the district's curriculum by subject matter and grade level. They did not study the district's curriculum in order to ensure that their curriculum materials, texts and teaching were aligned. Rather, they added objectives to the district curriculum to ensure that the six

developmental domains -- cognitive, social, language, aesthetic, physical and affective -- were addressed in each subject matter and grade level. So, they expanded on an external source of alignment or guidance by adding their beliefs and knowledge to it.

They did not align the school's curriculum or curricular materials with the state student content standards. And the MEAP scores reflected this. This school scored the lowest on the MEAP reading and mathematics tests of the three. To the extent that they aligned themselves externally it was with the ideas on how to teach presented by NAEYC.

The teaching practices of two of the teachers in this school, Marilyn Lancaster and Liz Grant, show just how different teaching practices can be even when teachers believe themselves to understand one another's focus, beliefs and knowledge concerning how to teach. Both teachers argued that "individualization" of the curriculum was essential for teaching in the DAP tradition. However, a peek into their classrooms showed just how differently individualization can look in practice.

Marilyn Lancaster's spelling curriculum was completely individual by student. She also individualized by having students working on different tasks as they worked in centers. In literature, she led small groups of students, grouped by similar achievement. In

such groups she asked questions to which she had the correct answers and encouraged students to get those answers.

Liz Grant, on the other hand, individualized in a completely different way. In literature, she divided students into groups of five or six students with mixed achievement levels. She then assigned them various roles to fulfill as they discussed the literature selection that the group had chosen. The roles rotated among the students. For instance, one student was the scribe and would take notes of the transactions. This way of teaching allowed each student to participate in the discussion and have different responsibilities in the discussions over the year. This differed from Marilyn's practice because "individualization" was not a unique curriculum for each student (though the content of the curriculum would vary by group), but rather was an opportunity for students to discuss their understandings of the piece of literature and work in different roles in the group.

These different interpretations of individualization show how difficult school coordination at the level of classroom practice can be. Perhaps the lack of alignment to state student content standards was in part responsible because these teachers taught quite different content in quite different ways within this school. The two teachers' methods show how schools can coordinate but

with little internal or external alignment, teach different content and have different understandings of what constitutes the elementary school curriculum.

The case of Brooke Elementary School is a case of a school with little or no external alignment with the state content standards. They didn't see or hear the call for schools to align with the state student content standards within the policy. Instead, the school saw itself as leading the policy and providing guidance for other schools that might want to develop and create a DAP school.

#### Idiosyncratic Mediators. Interpretations and Responses

The most obvious observation about the way the policies played out in these three schools is that they played out in idiosyncratic ways across schools. At Strether the Title I reading teacher led the school through a process of coordinating themselves in a way that looked remarkably like what many Title I reformers have called for. She started the development of the technical alignment strategy and the social coordination strategy at the school and classroom levels. In the other two schools the Title I reading teachers did not play strong roles in planning the Schoolwide. No other school so clearly enacted the coordination piece of the policy as closely to what Title I reformers were pressing.



At Knightly, two different leaders -- the principal and the fifth grade teacher -- emerged at different times and had quite different ideas about what the policy was asking the school to do. Over time, the two agreed, if implicitly, on an alignment strategy with the MEAP. This school used the technical alignment strategy for guidance and built the social aspect of the policy into understanding this alignment. At no other school did leadership pass so clearly between two people. Nor did either of the other two schools so strongly pursue an alignment strategy.

At Brook, the principal led teachers to enact a DAP program which while coordinating the school internally, ignored the strategy of alignment with the state student standards. No other school chose to coordinate around principles or practices that were not mentioned or pressed by the legislation or main policy reports. So while this school pursued the a social strategy of how to organize the school and the classroom, they did not coordinate this strategy with the technical alignment offered by the policy.

What accounts for these differences? The answer, in part, is that leadership in each school had quite different opportunities for understanding the policy. Each school worked in a near isolation from other schools or levels of governance within the formal school system. In no school were agents of the policy evident. That is, a

“teacher” from outside the schools could have provided guidance, but was not available. One school relied on the state’s policy instrument, the MEAP, for guidance but the other two schools did not rely on the state extensively. None of the schools worked closely with district personnel in interpreting the policy. In no school did the enactors read the federal legislation or regulations. That is, a federal policy “curriculum” they could have used for guidance was not used. In no school did they meet with other schools that had enacted the policy; thus they didn’t used a kind of distributed learning model between and among schools to enact the policy.

These differences can be accounted for by the political system within which the school system resided. Historically, the federal government has had little influence over state and local education policies. The IASA and Goals 2000 were the federal government’s first foray into trying to guide the entire education system, rather than the compensatory education system. Title I funding was tied to Goals 2000 in this legislation, thus making the Goals 2000 legislation, which is aimed at the entire education system, quite powerful due to Title I money. Title I is compensatory program -- a virtual entitlement to states and districts. Therefore, districts and schools have not had to follow Title I instructional guidelines in a strict manner to receive Title I moneys. Though they did have to

follow strict finance and resource allocations guidelines, they were free to run the instructional programs as they saw fit. A strong example of this is the district within which these school resided, which paid very little attention to the instructional aspects of this Title I policy.

The Title I legislation requests that districts work “in consultation” (IASA, p. 3530) with schools to enact Schoolwides, yet the central office in this district did not. This central office provided neither guidance nor support. Beyond this, the central office did not construct any constraints. One could conceive that even without guidance and support, this central office, had it not been distracted by budget cuts, could have provided oversight that restricted what the schools could do. But this central office did not.

In addition, the policy itself was not highly specified. It wasn't meant to be. It was meant to provide a framework for all federal education policy, and to move the Title I system away from a highly specified system that lacked accountability toward one in which accountability was measured by results. But there are other reasons the schools might have difficulty in specifying the policy in practice. One is that not enough is yet known about the fundamental tenets of school change and how school might best go about enacting comprehensive school reform. Another is that perhaps

comprehensive school reform is so unique to each environment or context it is not specifiable. And another is that there was much to specify and due to new ideas concerning national or state standards, much is still to be decided as to who is responsible for what in the education system. Above all, because education is a local and state concern, the federal government is in no political position be very specific in trying to guide the entire educational system. The old Title I, though highly regulated, delegated most instructional decisions to states and LEAs. The new Title I with its lack of specificity in some ways delegates even more decisions because of the lack of definitions around “advanced skills” (IASA, p. 3524); “higher order thinking skills and understanding” (IASA, p. 3525); “applied learning” (IASA, p. 3540); and the like. The Title I Schoolwide programs are in a way a federal experiment that could enable us to understand how school coordination interacts with systemic reform instruments.

The fragmented and decentralized political system including this passive district, together with the weakly specified policy, meant that the schools learning opportunities were nearly completely constructed from within each school. This accounts for the idiosyncratic ways in which Schoolwides played out in these three schools. The school staff could rely only on those resources

within the school, whether they are physical, human or social, to learn about the policy or to construct the opportunities to learn about the policy. So, school staff, particularly leadership, looked largely to their prior knowledge and beliefs to make sense of the policy. The rest of this chapter will explain who these leaders were, and what their prior knowledge and beliefs were. It will also explain the way leaders read the policy, and the way enactors responded to the policy.

I start by comparing the learning opportunities between and among the schools, and the various coordination activities they enacted.

### The Schools' Learning Opportunities

Each school constructed activities to learn about the policy. This makes intuitive sense. How could schools enact a policy that they knew nothing about? Beyond this, in no school did one person conceive of or write a plan and hand it over to the enactors. If this had happened, it seems almost a given that the enactors would have had to learn how to interpret and respond to the document given them.<sup>2</sup> At Strether, the Title I teacher and principal created a vision

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<sup>2</sup> Cohen and Barnes (1993) write that all policy enactments require some learning. This policy requires many changes in beliefs, knowledge, and skills concerning school and classroom organization, making the need to learn about them all the more obvious.

for the policy, while simultaneously talking with teachers about their ideas. They also created many learning opportunities for the full staff to learn about and from this vision. At Knightly the principal said that she had to have teachers buy into the strategy, which was one reason why she opened up the entire process, including the creation of the program itself, to all teachers. For the short time the fifth grade teacher was the leader, she conceived of a Schoolwide program and worked with teachers to enact it. At Brooke, the principal together with a few teachers created a vision which they then shared with the other teachers and parents.

