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COMPETING PERCEPTIONS AND INTERESTS OF
SCHOOL SYSTEM ACTORS REGARDING STUDENT
MOBILTIY

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Magane Koshimura

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COMPETING PERCEPTIONS AND INTERESTS OF SCHOOL SYSTEM ACTORS
REGARDING STUDENT MOBILITY

By

Magane Koshimura

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ABSTRACT

COMPETING PERCEPTIONS AND INTERESTS OF SCHOOL SYSTEM ACTORS
REGARDING STUDENT MOBILITY

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This is a case study in an urban school district in a Midwestern state of the United

States which looks at how differently situated actors respond to student mobility. The

research found that teachers, principals and district administrators perceived and

responded to student mobility differently. Various perspectives and responses to student

mobility among educators across three levels of the organization are based upon the roles

defined at the organizational level.

Tensions primarily existed between the district administrators and school-level

educators. Tensions are found around the differences in 1) primary values; 2) the

magnitude of priority given to student mobility; 3) an organizational approach vs. local

adjustment; and 4) the concept of student mobility. District administrators' primary

values of transition and productivity reflected their focus on external resource acquisition

and expansion as a district. As they are the farthest from the issue, they did not perceive

student mobility as a leading priority. In order to reduce the negative consequences of

student mobility, they have implemented a district-wide policy of pacing guides and

quarterly assessments. The organizational approach did not allow much differentiation.

District administrators capitalized on the effect of market reform options to increase

enrollment. Thus, they generally see student mobility as a solution for survival.

Principals and teachers; however, have competing values with district

administrators. They demonstrated the primary value of preservation—maintenance of

administrative and instructional routines and a stable community. The closer to the issue of student mobility, the more action educators took. Teachers and principals work with mobile students more frequently and more directly than do district administrators. In order to accommodate the changes created by student mobility, they made small, flexible adjustments locally—in the classroom or at the school. Local adjustment is allowed to happen in a loose coupling system. As schools are loosely coupled, local adjustment works the best for principals and teachers. Teachers and principals paid the most attention to incoming students. They knew when new students arrived and they also experienced disruptions in their instructional and administrative routines. Thus, they largely perceive student mobility as a problem.

Tensions between district administrators and school-level actors make it difficult to successfully implement an organizational approach to student mobility. But it might be possible to implement multi-layered approaches that help principals and teachers to work with student mobility at their levels. Several strategies that allow school-level educators to make small, flexible local adjustments to student mobility, are suggested. As to future research on student mobility, model mobility induction programs need to be further studied.

For my father Kichiro and my mother Fumiko

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Mobility is a social phenomenon in the United States. People move from place to place for many different reasons, including residential change—upward mobility, downward mobility and eviction, or as an escape from problems and family—related matters. When a family moves, school-aged children within the family also move from school to school. The high rate of student mobility is a social problem in American society (U.S. General Accounting Office 1994), yet even though student mobility is an important issue educationally and socially, it has not received much attention from educational researchers (Kerbow 1996; Rumberger and Larson 1998). The limited number of studies undertaken on student mobility indicate that student mobility has some negative impacts on the academic achievement of both mobile and stable students[1] in a classroom. (Benson and Weigel 1980, Benson et al 1979, Ingersoll et al 1989, Kerbow 1996, Ligon and Paredes 1992, Mao et al 1997, Morris et al 1967, Rumberger 1998, Schaller 1975, U.S. General Accounting Office 1994.)

In addition to academic achievement, social skills and adjustment are also affected (e.g., Buerkle 1997; Jason, Weine, Johnson, Warren-Sohlberg, Filippelli, Turner and Lardon 1992), particularly among minority and poor students living in inner cities who are prone to changing schools frequently (Kerbow 1992; Mao et al 1997; U.S. General Accounting Office 1994). Minority and poor students living in inner cities sometimes move four to five times a year. The more frequently children move, the more problems they tend to have educationally and socially, compared to those who stay in the

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[1] Mobile students refers to students who move during the academic year or during the summertime. Stable students refer to students who are in a classroom with a number of mobile students who are in and out during the academic year.

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same school. In most cases, mobility, particularly within urban settings where its frequency is higher, produces negative outcomes as presented in previous research studies. Such high mobility results in deficits in learning and social skills for the mobile students themselves and also creates difficulty in teaching, managing classrooms, developing school communities and meeting educational goals within the educational organization as a whole.

Although student mobility has a significant disruptive influence on mobile students, stable students, classroom dynamics and organizations, there are very few educational strategies to deal with student mobility. This study examined why differently situated educators did not effectively address student mobility and collaboratively develop strategies to respond to it even though they recognized the issue of student mobility.

In some cases, however, student mobility creates positive outcomes that include fresh starts, better learning and living environments, and better peer groups. While most previous research indicates the negative educational and social consequences of student mobility, other relevant studies show positive aspects of student mobility. Some cases indicate that student mobility is sometimes perceived by teachers and building administrators as a helpful strategy for classroom and school management because disruptive students can be removed.

The differing responses to student mobility may be observed among differently situated actors. For example, for the district personnel, any entries may be welcome no matter who the incoming students are because the incoming students will increase or maintain enrollment and bring resources to the district. On the other hand, any entries or

exits during the academic year signify a "disruption of teaching" for classroom teachers and "instability of both school and classroom community for building principals and classroom teachers." The withdrawals of disruptive students may translate into a better teaching and learning environment for classroom teachers, but may mean a "loss of resources" for the district personnel if students leave the district. Or, if disruptive students move from one school to another, remaining in the system, the district may not be affected by student mobility because it does not cause a loss of resources. Therefore, based on the interests of the actors, their knowledge and perceptions of student mobility- and responses to it-may differ.

Thus, student mobility may be perceived both negatively and positively. Within the educational organization, there are multiple levels of educators: classroom teachers, building administrators and central office administrators. Based on the educators' job responsibilities, their experiences and perceptions of student mobility must be different. Within this complex system of organization, there exists some autonomy for educators to make and exercise their own decisions about student mobility based on the role they play within the organization.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to understand the tensions within student mobility that cause it to be viewed in opposing ways—as either a "problem" or "solution", depending on the perspectives of differently situated educators. Organizational theories address different incentives and behaviors among actors, depending upon the role and responsibilities in relation to the position at the level of the organizational structure. Applying these organizational theories here, one would expect to see tensions

surrounding the issue of student mobility among differently situated educators who have different incentives. To understand these tensions, this study focused on an intensive examination of how student mobility affected one Midwestern metropolitan school district in the United States.

It is important to understand these tensions in matters of both policy and practice. Some policies, such as schools of choice and charter school policies, created new incentives for educators to help the district to survive by increasing or maintaining enrollment. With such new incentives including maintenance of or increase in enrollment and education revenues, the rules for schools of choice options were sometimes loosened or modified. The resulting relaxed rules for new enrollment policies appear to have created more student mobility over and above the existing issue of student mobility in the district's city. The entry and exit of students into or from classrooms and schools, in general, had adverse effects on instruction, academic performance, classroom dynamics, and the school as a community. It is important for policymakers to be aware of how certain policies increased student mobility, and the adverse effects of student mobility on the classroom and school environment. For all educators, it is useful to think critically about their job responsibilities, how these responsibilities relate to the way they deal with the issue of mobility, and how their decisions about student mobility affected different parts of the organization. Furthermore, it is important to understand that contradictory aspects of student mobility must contribute to how the organizational response to student mobility plays out.

The study also explored what tensions affected organizational responses to student mobility. Using a case study design, educators' patterns and themes of

knowledge, perceptions of and responses to student mobility were described and analyzed. The study was conducted in a metropolitan school district, using seven elementary schools as different cases. The study examined the following questions.

Research questions

The main research question is: how do differently situated actors within an urban school system respond to student mobility? In order to answer this question, several sub-questions are asked.

The first set of sub-questions asks how differently situated actors learn about, interpret, and formulate responses to student mobility. In order to capture differently situated actors' knowledge, perceptions and responses, this study asked four specific questions. What do differently situated actors know about student mobility? What are the actors' perceptions of student mobility? What are the actors' job responsibilities in relation to student mobility? What are their responses to student mobility?

The second sub-question deals with how actors' perceptions and responses to student mobility vary by location within the organization (at the classroom level, the school level and the district level). The third question explored explanations for variations among educators within educational organizations, including both variations across levels of the organization and variations between schools. The fourth sub-question is how such variation might affect organizational responses to the phenomenon of student mobility.

The first three questions were constructed with a focus on the roles and responsibilities of each individual educator differently situated within the organization. In the last question, the organizational behavior with respect to the phenomenon of

student mobility was synthesized by addressing the variation in responses among differently situated educators. How varying responses among differently situated educators affected an organizational response to student mobility was analyzed.

Definition of terms

Student mobility: Phenomenon describing students who move from one school to another during the academic year (the study did not focus on student mobility between academic years).

Differently situated actors: District central office administrators, elementary school building principals and elementary school classroom teachers within the same educational organization.

Entries or inward mobility: The influx of students who move to a new school during the academic year.

Exits or outward mobility: The outflow of students who leave a school during the academic year.

Mobile students: Students who have a tendency to move in and out of school during the academic year.

Stable students: Students who are in a classroom with a large number of mobile students.

Delimitations and limitations of the study

This study was confined to interviewing school district central office administrators, elementary school building principals and elementary school classroom teachers in one metropolitan public school district in a Midwestern state. This was done because this research was a case study examining the tensions around student mobility among differently situated educators within the same organization. Each school was considered as a case and the purpose of doing so was to analyze possible variations across schools as well as across the levels of the organization. Data analysis heavily relied upon interview results because documents and statistics in relation to student mobility in this school district collected from the State Department, the district central

office and elementary school classroom teachers were neither sufficient nor accurate. The benefits of a case study include a good understanding of and a thorough examination of the tensions around student mobility among educators in one particular setting. The case study findings should help the district to understand the persistence of the issue of student mobility more clearly.

Significance of the study

Previous research on student mobility did not examine, compare or contrast how differently situated actors in an education system respond to student mobility depending upon if student mobility is perceived as a problem or a solution. Different views of student mobility might create a tension. This research explored and examined incentives and behaviors in response to student mobility and how tensions were emerged from different incentives and behaviors according to educators' placement-related responsibilities and control. The research examined how competing incentives and interests among differently situated educators in a loosely coupled educational system, relying on external resource acquisition to survive, contributed to the persistence of the issue of student mobility. With competing interests, student mobility was perceived and utilized as both a problem and a benefit, which created a tension. The findings could help the district to understand the tensions surrounding the phenomenon of student mobility.

Chapter 2

Description of Renton City, Renton School District, Schools and Educators
in the Renton Study

This chapter describes characteristics of the Renton School District and Renton

City, and includes a brief description of seven schools chosen for this study and

educators—district administrators, building principals and teachers—who were

interviewed in this study.

Renton School District Overview

This is a case study of one metropolitan school district in a Midwestern state of

the United States. The Renton School District has a long history, dating back to the mid-

nineteenth century when a teacher began holding classes in a one-room wooden

schoolhouse on the north side of the city. The Renton School District was formally

incorporated in 1861. It encompassed 64 square miles, which included Renton City. As

of April 23, 2002, there were 41 schools in the Renton School District. The district has

also experienced a declining number of school-aged children and an increasing number of

students of color and students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The district's

statewide standardized tests scores fell below the state average. Of the 41 schools in the

district, 34 are elementary schools. Seven elementary schools were selected for the study

based upon their student mobility rates, the percentage of students of color and the

percentage of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The Renton School District was chosen because its characteristics predicted high

student mobility: high rates of poverty, diverse ethnic background of the population,

demographic change, "white flight," and expanding educational opportunities through

schools of choice and charter school policies. Previous research indicates that low socio-

economic-level students and students of color tend to move more often than students from upper-middle-class and white backgrounds. Research shows a correlation between mobility rates and the composition of minority and low socio-economic-class students. The Renton School District serves a diverse population in terms of race and class, and the district has been experiencing high student mobility.

The researcher for this study collected data through surveys and face-to-face interviews with educators at different levels of the organization, and through data analysis. During the process of data collection, the researcher realized that the issue of student mobility was often mentioned by educators in the Renton district who were surveyed or interviewed for the project. Thus, Renton School District seemed an ideal setting to study how educators respond to high student mobility, because many educators were aware of the issue.

There were several significant characteristics of the Renton School District. First, it has experienced a large decline in enrollment since the mid-1980s. Factors that affected a decline in enrollment were a declining number of school-aged children due to demographic change, schools of choice transfers and charter school competition. That is, a decline in population and school-aged children in Renton City created a decline in school aged children in the district. Furthermore, schools of choice and charter school options also created a decline in enrollment within the district. As Table 1 indicates, the number of children enrolled in school dropped from 25,000 in 1989-90 to 17,000 in 2000-2001. That was a 32-percent decline in enrollment in 10 years. Second, racial composition of the district has also changed since the beginning of the 1980s. The percentage of minority students increased from 41 percent in 1989-90 to 58 percent in

2000-2001. This increase followed a trend in many urban areas in the United States. Third, students' academic performance level was relatively low compared to the state average and neighboring suburban school districts.