#### Who Mediated the Policy?

Did someone teach each school about the policy? That is, did someone mediate the policy or was there an instructional leader for the enactment of the policy? In each school, the answer was yes. Again, as might seem almost intuitive, in each school a leader emerged. Leadership emerged and the policy's enactors either followed that leadership, or left the school as was the case at Brooke Elementary.

Who emerged as the leader could not have been predicted from that person's employment status. It wasn't always the principal, or any other person within the school who provided leadership. At Strether, the leader was the Title I reading teacher who had a good

relationship with the principal and the teachers, and was knowledgeable about the Title I program. At Knightly, the leader changed back and forth from the principal to the fifth grade teacher and back to the principal with the support of the fifth grade teacher. At Brooke, the leader was the principal.<sup>3</sup>

In each school the principal, was the (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 1991), though not necessarily the leader. At Strether, the principal gave her blessings to the reading teacher's leadership and ideas. At Knightly, the principal agreed to let the fifth grade teacher provide leadership and the school to enact her ideas, even though initially skeptical. At Brooke, the leader and principal were one in the same.

### Who Enacted the Policy?

In each school, the mediator was also an enactor, as was the rest of the school staff.

At Strether, the learners were the entire school staff. This is because leadership emerged from within the school. Ann DeBoer was the leader and while the after school Schoolwide planning meetings were optional (though teachers were paid to attend), about 85 or 90 percent of the staff attended each one. And over the three meetings,

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<sup>3</sup> If this were a study of leadership, rather than policy enactment one might be able to make the case the leadership in this school was

probably 95 percent attended one of the three meetings. While there, the staff was engaged and working, though at times they complained about the lack of time to finish the work they needed to do.

At Knightly, the learners included the entire staff, including the leaders, the principal and the fifth grade teacher, particularly as they learned from the MEAP workshop.

At Brooke, like the other two schools, the entire staff was learning. The categories of "teacher" and "learner" tend to break down completely because the Schoolwide planning document was written by a committee of teachers who endorsed DAP. They learned from one another as they wrote the document. Then the other teachers and the parents became the learners as this set of teachers explained the plan.

In all three schools, most if not all staff, had positive dispositions toward improving their school and teaching practices - particularly for disadvantaged kids. At Strether a third grade female teacher said (5/29/96) to her male counterpart, "You know, it is never going to be easy. We can improve, but it isn't going to be easy."

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distributed across the School Improvement Team.



To which he responded, "We will do better," as many heads nodded in agreement.

At Knightly a teacher said in response to learning that Schoolwides give schools a chance to tailor their programs to their students said, "This is exciting" (3/3/96). Again, many heads nodded in agreement. At Brooke, the principal and teachers talked tirelessly about the need to change schools to serve all students.

In a like manner, all three schools believed themselves to have responded to the policy. They all felt strongly that they were serving traditionally under-served students.

In addition, though teachers can always close the proverbial classroom door, all staff in these schools was involved in Schoolwide changes in one way or another. At Strether, they all utilized the communications center. At Knightly they all took the MEAP workshop and met on Wednesday mornings. At Brooke they all team-taught multi-age groups.

#### What Process and Content Was Used?

The process and content that each school used to learn the Schoolwide programs followed from leadership. This was most obvious in Knightly where as leadership changed, so did the process and content of what was considered a Schoolwide. In each case, the

leader's prior knowledge and beliefs played a strong role in the content of what teachers learned.

At Strether the instructional leader had a strong, direct approach. She had ideas about what she wanted the school to accomplish during the planning year and first year of enactment, and designed tasks so that teachers could learn more about what it was the school was to accomplish.

She relied on her knowledge of Title I. She pushed the school to enact many of the ideas mentioned in the Title I legislation or research reports -- upgrading the entire program, eliminating pullouts or remediation programs, creating heterogeneously based groups for instruction, holding all students to the same high standards, and encouraging the entire staff to be responsible for all children's learning. She learned about Schoolwides when she attended a talk for Mapleton reading teachers which the state director of Title I held. In addition, her husband, a Title I director in an adjacent district, kept her abreast of Title I changes. She also relied on her knowledge of Reading Recovery and the teaching of reading more generally, as the school focused on communication skills.

Knightly changed policy mediators or instructional leader as the school moved through the planning process. Each change in

leadership changed the process and content of the policy. At first, the principal was the leader. She openly searched for guidance to enact the policy. She called the Title I offices at the district and state levels for a framework from which to work. She received from the state a list of the eight Schoolwide components and used the school's existing program to fill out the list.

She had a strong disposition to rely on policymakers for guidance. She mentioned to me that the district's curriculum was in place, but what the school staff needed to figure out was how to implement it. When the staff began to discuss grade level goals, she announced that they didn't need to determine grade level goals, because the district's curriculum was already in place. She also said that her opinion of the MEAP didn't really matter, that the students needed to score well on the MEAP. So, her disposition was to use policy for guidance.

After this, the fifth grade teacher used her prior knowledge and beliefs to mediate the policy. She had previously taught in a private school in Florida, and had been a teacher in another Mapleton School that piloted a Michigan Accreditation Program. The pilot of the Michigan Accreditation Program included many of the eight components of Schoolwides, and promoted the MEAP as a source of guidance. Her method of instruction was direct as she encouraged

teachers to write, or borrow from other sources, test items for each grade level so that students could be tested for placement in multi-age groups. She also encouraged teachers to write grade level goals to help them determine these test items. All were activities she had learned in previous settings. The school staff worked to enact multi-age groups in reading and mathematics, which lasted for one semester.

In the third stage of enactment, the teachers began to organize themselves around the MEAP by participating in a workshop organized by the state and working on what they had learned in the workshop in their Wednesday morning meetings. Both the principal and the fifth grade teacher thought the MEAP to be a good source of guidance. The school began to align their curricular materials with the MEAP.

At Brooke, four teachers and the principal met together to hammer out agreements among themselves about what they meant by DAP as informed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This group shared a common disposition toward DAP from prior individual experiences. All of them had been exposed to ideas concerning DAP previous to their experience in Brooke Elementary School. They then worked to mediate their Schoolwide planning document for the other teachers and the parents. So the

leader determined the process and content of the learning opportunity.

### Summation of Mediating the Policy

The schools constructed their own learning opportunities; they worked with the human and social resources that were already available in the school, though they also continued to build these resources as they enacted the policy. The schools chose their source of guidance, rather than having it laid out for them.

In each school, an instructional leader or mediator emerged. Though the principal was the gatekeeper, the mediator's role in influencing how the policy play out is hard to overestimate.

In each school, the process and content of what the mediator presented was built on the leader's prior knowledge and beliefs, as well as dispositions toward the policy. In two cases, Strether and Knightly, the new Title I policy and Goals 2000 legislation informed the leaders' technical knowledge and skill. At Strether the policy also influenced the social relationships within the school.

The policy enactors in each school were generally enthusiastic about enacting the policy. The enactors believed that they had enacted the policy. In two of the three schools there appeared to be little conflict around enacting the policy. In the third, Brooke, there

was much conflict; however, those who opposed the policy left the school.

The next section addresses issues of how schools interpreted and responded to the policy.

### The Schools' Enactments of the Policy

All three schools enacted the policy, in part because the policy itself was not highly specified. Perhaps the spirit of the law can be summed up as follows. Policymakers hoped that Schoolwides would encourage teachers to assume responsibility for all children to gain proficiencies in student standards and would coordinate across the school, discard pullouts, and use Title I to lead change. They were to enact the technical and social aspects of the policy. They were to ensure that all students gained proficiency in state student content standards through alignment with the standards. They were to organize themselves internally to accomplish this. One might question if Brooke Elementary enacted the policy because they did not align with the state standards. From the school's perspective they did enact the policy because they held students to high individual standards.

In this section, I answer questions about how schools responded to the policy. Did schools organize themselves internally, and align themselves with the state student content standards? Is

so, how did they? To answer this question I used six ideas, most based in the school coordination literature. They are as follows. Did schools develop or choose a common focus and what focus did they choose? Did schools develop professional relationships and what did they look like? Did schools develop interdependent relationships and what did they look like? Were school staff exposed to images of classroom practice that could serve as guidance? Did schools align internally and how did they? I also asked a question about alignment. Did they align externally and how?

#### Did Each School Develop a Focus?

Every school developed a focus, though in one school it wasn't explicit. Each focus became the centerpiece of the curriculum students were exposed to.

At Strether, the focus was communications, which meant reading, writing, speaking and listening. Communications was highlighted in each activity the staff conducted to make a Schoolwide program. For instance, they dedicated five professional development days to language arts activities. When studying the MEAP, they used more time reviewing the reading sections, and reviewed them in more detail, than the mathematics MEAP. When writing goals by grade level they addressed the basic subject

matters, but for communications they also wrote activities to achieve each goal.

The time the teachers spent in discussing and learning about communications was reflected in the students' activities. During the first year of enactment, students spent more time on reading, writing, speaking and listening in the communications center and in the classroom. In classrooms, they worked on journals and on creating portfolios. They spent so much time on communications, in fact, the some teachers found these activities were crowding out the science, mathematics and social studies curriculum.

At Knightly the focus became, over time, the Michigan Educational Assessment Program, though the staff might not have said the MEAP was the focus. At the beginning of the process, the principal told me that the staff didn't really want to have focus, and when they discussed the Schoolwide program, they made a list of activities to pursue -- none of which was privileged over another. For a short time the fifth grade teacher might have said that the focus was multi-age grouping. However, that focus lasted for only one semester during the time I observed.

The MEAP became the school's focus as the staff aligned curriculum materials, the curriculum and their teaching practices to the MEAP. More than one teacher told me the school had to turn its



attention to social studies because the next MEAP would concern social studies, and that the MEAP's encouragement of "constructed responses" was an important part of the curriculum. The MEAP test scores, which were higher than the other schools and higher than the district average, showed this focus.

At Brooke the school's focus was Developmentally Appropriate Practice, using principles outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and early childhood education programs. In creating the DAP goals and activities staff frequently discussed classroom practices. DAP determined, in part, the curriculum the children would be exposed to. However, classroom observations showed there was wide latitude in what DAP meant in terms of the content and process of the teaching.

Whether it was communications or the MEAP or DAP, what the adults studied became the centerpiece of the children's curriculum. Though they all developed a focus, each developed a quite different focus and this meant that students were exposed to quite different curricula.

### Did Each School Develop Professional Relationships?

Each of the schools developed professional relationships around the focus. This could mean that as schools created shared understanding about learners, learning and teaching, each school might have become more cohesive. But the three schools might have been more divergent from one another in their understandings.

The Strether staff uniformly understood that the Title I program was no longer about a subset of the students, but about all students in the school. That is, they were aware that all students were to work toward high standards. They developed understandings about what students could achieve and how they could achieve on many fronts including exploring how students made sense of the MEAP, creating grade level goals, aligning the early grades' reading curriculum with Reading Recovery strategies. They also explored teaching activities when working with a language arts professional development provider and when writing grade level goals. They, at least tentatively, developed shared ideas about learners, learning and teaching.

Knightly, too, developed shared ideas about learners, learning and teaching, but focused its efforts on one technical aspect of the policy: the MEAP tests. They took a workshop the state encouraged to understand how all students performed on the MEAP and what they

could do to improve that performance.

A subset of teachers at Brooke Elementary continually discussed student learning, learners and teaching, in defining DAP, and shared those ideas with other teachers and parents.

All three schools discussed ideas concerning learners, learning, and teaching. The policy created an opportunity for this to happen, particularly at Strether and Knightly. At Strether, the policy provided an opportunity for the reading teacher to gather the staff together and have such discussions. At Knightly staff discussed how students could understand the MEAP. At Brooke, conversations about classroom practice preceded the Schoolwide planning year.

#### Did Each School Develop Interdependent Relationships?

The only school that clearly developed interdependent relationships was Brooke. They did this through team teaching, though each team could define them as they chose. Nonetheless, the two teachers in each team had to at least schedule around one another, and I know four teams did much more than schedule around one another. At Strether the interdependent relationships between Title I aides and classroom teachers through the communications center, could be as strong or as weak as the two parties wanted. Knightly developed interdependent relationships between the

teachers through the multi-age program they used for one semester. Ironically, these experiences were one reason they chose to go back to self-contained classrooms. All the teachers I talked with thought it was a good idea that they didn't continue this program, even though at least the principal seemed disappointed to have given up on it. Differences among teachers concerning classroom management and appropriate materials for use in multi-age classrooms surfaced.

So, all schools created interdependent relationships for at least awhile.

#### Did Schools Develop or Use Guidance for Classroom Practice?

Only one of the three schools clearly used images of new Title I practices for guidance for classroom practices. At Strether the Title I reading teacher and half-time Title I mathematics teachers were available to model lessons in the classroom. A number of teachers took advantage of this opportunity. Also, if the teachers chose to see it as such, the communications center could be seen as an example of authentic pedagogy.

I asked the Knightly and Brooke teachers if they had opportunities to view videotapes or observe other teachers teach in the way Title I policymakers are asking them to, their response was that they had no such opportunities.

Any instructional guidance that schools took was what they saw and wanted, not what was shown or imposed from the outside.

#### Did Schools Align the Curriculum Internally?

All three schools internally aligned their grade level goals with what they were teaching students, though to varying degrees and in different ways. Strether Elementary aligned internally in the early grades by using the reading strategies as used in the Reading Recovery program as a guide for all children. The also created grade level goals and, in communications, grade level activities to match these goals.

Knightly Elementary tentatively aligned internally by discussing grade level goals and test items for placement in multi-age classrooms during the first semester of enactment. But they used them for only one semester.

A subset of Brooke Elementary's staff aligned the district's curriculum to the seven developmental domains often discussed in early elementary education. I refer to this as internal alignment because they aligned the curriculum to their ideas, rather than aligning their ideas or curricular materials or other such alignment instruments to the standards. They also tried to align on how they would teach, more than on what they would teach.

### Did Schools Align Externally with the Content Standards?

At the time data were collected, the Michigan Department of Education was working to align the MEAP with the state student standards. The Department's official stance was that following the high state student content standards would not adversely affect achievement on the MEAP scores (SR, 1998). The Department did not state whether or not following the MEAP would adversely affect achievement on the standards. So, it wasn't clear if using the MEAP for guidance would mean that they were enacting the latest set of standards.

Strether Elementary aligned with the reading MEAP tests and to a lesser degree, the mathematics test. Knightly Elementary aligned with all the MEAP tests that were in the elementary school curriculum: fourth grade reading and mathematics tests, and fifth grade writing and science tests. Brooke Elementary did not align with the state student standards or the MEAP. But Brooke staff said the Mapleton Curriculum was aligned with the state student content standards and they spent a great deal of time aligning the Mapleton curriculum to seven developmental domains. While this is not an external alignment strategy it probably enabled at least the subset of the teachers doing this work to become familiar with expectations by grade level.

In these three schools, the attention paid to the MEAP was reflected in their MEAP scores. Over a four year time period -- the year proceeding the planning year, the planning year, the first year of enactment, and the year following, the school years 1995-96 through 1998-99 -- Knightly scored the highest, Brooke the lowest and Strether between the two on the MEAP tests.

Because the MEAP is a criterion referenced test it can't be compared across schools by simple averages. One way to compare the schools is by the percent of students in each school that scored a "satisfactory" compared to those in the district in reading and mathematics. Knightly students scored satisfactory in a greater percentage than district students did on 7 out of 8 tests (4 times in mathematics and 3 times in reading). Strether students scored a satisfactory in a greater percentage than district students did on 4 out of 8 tests (3 times in mathematics and once in reading). Brooke students scored satisfactory in a greater percentage than district students did 2 out of 8 times (once in mathematics and once in reading).

Another way to compare the scores is by the number of times more than 50 percent of students achieved a satisfactory score. At Knightly more than 50 percent of students achieved a satisfactory score 4 out of 8 times (3 times in mathematics and once in reading).

At Strether the number was 2 times (both in mathematics). At Brooke on no test did more than 50% of students achieve a satisfactory score.

The MEAP was the most obvious representation of the policy to the schools. Though it is unclear whether the schools saw the MEAP as one of the main components of the Schoolwide program or not, at least two schools worked to align their curricula, teaching practices, curricular materials, or understandings with the MEAP.

#### Additional Observation on Enactment

What seems remarkable about these three schools is that all three at least started conversations that would lead to professional relationships. That is, they all at least tentatively discussed ideas concerning learners, learning and teaching. The policy allowed for the time and space for this to happen. And what seems even more remarkable is that the policy was relatively new and all three schools were in only the early stages of enacting this standards-based reform.

In all three schools (1) all staff were eventually brought into the conversation about becoming a Schoolwide program, (2) staff developed a focus that was centered on classroom practices, and (3) staff began conversations about learners, learning and teaching. One can imagine scenarios in which not all staff is involved in planning



the Schoolwide, or in which a focus is not developed or is not centered on classroom practice, or in which the teachers do not discuss classroom practices. Yet in these three schools, the policy provided the opportunities to begin to discuss as a whole staff the knowledge and beliefs underlying their practices.