The historical background of the Renton School District, as well as the major characteristics of the district, are also described. Over the past decade, there have been significant changes within the Renton School District in the areas of enrollment figures, percentage of minorities, number of economically disadvantaged students as reflected in free and reduced school lunches, and academic performance on standardized tests. The overall direction of these changes has been as follows: 1) enrollment significantly declined between 1990 and 2000, dropping from 25,000 students in 1990 to 17,000 in 2000; 2) the percentage of minority students changed from 24 percent in 1990 to 38 percent in 2000; 3) the number of economically disadvantaged students increased from 43 percent to 55 percent; and 4) statewide standardized test passing rates increased from 36 percent in 1997 to 47 percent in 2000 but passing rates remained well below the state average passing rate of 57 percent. Details of each characteristic of the district are described as follows.

The Renton School District served 17,000 students in grades K through 12 and Adult Education as of April 23, 2002. According to the State Department of Education data (Table 2), Renton School District's enrollment consistently declined over time from 22,800 in 1991-92, to 20,300 in 1995-96, to 17,000 in 2000. As Table 8 shows, the number of persons under 18 decreased from 47,507 in 1970 to 31,894 in 2000, with the number of school-aged children in Renton City declining over time.

Table 1: Renton School District Demographic
Data

	1989-1990	2000-2001
Total person	135,172	124,483
% Urban	98.24%	
% White	72.35%	
% Black	17.10%	
%Asian Pacific Islanders	1.61%	
% Hispanic	7.74%	
% Poverty	18.73%	

Total children	30,823	22,532
Enrolled in School	24,861	17,124
% Urban	98.8	
% White	60	41.6
% Black	24.3	37.5
% Asian Pacific Islanders	2.33%	5.4 14.4
% Hispanic	12.19%	
% Poverty	27.33%	

Median House		
	1989-1990	2000-2001
Value ($)	48,733	
Per Capita Income ($)	12,417	16,919
Median House-Hold income $	26,750	39,222

Source: Census Data,
State Department of Education data

Table 2: Renton School District's Enrollment and Free & Reduced Price Lunch
Recipients

Year	Enrollment	Enrollment Minority %	Free & Reduced Lunch %
91-92	22,752		42.7
92-93	22,392		47.7
93-94	21,949		50.9

94-95	20,399		50.4
95-96	20,337		53.6
96-97	19,036	53.1	55.2
	Enrollment	Enrollment	Free & Reduced
Year		Minority %	Lunch %
98-99	17,836	55.1	53.9
99-00	17,620	56.7	51.7
00-01	17,092	58.4	54.8

Source: State Department of Education data

Another significant district characteristic was that it served a large number of minority students. The breakdown of the grades K-12 student body was 46 percent white, 33 percent black, 12 percent Hispanic, five percent Asian and one percent American Indian. Compared to the state average percentage of minority students—11 percent in 2000—the district served a larger number of minority students (State Department of Education data 2000). The percentage of minority students increased over the past decade. The 1989-1990 Census School District data (Table 1) indicated that the breakdown of school-aged children was 59 percent white, 24 percent black, two percent Asian Pacific Islanders, 12 percent Hispanic and the rest American Indian. Also, 27 percent of school-aged children were members of families whose income fell below the poverty line.

The number of students who received free or reduced price lunches increased from 43 percent of the total student population in 1991-92 to 55 percent in 2000-2001. Since 1995, the number of free or reduced price lunch recipients has been stable at 50-55 percent. Compared to the state average of free or reduced price lunch recipients—29 percent in 2000-2001 (State Department of Education data 2000)—Renton School District has served a large number of economically disadvantaged students.

Table 3 shows the Renton School District's statewide standardized test performance results compared with the state average. According to the data, the overall district performance level was low. The Renton School District's statewide standardized test passing rates did increase from 36 percent in 1997, and 42 percent in 1998-1999, to 47 percent in 2000. However, when they were compared to the year 2000 state average passing rate—57 percent—the district's rates were significantly below the state average (State Department of Education data 2000). Additionally, compared to the average passing rates on statewide standardized tests by race and ethnicity, Renton's white and Native American students' standardized test scores were comparable to the state average, but other minority student rates (particularly Asian and Pacific Islander and Hispanic students) were significantly below the average (State Department of Education data 2000).

Table 3: Renton School District statewide standardized tests results—including social studies (%)

Year	2000	2000 state	1999	1998	1997
Passing	46.7	57.1	42.1	42.1	35.9

Passing by Race/Ethnicity

Year	2000	2000 state	1999	1998	1997
Asian Pacific	38.1	60.6	35	36.8	37.4
Black	34.1	39.7	29.9	30.7	25.1
Hispanic	40.4	47.9	35.3	32.7	28.6
Native American	44.7	44.1	35.4	35.6	27.9
White	59.1	58.9	54.4	53.1	45.9

Data: State Department of Education data 2000

Description of Seven Schools in the Renton Study (See Figure 1 and Table 7).

This section describes the characteristics of the seven schools studied in this

research. Seven K-5 elementary schools were chosen among 34 elementary schools in the district. One of the district administrators and the researcher met to review mobility rates and school characteristics. Seven schools were selected based on the rates of student mobility (high and low) and similar school characteristics (high racial minority and free and/or reduced lunch ratios). Four schools had high mobility rates (Akers: 71 percent; Milford: 58 percent; Lynden: 58 percent; and Timberland: 53 percent) and three schools had low mobility rates (Kirkland: 30 percent, Elmwood: 23 percent: and Royal: 31 percent), compared to the average district elementary school mobility rate—37 percent. All seven schools had a relatively high percentage of students of color and a high percentage of free or reduced lunch recipients. The following describes similarities among the seven schools.

Five of the seven schools were built between 1950 and 1965 and two schools were built between 1920 and 1930, indicating how old or how relatively new these schools are. Declining enrollment was a characteristic common to all seven schools. The schools primarily served students from low socio-economic backgrounds, except for Elmwood School, which consisted of less than 50 percent free or reduced lunch recipients. All seven schools served a large number of minority students, ranging from 60 to 75 percent. Three schools were popular schools of choice that had a more than 35 percent student body of choice students, and, in all seven schools, the number of schools of choice students was increasing over time. All seven schools showed mixed test scores, except for Royal, which had consistently good results. Figure 1 provides a capsule summary of each school in the areas of student mobility, enrollment, reduced/free lunch, minority enrollment, schools of choice, Math 4 satisfactory rates, principal interviewed

and teachers interviewed. Comparison between schools is also made in these areas of characteristics. The following section further describes each school in detail.

Table 4: Mobility rates at the building level 1996-97[2]

School	Mobility rates
Akers	71%
Kirkland	30%
Milford	58%
Lynden	58%
Timberland	53%
Elmwood	23%
Royal	31%
Elementary building average	37%

Mobility rates were calculated by [(Total change = enter and exit) divided by (Enrollment=1996 Fall Count Day Headcount)] X 100%

Data: Renton School District Central Office

Elmwood Elementary School

Elmwood was established in 1965 with an original capacity of 460 pupils. The school is located in an area with a high concentration of minority students. Enrollment has steadily declined from 360 in 1964, and 290 in 1995, to 280 in 2000-2001. The average percentage of students who received a free or reduced lunch between 1995 and 2000 is 37 percent. The number of minority students increased to 76 percent as of 2000-2001. Elmwood is a popular schools of choice. The school consisted of 43 percent schools of choice students as of 2000-2001. Elmwood's Math 4 satisfactory rates were well above both the district and state averages for the past two years, but the school's Reading 4 satisfactory rates were still well below both the district and state averages. Elmwood has experienced a declining enrollment, an increasing number of minority

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[2] Renton School District collected and compiled student mobility rates in the year of 1996-1997 only. No student mobility data before and after 1996-1997 was available as of the winter 2001.

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students and mixed test results. Elmwood student mobility for the year 1996-97 was 23 percent, which was considered low when compared to other elementary schools in the district.

Milford Elementary School

Milford was established in 1951 with an original capacity of 485 pupils. Milford is located in an economically disadvantaged area of the city where a large number of new immigrant families live. According to educators interviewed, the area in which Milford is located is one of the lowest socio-economically in the city. Ironically, the school is located in a neighborhood with a state-of-the-art hospital. The contrast between the school, which serves low-income families, and the billion-dollar, high-tech hospital is striking.

The number of students enrolled changed from 310 in 1955, 465 in 1965, and 250 in 1995, to 165 in 2000-2001. The recent enrollment has drastically declined. The students who received free or reduced lunches between 1995 and 2000 averaged 90 percent. The average percentage of minority students between 1995 and 2002 was 56 percent. The number of schools of choice students increased from 17 percent in 1996-97 to 27 percent in 2000-01. Milford's student mobility rate for the year 1996-97 was 58 percent, which is considerably high.

Milford school entry and exit reports show how many students came in and went out from January 2001 to June 2001. The influx and exit of students between classrooms vary. Ms. Getz, a teacher in this study, experienced the influx and the exit of seven students during six months in 2001. The number appeared to be large for the class size of 17-19 students, and it was rather common for Milford.

Table 5: Milford January 2001 to June 2001

Grade level	IN	OUT	Total
K AM	5	0	5
K FD	1	1	2
1	7	2	9
1-2	4	4	8
2	5	2	7 (Ms. Getz's classroom)
3	3	0	3
4	8	5	13
4-5	3	0	3
5	3	1	4

Data: Milford School

Milford's Math 4 satisfactory rates were well below both district and state average satisfactory rates since 1991. However, their Reading 4 satisfactory rate for 2001 was above both the district and the state averages. This indicates that their reading performance improved recently.

Timberland Elementary School

Timberland was founded in 1965. The school is located in a relatively middle to high socio-economic, predominantly white neighborhood. But, in order to meet federal court desegregation orders, students with diverse backgrounds are bused in. The school is also located close to the border of a neighboring suburban district, which is considered a better school district academically and has a higher socio-economic status. There is a temporary residential shelter in the area, and Timberland is responsible for educating students from this shelter.

The enrollment shifted from 320 in 1965, and 470 in 1995, to 410 in 2000-2001. Since the mid-1950s, enrollment has been declining. Timberland is one of the biggest

elementary schools in the district. On average, 57 percent of its students received free or reduced lunches between 1995 and 2002. About 55 percent were minority students. The number of minority students has been increasing over time. Thirty-five percent were schools of choice students. Although Timberland was also considered a popular schools of choice, this was the only school that had permission from the district to turn down an excessive number of schools of choice applicants because of limited capacity. The school's mobility rate for the year 1996-97 was 53 percent, which is considered high compared to the elementary building average. Timberland's Math 4 and Reading 4 satisfactory rates were below the state average but were around the district average rates.

Royal Elementary School

Royal is located in an economically mixed area—some low-income and some middle-income families. Royal is considered a relatively "good school." The area used to be a predominantly white neighborhood, but the number of minority students has been increasing over time. Royal Elementary School was founded in 1930 with an original capacity of 350 pupils. Enrollment changed from 280 in 1955, 360 in 1961, and 230 in 1996-97, to 180 in 2000-2001. Recent enrollment has been decreasing. On average, 60 percent of students received free or reduced price lunches between 1995 and 2000. In 2000, 65 percent of the students were minorities, and the number was increasing. The school consisted of 37-38 percent schools of choice students. The school's mobility rate for the year 1996-97 was 31 percent, which is low compared to building average of 37 percent. Royal's Math 4 and Reading 4 satisfactory rates were well above the district average most years since 1991, particularly in 2001, when rates were well above both the district and state satisfactory rates.

Akers Elementary School

Akers is located in a relatively low socio-economic area, in which there are many houses that need repair and improvement to meet code requirements. There are a number of rental houses. The area in which the school is located has a high concentration of minority population. There is also a shelter providing temporary boarding and meals. Across the street from the school is a charter school.

Akers Elementary School is one of the oldest buildings in the district. It was established in 1924 with an original capacity of 430 pupils. Enrollment changed from 540 in 1945, 460 in 1955, 580 in 1965, and 280 in 1995-96 to 190 in 2000-2001. Enrollment has been drastically declining over time. Well over 80 percent of students receive free or reduced price lunches. On average, 67 percent of students between 1995 and 2002 were minorities, and only 20-25 percent of students were schools of choice students. The school's mobility rate for 1996-97 was 71 percent, which is the highest among elementary schools in the district. The flow of students between Akers and the charter school across the street partly contributed to such high student mobility.

Akers' Math 4 satisfactory rates were well below both the district and state averages, but their Reading 4 satisfactory rates improved and surpassed the district and state averages for the last two years.

Lynden Elementary School

Lynden is located in the same neighborhood as Akers. Many houses in this neighborhood are red-tagged, denoting that their construction is sub-par and needs renovation. There are some rental houses. The area has a large concentration of minority population.