In two schools, Knightly and Strether, the policy was able to provide resources to buy time for this labor intensive work, to draw attention to issues, to infiltrate national language, and to simply allow conversation. In changing the nature of the conversation, the schools began to address changes in either what was taught or how it was taught.

### Enactment Follows Guidance

My rationale for conducting this study, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, was, to understand *if* and *how* opportunities to learn affect the enactment of Title I Schoolwide programs as set within the Goals 2000 legislation.

My answer to this exploratory question is that learning opportunities did affect the enactment of Schoolwides. Opportunities to learn greatly influenced the enactment of Title I Schoolwide programs. And furthermore, this influence was exerted mainly through the person who mediated the policy for the enactors. Beyond this, because the schools were in a fragmented and

decentralized system, each school chose its source of guidance -- the policy didn't provide, nor could it, a single mediator from whom all schools enacting the policy could or should use. Hence, there was great diversity in what the schools chose as a focus, what they talked about, and how they organized the school's and the children's curriculum. And this diversity came about in part because of the mediator's knowledge and beliefs.

### Conclusion

This chapter suggests that the three schools, which were situated in a fragmented and decentralized formal education system including a passive school district, made or found learning opportunities to enact Schoolwide programs. The schools chose a source of guidance for these learning opportunities that included none of some of the obvious federal guidance. No school turned to a governmental agent -- at the federal, state or district level -- for guidance even though one school, Knightly would have welcomed such guidance. Knightly did ultimately avail itself of such guidance through MEAP workshops. No school turned to the federal "curriculum" of legislation or regulations or federal or national reports for guidance. No school turned to other schools that had enacted or were enacting the policy for guidance. No school turned to a professional organization such as the National or Michigan

## Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Because the policy is weakly specified and the educational system of which the schools were a part of is decentralized and fragmented, the schools had many choices of sources of guidance. These sources were rooted both inside and outside the formal educational system. As other studies have indicated, the principal was the gatekeeper for these choices, if not the mediator.

This chapter further suggests an instructional leader or policy mediator emerged to construct the learning opportunities. The mediator emerged from different formal roles within the organization. That is, it was a principal, a classroom teacher, the Title I reading teacher -- a person in different formal roles. The mediator's understanding of the policy was created from the mediator's prior knowledge and beliefs together with new knowledge of the policy. The policy, in part because it was systemic in nature, influenced the thinking of two of the three mediators in this study.

The content of the mediator's work with the teachers greatly influenced the policy's enactment. In these three schools the mediator's work helped schools develop a focus that enabled each school's staff to discuss learners, learning and teaching, discussions that could lead to what I call professional relationships.

Finally, this chapter suggests that the sources of guidance

schools chose might be quite different from one another, and that schools might enact quite different aspects of the policy. Strether worked to learn the technical and social aspects of the policy, but didn't press on the technical aspect as strongly as Knightly had, nor the social aspect as strongly as Brooke had. Knightly organized strongly around a technical alignment strategy, and was able to bring to bear prior social resources to this strategy. Strether organized strongly around the social aspects of classroom and school coordination, and the technical aspect of how to teach, but largely ignored the technical aspect of state student standards. This indicates that though programs might become more coordinated within schools, programs across schools might become more diverse.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

This study shows that as three schools enacted a systemic standards-based reform strategy meant to ensure that all children are taught advanced academic skills, the policy played out by school in idiosyncratic ways. The political system and weakly specified policy meant that the human and social resources and dispositions towards policy within the schools influenced greatly how the policy played out. The policy's enactment was greatly influenced by the policy mediator in the school and the learning opportunities she provided.

The study also suggests ways in which schools like these might be enabled to enact the policy more fully. One way is simply to allow time for the systemic nature of these reforms to take place. Another is for policymakers to continue to ensure that, though fragmented, the political system begins to define what educators up and down the system are responsible for at various levels of aggregation. These responsibilities include not only providing somewhat abstract directions such as standards, but also providing guidance showing how to enact such reforms. Another source of enactment guidance could be people who are

prepared to work with individual schools as they enact such a policy.

Finally, the study suggests that the assessments required by the

Improving America's School Act (IASA) of 1994 and the Goals 2000:

Educate America Act have much potential for influencing the way schools enact the policy, and should be created and updated with care.

### Lessons Learned from the Three Cases

The policy played out in the three schools in idiosyncratic ways for at least three reasons. One reason was that the schools worked in near isolation, and the human resources available within the schools meant that the policy mediator, and the interpretations and responses varied by school. The policy mediator in each varied in her knowledge and understandings of the Title I program, standards based reform, comprehensive school reform, and other issues. They also varied in their dispositions toward learning about and from the policy. A second has to do with why they worked in near isolation: they worked within a fragmented and decentralized political system. The district's central office and the state department played modest roles in the schools' enactments of the Schoolwide programs. A third reason was that the policy itself was weakly specified.

### Human Resources within the Schools

The policy played out in these three schools in idiosyncratic ways in both how the schools were organized for the delivery of instruction, and in what was taught to students and how it was taught. Each school made technical and social changes to their Title I program.

In the first year of enactment, students in the three schools worked within different organizational structures and somewhat different curricula. At Strether the technical changes meant that students were exposed to a curriculum that emphasized what the teachers referred to as “communication skills” in all classrooms. They conducted this work in grade level heterogeneous groups in autonomous classrooms. All students also worked with Title I aides in heterogeneously based groups on communication skills in the communications center. In the center, they had the opportunity to experience what the policy might refer to as “applied learning” (IASA, p. 3540). A handful of first grade students were individually pulled out once a week to work in the Reading Recovery program.

In addition to these technical changes, teachers might have made social changes in the way they organized their classrooms by listening to students’ ideas, particularly concerning communication skills and the

MEAP. Their teachers made social changes as they worked collectively to write grade level goals and activities, and were urged to work with the Title I staff in the communications center.

At Knightly, students stayed in grade level autonomous classrooms. Most likely the students were exposed to some technical changes in curriculum as each classroom teacher developed knowledge of what was expected of students on the fourth and fifth grade Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) tests. New curricular materials were aligned with the MEAP. In addition, the fifth grade teacher pressed the other teachers to teach students how to use constructed responses across the curriculum. A science teacher came into each classroom to teach science. A subset of students in each classroom was pulled out for reading. Different students were encouraged to work with aides during the noon hour, depending on whether or not they needed help with classroom work expected at that time. The same two aides who ran the noon hour program also rotated through the classrooms helping students.

Like Strether's students, students in this school may have been exposed to changes in the social organization of classrooms as teachers tried to determine if they were understanding the MEAP, and as their teachers used constructed responses to get at children's learning. Their



teachers continued to develop the social resources among themselves by discussing the MEAP and student's responses to the MEAP.

At Brooke, students were grouped by three-year age spans with their primary teachers. Students also had secondary teachers who team-taught with their primary teachers. What students were taught or how decisions were made as to what to teach them was less clear in this school than the others, though a philosophy of how students learn and teachers teach was well articulated.

The teachers in this school pressed on the social changes in the policy such as how to teach students and how to arrange themselves to teach students in a particular way. They did not press on the technical aspects of the state standards and aligned assessments.

### Common Elements of Planning and Enactment

The policy played out in these various ways in part because the schools worked in isolation and had to rely on the human resources available in the school to mediate, interpret and enact the policy. All three schools' stories show that the instruction they received to enact the policy strongly influenced how they understood the policy and how it played out in each school. Though they played out in different ways, there were several common elements of the enactment processes, which

show that the learning opportunities available influenced the outcomes, and why they played out in different ways.

Each school chose its source of guidance, whether that was a person, a policy instrument or another program; and within that source of guidance they paid attention to either the technical aspects of the policy, the social aspects or both. A policy mediator emerged and led the rest of the school through interpreting, planning and enacting the policy. Though the principal was the gatekeeper, the policy mediator and instructional leader was not predictable based on her official role within the school.

In each school a significant portion of the staff participated in either creating the Schoolwide plan or learning about and from it. Enactors, which included the mediator, were generally enthusiastic or at least accepting of the Schoolwide plan and enactment, or eventually left the school. All the enactors believed they had enacted the policy.

Each mediator relied largely on her prior knowledge to provide mediation and leadership. In two of the three schools, the mediators used aspects of the policy to help provide guidance.

The policy mediators played a large role in the learning opportunities available, pressing those opportunities that had to do with

the selected focus of each school. And the guidance schools obtained was strongly related to the schools' enactments of the policy.

I chose to examine five elements of coordination, which have both technical and social aspects, to help understand how the schools coordinated themselves for instruction. These were a common focus or vision, professional relationships, interdependent relationships, images of classroom practice, and internal alignment. I also determined if they made use of external alignment.

Each of the three schools had a focus, though in one school it was implicit. Surprisingly, each of the schools addressed issues of the nature of learners, learning and teaching, and thus developed at least tentative professional relationships; though two of the schools pressed on *what* and *how* they were to going to teach students, while one pressed on *how* they were going to teach them. Each school had independent work relationships at least for a short time, meaning teachers literally worked together. None of the schools had available to them images of new ways of teaching Title I students that originated outside the school, though in one school the Title I reading and mathematics teachers were available for modeling teaching in classrooms. One school, Strether, clearly addressed internal alignment. Another, Knightly, attempted to use it for one

semester. And the third, Brooke, aligned with a set of ideas based in early childhood education that was not aligned with state standards. Finally, two of the three schools aligned externally with the MEAP.

### Idiosyncratic Interpretations

Though the three schools had all these elements of the process in common, their Schoolwide programs were strikingly different. The mediators prior knowledge and beliefs and dispositions toward the using the policy for guidance together with the chosen curriculum focus and the aspects of that focus they chose to press, meant the policy played out in quite different ways. The leaders pressed, and the enactors followed quite different tracks.

The schools' foci ranged from communications and ideas promoted by Title I reformers, to the MEAP, to DAP. Within these foci, two schools pressed on what and how to teach, and one school pressed on how to teach. As noted above, children in each school might have quite different experiences in schooling both in how their schools and classrooms were organized and in the subject matters they studied.

### A Lesson on Organizational Change

Though each group of teachers discussed quite different issues, they each had opportunities to talk about learners, learning and teaching.

Perhaps this was an interactive effect of having a classroom level focus and the opportunity to discuss that focus. This interaction of the school-level discussion with classroom-level ideas might be what Judith Warren-Little calls “joint work” (1990). Joint work occurs when “independent action is both enabled and constrained” (p. 521). The schools appeared to have begun a conversation that was joint work.

Peterson, McCarthy, and Elmore (1996) write that changing classroom instruction is a problem of learning, rather than organization. This study suggests, however, that changing the organization or at least discussing changes created opportunities for creating shared understandings or learning. In some instances, these opportunities were taken up and in others, they weren't. But rather than contrasting organization and learning with one another, this study suggests we need to know more about their interaction.

#### Nested in a Fragmented and Decentralized Political System

That the education political system is fragmented and decentralized is no surprise to those who study the system in the United States (Cohen, 1982; Cohen and Spillane, 1993; Cusick, 1992; Meyer and Rowan, 1983; and Weick, 1976).

This fragmentation and decentralization accounts for at least two reasons why the policy played out in idiosyncratic ways. One was that the policy mediators in each school had been exposed to different and sometimes conflicting ideas and activities concerning comprehensive school reform and Title I classroom practices. There was a lack of guidance from outside the school. No policy agent or other representation of the policy was pressed upon the schools; they chose all their source of guidance. No one outside the school was available to point out ways in which the school could have interpreted the policy any differently than they did. The schools did not read the legislation, regulations or other policy documents; and they did not work with other schools as they enacted the policy. These might have influenced the schools to interpret the policy differently than they did.

In addition, structural or organizational boundaries did not enable or constrain how the schools interpreted and responded to the changes related to the policy. Though the central office had what Archbald and Porter (1994) refer to as a strong central curriculum control -- textbook adoption policies, curriculum guidelines and testing -- no one was either enforcing them or helping schools to learn how to use them. The schools

enabled and constrained their own work, but no one from outside the school participated.

Neither the state nor the district provided pressure or support meaning that two potential sources of guidance were not available to the schools. Michigan has traditionally been a local control state. Though the State Education Agency (SEA) has increasingly been involved in curriculum since the initial creation of the MEAP in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this Local Education Agency (LEA) behaved as if it were completely autonomous from the state. The former assistant director of the Title I office in the district made it clear that the central office behaved in this way. She told me (CO, 8/2/96) that the staff in central office were "off in their own little world." I had drawn a diagram of the central office in the middle of a number of education constituencies -- the state board, the state department of education, the local school board, the parents, the teachers, the students and others -- and had connected them with lines to try to get a sense of the relationships. She told me that at least this central office didn't behave in that way. She continued by arguing that the lines between the central office and these various constituencies were dotted lines at the most, "because they don't listen to any of these groups." She then argued that the central office staff

complied with legislation just enough so as not to draw attention. “But,” she concluded, “they tend to do pretty much what they want. They can be bent, but it takes a great deal to bend them.”

The loose coupling between the central office and state office, at least in the Title I program, was also apparent because the state director of Title I didn’t work with the central office to encourage them to enact Schoolwides. Instead, she made a presentation directly to the Title I teachers in the district. The reading teacher at Strether told me that the Title I director organized this meeting because she had heard that Mapleton had no Schoolwides.

The loose coupling between this central office and federal direction is evident because the central office prevented schools from becoming Schoolwides between 1988 and 1996. Yet, the legislation directs LEAs to inform schools of Schoolwides and then support that effort. The Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 states that LEAs must write a plan which assures that the agency will “inform eligible schools and parents of schoolwide project authority” (IASA, 3530).

In this same plan, LEAs are to provide assurances that they will “provide technical assistance and support to schoolwide programs,” and “work in consultation with schools as the schools develop the schools’



plans...and assist schools as schools implement such plans” (IASA, 3530). But the strongest role central office played in the year of planning and first year of enactment (the spring of 1996 and the school year of 1996-97) was its lack of participation. The co-supervisor of the Title I office, Sharon Wellborn, was supposed to help schools enact Schoolwides. She met with the principals of those enacting Schoolwides twice, met with the reading teacher and principal at Stretcher once, and met with Knightly's staff once. That was the extent of her participation. She supported the schools and staff felt free to call her; but she had other work to attend to in central office.

The central office did not participate much in the enactment of Schoolwides, though they could have both enabled and constrained much more activity had they chosen to. In fact, Knightly school continually sought central office help for the first half of the semester, but did not receive it.

In the IASA, SEAs and LEAs were to make certain assurances in their plans in exchange for their grants. Yet, because of the history of the local control in education, all federal legislation is voluntary. Title one is a categorical program, and money is granted to states by virtue of the target population of Title I, thus making it a virtually entitlement grant to

SEAs and LEAs. This might be part of the reason the central office was so disconnected from the process and unconcerned about fulfilling the terms of the legislation.

The state played a role in two of the three schools, Knightly and Strether. At Strether, it was the state's Title I director who enabled the reading teacher to encourage the principal and other teachers to make the school's instructional program into a Schoolwide program.

#### Policy Weakly Specified

An additional reason schools were left to enact Schoolwides virtually on their own was the policy lacked specificity and allowed for wide interpretation. The policy was not meant to provide specificity. It was meant to provide a framework for all federal legislation. It was also meant to change the accountability measures in the Title I program. Previously, accountability was measured by restricting and specifying Title I allocations. In the new Title I, accountability is to be measured by results on student assessments. In exchange schools are to have more flexibility in how they spend Title I money.

There are other reasons, however, that may account for the lack of specificity. Perhaps it wasn't specified more because of the traditional role of the federal government in education. Perhaps it wasn't specified

more because it was either too much to specify, too early to specify or too unique to each context to specify.

### Local Control in Education

As mentioned in the section on fragmentation and decentralization in the United States education is a local or state responsibility. One way to think of the IASA and Goals 2000 is an attempt on the part of federal government to communicate a larger vision, rather than specific practices. This strategy delegates much of the interpretation and development of the policy to states, districts and schools. A part of this vision is to urge states not only to create state level goals and assessments, but also to ensure that these goals and assessments are well understood at the local level. Districts might reinterpret their curriculum based on the state standards, and help in the development of Schoolwide programs. Schools might respond to a federal policy that has been specified by the state and district. In these three schools, there was wide latitude for interpretation; but SEA and LEA activity could have specified this policy much more.