The school was built in 1952 with an original capacity of 640 pupils. Enrollment changed from 560 in 1962, 580 in 1965, 360 in 1995-96, to 250 in 2000-2001. Enrollment has been drastically declining over time, particularly in recent years. On average, 80 percent of students received free or reduced price between 1995 and 2000. Seventy-six percent of the student body were minority students in 2000-2001, and the number of minority students has been increasing. Nineteen percent were schools of choice students and this number has also been increasing. Lynden's mobility rate for the year 1996-97 was 58 percent, which was high among district elementary schools. Lynden's Math 4 satisfactory rates were well below both district and state averages, except last year when the school's rates went above the district average. Reading 4 satisfactory rates, however, were still well below both district and state averages.

Kirkland Elementary School

Kirkland is located in a low-income neighborhood with a high minority population. Kirkland is also one of the biggest elementary schools, and it is still run as an open school. The neighborhood holds a mixture of houses, trailer homes and apartment complexes. The school was built in 1967, and an addition was completed in 1970 with a capacity of 694 pupils. Enrollment has been gradually declining, from 400 in 1990, to 250 in 2000-2001. On average, 70 percent of students received free or reduced price lunches from 1995 and 2000. Ninety percent of students were minorities in 2000-2001, and the number of minority students has been increasing. Kirkland was one of the Renton School District schools that was out of federal court order compliance. (To be in compliance during the 2000-2001 school year, the school must not have a majority of white students: enrollment below 21.7 percent or above 61.7 percent.) As of 1998-99, 26

percent were schools of choice students, and that number was increasing.

Kirkland's mobility rate for the year 1996-97 was 30 percent, which is considered low among other elementary schools in the district. But, when data at the classroom level is considered, mobility rates at Kirkland for the year of 2000-01 (Table 6) were a lot higher than the rates calculated in 1996-97, except for the fourth grade.

Table 6: Kirkland Building from August 28 to the end of the school year 2000-01.

Grade level	in/out	enrollment	mobility rates
K	20	30	67%
1(Ms. Lynch)	17	32	53%
2	22	48	46%
3(Ms. Park)	29	49	59%
4	15	49	31%
5	23	49	47%

Data: Kirkland School

Kirkland's Math 4 satisfactory rates were at around the district average, although their rates were below the state average. Their Reading 4 rates were still well below both district and state average satisfactory rates.

Figure 1 The Seven Selected Schools

ELMWOOD	
Mobility:	23%
Enrollment:	280 students
Reduced/free lunch: 37%	
Minority enrollment:	76%
Schools of choice:	43%
Math 4 Satisfactory rates:	78%
Principal interviewed: Danforth	
Teacher interviewed: Thompson	

MILFORD	
Mobility:	58%
Enrollment:	165 students
Reduced/free lunch: 90%	
Minority enrollment:	56%
Schools of choice:	27%
Math 4 Satisfactory rates:	38%
Principal interviewed: Nekeman	
Teacher interviewed: Getz	

TIMBERLAND	
Mobility:	53%
Enrollment:	410 students
Reduced/free lunch: 57%	
Minority enrollment:	55%
Schools of choice:	35%
Math 4 Satisfactory rates:	38%
Principal interviewed: Stratton	
Teachers interviewed: Young/Wells	

ROYAL	
Mobility:	31%
Enrollment:	180 students
Reduced/free lunch: 60%	
Minority enrollment:	65%
Schools of choice:	37.5%
Math4 Satisfactory rates:	93%
Principal interviewed: Mason	
Teachers interviewed: Ponzi/Kiss	

AKERS	
Mobility:	71%
Enrollment:	190 students
Reduced/free lunch: 80%	
Minority enrollment:	67%
Schools of choice:	23%
Math 4 Satisfactory rates:	42%
Principal interviewed: Naughton	
Teachers interviewed: Mullen/Morgan/Osborn	

LYNDEN	
Mobility:	58%
Enrollment:	250 students
Reduced/free lunch: 80%	
Minority enrollment:	76%
Schools of choice:	19%
Math 4 Satisfactory rates:	48%
Principal interviewed: Hughes	
Teachers interviewed: Zuccato/Pearson	

KIRKLAND	
Mobility:	30%
Enrollment:	250 students
Reduced/free lunch: 70%	
Minority enrollment:	90%
Schools of choice:	26%
Math 4 Satisfactory rates:	69%
Principal interviewed: Shirk	
Teachers interviewed: Park/Lynch	

Comparison between schools:
Mobility: Akers (71%), Milford (58%) and Lynden (58%) have highest rates.
Reduced/free lunch: Milford (90%), Akers (80%) and Lynden (80%) have highest rates.
Minority enrollment: Kirkland (90%), Elmwood (76%) and Lynden (76%) have highest rates.
Schools of choice: Elmwood (43%), Royal (37.5%) and Timberland (35%) have highest rates.
Math 4 Satisfactory: Royal (93%), Elmwood (78%) and Kirkland (69%).

Table 7: School Data

School	Year	Enroll-Ment	Free/Reduced Lunch %	Minority %	Standardized tests Satisfactory % Reading	Math	Choice Students %	Intra-District Choice	Returned from charter
Elmwood	94-95								
	95-96	290	38	63					
	96-97	286	41	73	25.6	22	40		
	97-98	293	42	72	53.7	63.4	38	20	6
	98-99	291	36	72	33.3	48.5			
	99-00	273	32	71	45.2	83.3	45		
	00-01	278	31	76	71.4	78	43		
Milford	94-95				24	16			
	95-96	249	88	55	18.2	27.3			
	96-97	234	92	49	17.5	10	17		
	97-98	199	89	59	23.1	46.2	19	19	0
	98-99	177	93	60	25	21.1			
	99-00	156	91	61	41.7	58.3	23		
	00-01	165	84	54	62.5	37.5	27		
Timberland	94-95				47.4	61.5			
	95-96	469	61	51	30.5	54.2			
	96-97	381	62	55	45.7	56.5	25		
	97-98	384	55	58	50	59.1	38	71	3
	98-99	392	57	60	46.9	51			
	99-00	414	53	63	41.5	70.8	35		
	00-01	408	56	62	49.1	63.6	32		
Royal	94-95				34.5	37.9			
	95-96	225	52	55	9.7	29			
	96-97	230	57	59	33.3	41.9	34		
	97-98	204	60	64	54.5	51.5	35	19	1
	98-99	197	69	66	28.6	59.3			
	99-00	177	62	65	53.6	53.6	38		
	00-01	179	61	65	92.6	92.6	37		
Akers	94-95				17.1	19.5			
	95-96	279	84	66	22.2	18.5			
	96-97	251	88	69	27.3	30.3	12		
	97-98	268	80	70	30.4	8.7	20	30	0
	98-99	266	82	65	25.9	35.7			
	99-00	224	67	65	54.5	50	26		
	00-01	186	86	67	60.6	42.4	20		

School	Year	Enroll-Ment	Free/Reduced Lunch %	Minority %	Standardized tests Satisfactory %		Choice Students %	Intra-District Choice	Returned from charter
					Reading	Math			
Lynden	94-95				22.9	29.2			
	95-96	361	74	59	19.5	24.4			
	96-97	293	74	60	16.1	22.6	11		
	97-98	284	81	72	15.4	30	14	20	1
	98-99	270	83	68	37	48.1			
	99-00	227	83	70			18		
	00-01	247	87	76			19		
Kirkland	94-95				24.5	35.8			
	95-96	344	60	73	22	39			
	96-97	339	70	78	33.3	32.7	15		
	97-98	351	70	82	36.8	63.2	24	27	5
	98-99	326	71	89	28.3	50.9			
	99-00	309	72	88	12.1	33.3	23		
	00-01	254	77	90	48.5	69.4	26		

Source: Renton School District
State Department of Education data

Descriptions of Educators Who Were Studied in This Research

Central office administrators

Five district-level administrators participated in this study and their interview

results were analyzed. A brief synopsis of the five educators' interview results follows.

Years of service in the district vary.

Name	Years with Renton School District
Ms. Haggard	1
Ms. Torias	27
Mr. Ochoa	31.5
Mr. Goulvitch	2
Ms. Wedmeyer	18

Building principals

Seven building principals participated in the study and their interview results were analyzed and studied. Most of principals have been with the district for more than 25 years.

Name	School	Years with Renton School District
Mr. Naughton	Akers	27
Ms. Shirk	Kirkland	31
Mr. Nekeman	Milford	10
Ms. Hughes	Lynden	19
Ms. Stratton	Timberland	30
Mr. Danforth	Elmwood	34
Ms. Mason	Royal	32

Classroom teachers

Thirteen teachers' interview results were analyzed and studied in the research. Teachers were chosen based either on the principal's recommendation or self-selected after they were informed by their principals of the possibility of participating in this mobility study.

Name	School	Grade	Years with Renton District
Ms. Young	Timberland	3	7
Ms. Wells	Timberland	2-3-4-5	25
Ms. Thompson	Elmwood	K	38
Ms. Zuccato	Lynden	4,4-5	30.3
Ms. Pearson	Lynden	3,3-4,2-3	28
Ms. Mullen	Akers	5,1-5	36
Ms. Morgan	Akers	4,3	26
Ms. Osborn	Akers	3,3-5ESL	2
Ms. Getz	Milford	2,K-12BL	24
Ms. Ponzi	Royal	3	3
Ms. Kiss	Royal	1,2,2-3	3
Ms. Park	Kirkland	3,2	30
Ms. Lynch	Kirkland	1,1-2	12

Demographic Change in Renton City

Renton City has experienced an overall decline in population since the 1970s, but while the white population in Renton has declined over this period of time, the number of minority residents of Renton has increased. The number of school-aged children declined during the same period of time as the decline in population. This decline in both city population and number of school-aged children in Renton City correlated to a decline in the number of the school-aged children enrolled in the district. Compared to neighboring cities, Renton City was relatively poor and had many low-income families, based on the Census statistics of median house value, per-capita income and median household income. Since 1977, the Renton School District has been under a federal court order for school integration to maintain racial balance in the schools. This legislatively mandated order led to the exit of some students to the more predominantly white suburbs.

This section explains the demographic change in Renton City and effects the demographic change had on the characteristics of the district. The Renton City demographic data (Census Bureau 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000) (Table 8) show that the population declined from 132,000 in 1970 to 119,000 in 2000, an approximately 10 percent drop in population. The city experienced the "hollowed out" phenomenon. That is, the greater metro area lost a large percentage of population in its inner-core neighborhoods, experienced neither a gain nor a loss in its middle third, and saw considerable growth in its outermost neighborhoods. The data suggest that population changes within the greater metro area revealed that decentralization was occurring (Census 2000). The factors that affected population decline in the inner-core neighborhoods were lack of appropriate size or type of housing, decline in business,

higher crime rate, and other social factors. Census data reveal that the white population declined from 90 percent in 1970 to 65 percent in 2000. The statistics indicate that there was an increase in the number of minority population in the city. The number of persons under age 18 also declined, from 47,500 in 1970, to 31,894 in 2000, a 33-percent drop. A decline in population and persons under 18 in the city correlated to a decline in the number of school-aged children in the district. Increases in the minority population also coincided with increases in minority students in the district.

Table 8 shows that residential mobility (the number of people who did not stay at the same residence for five consecutive years) was slightly declining from 51 percent in 1960, to 49 percent in 1970, and to 48 percent in 1990. The median house value was $49,000, per capita income was $12,400 and median household income was $27,000 (Table 1-Census bureau 1989-1990). Compared to neighboring cities and towns, the median house value, per-capita income and median household income were significantly lower. The above data indicate that the population was declining and more people were on the move over time in Renton City. The city was relatively poor and served low-income families.

Table 8: The Renton City Demographic Data

		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population	Total	107,807	131,546	130,595	127,321	119,128
	White	100,814	118,287		94,135	77,766
	Other races	6,993	13,259		33,186	41,362
Persons under 18		38,958	47,507			31,894
Residence		94,733	117,717		115,656	
		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Persons 5 years plus						

Same house		48,628	57,769		55,709	
Mobility %		51	49		48	
Census Data 1960-	2000					

Desegregation Policy

The large change in racial composition in Renton affected local schools. Since

Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 declared racial discrimination in public education

unconstitutional, there was a movement toward the integration of schools across the

nation. The Renton School District was no exception. Changes in attendance zones to

integrate elementary schools in Renton School District had been requested since the mid-

1950s. However, before the federal court order for school integration in 1977, there were

many examples of the district's policy that prevented integration of the elementary

schools. The evidence included: 1) the gerrymandering of attendance zones to match the

racial composition of service areas with the predominant racial profile of particular

schools; 2) the board's rescission of the "cluster plan" for desegregating the elementary

schools; 3) the intended use of a new elementary school to be located in a heavily black

area; 4) the use of mobile classrooms to contain students in racially unbalanced schools

(predominantly black or predominantly white schools); 5) the special transfer policy

which allowed white students to escape from their neighborhood schools to white schools

outside their neighborhoods; and 6) the policy of one-way busing of minority students

(Renton School District Board v. NAACP, 1977 p.6, p.16).

There were tensions around school integration among educators and residents.

For example, some educators and parents of color advocated elementary school

integration, but there were ways implemented in the system that white parents could send

their children to a new school that was not racially balanced. The argument divided

along familiar lines: the Board of Education invoked the sanctity of neighborhood

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schools, while minority representatives claimed the "neighborhood school" policy was unfairly manipulated to segregate minority students, and demanded school integration for social justice (Renton Board of Education v. NAACP 1977). Even though boundaries were rewritten to balance enrollment across schools, there were district policies as described above, which became a block to school integration.

The voices of concerned citizens were finally recognized in 1977 when the court found racial segregation of students to exist in the district. Since 1977, the Renton School District has been under a federal court order to integrate its schools. Attendance zones have been recreated and re-enforced to improve racial integration in schools. However, there has been a consequence of school integration under the federal court order. The district has experienced a large exit of white students to predominantly white suburban districts. The mid-1970s court order for school integration had an effect on school transfer among white families who move to the suburbs or send their children to schools where the majority of students were like them racially.

Timberland, one of the schools studied in this research, was serving two diverse student populations in order to meet the court order. The school drew students from a neighborhood in which the majority of residents were white, and also from an area with a large number of minority residents. Even under the federal court order, five elementary schools were recently out of compliance, and Kirkland (another of the seven schools studied in this research) was one of them. Unfortunately, there were no data that showed improvement in racial integration among schools after the court order. As some administrators and teachers in the study indicated, there was an exodus from Renton School District as the white students escaped integration. Some students and their

parents used schools of choice and charter school policies for this reason.

In this study, new policies of school funding, schools of choice and charter schools accelerated student mobility through competition over resources and students among educational organizations; they offered more educational opportunities and choices to parents. The following section describes the policies of new school funding, schools of choice and charter school policies and also explains how the new policies possibly affected student mobility.

School funding, schools of choice and charter school policies

Since the mid-1990s, schools of choice and charter school policies have been implemented at the state level. Such new policies resulted in a flow of students in the Renton School District. The district also had an intra-district schools of choice policy dating from the mid-1990s, which was implemented to reduce student mobility but it did not produce the intended outcome.

In the mid-1990s, policies on charter schools and inter-district schools of choice in this Midwestern state were inaugurated via a dramatic shift in the state's school finance system. One of the major characteristics of the new school funding policy was to make money portable so that when a student moves, the money goes with a student. This policy created a foundation for inter-district school transfer and charter schools policies.

The state's charter school law, passed in 1993, was relatively liberal in its provisions (Mintrom 1998). The law states that charter schools are publicly funded, are non-discriminatory in the selection of students in grades K-12 based on race, religion, gender or test scores, and cannot be religiously affiliated. The statute provides for four authorizing agencies, including local school districts, intermediate school districts,

community colleges, and state universities. Currently, the great majority of schools are chartered by universities. The law also provides considerable leeway to organizers of charter schools to set policy and programs. Furthermore, the law places no restrictions on the number of charter schools that might be established, nor on where they might be located. And, the law allows for private schools to convert to charter status. Charter schools have grown apace over the past six years. Beginning with one school, the numbers increased significantly thereafter: 38 charter schools in 1995-96, and 202 in 2001-2002. In 1998-99, charter schools enrolled approximately 34,000 students, some 2 percent of the state's K-12 enrollment.

In 1996, the state passed an inter-district choice policy as well. This policy allows districts to decide whether or not they will accept students from other districts within the boundaries established by the state's Intermediate School Districts. Under this policy, districts cannot prevent students from leaving to attend school in other public school districts, but they can regulate the number of students they are willing to accept from other districts. The number of districts participating in inter-district choice has increased from 37 percent of the state's 550 districts in 1996, to approximately 50 percent in 1998. The number of students who participate has also increased from 7,836 in 1996-97 to 14,461 in 1998-1999, or 0.85 percent of public K-12 enrollments.

In combination with a new school funding policy, the new choice policies dramatically altered the character of school finance and governance at the local level. Charter schools are new competitors in the previously protected market of the public schools, while inter-district choice places school districts in implicit or explicit competition with one another for students and resources.

Schools of choice and charter school policies greatly affected the district in this study. Two observations from enrollment data (Table 2) are noteworthy. First, enrollments began declining prior to the advent of charter schools and inter-district choice. Second, these declines accelerated under choice, hastening a trend that was already underway. The region is home to eight charter schools, which currently enroll 2,300 students. Inter-district transfer students increased from 320 to 810 over this three-year period. From 1996-2000, the district lost 780 students and gained 95 (Intermediate School District 2001). The district also lost 685 students to schools of choice in the last four years, mostly to neighboring, predominantly white districts of higher socio-economic status.

Decline in enrollment was greatly affected by charter schools and schools of choice, with about 25 percent of the decline in enrollment due to the decline in birth rates in the county. Another 25 percent is due to the loss of students to schools of choice, and the remaining 50 percent is due to the loss of students to charter schools (interview with Mr. Goulvitch, a district administrator, 2001). Thus, charter schools and inter-district choice policies have had a large effect on enrollments in this district. Such policies have a great impact not only on enrollments but also on student mobility, because they allow students to move from school to school.

In 1994, the Renton School District implemented an intra-district choice policy. The policy allows students to stay at the old school even after they move within the district. The policy states that the in-district schools of choice option is available for all Renton School District students. The open enrollment period is from the beginning of April to the first count-day in September. Choice applicants are approved with equal

priority during the first enrollment period, which runs from the first of April until the end of May. From the end of May until the first count-day in September, applications are approved on a first-come, first-served basis. Choice applications are approved unless the grade, classroom or program is at capacity. The schools of choice option is not available at any other time in the school year except under the following conditions. First, if a student's family moves into the Renton School District at any time during the school year, they can apply for schools of choice. Second, if a student's family moves to a new residence within the Renton School District boundaries during the school year, the children can stay in their current school, or if they do not wish to attend the school in their new residence area, they can apply for a schools of choice.

This policy was implemented to reduce student mobility, but it did not meet its original purpose (interview with Ms. Wedmeyer, a district administrator, 2001). The schools of choice policy does not provide transportation. Even though parents want to send their children to the old school even after they move, if they do not have a way to drive their children to the old school, their children must attend the new neighborhood school. Thus, lack of transportation is a key factor inhibiting students from staying in the same school after they move to a new location.

Chapter 3

Review of the Literature on Student Mobility

How student mobility was perceived in previous research studies helps us to understand how educators respond to student mobility in certain ways. The literature on student mobility focuses on several different facets of this issue, including the following: students' reasons for school transfer; patterns of mobility; academic performance of mobile and stable students; impact of mobility on mobile students' social skills; teachers' instructional approaches as a result of mobility; and the impact of mobility on classroom dynamics, classroom management, the school as a community and the educational organization as a whole. In addition, the literature also addresses the positive aspects of student mobility. Some articles also explain competing interests between educators on the issue of student mobility.

This review of the literature on student mobility is organized into four categories: the patterns and causes of student mobility; the effects of student mobility on individuals, which includes students and educators in an educational institution; the effects of student mobility on the individual schools themselves and the school district as a whole; and responses and suggestions by educational researchers to the issue of student mobility.

The Patterns and Causes of Student Mobility

Previous studies on the patterns and causes of student mobility help us to understand that student mobility is not only an educational issue but also a social one. Both family-related and school-related factors cause student mobility between schools. While student mobility was largely perceived as a problem, some studies addressed how student mobility was used to deal with disciplinary problems, and was viewed as a

helpful solution. This literature helps us to understand how differently situated educators learned about, made sense of and formulated responses to student mobility. Furthermore, a new policy—market reform—created a new incentive for some educators to increase and maintain enrollment and get rid of disruptive students. Consequently, such new incentives led to more student mobility. It is important to understand how recent market reform contributed to high student mobility.

High student mobility in U.S. society

Using National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) data from January 1988 to the spring of 1992, Rumberger and Larson (1998) studied high school students' residential and school mobility and how this mobility affected their school performance. In their study, Rumberger and Larson found that students in the United States who changed schools frequently tended to show lower academic performance. A national longitudinal survey of U.S. eighth graders in 1988 found that 31 percent had changed schools two or more times between the first and eighth grades and 10 percent changed schools two or more times between the eighth and 12th grades, not counting regular promotions between elementary, middle and high schools (Rumberger and Larson, 1998, pp.1-2).

A 1990-91 national study, using 15,000 third graders in 235 elementary schools, their parents, school principals and teachers, examined the characteristics of mobile students and their success in school relative to children who had never changed schools (U.S. General Accounting Office 1994). The study found that more than 40 percent of all third graders had changed schools at least once since first grade and 17 percent had changed schools two or more times in the U.S. General Accounting Office's study (as

cited in Rumberger and Larson, 1998, p.2).

Several previous studies noted that minority students generally were more mobile than white students (Kerbow 1992; Mao et al 1997; U.S. General Accounting Office 1994), and socio-economically disadvantaged students generally were more mobile than socio-economically advantaged students (Buerkle 1997; Jason et al 1992; Kerbow 1992; Mao et al 1997; Rumberger et al 1999; U.S. General Accounting Office 1994). Mao et al (1997) examined the magnitude of student mobility in Texas public schools by using a student-based data set primarily focused on student transfers during the academic year. The study also examined student mobility longitudinally by following the first grade students of 1991-1992 through the 1995-96 school year. Schools serving higher-income families had a 16 percent turnover each year, whereas schools serving low-income families showed a 49 percent turnover in the study by Sexton (1961). Mehana and Reynolds (1995) found poverty was a significant predictor of mobility, and frequent mobility a significant predictor of lower reading achievement in sixth graders. When they did move, however, white students were more likely to move across district lines than to move within the district. Typically, students who moved within the district were economically disadvantaged (Mao et al 1997, p.39; U.S. General Accounting Office 1994), attended inner-city schools (U.S. General Accounting Office 1994), were over age for their grade level, and were members of ethnic minorities (Mao et al, 1997, p.39).

Rumberger et al's California study found that student mobility was prevalent among all ethnic and immigrant groups in California (Rumberger et al 1999). According to the California study, mobility rates did not vary widely among ethnic and immigrant groups, but mobility was clearly related to family income and socio-economic status—

low-income students were more mobile between the eighth and 12th grades than were high-income students. The latter finding is similar to other researchers' findings. Yet, despite its high incidence, the issue of student mobility has not received much attention from educational researchers, practitioners, or policymakers (Rumberger and Larson, 1998, p.2).

Causes and patterns of mobility

Bayer (1982) explored the phenomenon of student transfers from school to school at the elementary and secondary levels by using existing literature and then creating a school transfer typology. He divided the phenomenon of school transfer into two major themes: systemic change and individual factors. Systemic changes included the following: 1) system structure change (normative move from elementary to middle and on to high school); 2) change due to rezoning, particularly for desegregation (to balance the racial and ethnic composition of schools, traced back to the historic 1954 Supreme Court decision and the Civil Rights Act of 1964); and 3) change to accommodate school closings, balance system enrollment and accommodate shifts in "enrollment demand" across neighborhood schools within a school district. The second category, individual factors, included the following: 1) change between public and private schools for academic, financial, social, personal or religious reasons; 2) school transfer for academic and behavioral remediation; and 3) school change due to family residential change. Bayer (1982) further determined that school transfers prompted by individual factors generally provided less "anchoring" continuity in the child's life experience, and generated more severe transitional adjustments than transfers prompted by systemic factors.

Buerkle (1997) described the Kids Mobility Project, which was initiated by a group of local planners and researchers from various educational and community organizations in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, area. Their work studied student mobility and student achievement both quantitatively and qualitatively. They analyzed student mobility statistically by using school data. Four types of moves were identified: "coping" moves, "forced" moves, "upward" moves, and "lifestyle" moves. The mobility 59 percent of the families interviewed reflected the first category, of "coping" moves: they were moving to cope with such difficulties as substandard housing conditions, inability to pay rent, a landlord-tenant problem, a desire to leave bad relationships, abuse, chemical dependency, and other issues that destabilize families. The moves of 21 percent of families were characterized as "forced" moves due to eviction, property condemnation, and sub-par housing conditions. Eleven percent of families interviewed were positive about moving and saw them as exemplifying "upward" moves-a chance to establish a better life with more stability for their children. Nine percent of families' moves were characterized as "lifestyle" because they moved often as a way to escape problems or to generate excitement and change in their lives (pp.10-11).

In the study of the Kids Mobility Project, two types of factors causing school transfers were identified: out-of-school factors; and school-to-school factors. Students transferred schools due to some family-related matters. These matters included family relocation, housing situations, family structural changes and change in custody. One reason was that student mobility was frequently seen as an inevitable result of family relocation or residential mobility that schools could do little about. Residential mobility in the United States was high, and generally was higher than in other Western countries

and Japan (Long 1975). A recent study found that 50 percent of all school-aged children in the United States moved at least twice before they were 18 years old, and 10 percent moved at least six times (Rumberger and Larson, 1998, p.2). An earlier study by the U.S. Census Bureau found that, during a single year, one-fifth of all school-aged children in the United States in 1987 moved in the U.S. Bureau Office of the Census's study (as cited in Rumberger and Larson, 1998, p.2). One study conducted in Chicago showed that 87 percent of all moves were intra-district school transfers (Kerbow 1996). The Minnesota study (Buerkle 1997) indicated that a) most residential moves occurred in centrally located, low-income areas of Minneapolis; and b) families usually moved short distances, remaining in the same community or a neighboring community (39 percent moved less than a mile, 66 percent less than two miles) (p.7). The Jason et al Chicago study (1992) also indicated that 71 percent moved within Chicago and 29 percent moved from outside the city. The California study suggested that while mobility was the norm during elementary school, it was the exception during high school (Rumberger et al 1999).