### Too Much To Specify

Another reason this policy was weakly specified might have been its very comprehensiveness. In addressing so many pieces of the education

system all at once -- content and performance standards, assessments, local curriculum, professional development, comprehensive school programs and others -- it might take several years to specify what is meant by each.

Just how comprehensive and new the idea of systemic standards-based reform was demonstrated in the way school worked with the technical aspect of the policy, the MEAP. Two schools invested in working on the MEAP, but seemed to view this as a way of improving MEAP scores rather than as a way of getting at state standards. A third didn't seem to understand that state standards were an aspect of the policy, and did not invest much in learning about the MEAP. For example, the staff at Strether Elementary worked to understand the fourth grade mathematics MEAP. When I asked what they hoped to accomplish, the half time Title I mathematics teachers told me that they had not reviewed it to increase the scores of the lowest scoring students, but rather to ensure that some of their top students did even better. Yet, by exploring the language used on the MEAP and the language used in their classrooms, they might have been creating way to help all children to achieve on the MEAP and thus achieve the state standards.

At Knightly the principal and the fifth grade teacher talked as if the Title I program was a comprehensive school program while the MEAP was something separate. The fifth grade teacher thought the knowledge and skills the MEAP required of students was valuable to students, and worthwhile for teachers to teach. But the teachers didn't talk about building a comprehensive program around state standards, but rather talked as if they were addressing comprehensive school reform and improving MEAP scores simultaneously.

At Brooke, the school overlooked entirely the technical alignment piece of a Schoolwide program, and did not align with the state content and performance standards.

### Too Early to Specify

Closely related to the idea that the policy was not specified because of its comprehensiveness, is the idea that it was too early to specify. In some ways this policy is a national experiment, which might help us begin to understand the relationship between systemic reform and Schoolwide programs and the enactment of both.

The education community and larger public are in a sea change of ideas concerning education, and the IASA and Goals 2000 add to this sea change. Not much is yet known about how these changes will play out as

the process -- if it continues -- is still in the very early stages.

Nonetheless, from the classroom to the Secretary of Education, educators are being encouraged to change their work practices. These include calls for teachers to teach a “balanced” curriculum (Hammond, 1999), schools to make comprehensive school reforms, district administrators to focus on instruction (Elmore, 1996), state officials to be more actively involved in curriculum (IASA, 1994; Goals 2000), and policymakers to re-conceive of their roles (Berman, 1986; Wilson, Peterson, Ball and Cohen, 1996). If these changes do continue, this study will be just an opening chapter in very long story.

But there is another issue to consider in addition to asking educators up and down the system to change their work practices. While local control was once a given in education policy matters, we now are in the midst of a debate about who should be responsible for what. The state curriculum frameworks and the IASA and Goals 2000 have contributed to the debate and the sea change. Schmidt and Prawat (1999) argue that we should set state or national standards, and that teachers should have flexibility over lesson plans and delivery. But in the last 10 to 15 years, state curriculum frameworks such as California’s have reached far into the classroom. And there is much to decide in addition

to standards and lesson plans. Issues range all over the educational system, including standards, the content of the curriculum (how and what), scope and sequence of the curriculum, assessments, syllabi, textbooks, bench marks, course offerings, lesson plans, lesson delivery, grade specific goal setting, theory alignment, school organization, school program and many others.

The purpose of this study was to understand the guidance provided to enact changes in policy. Because the study took place in a fragmented and decentralized political system and because the policy was weakly specified, the study begs a couple of questions that are pieces of the national debate.

One question: who is responsible for what at various levels of aggregation of the education system? The IASA and Goals 2000 are clearly a move away from local control because the states are to set student content and performance standards at the urging of the federal government. Though Michigan had begun the process of developing essential skills and objectives, in the IASA the federal government entered the conversation and strongly encouraged states to create content and performance standards. This study suggests that the while the state was quite responsive to trying to change its role and work to

develop state content and performance standards, the district was not willing to change its role.

Another question: who is responsible for ensuring that these changes are enacted at the classroom and school levels? This study suggested that at least in passive school districts, it is the schools that take that responsibility if they choose to enact a Schoolwide.

### Contexts Too Unique for Specification and Mutual Adaptation

Perhaps Schoolwide program policy can't be specified in great depth. As schools shape the policy to their own contexts, perhaps all Schoolwides will look quite different. In addition, as many have noted, policy is a blunt instrument.

Berman and McLaughlin (1978) suggest that the policy process is one of mutual adaptation. That is, the policy enactors slowly move toward the policy's goals as they shape the policy to their own contexts. When weakly specified policies play out in a fragmented and decentralized system, the system and learning opportunities within the system greatly complicate the process of mutual adaptation.

Perhaps the unique ways the policies were enacted is a fixture of our system, as much as it is an artifact of unique contexts. What the schools in this study understood or knew about the policy greatly



influenced how they enacted it. So, what the three schools were adapting to their local contexts across schools was quite different. This suggests the policy wasn't adapted to local contexts as much as to local knowledge and beliefs.

Yet these knowledge and beliefs can be influenced by the learning opportunities. Rather than adapting the policy to their local contexts, perhaps the schools in this study had too little instruction. Researchers (Majone and Wildavsky, 1977) have written about the policy process as an evolutionary process in which policies are enacted slowly over time. This study suggests that the evolution of the policy can be enhance, or quickened, or both by educative opportunities. This was most obvious at Strether, which was able to quickly begin to enact both the technical and social aspect of the policy.

### Conclusion

This study presented three schools that enacted a policy that presented for policymakers and enactors teaching and learning problems that were both technical and social in nature. These schools show some ways in which the policy will play out, particularly in schools that enact the policy in virtual isolation. The curriculum was idiosyncratic by school, and perhaps by classroom as well. These Schoolwides, though early in the

process, might have played out differently in a different central office or state, or in schools that were enabled and constrained by the formal education system. Brooke Elementary School enacted the social coordination ideas in the policy without the technical alignment to the state standards. This school's case suggests that some schools would need considerably more direction that enables and constrains school and classroom practices.

Where might the support to enact such a policy come from in a fragmented and decentralized political system? One way to ensure more guidance would be to encourage a more nested political system in which each level of governance had responsibilities. Responsibilities would need to include not only the development of policy instruments, but support for enactors to use the instruments. That is, various levels of governance might be responsible for defining the educational system's "curriculum" and for "teaching" that curriculum to enactors up and down the system.

For example, the federal government might be responsible for creating a set of national standards and assessments. This study suggests that policy enactors up and down the system could help in understanding and enacting those standards and assessments. The federal government, another level of governance, or another organization

would need to be responsible for ensuring that SEAs make sense of the standards and assessments, and enacted them. The same would be true to ensure that LEAs, schools and classrooms make sense of and enact the standards and assessments.

In this case, the federal government attempted to communicate the policy and provide support for enacting it. This study shows ways in which the federal government was able to communicate with districts and schools and ways it wasn't. That the policy was able to get schools focused on the classroom issues seemed almost amazing. In two of the three schools, the staff paid attention to the state's criterion reference test program, the MEAP. It was one instrument that appeared to have gained attention not just in the school system, but in the general public as well.

On the other hand, support for the policy that policymakers hoped for wasn't forthcoming. The money the central office spent on professional development was to be based on the state's content and performance standards. I saw no such workshops in the LEA over at least a three-year period that I followed this district.

In addition, the comprehensive regional technical assistance centers and the educational laboratories were to give "support and assistance"

(IASA, p. 3548) to the SEAs for the statewide support system. The only evidence I saw of this was that a person from the regional technical center spent two hours lecturing to those teachers and principals who chose to show up on a summer day in 1995. Not one teacher or principal from the schools that planned Schoolwides the following year was there. While this lecture might have provided an introduction to the ideas in the policy to some schools, it would likely play a minor part in enacting a Schoolwide program.

Strether Elementary School's enactment of the policy suggests that another way to ensure guidance for schools and teachers is to develop in local communities people who are the policy's agents and mediators. Ann DeBoer may be an example. But Ann was in part able to move the school quickly because of the social resources she had developed in the school and her technical knowledge. She was part of the school and the staff trusted her. She had a least 15 years experience with Title I and its changes over that time. It is hard to imagine how to garner the resources it would take to prepare enough Ann DeBoers to work with even a subset of Michigan's 3,500 public schools.

The case of Knightly Elementary School suggests that the states' criterion referenced tests can be powerful tools for change, if enactors

have positive dispositions toward learning from and about the policy.