Some moves within the city were not academically inclined, which resulted in frequent moves from one low performing school to another low performing school. This pattern of moves indicates that moving was caused by out-of-school rather than in-school factors, including housing situations and family structural change. Students tended to move between campuses with similar socio-economic and ethnic compositions (Kerbow 1996; Mao et al 1997, p.40). Kerbow (1996) stated that student mobility in Chicago was strongly stratified, so that movement in a school system was bounded by achievement level, racial composition and economic resources. Although many students changed schools, they did not often cross these boundaries (p.16). A disproportionate number of

withdrawals were from low-performing schools; however, students from low-performing

schools often moved to other low-performing schools nearby (Mao et al 1982).

Some previous studies found students switched schools due to family-related

issues, yet other scholars argued that student mobility was partially related to what went

on in schools (Jason, Weine, Johnson, Warren-Sohlberg, Filippelli, Turner and Lardon

1992; Wehlage and Rutter's study cited in Rumberger and Larson, 1998, p.2). Jason et

al's Chicago study (1992) indicated that the reasons for school transfer in Chicago

included 1) dissatisfaction with public schools; 2) an unwillingness to allow a child to be

held back; and 3) a student's academic or social problems. A national study of high

school students found that 40 percent of the reasons students gave for transferring schools

were not related to moving homes (Lee and Burkam 1992). Kerbow (1996) examined

student mobility across Chicago elementary schools and its impact on student

performance and classroom dynamics. The study found that 40 percent of elementary

students who transferred schools in Chicago between 1992 and 1993 did not change

residences (Kerbow 1996). The finding illustrates that a high percentage of students

moved to new schools even though such a move was not necessitated by a change of

residence. This finding confirms that residential relocation was not the only reason why

students moved to new schools.

Rumberger, Larson, Ream and Palardy (1999) examined the incidence,

consequences and causes of student mobility in relation to students and schools, mainly

in California secondary schools. The study used a data set of 1,114 eighth graders,

followed over six years as part of the National Educational Longitudinal Study, surveys

of 10th graders in 56 schools, interviews with 19 mobile high school students and their

parents, and interviews with 32 educators in the year of 1990. Similarly, they found that 50 percent of all high school changes were not due to residential change. The Rumberger et al study indicated almost half of recent high school changes were initiated by adolescents requesting a change of school. Most of the reasons for student-initiated changes were reactive rather than strategic in nature, such as escaping a bad situation or social isolation, or departing an unsafe school environment or a hostile academic environment (pp.ix-x).

Two recent case studies of urban high schools documented how school changes occurred when school officials actively tried to "get rid of disruptive students," by forcing them to leave or illegally telling them they had to leave (Bowditch 1993; Fine 1991). Fine's study (1991) on dropouts at an urban comprehensive New York school found a complex politic of "discharge," coupled with low awareness of legal entitlement to education from students and parents, resulted in a dropout rate of 66 percent of a ninth-grade cohort without comment or concern. Schools were also found to often initiate instances of mobility in California as highlighted particularly in Rumberger's study of California schools (Rumberger et al 1999). Fighting or poor grades, for example, could prompt a school to seek an alternative placement for students. Both student-initiated and school-initiated school changes were brought on by social as well as academic situations (Rumberger et al 1999, p.x). Taken together, these studies by Bowditch, Fine and Rumberger suggest that schools were at least partly responsible for high student turnover and, consequently, schools should help address the problem. These researchers' findings help dispel a myth among educators that there was nothing much they could do about student mobility because they had little control over when or where students moved. In

reality, there were cases in which school-related factors had great impact on student mobility. Educators were responsible for being aware of and understanding the problems and issues that students faced in school and were responsible for responding to such problems and issues in order to create a better learning environment for students.

In some cases, student mobility created positive results for mobile students and classroom management, and classroom dynamics. In the case study in California, teachers commented that one benefit of student mobility was that disruptive kids would leave the class (Lash and Kirkpatrick 1990), and two recent case studies (Bowditch 1993; Fine 1991), mentioned earlier, suggested the departure of disruptive kids created a more stable, cohesive teaching and learning environment. Thus, some studies suggested that there were cases where certain types of mobile students created a better teaching and learning environment for teachers and stable students.

One of the systemic factors that caused student mobility was school integration, the beginning of which can be traced to the 1954 case of Brown v. the Board of Education and the civil rights movement, which provided the impetus for public school integration. As school integration led many white families to choose new schools that were less racially mixed, school integration became a systemic factor in increased student mobility. Before schools of choice and charter school market reform was implemented, white families avoided integration by sending their children to private schools, which took extra money, or by making a geographic move to a place where there was no school integration. The following category explains how and why "white flight" happened, and how the initial school integration in the mid-1960s still affects white living patterns today.

McPherson, Crowson, and Pitner (1986) explained incentives external to the

organizations as follows:

> The collective actions of individuals who are making choices on the basis of
> incentives (e.g., the benefit/tax ratio) result in environmentally determined
> constraints upon educational organizations and their administrators. From this
> perspective, we see that the nature and population characteristics of a surrounding
> community, the range of policy options open to consideration (e.g. developmental
> vs. redistributive), the limits upon tax-resource availability for schools, and the
> dangers of pursing a course of action that might add to householder mobility (the
> white flight due to busing) all represent real considerations for the school
> administrator that flow directly from the choices that individuals make in
> weighing their gains and losses associated with living here rather than there
> (p.188).

As McPherson et al (1986) explained, white flight created some administrative

constraints for schools. White flight was also a significant factor contributing to

demographic change in a district. Federal court orders to integrate schools in the mid-

1970's seemed to have caused white families to move out of districts. While maintaining

paperwork for official records of student inter-district transfers was difficult, the fiscal

constraints caused by white flight were far-reaching in scope and implications. The

initial white flight caused by the court order for desegregation still seems to affect student

outward mobility. Thus, white flight continues to be a factor when looking at residential

and school change.

Market reform

According to recent policy debate and research (e.g., Cookson 1992; Moe 2001;

Nathan 1996), expanding opportunities for parental choice represents the latest in a long

history of policy reforms that sought to bring about significant changes in the public

school system. The reform strategy provided consumers (students and their families)

with more educational opportunities, regardless of their residential location, and parental

choice created competition among producers of education. Market reform allowed

students to move from one school to another, which created a flow of students between

schools. Reform strategy used an economic theory of competitive, open markets.

This theory assumed that competition among producers of education over market

share would improve the performance or product of the producers of education. Market

reform encouraged student mobility, but neglected to address the educational

consequences of mobility on teaching and learning. Research generally found little

evidence that choosing among schools led to improved student performance (Driscoll

1993; Plank et al 1993; Witte 1993 as cited in Swanson and Schneider 1999, p.56). Some

authors suggested that movement across schools failed to produce measurable academic

benefits because many students and families who changed schools seemed to do so with

limited information about the schools (Swanson and Schneider 1999, p.56). It focused on

changing the normative and fiscal environment in which schools operated, on the

assumption that actors within the system would respond to environmental changes in

ways that maximized their claims on resources and chances for survival. In reality,

movement possibly created a misallocation of resources, because money was given to the

schools where children no longer attended because the student changed to another school

after the official counting day. In policy debate, market reform strategy included charter

schools, inter-district transfer policy and vouchers. But, in the Renton study, market

reform referred to charter schools and inter-district policy only.

Even though annual rates of residential mobility in the United States have

gradually declined (Hansen 1995), the rates at which children change schools increased

in Plank, Schiller, Schneider and Coleman's study (as cited in Swanson and Schneider

1999). This rise in educational mobility is partly the result of the increasing opportunity to choose among options for public schooling (Cookson 1994). Through a market-based reform (intra-district transfer, inter-district transfer and charter school policies), students and their families were given opportunities to choose schools based on their preferences, and these preferences were no longer necessarily dictated by personal economic gain. Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), Swanson and Schneider (1999) studied the impact of residential and educational mobility and high school students' long-term educational benefits. They found that, despite some negative short-term consequences, mobility early in high school (particularly a change of school as opposed to changing classes or teachers while remaining in a same school) could lead to important long-term educational benefits. A different school might provide a new learning environment that conformed more closely to family's educational values and expectations or better accommodated the academic needs of a specific student and promoted a positive educational outcome.

The Effects of Student Mobility on Students and Educators

Literature on the effects of student mobility on mobile and stable students and educators helps us to understand how individuals struggle with student mobility or utilize it to achieve positive benefits. Mobility also adversely affected mobile students' academic performance and social skills. Stable students in a classroom with a large number of mobile students also exhibited some experiences of limited educational opportunity and feelings of detachment. Building principals who dealt with high student mobility also had difficulty creating a sense of community within a school.

Notwithstanding this overall negative picture, school transfer created a better learning environment for some students. While classroom teachers who experienced a large influx and exit of students had to struggle to adjust their instructional approaches and classroom dynamics, some teachers used student mobility strategy to create a better teaching and learning environment.

Impact of mobility on school and student academic performance

(a) Mobile students: Previous research on student mobility suggested that student mobility generally had negative impacts on mobile students' academic achievement (Benson and Weigel 1980; Benson, Haycraft, Steyaert, and Weigel 1979; Buerkle 1997; Ingersoll et al 1989; Kerbow 1996; Ligon and Paredes 1992; Mao et al 1997; Mehana and Reynolds 1995; Meier 1995; Morris Peataner, and Nelson 1967, Rumberger and Larson 1998; Rumberger et al 1999; Schaller 1975; U.S. General Accounting Office 1994; Wasserman 2001). As these studies individually discuss, discontinuities in the reception of instruction disrupted students' acquisition of required academic skills.

Ligon and Paredes' study (1992) found that the longer a student was exposed to a program of instruction, the better the student would learn and acquire the skills and knowledge relevant to it. In other words, schools needed a consistent and continuous period of instruction before they could have a significant impact upon students (Ligon and Paredes 1992, pp.2-3). Mehana and Reynolds (1995), in a study of 988 urban, low-economic status black children participating in a longitudinal study of the effects of preschool intervention in the spring of 1992, examined the predictors of school mobility and the influence of mobility on sixth grade math and reading achievement. They found that sixth grade children who moved three or more times were three months farther

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behind in reading achievement than those who did not. Meier (1995) similarly found that stability of students in classroom was important for academic success.

Buerkle (1997) also found that attendance was an important predictor of performance for students in her study. She found that higher mobility rates resulted in diminished attendance rates, which in turn resulted in diminished academic performance. Students who did not move during the course of the study had an average attendance rate of 94 percent. Students with three or more moves dropped to 84 percent. Attendance was strongly related to achievement. Students with nearly perfect attendance on average had reading scores that were 20 points higher than those who attended less than 80 percent of the time (p.8). However, it is important to note that tests themselves may be a measure of poverty and mobility, not academic achievement (McGee 1997 in his study of the eighth grade Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP) test in 100 school districts in the Cook County suburbs of Chicago).

Temple and Reynolds (1999) studied the effects of school mobility on reading and math achievement for 1,539 minority students in the Chicago Longitudinal Study at 25 sites in the fall of 1985. Among 1,539 students, there were 1,087 low-income black children. They discovered in their Chicago study that, although the students who changed schools frequently between kindergarten and seventh grade performed approximately one year behind their nonmobile peers on reading and mathematics achievement tests taken at the end of the seventh grade, only one half of this difference appeared attributable to frequent mobility. The remaining portion was due to the fact that the mobile students were lower-achieving even before they started to change schools (p.355). Heinlein and Shinn (2000) found in their New York City research that two

longitudinal studies showed no relationship between mobility and subsequent achievement when prior achievement was controlled. That is, early mobility (prior to third grade) was a more potent predictor of sixth-grade achievement than later mobility. Bolinger and Gilman (1997) examined differences between 107 stable students and 39 mobile students attending a three-year middle school in Terre Haute, Indiana, in relation to their aptitude and achievement. They found a significant correlation between mobile students and low scores on the language subtest of the ISTEP exam, but no relationships between mobility and the math or reading subtests of the exam.

Students' opportunities to learn depended on the pace with which new material was introduced into the curriculum (Barr 1974, Good and Marshall 1984, Rowan and Miracle 1983 cited in Kerbow 1996, p.17). The impact of ability grouping was especially critical for mobile students. The new teacher generally had limited information about mobile students; therefore, their placement into a group was not straightforward (Kerbow 1996, p.18). The performance gap between mobile and stable students was greater on campuses with higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students or higher student turnover rates (Mao et al 1997). Students experiencing numerous moves fell further behind their stable counterparts as their education progressed (Kerbow 1996, p.20). The more school moves there were, the more a mobile student's learning was impacted (Kerbow 1992, Mao et al 1997). The strong negative association between accountability ratings and student turnover rates at the campus level was best shown by examining the variability in student turnover rates among schools with different accountability ratings (Mao et al 1997, p.43).

(b) Stable students: Student mobility had adverse effects not only on mobile students' academic performance, but also on stable students' academic performance (Kerbow 1996, Rumberger et al 1999, U.S. General Accounting Office 1994, Wasserman 2001). As examples of the impact of student mobility on stable students, Kerbow (1996) mentioned the flattening curriculum, review-oriented class lessons, and more focus on "generic" students. These factors limited the amount and quality of educational materials to which stable students were exposed. Rumberger et al (1999) indicated that average test scores for non-mobile students were significantly lower in high schools with high student mobility rates. There was a relationship at the school level between student mobility and the percentage of students meeting the standards of the Alberta Achievement tests, with schools with higher mobility rates having lower percentages of students meeting the standards (Wasserman 2001, p.26). Williams (1996) claimed that transfer students had a ripple effect on their classmates (p.37). Educators characterized the overall effects of student mobility at the school level as a "chaos" factor that affected classroom learning activities, teacher morale and administrative burdens—all of which could impact the learning and achievement of all students in the school (p.ix).

Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) studied the impact of student mobility and classroom instruction and management by examining 21 classes in a single urban elementary school in California. The study found negative effects of student mobility on classrooms, which were explained under the subcategory of *Impacts of Student Mobility on Classrooms and Schools*.

Heywood et al (1997) studied how classroom mobility affected stable students in terms of academic achievement by collecting data from 21 inner-city elementary schools

in a Midwestern city (K-5/6 level), having a combination of low socio-economic status and relatively poor achievement. The data yielded 6,358 student observations in grades two through five for the 1990-91 school year. The research study showed no relationship between student mobility and stable students' academic performance.

Impacts of student mobility on psychological and social aspects of mobile students

Many students experienced difficulties adjusting to new school settings (e.g., Buerkle 1997; Jason et al 1992; Rumberger et al 1999; Williams 1996). Elias, Gara and Ubriaso's study (as cited in Jason et al, 1992) enumerated the challenges of school transitions, which encompassed not only psychological but also social and academic adaptations, such as 1) shifts in role definition and expected behaviors; 2) changes in membership in and position within social networks; 3) reorganization of personal and social support resources; 4) restructuring the way one perceived one's world; and 5) management of stress resulting from uncertainty about expectations and goals and one's ability to accomplish the transition tasks (pp.112-113).

Both students and educators reported school transfers affected student personality or psychological well-being (Rumberger et al 1999, p.xii). Williams's report (1996) focused on examining the influx and exit of students at one particular school in Chicago as well as student mobility at 80 selected elementary and secondary schools. The report on mobility in Chicago schools suggested that many transfer students did not get a chance to bond with their teachers or did not make friends before they were bounced to another school. They had to learn a different classroom culture each time they moved, and they had to learn their place in another pecking order (p.36). The University of Minnesota

study (Buerkle 1997) also indicated that parents of transferring students reported that their children had problems with behavior, emotions, self-esteem and friends that they attributed to stress associated with frequent family moves (p.10).

Impacts of student mobility on teaching, classroom management, and classroom dynamics

Teachers who experienced a high rate of influx and exit of students had constraints on their instructional approach in several ways. The following are examples of difficulties that teachers had in relation to teaching and collaboration with other teachers. First, long-term instructional planning, a time-consuming process in any context, became more difficult. Second, classroom instruction might be focused more on a "generic" student rather than the specific composition of the class, since the composition was likely to change. Third, in schools with a large number of mobile students in a Chicago study, teachers reported lower levels of collaboration with their peers, less collective focus on student learning, and a lower orientation to innovation in instruction (Sebring et al 1995, cited in Kerbow, 1996, p.23). Mobility appeared to impinge on the instructional life of a school in a broad sense (p.23). It constrained opportunities to focus on instructional practices for the long-term improvement of a group of students for which the school was collectively responsible. Fourth, teachers might become more review-oriented in their lesson plans. New students missed the specific instruction that preceded their arrival. They had to be brought into the lesson in some way. Slowing down the introduction of new topics and reviewing old material was an alternative that in many respects seemed perfectly rational for a classroom teacher. Thus, the introduction of new students, especially those who were weak academically,

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might be disruptive to the flow of instruction for all students. Repetition decreased the instructional pace for all students in the class. In general, a tendency toward more routine instruction and increased review in classroom instruction was evident in the Chicago study (Kerbow 1996).

Kerbow (1996) indicates that slowing down the curricular pace limited the amount of material to which all students, not just mobile ones, were exposed. This suggested that mobility would have an organizational impact on learning that extends beyond the individual and the classroom. Despite a lack of access to services and resources that were available in more affluent communities, and operating under multiple constraints, such as serving students who often began school less prepared, providing additional review and teacher attention for transfer students, etc., schools that experienced high levels of mobility were accountable for high performance. If the instructional pace for stable students was accelerated in order to meet school accountability requirements, problems for late entrants would be exacerbated, and late entrants would be even further behind their classmates. Thus, the more successful a school was in improving the curricular pace, and perhaps also the learning growth of its stable students, the more stark this contrast was likely to become. Focusing attention on mobile students, on the other hand, took human resources from continued instructional and organizational development. Consequently, a school in an unstable urban context that wished to improve instruction confronted the problem of integrating mobile students who would inevitably enter its classrooms without sacrificing the learning of the other children (Kerbow, 1996, p.26).

Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) also indicated in their Maryland and California study that teachers noted two major negative impacts on classroom instruction. First, changing schools interfered with classroom instruction and increased noninstructional tasks, especially if little advance notice was given for late entries and withdrawals. According to teachers in the Maryland school, because teachers were not given advance notice when a new child arrived, the class must be interrupted and instruction delayed. The teacher had to take time to acclimate the child to the classroom environment and provide her with instructional materials and a desk. At the California school, because of the lack of information about children's arrivals, teachers said that they did not prepare for new children. If teachers were given even minimal advance notice, the California teachers stated, they could better help a new child to feel more welcome and at ease, because the teacher could have a desk and materials ready. Children's mobility added to the teacher's workload by increasing paperwork. Secondly, schools generally must place children before records arrived, and therefore might not be able to provide children with needed services. This created an educational problem because children must be placed immediately, without records, leading to possible inappropriate placements or a failure to provide needed support services. Timely receipt of children's records would assist in placing children appropriately, school staff noted, and avoid repetitive testing when a child entered late.

Rumberger et al (1999) also claimed that mobile students created chaos and burdens in the school as well as the classroom. School administrators reported how time-consuming it was to simply process students when they entered and exited a school. Beyond the administrative costs, school personnel also identified other impacts, such as

the fiscal impacts that resulted from mobile students failing to turn in textbooks, and effects on school climate (p.xiii).

The Effects of Student Mobility on School

Literature on school as a community helped the reader to understand how important social bonding was to create a sense of community that was closely related to turnover rates in schools. Schools with low turnover rates generally had a characteristic of a cohesive sense of community. Schools with high turnover rates tended to not have a strong sense of community. Mobile students tended to be not attached, not committed, not involved and did not have belief in the norms, activities and people of an institution. With lack of a sense of community, teachers and principals had difficulty creating a sense of community.

Literature on the membership boundary theory explained how an educational institution also had control over the entry and exit of students. Market reform created an additional flow of students and the district could modify the rules to alter the flow of students. Such modification and alteration of rules and regulations on policy clashed with an intention and an effort to create a sense of community within a school or a classroom.

School as a community

A new body of literature (e.g., Bryk and Driscoll 1988; Wehlage, G. G. et al 1989) addressed the importance and effectiveness of the collaboration of educators, parents and community members in developing a sense of community that created connection and bonding within a school. Participation of teachers, parents and community members in school governance and development of academic and social

programs was an important aspect of school improvement. The social organization of the

school affected administrators' and teachers' work and might influence a variety of

outcomes for students. In particular, the image of a school as a community emerged as

an organizational form where social processes beneficial to the work of students and

teachers were linked together (Bryk and Driscoll, 1988, p.5). Qualitative studies

suggested that schools with a "sense of community" had positive effects on both teaching

and learning (Bryk and Driscoll 1988).

The theory of school as a community was relevant to the study because the

phenomenon of student mobility had a large impact on the development of a school as a

community. Student mobility appeared to create a vicious cycle in which it interfered

with the development of a school as community. As the school did not have a sense of

community, bonding and connection, parents and students more easily left the school and

enrolled in a new one; such an easy exit and entry created difficulties for school

personnel in building a sense of community for a better teaching and learning

environment. In other words, a communal school might help reduce the phenomenon of

mobility of students because parents and students had a good relationship with school

personnel and the school itself.

Bryk and Driscoll (1988) developed three concepts comprising a communal

school organization: 1) a system of shared values among the members of the

organization, reflected primarily in beliefs about the purpose of the institution, about

what students should learn, about how adults and students should behave, and about what

kinds of people students were capable of becoming; 2) a common agenda of activities

designed to foster meaningful social interactions among school members and linked them

to the school's traditions; and 3) a distinctive pattern of social relations, embodying an ethos of caring that was visibly manifest in collegial relations among the adults of the institution and in an extended teacher role (p.5).

According to Bryk and Driscoll's findings, in terms of consequences of communal school organization for students, various forms of social misbehavior (class cutting, absenteeism and classroom disorder) were less prevalent in schools with a communal organization. School dropout rates were also lower in such schools and their students were more interested in learning. Applying Bryk and Driscoll's arguments, the development of school and classroom communities might help lower student mobility.

Wehlage, G. G. et al (1989) suggested how schools create "social bonding" among students, teachers and staff. The term social bonding describes a social-psychological state or outcome in which a student is attached, committed, involved and has belief in the norms, activities and people of an institution (Hirschi 1969). A student is socially bonded to the extent that he or she is attached to adults and peers, committed to the norms of the school, involved in school activities and has belief in the legitimacy and efficacy of the institution. School membership required students to meet these four conditions of social bonding.

Attachment referred to social and emotional ties to others. It was best expressed when an individual felt a personal stake in meeting the expectations of others and conforming to the norms of "good" and "proper" behavior as defined in a particular social setting. Commitment was the second element of social bonding. Whereas attachment emphasized the emotional, commitment emphasized the rational side of participation in any social institution. Commitment stemmed from a more or less rational

calculation of what one must do to achieve goals; in this context, one remained with an institution because it was the pragmatic thing to do. Involvement was the third bonding element. Individuals involved in the activities of an institution were likely to view them as legitimate and valuable. And, lastly, belief was the fourth element in social bonding and the bedrock of this theory. It was difficult to be attached, committed and involved if one did not have faith in the institution.

Wehlage et al (1989) argued that students obtained and maintained school membership by obtaining these four elements of social bonding. School membership was promoted by the following adult practices: 1) active efforts to create positive and respectful relations between adults and students; 2) communication of concern about, and immediate help for, individuals with personal problems; 3) active help in meeting institutional standards of success and competence; and 4) active help in identifying a student's place in society based on the link between herself, her school and her future. In exchange for this energetic and active adult commitment, student responsibilities involve: 1) behaviors that are positive and respectful toward adults and peers; and 2) educational engagement, i.e. a level of mental and physical effort in school tasks that makes their own achievement likely and makes the commitment of adults rewarding (pp.120-121).

Wehlage et al also argued that programs for potential dropouts could have the following effects on their students: 1) the ability to establish a sense of social bonding to the school, teachers and peers; 2) support for students in their efforts to alter previous attendance, behavior and academic patterns that interfere with school success; 3) the ability to nurture self-esteem and increase personal control; 4) improvement of academic self-concept and an increase of aspirations for further learning; and 5) an extension of

students' sense of opportunity regarding future occupations. Fundamental to these positive changes was a commitment on the part of the school to help all students succeed. Such a commitment led to the cultivation of activities and attitudes aimed at integrating students into the school environment in ways that helped them overcome isolation, academic difficulties and the experience of incongruence (p.154).

Tinto's work (1993) elaborated on a theory of institutional support that attracts and sustains membership. Although Tinto examined college students, an argument on a connection between a higher educational institution and college students was applicable to a connection between an elementary school and grade-level students. Tinto (1993) argued that voluntary departure from college resulted more from institutional experiences with the college than from prior experiences, preparation or the strength of individual dispositions. He believed that schools might withhold the kind of commitment to students that was crucial to their membership and retention. This lack of commitment often was explained in terms of the family backgrounds, personal problems and anti-school behaviors that adolescents displayed. Students with certain personal or environmental characteristics might be seen as unworthy or at least very unlikely to benefit from teachers' efforts; these students were viewed as "damaged," and unable to benefit from school. These negative views of students corresponded to those of transient students in Benson et al's study (as cited in Jason et al, 1992, p.51). Using Tinto's argument, some school personnel might not make an effort to create a connection and to reach out to students who moved frequently. When schools did not "reach out" to these students to make them a part of the classroom, they failed to develop a sense of classroom community and were easily left out.

Tinto (1993) further described impediments to school membership. There are four common impediments, which include adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation. These terms identify ways in which students were prevented from becoming school members and suggests by implication some constructive responses the institution could make to young people who were unsuccessful in school.