This school did not develop an implicit focus, nor did it have interdependent work relationships at the end of the first year of enactment, however, it had aligned strongly with the MEAP. They were still organized in the egg crate fashion of traditional schools, but this school was not traditional. The time that they had carved out to work together on Wednesday morning coupled with their attention to the MEAP may have developed in this school what Warren-Little refers to as “joint work,” work that enabled and constrained their classroom practices.

This study suggests systemic standards based reform with Title I leading the way moved two of the three schools in the direction of the policy. Again, this is a relatively new policy and watching how these and other schools continue to enact the policy would be instructive. Perhaps policy makers' messages will become clearer to schools over time.

People teach in part to make learning more efficient and effective -- though this is not to argue that learning can be guaranteed to be efficient or effective. Ensuring standards based reforms are enacted somewhat efficiently and effectively will mean providing guidance. One way to do this is continue to find ways to make the multiple, disjointed organizations that make up the education system more united in their

efforts. Another way would be to prepare people to work more consistently within the schools to guide the changes. Another way would be to continue to define what it means to align with state or national standards with particular emphasis on the assessments. Finally, some combination of all three of these strategies might be helpful. These might be ways to provide guidance that goes beyond messages, and that provides the know-how to enable schools to enact the policy in ways that ensure all children gain proficiencies in ambitious standards.

These schools show us three probable ways the policy will play out in schools in which the policy was not mediated strongly by the state or local governance system. These schools also show us the possible, especially in good will. Perhaps their isolation shows that they had to have extra will and capacity to enact a Schoolwide. Despite a lack of support from their central office, they worked to enact the policy in ways that they believed helped disadvantaged children. The question then is how to find ways to capitalize on their energy.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### ***EPPS Teacher Interview Spring 1993***

Enclosed in this little bundle are different categories of questions. These include:

- Post observation questions
- Questions about categorical programs
- Questions about anything new
- Questions about assessment and testing
- Questions about teacher learning
- Pedagogical biography

#### ***Post Observation Questions***

How do you feel about the day? Why do you think that? Did you accomplish what you hoped to today? Did anything go differently than what you expected?

Was today a typical day? If so, in what ways? If not, in what ways? Why?

I am interested in focusing on two different events from the class I observed. Because we are interested both in language arts and mathematics instruction, I've selected one event from each of those areas. I'll start with one, and ask you a series of questions about it, and then ask you the same series of questions about the other.

*Observation 1:* I noticed that *[plug in the relevant descriptor]*

Could you tell me a little bit about *[relevant descriptor]*

Where did you get that idea?

Did you change the textbook/the strategy/the materials/the idea in any way? If so, how? Why?

What were you hoping kids would get from it?

How do you think the students did?



Is there anything they had trouble with?  
 How could you tell?  
 Why was this a problem?  
 Is there anything they found easy/interesting?  
 Why do you think they found this easy/interesting?  
 How could you tell?  
 Is there anything you want to follow up on in future classes?  
 If so, what?  
 Why is that important to follow up on?  
 How might you go about doing that?  
 Are there ways that kids typically react to this material? Things they find difficult, interesting, fun, boring?  
 If so, what?  
 Are there differences in the ways that students react to this material?  
 If so, what?  
 Do girls react differently than boys? Do children from different cultural, racial, or ethnic backgrounds react differently?  
 Does that affect the way you think about teaching this material?  
 In what ways? Could you give me an example?  
 Did you teach this material in the same way last year?  
 If so, can you recall any differences in the way you taught it this year and the way you taught it last year?  
 What were those changes?  
 Why did you make them?  
 Is there anything that you might do differently next time?

*Observation 2: I was interested in the part of the day when you did....[repeat the above questions for a second part of the day dealing with the other subject matter]*

Before I go on and ask you some more general questions, is there anything else that you want to say about the day?

### ***Questions about Categorical Programs***

Today I'd like to focus our conversation on the categorical programs in the school. The interview has four parts. First, I'll just ask you to give me an overview of the programs that are offered to students in the school. Then I'll ask you for detailed information about each of those programs. Then I'll ask you some questions about the coordination or relationship among those program. Finally, I need to

know a little something about the professional development opportunities that instructors are offered in these programs. I am particularly interested in how any instructional programs such as Chapter I or bilingual education co-exist in your school with the curricular reforms that we are investigating in language arts and mathematics, so any insights you have into that would be of great interest to me.

### ***Overview of Schoolwides in This School***

#### ***Detailed Information about Title I Schoolwides***

Now I'd like to get some more detailed information about the programs you have mentioned.

Let's start with [insert here, e.g., Chapter I]:

What are the needs of the students in this categorical program?

What is the goal of the program?

What are the anticipated/hoped for outcomes of the program?

How is this program funded?

Who is involved in deciding the needs of this particular group of students?

Do the needs of students vary within categorical groups?

In what ways does the program serve the students' needs?

How are the services of this program provided?

Are there special teachers? Aides? Assistants?

Is this a pull out program? Or do students stay in the room?

What are the instructional materials used in the program?

Are these instructional materials that are different from those provided in the student's classroom?

Who makes the decisions about the instructional materials categorical students encounter?

What are the factors that influence the decision on materials used with this group of students?

Is there any relationship between the instructional materials used in the specialist classrooms of categorical students and the instructional materials used by their classroom teacher?

Are there certain skills, or curriculum that you feel this categorical group of students should experience but do not?

What assessment materials are used in this program? How do you measure and report student or school improvement for these programs?

Have there been any changes in the assessments you use or in how you evaluate the programs?

How would you describe those changes? In your opinion, why did those changes take place?

Are parents involved in this program at all?

If so, how? What is the nature of parent involvement?

How and when are students placed out of the program?

What is your opinion of the effectiveness of this program?

What kind of monitoring do you do of this program?

Is there a relationship between the instruction offered in this program and the regular classroom instruction?

If so, what?

Has this program changed in the last five years? If so, in what ways? Why did those changes occur?

Before we move on, do you anticipate any changes in any of these programs in the coming year?

If so, what are those changes?

What is your sense of why they will be happening?

How do you feel about them?

Will those changes affect your instruction at all?

If so, in what ways?

### ***Professional Development/Learning Opportunities for Teachers and Program Aides***

What kind of preparation do the specialists and the instructional aides receive?

Who do the specialists and instructional aides work with among the staff?

Do you know if they participate in professional development opportunities? Where? What kind?

### ***Questions about Anything New***

One of the things that we are interested in tracking are changes that teachers go through from year to year in their teaching. While I am interested in anything that is new about your teaching this year, I am also specifically interested in anything new that might be happening in your teaching of language arts/reading/literacy and mathematics. This next set of questions is intended to help us have a conversation about things that are different in your teaching this year.

Let's start with a general question. Is there anything new in your teaching this year? *[Note: We anticipate that the 'grain size' of responses to this question will differ]*

If so, what? Can you describe it for me.

*Note: If the teacher can not think of anything, probe with the following:*

Anything new with the curriculum or textbook?

Anything new with your style of teaching? Or the strategies you use?

Are you teaching any new topics?

Are you using any new materials?

Are you teaching kids in different ways?

### *Schoolwides*

Since we are interested in language arts and mathematics teaching, I am going to ask you several questions about your teaching in both of these areas.

### *Language Arts/Reading*

Is there something different in the way you are approaching your teaching of reading and writing this year?

*If yes: What?*

What has contributed to these changes?

Does the textbook (or the new program) you are using having anything to do with this? *If yes: What?*

Is your school doing anything different with reading and writing instruction this year?

Has your principal--or any other administrator--said anything about the teaching and learning of language arts/reading and writing? What has he/she said?

*Note: It may be that you, as the observer, noticed something new in the teaching or the classroom. If this is so, please add the following probes:*

I noticed a few things that I hadn't seen before. Could you tell me a little about *[plug in the relevant descriptor here]*?

Is this a new practice/idea?

If so, where did it come from?  
How do you feel about it?

### *Mathematics*

Is there something different in the way you are approaching your teaching of mathematics this year?

*If yes: What?*

What has contributed to these changes?

Does the textbook (or the program) you are using have anything to do with this?

Is your school doing anything different with math instruction this year?

Has your principal--or any other administrator--said anything about the teaching and learning of mathematics? What has he/she said?

*Note: It may be that you, as the observer, noticed something new in the teaching or the classroom. If this is so, please add the following probes:*

I noticed a few things that I hadn't seen before. Could you tell me a little about *[plug in the relevant descriptor here]*?

Is this a new practice/idea?

If so, where did it come from?

How do you feel about it?