Membership boundary maintenance theory

As described above, market reform strategies enhanced student mobility. As schools compete over students as resources, some schools might modify their policies for entry and exit to maintain or increase enrollment. Such a modification of policies might negatively affect the development of school and classroom as community because school personnel might need to deal with an extra amount of student mobility. There appears to be a clash between the effort of developing a communal classroom and school and the intent to control entry and exit by modifying policies. The following explains how the maintenance of membership boundaries for students took place.

Two aspects of environmental uncertainty were especially relevant to the study: changes in the quality of client inputs, and changes in the task-related resources made available to the organization by its environment (Reihl, 1992, p.36). In each of these cases, one way in which an organization could adapt to imposed conditions was through the creation or modification of its membership boundaries. These boundaries had to do with the inclusion of categories of individuals within the organization and with the designation of particular behaviors of individuals to which the organization could lay claim (Scott, 1998, p.36).

Maintenance of membership boundaries was accomplished by organizations through control over the admittance of members into the organization, control over their exit, or control over both admittance and exit. In addition, members of many organizations also had some self-control over entrance and departure. Aldrich (1979) argued that these three dimensions—organizational control over entrance, organizational control over exit, and member control over entrance or exit—must be considered together in describing an organization's boundary maintenance.

Responses and Strategies to the Issue of Student Mobility

Literature on the patterns and causes of student mobility, on the effects of student mobility on individuals and the effects of student mobility on organizations raised the issue of a clash or a tension around student mobility. We predicted that different situated educators might respond to student mobility in various ways. Various ways that they would respond to student mobility may create a tension. A tension must come from different incentives and educational goals that educators had. How different incentives were created within the organization are discussed in the following theory section.

The section of literature review on responses and strategies to deal with student mobility addresses what could be done within an educational setting. There is a limited amount of literature on actual strategies already implemented to deal with student mobility. That there is a clash around the issue of student mobility among differently situated educators might explain why there is only a limited amount of literature on it. Thus, the issue was not directly solved, but it was rather left as it was. Nonetheless, the responses and strategies that were suggested to implement in previous literature help us to think how to possibly reduce mobility and to deal with the consequences of mobility.

Despite the fact that a large amount of the literature addressed problems and consequences of student mobility on performance, social skills, instruction, classroom dynamics, and school as a community, there were not many articles that analyzed strategies to deal with student mobility. While many educators were concerned about the needs of transfer students and the school system developed generic orientation programs, few evaluated the success of these programs in the Cornille, Bayer and Smyth study (as cited in Jason et al 1992). But some researchers did make suggestions on how to deal with student mobility. Here are some suggestions the researchers listed suggested implementing.

The School Transition Project in Chicago

The School Transition Project in Chicago was one of few programs directly dealing with transfer students. In the four years of the program, 10 schools were randomly selected and assigned to an experimental condition and 10 to a control condition in the first year of the study—1986. Nearly 1,400 elementary school children were studied. According to Jason et al (1992), the School Transition Project was, in part, an opportunity to advocate well-being and provide counseling for mobile students in one Chicago-area school. Throughout the project, mobile students were tutored directly in a school setting, and teacher and tutors regularly communicated to each other verbally or in writing, discussing the children's academics, self-esteem and peer relations. In the Project, teacher-tutor communication was one of the top priorities (p.99).

The Project also provided resources that parents of mobile students generally desired, such as psychological services, bilingual services, educational testing, tutoring for siblings and low-cost health services. The goal of the School Transition Project was

to teach students skills they needed to succeed at their new school (p. 101). The Project also aimed to increase teachers' awareness of what it meant for a child to be new at a school and of these students' special needs. Finally, the Project attempted to get parents involved and trained them to tutor (p.101). Thus, the success of the program depended on building resources and support for the transfer students during a one-year intervention so that children would continue learning and progressing on their own. The Project showed promise in improving transfer students' academic performance (p.193).

The School Transition Project in Chicago was one of few programs meant to improve transfer students' academic and social lives. But there are not many strategic programs implemented to deal with the problem yet. What follows are the suggestions that researchers and practitioners made to help transfer students academically, socially and psychologically.

What students, families and community members should do

Rumberger et al (1999) suggested in their California study that it was best for parents to resolve problems at school before initiating a school transfer. Parents were encouraged to be aware that it was better to make school changes between school semesters or at the end of the school year. This suggestion also made sense for the evicted students as indicated below.

In 1988, in Rochester, New York, an apartment owners' association president, David Shuler, took action to help decrease student mobility (Williams 1996). Shuler discovered that the local school near his apartment building had a mobility rate of 73 percent and found that mobility had seriously affected students academically. To help lower mobility rates, the association: 1) sent letters to parents, explaining the negative

effects of mobility and offering to help them to stay within their schools' attendance

boundaries if they had to move, by either mediating disputes with landlords or helping

the parents find new apartments nearby (p.39). The association helped resolve the

housing problems of 40 families; and 2) convinced HUD to enclose notices in welfare

checks, stressing the importance of stability in school. The association also persuaded

the agency to send rent checks to landlords.

What schools should do

An organizational perspective was helpful for planning interventions (Jason et al

1992). It was important to consider teacher, student and administrator behavior as

important variables in the school milieu to discover a school's resources and constraints

in the Short and Short's study (as cited in Jason et al, 1992). Fisher and Matthews (1999)

completed a qualitative study on interventions that schools and school districts provided

for mobile students. They realized that only a small number of studies examined existing

school programs that were developed and implemented specifically for particular sources

of student mobility such as seasonal or migrant patterns of attendance. They found that

even fewer studies investigated interventions that were more inclusive of or relevant to

other populations of mobile students, particularly those with less predictable patterns of

mobility (p.6). Although it might be presumed that most of the effect of student mobility

on school functionality was experienced at the classroom level, much of the literature

suggested that the impact was significant at the administrative level as well (p.7).

Disruptions in student attendance and enrollment not only complicated the maintenance

of student records, but also potentially frustrated administrative efforts to build a stable

sense of school community. The Fisher and Matthews study examined the following

three major areas: 1) programs that stabilized schools; 2) perceptions of effective components; and 3) contextual factors that helped to sustain interventions (Fisher and Matthews, 1999, p.10).

Programs that stabilized schools contained the following five domains or types of programs that school personnel believed to be beneficial in stabilizing their student population (Fisher and Matthews 1999; Jason et al 1992; Rumberger 1999): Schools could provide in-class tutoring and before and after programs for both academics and social skills. Personal and family counseling would help families and students to communicate with one another better through acquiring problem-solving skills. A school could function like a community center that provided families with basic needs that included health care, food and clothing. As a community center, a school could also provide some before and after programs to enhance parent employability.

Perceptions of effective program components comprised both effective programs for families and effective programs for students (Fisher and Matthews, 1999, p.14). Effective components for families included programs like health clinics and family camps, and making a school accessible to parents. Effective components for students included: 1) consistent in-school programs; 2) establishment of caring relationships; and 3) the belief that all students could succeed. Lastly, contextual factors that helped sustain interventions comprised two domains—internal and external support structures. Internal support structures specified that there was a very high level of mutual support among the administration, teachers and staff, and that there was a high level of commitment and enthusiasm among administrators, counselors and teachers (Fisher and Matthews 1999; Ohio State Department 1998; Rumberger et al 1999). External support came from a

variety of agencies (corporations, universities, Boys & Girls Clubs, the YMCA). Most of the schools were able to provide extra-curricular services because of their affiliation with community agencies. Additionally, schools trained parents to help each other adjust to a new school environment by getting parents involved as orientation facilitators for new parents at the school's resource center, as well as assisting them in their acquisition of additional resources.

Fisher and Matthews (1999) indicated that, while most of the programs were not designed specifically for highly mobile students and their families, they were perceived to have a stabilizing effect on the schools. This was primarily due to the fact that a large number of highly mobile families were able to benefit from the school's resources. Although some research (e.g. Fisher and Matthews 1999) suggested that highly mobile students and families received helpful services, other research indicated that transient students often failed to receive remedial services.

Only a small minority of transfer students actually received remedial services, perhaps because newcomers were too often seen as presenting unwanted problems for teachers (Jason et al, 1992, p.51). One investigation revealed that teachers tended to hold stereotyped views of transfer children with regard to attendance, ability, attitude and academic achievement in the study of Warner 1969 (as cited in Jason et al, 1992). For successful transition, transfer students must be accepted by teachers, and other school support personnel such as teacher aides, counselors and school psychologists, who play a central role in helping new students to succeed in school. As for peer support, ways to capitalize on positive social factors in schools included implementation of peer tutoring or encouragement of cooperative learning efforts among students (Jason et al 1992).

Similar to paired, peer tutoring, student team learning was another educational approach that groups students to complete class assignments; with this strategy, individual student achievement depended on the cooperation and success of the group in the study of Hawkins and Weis (as cited in Jason et al 1992). During orientation programs, the coupling of nontransfer "buddies" with newcomers was shown to establish immediate social networks within the school for transfer students, thereby potentially contributing to successful transition adjustment in the study of Jason and Bogat (as cited in Jason et al, 1992).

Williams (1996) suggested that a school could be a community center and could become a liaison to community agencies such as health centers. In this way, between 1991 and 1994, one Chicago school lowered mobility rates from 40 to 20 percent. Buerkle (1997, p.14) suggested that this might improve school attendance for all students, with particular emphasis on attendance issues related to families who were changing residence or were homeless.

What the State should do

Rumberger et al's study (1999) suggested the following things for the State to do:

1) require schools to report mobility and completion rates to the State Department of Education; 2) include mobility rates as a measure of school effectiveness in school accountability and performance reports; 3) hold school districts accountable to monitor the whereabouts of students who leave a school early, particularly students who say they are transferring to another school within the district, to insure that students actually enroll in another school in a timely fashion; 4) require school districts to transmit student records to the new school in a timely fashion; 5) urge the State Department of Education to prepare a guidebook for students and parents on mobility that describes the advantages and disadvantages of changing schools and provides information on actions they can

take to prepare for the move and ease the transition into a new school; 6) urge the State Department of Education to prepare a guidebook for school districts that provides information on actions they can take to reduce unnecessary school transfers and respond to the needs of transfer students; and 7) provide funds to schools with high mobility to establish programs that improve the integration of new students.

Rumberger et al (1999) suggested that the State Department should take the role of monitoring, supervising and controlling student mobility through services they provide to districts and schools. The question was how effective what they suggested would be, considering the fact that some students, particularly students in inner city schools, just disappear one day and show up in a new school without notice.

Summary of Literature Review

The clarification of the patterns and causes of student mobility suggest that student mobility is an educational as well as a social issue. Although student mobility was largely perceived as a problem both for individuals and organizations, student mobility was also utilized as a solution in certain situations. Adverse effects of student mobility included mobile students' low academic performance and their lack of social skills, limited educational opportunities for stable students who were in a classroom with a large number of mobile students, teachers' adjustments to instructional approaches and classroom dynamics, and building principals' struggles with creating a sense of community within a school. Positive effects of student mobility were to create a better teaching and learning environment by removing students who had disciplinary problems, and to gain and maintain enrollment by modifying rules of market reform policies. Dual characteristics of student mobility—adverse and positive effects created tension among differently situated educators.

There was evidence that such dual characteristics of student mobility exist, and there is a lack of literature reviewing and analyzing the programs dealing with student mobility. It was important for policymakers and educators to understand there was tension around the issue of student mobility and that there are consequences that students and educators deal with. Responses and strategies for student mobility helped the reader to be aware of what could be done to reduce adverse effects of student mobility within an educational setting.

Literature on student mobility did not explain why and what variations in knowledge of, perceptions of and responses to student mobility were among differently situated educators within an organization. In order to examine and analyze why and what such variations were, the next section addresses organizational theories that predict why and what the variations are. Organization theories describe incentives and behaviors in relation to actors' roles and responsibilities of their position within the organization. Incentives and incentive-induced behaviors determine how to respond to student mobility. And, the interaction of actors around the issue of student mobility determines the effectiveness of organizational responses to student mobility.

Chapter 4

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the research was conducted to explore how differently situated actors might respond to student mobility differently, what might explain such variations, and how such variations might affect organizational response to the issue. The following three theories help us to understand and explain why differently situated educators' responses to student mobility might be different.

Three theories—the loose coupling theory, Parsons' (1960) organizational theory and the resource dependence theory--help us to predict that differently situated actors might respond to student mobility in a variety of ways. The loose coupling theory explains that high differentiation and low integration are created based on actors' specialized job responsibilities within the organization. The ways to understand and respond to the issue of student mobility may be different, depending upon what knowledge educators have at a compartmentalized unit or level within the organization. Parsons further explains three distinctive levels of the organization—technical, administrative and institutional—and the differentiated functions of each level as being based on distinctively specialized job responsibilities and control. These two theories help us to predict that teachers, principals and district administrators might have different understandings, and responses, to the issue of student mobility because each will have bounded perceptions within a loosely coupled organization. The resource dependence theory also helps us to understand that the organization is affected by the environment— external forces. The organization's basic need is to survive, which is achieved through resource acquisition. Actors are influenced by these external forces differently, depending upon how much contact they have with external forces. In general, the higher

up in the organization, the more external forces tend to exert influence over individual actors. Depending upon where they are in the organization and how much influence they have in the environment, their responses to the issue of student mobility might be different. Within a school system, district administrators have more contact with the environment than do principals and teachers. Thus, it might be predictable that district administrators would be most affected by the environment. As a result, their responses to the issue of student mobility might presumably be different than those of principals and teachers.