We've talked some about what is new for you in your own teaching. Now I have a few questions about anything you have observed as new in the district or state. I'll begin with a few questions about the district.

### *District*

Is there anything new going on in the district?

If so, can you describe it for me?

Has there been any talk at the district level about the teaching and learning of reading and writing?

*Potential probes:* Any new personnel? Any new materials or mandates? Has the student population changed at all?

How about in mathematics? Has there been any talk about teaching of mathematics in the district? *[Note: Use the same kinds of probes to find out anything about math]*

## **State**

Have you been hearing anything about the state reform initiatives in reading and writing?

If so, what is your impression of the ideas?

How have you gotten information about them?

Do you know why these ideas were introduced?

How about in mathematics? Have you heard anything about state reform initiative in mathematics teaching?

Have you actually seen a copy of the any of the state policies about these ideas?

Have you talked with any other teachers about this? What have they said?

Has there been any talk at the district level about the state definition/framework?

Do these ideas affect your thinking or your work with your class?

If so, in what ways?

*[Note: You'll want to probe for reading/writing and mathematics with all of these questions]*

## **Questions about Assessment and Testing**

We are interested in the kinds of assessments and tests that you use in your daily practice, as well as the tests that the district and state uses. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your own assessments--either ones that you create or ones that you use--and then move on to the district and state tests.

What kinds of assessment do you find yourself using most often in your teaching?

For example, what kinds of assessment would you use to accompany the work that I saw you do with your students in class

today? *[Note: If you saw some things that looked like forms of assessment that were used during class, you should ask separate questions probing on each of those. Also, if you see any evidence in the room of other kinds of assessment--portfolios, for example, you should ask the teacher to explain what they are and how they are used. Among the questions you might consider asking are:*

Can you tell me how you use that assessment?

How long have you been doing that?

Where did you get the idea to do that?

Now that we've talked some about the assessments that you use most often as a teacher, I'd like to spend a little time talking about district and state level tests.

Can you list for me the tests that are used by your district and state?

What do you know about each of these?

How have you gotten information about it (them)?

Have you actually seen copies?

Do you know *why* these tests were introduced?

Do these tests seem different from those that the district or state was using before? If so, can you tell me how?

Have any of the other teachers commented on these tests? What have they said?

Has your principal--or any other administrator--said anything about these tests? What has he/she said?

How does the district use the information obtained through these tests? How do you feel about the way that they are used?

Do you have any sense about how parents think about these tests?

Is there anything in particular that the parents of your students care about regarding these tests?

How do your kids perform on these tests, in general?

Do your students perform differently on these tests than on the ones they used to take?

How would you compare the several tests that your kids take?

Are the tests testing similar or different things? In similar or different ways? What do you think of those similarities and differences?

Do these tests affect your thinking or your work with your class? In what ways?

Are these tests valuable to you? Why or why not? In what ways?  
If there were no state or district assessments, would you teach  
any differently than you currently do? Why or why not? What  
would be different?  
Do you prepare your students for these tests in any particular  
ways? How? (or why not?)  
Do you know how any of your colleagues prepare students for the  
tests? How?

### ***Questions about Teacher Learning***

We've been talking about your teaching of reading and mathematics--  
and about changes in each. One of the things we are interested in is  
where and under what conditions teachers have opportunities to  
learn new things. And we're interested in what they *do* learn and  
what they *want* to learn.

As you think about what you are doing this year, can you think of  
things that you have learned or that you are learning related to your  
teaching-in general or related specifically to reading or math?

What? Can you give me a specific example?

How did you learn this?

Has there been anything in particular that has contributed to your  
learning?

Has there been anything that has impeded your learning?

Can you think of anything that you would like to be able to do in your  
teaching but are currently unable to do? If so, can you tell me about  
that. Can you tell me why you can't do that thing at this time? What  
might it take to be able to do that?

As you think about the kinds of changes that are called for in these  
reforms that we've been talking about, is there anything in  
particular that you think you need to know more about?

If so, how would you go about doing that?

What kinds of resources or supports would be helpful to you?

Have you been to any professional development workshops or  
inservices this past year?

If so, could you describe those for me?

Did you find them helpful?

What did you learn?



Do you have any plans for attending any professional development workshops this sspring or summer?

If so, what are they?

Could you describe them for me?

Have you been involved as a teacher or presenter in any workshops?

If so, can you describe that experience for me?

What was your role?

How did you get involved?

What did you learn from the experience?

### ***Pedagogical biography***

We have found in our work thus far that it helps to know things about the backgrounds of the teachers we interview. I'd like to ask you some questions about your own biography so that I can get a better sense of who you are as a person. If you find any of these questions offensive or intrusive, please just tell me. The intention here is for me to gain insight into your personal history and how that affects your teaching, not to be nosy.

#### ***Basic biographical facts:***

Can you tell me where you grew up?

Where did you go to college?

What did you major in?

Where did you get your teaching certificate?

What kind of certification do you have?

Have you gone back to school at any time since graduation from college?

If so, do you have any additional degrees?

What are they in?

Where are they from?

When did you receive them?

How long have you been a teacher?

Where have you taught?

What grades?

How long have you taught in this school?

What grades have you taught?

Do you have any children?

If so, what are their ages?

Where do they attend school?

Does having children of your own affect your thinking about teaching and learning? If so, how?

Are you involved in any professional organizations?

If so, which? Why?

Do you receive any journals or magazines about teaching and learning?

If so, which?

Do you find it/them helpful to you in your teaching? If so, in what ways?

Do you talk with others about teaching?

If so, with whom?

About what kinds of things?

## APPENDIX B

**97/04/30**

### **Questions to Ask Teachers**

1. Would you say your teaching has changed over the last year or so? How so?
2. I'm studying the Title I schoolwide policy. What do you think the purpose of it is?
3. Do you think the Title I schoolwide policy is asking teachers to change their teaching? In what ways?
4. Has your teaching changed at all due to the policy? Particularly in mathematics or literacy? Particularly with students who would have been labeled "Title I" students previously? In what way?
5. How were you able to make them? Was it difficult/easy? What made it hard? Did you have to learn anything new to be able to do those things?
6. Who or what helped you make those changes? learn that?
7. Did anyone provide you images of what the policy is asking you to do? Tell me about them.
8. Do you consider the MEAP at all when you are preparing, planning or teaching? If so, how?
9. Does your supervisor play a role in helping you make changes in your teaching? If not, why not? If so, then how could your supervisor be helpful to you?
10. Does the central office have a role to play in helping you to make changes in your teaching (along the lines of the policy?) If so, how could central office be helpful to you?
11. Who could help you make those changes? learn that?

## **Questions to Ask Instructional Leaders**

1. How do or did you decide the way you will work with teachers? Did you have any role models or images or ideas in particular that you draw on?
2. Has that changed over the last year or so? In what way? What accounts for that?
3. Was making those changes hard or easy? Why? Did you have to learn anything to make those changes?
4. I'm studying the Title I schoolwide policy. What do you think the purpose of the policy is?
5. Do you think the Title I schoolwide policy is asking you to make changes in the way you work with teachers? In the way teachers teach? In what ways? How so?
6. Has your work with teachers changed at all due to the policy? Particularly in mathematics or literacy? Particularly with student who would have been labeled "Title I" students previously? In what way?
7. How were you able to make those changes? Was it difficult/easy? What made it hard? Did you have to learn anything new to be able to do those things?
8. Who or what helped you make those changes? learn that?
9. Did anyone provide you images of the what the policy is asking you to do? Tell me about them.
10. Do you consider the MEAP at all when you are preparing, planning or teaching? If so, how?

11. Who do you think of as your supervisor? Does your supervisor play a role in helping you make changes in your teaching? If not, why not? If so, how could your supervisor be helpful to you?
12. Does the central office have a role to play in helping you to make changes in your teaching (along the lines of the policy?) If so, who could central office be helpful to you? How could the central office help you enact the policy?
13. Who could help you make those changes? How?
14. Has the way teachers teach in this school changed at all due to the policy? Particularly in mathematics or literacy? Particularly with students who would have been labeled "Title I" students previously? In what way?
15. How were they able to make them? Was it difficult/easy? What made it hard? Did they have to learn anything new to be able to do those thing?
16. Who or what helped them make those changes? learn that?
17. Did anyone provide them images of how the policy is asking them to teach? Tell me about them.
18. Does the central office play a role in helping them to make changes in their teaching (along the lines of the policy?) If so, how could central office by helpful to you?
19. Who could help them make those changes? learn that?

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