The Competing Values Framework (CVF) is a framework for the analysis of actions across three levels. The CVF examines actors' motivations and behaviors in relation to four different values—preservation, equity, transition and productivity. These four values are created by the combination of organizational characteristics as inherent to the aspects of internal process vs. external process and stability vs. flexibility. The CVF helps us to diagnose how actors respond differently to the issue of student mobility and how different responses create tensions.

Loose Coupling Theory

Structures and roles

The phrase "loose coupling" appeared in the literature (Glassman 1979; March and Olsen 1975) to contest the prevailing belief that elements in organizations are tightly coupled. A newer, open-systems view of organizational structure stressed the complexity and variability of the individual component parts—both individuals and subgroups—as well as the looseness of connections among them. High differentiation and low integration were the primary characteristics of loose coupling systems. The degree of coupling between persons, roles or units within organizations depended upon the activity

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of their common variables. If two elements had few variables in common, or if variables common to both are weak compared to other influential variables, then they were relatively independent of each other and thus loosely coupled. In school systems, differently situated actors had distinctively differentiated job responsibilities so that they had specialized roles. Teachers provided students with instruction in a classroom; principals administered school operations and district administers coordinated and negotiated with both internal and external personnel and resources to manage the district. Thus, actors in school systems were more likely to be loosely coupled because of few common job responsibilities. It was harder to produce change or shared responses across levels of the organization because of few commonalities or light linkages.

Relationships between individuals and subunits

Loose coupling exists if A affects B, 1) suddenly (rather than continuously), 2) occasionally (rather than constantly), 3) negligibly (rather than significantly), and 4) indirectly (rather than directly). Connections might appear suddenly and occasionally, when a teacher asks a principal to get a new student's record from her old school because of the delay in record transfer. Connections might be negligible, as when there is no appropriate response from the district administrators to principals regarding their concern about the effect of student mobility on student performance. Connections might be indirect, as when a superintendent can affect a teacher only by first affecting a principal (Weick 2001, p.383)

Bounded rationality

Loosely coupled systems are often characterized as systems in which there is low agreement about preferences and cause-effect linkages. When actors see things differently because of different roles, values and perspectives, their efforts would be only

loosely coordinated. The sequence of activity and sensemaking that produces loose coupling begins when individual actions produce individual realities that have only modest overlap. Having acted toward an event such as the issue of student mobility, people perceive that event in different ways and, as a result, see different things. Thus, educators only know what they pay attention to and because of bounded rationality, respond to an event such as student mobility differently.

A loosely coupled system is also a consequence of bounded rationality, and the constraints on rationality across people and groups. Bounded rationality is not homogenous. For example, when people search in the vicinity of the problem, it has been presumed that they would search in the same ways and in the same places. However, because people differ in their definitions of what a problem is, what constitutes a search, and how much information they can store before they have to process it, they differ in what they find (Weick 2001).

This bounded rationality argument supports the prediction of this research that differently situated actors would see the issue of student mobility differently because of their distinctive roles and their role-related bounded perceptions of the issue, so that their efforts to address the issue might not be well coordinated.

Sensitive sensing mechanisms to external conditions

Loose coupling might provide a sensitive sensing mechanism to external conditions. A sensitive sensing mechanism is a functional tool to detect what is happening around an actor and how it affects her role. Perception is most accurate when a medium that contains many independent elements senses a thing. It can be argued that loosely coupled systems preserve many independent sensing elements and therefore understand their environments better than more tightly coupled systems, which have

fewer independent elements. Sensing mechanisms to the environments are not homogenous, just like bounded rationality. Actors' roles and their related responsibilities determine what their sensing mechanisms are.

A similar argument can be made that, in loosely coupled systems where the identity, uniqueness and separateness of elements is preserved, the system can potentially retain a greater number of mutations and solutions than would be the case with a tightly coupled system. Therefore, in a loosely coupled system there is more room available for self-determination by the actors so that their responses to the issue such as student mobility might be different. However, loose coupling might inhibit diffusion of these adaptive practices to other parts of the organization.

In this study, loose coupling's bounded rationality and sensitive sensing mechanism are keys to predicting why differently situated actors might respond to student mobility differently. With their varied roles and job responsibilities, actors' perceptions and sensing mechanisms are different, and as a result their responses to student mobility might be different. How actors perceive and respond to student mobility differently can be predicted more clearly by combining Parsons' three distinctive levels of organization.

Adaptability—flexibility and stability

A key dilemma in organizations involves the trade-off between adaptability that requires loosening and adaptation that requires tightening (Weick 2001). The trade-off between adaptability and adaptation is often described in the context of flexibility and stability. Flexibility and stability are two important aspects of the values in the Competing Values Framework, which will be explained later in this chapter. Flexibility is required to modify current practices in order to accommodate to the current changes.

This means that the organization must detect changes and retain a sufficient number of responses to accommodate to these changes. Total flexibility makes it impossible for the organization to retain a sense of identity and continuity. But total adherence to stability would be as disruptive as total flexibility because more economical ways of responding might never be discovered and new environment features might not be noticed.

Adaptability vs. adaptation

Loose coupling is the source of adaptability whereas tight coupling is the source of most adaptation. Loose coupling of structural elements may be highly adaptive for the organization, particularly when confronting a diverse, segmented environment. To the extent that departmental units are free to vary independently, they may provide a more sensitive mechanism to detect environmental variation. Allowing local units to adapt to local conditions without requiring changes in the larger system reduces coordination costs for the system as a whole (Scott, 1998). In a loosely coupled system, actors handle the events by frequent local adjustments, and they are unconstrained by centralized policy. But, if major change becomes necessary, it is much harder to diffuse it among a loosely coupled system.

Glassman's two systems

Using elements of coupling, Glassman (1973) categorized the degree of coupling between two systems on the basis of the activity of the variables, which the two systems share. We can apply this to the educational situation by considering the principal/vice-principal/superintendent as one system, and the teacher/classroom/pupil/parent/curriculum as another system. If we do not find any variables in the teacher's world to be shared in the world of a principal or if the variables

held in common were unimportant relative to their variables, then the principal can be regarded as being loosely coupled with the teacher (Weick 1976).

Parsons' Functionalist View of Organization

In contrast to Glassman's two systems, Parsons (1960) addressed three distinctive organizational levels. Parsons (1960) argued that complex organizations, like schools, had three distinct levels of responsibility and control: the technical level, the managerial level and the institutional level. Fundamental educational activities—teaching and learning—take place at the technical level, where teachers operate. Mediation, administration and coordination happen at the managerial level, directed for the most part by the principal. And, lastly, how the organizations survive, negotiate, compete and cooperate with external actors such as the public, the school board, the media, state government, federal government and international agencies occur at the institutional level, a concern of the district administrator. Their professional roles determine what their functions are, and they also determine what their responsibilities and control are.

Parsons also suggested that at each of the two points of articulation between them, there was a qualitative break in the simple continuity of "line" authority because the functions at each level were qualitatively different. The articulation of level and of functions rest on a two-way interaction, with each side, by withholding its important contribution, in a position to interfere with the functioning of the other and of the larger organization. His argument is different from Weick's loose coupling system in which subgroups or subunits of the organization might not be well aligned because their role-related responsibilities did not overlap much. Parsons argued because role-related responsibilities were different at the different level or unit of the organization, such differences actually might interfere with the other unit or level of the organization.

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Depending upon where educators are located within the school system, their responsibility and control differ. Given an issue, the perception of the issue and the level of attention to the issue vary between differently situated educators. Parsons claims that uncertainty (about an issue like student mobility) would appear to be greatest at the institutional level because the organization deals largely with elements of the environment over which it has no formal authority or control. Uncertainty, however, would become less at the technical level because that is where the actual product of the origination is processed—in this case, teachers conduct teaching in classrooms. According to this model, educators might express views and respond to the issue of mobility differently, depending upon what their role-related functions and how uncertain they are about issues like student mobility.

Resource Dependence Theory

The resource dependence theory further explains how the organization is affected by the environment, how the organization survives, and how the environment might affect educators' certain behaviors. School systems' behavior toward student mobility might also be understood from the perspective of the resource dependence theory. As part of the systems theory, the resource dependence theory argues that an organization is most critically attentive to those elements in its environment which provide the resources important to its survival. The resource dependence theory also recognizes the relationship between organization and environment as an interactive one.

McPherson et al (1986) describe how those who have the most power (e.g., through their control over money, public opinion, regulatory mandates, votes) will have much more influence over the organization than those who are powerless. Those who run organizations set the agenda and influence decisions. The powerless, on the other hand,

largely accept decisions made without their input. They reach out as administrators to try to alter their own environments—to manage, as Pfeffer (1978) puts it, "their external dependencies, both to ensure the survival of the organization and to acquire, if possible, more autonomy and freedom from external constraint." McPherson et al (1986) and Pfeffer (1978) recognize that in their dependency upon their environments, organizations are rewarded if they can somehow acquire a bit of their own power and discretion over that dependency. School district superintendents typically put a great deal of time into managing the agendas of their local boards of education. Which issues come before the board and which do not, what gets read and what does not, what comes up first and what last—these are important issues in the lives of school administrators.

The resource dependence model links the internal politics of an organization (and thus its structure and function) to environmental effects; internally, the organization reflects its external constraints. The resource dependence theory also argues that survival is a primary goal for an organization and that organizations tend to attempt to actively manage their own survival. The resource dependence model, however, incorporates from ecology the added notion that it is the environment that essentially creates the conditions for intra-organizational behavior. To understand the behavior of an organization internally, one must first understand that an organization's dependence on resources links it to a specific environment.

In this research study, the majority of educators feel pressured to meet the levels determined by standardized test scores. They acknowledge that the powerful influence of public opinions on what makes a good school district is based upon standardized test scores. Educators want to obtain and maintain good reputations for school and district performance for recognition and survival. Thus, their behavior toward meeting the new

standards indicates how they were affected by external factors. As Parsons' functionalist view of the organization suggests, district administrators would most actively detect the influence of public opinions and state mandated regulations because they deal with these elements of the environment at the institutional level. Thus, logically speaking, district administrators are more likely to respond to meeting the new standards.

Additionally, because of competition created by charter schools and inter-district transfer policies, educators, particularly district-level administrators, are concerned about student enrollment in their district. Under the new funding system, the number of students enrolled in the district determines state aid levels. In order to operate the district, the district receives a certain amount of money that is equivalent to the number of students enrolled in the district. A decline in enrollment, caused by demographic change and charter schools and inter-district transfers, is significant in the district. Thus, recruiting and maintaining students is an important agenda item for the district administrators, and thus their focus is on resources—in this case, children, who bring money into the district. Students may be perceived as consumers and resources by district administrators, while students might be perceived as learners and children by teachers and the majority of principals. District administrators might utilize charter school and inter-district policies to increase and maintain enrollment so that student mobility might be enhanced by market reform policies. Student mobility created by market reform policies, particularly inward mobility to the district, might be largely perceived as a solution to district survival by the district administrators, while student mobility caused by market reform policies—most kinds of mobility: incoming and revolving in particular—may be perceived as a problem by teachers and the majority of principals because student mobility would create a disruptive teaching, learning and

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community building environment in classrooms and schools. The resource dependence theory explains the tension on the part of resource acquisition and growth among differently situated actors.

These three theories—loose coupling, Parsons' functionalist organization theory and the resource dependence theory—describe functions, behaviors, actions and perceptions of actors. And they also help us to predict that differently situated actors might respond to the issue of student mobility differently because their role-related responsibilities and control are different due to their bounded perceptions and their relationship with external forces.

The Competing Values Framework (CVF)[1]

The CVF is a tool for analysis of actions across three levels of the organization, which was predicted by the above three theories. The CVF is a framework that highlights four different values constructed by the characteristics of actors' behaviors and perceptions reflecting their focus on internal process vs. external process and stability vs. flexibility. Different values cause tensions. It is important to identify what and where tensions rest within the organization and describe how tensions contribute to an organizational response to student mobility. Thus, the CVF is useful to apply in this study, along with the three theories.

The CVF examines the actions predicted by the three theories: 1) loose coupling

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[1] For many decades, academics, researchers, and practitioners have sought to identify exactly what makes schools "effective." One stream of research, focusing on the key factors of organizational effectiveness, is the Competing Values Framework (CVF). (Quinn 1988; Cameron and Whetten 1994; Cameron and Quinn 1999). The CVF defines core values on which judgments about organizational effectiveness are made.

of differently situated educators' responses to the issue of student mobility due to bounded rationality and different sensing mechanisms; 2) Parsons' three distinctive functional responsibilities that predict different actions; and 3) the effect of environment on actors' responses to student mobility.

Within complex organizations, individuals must fulfill many competing expectations (Quinn 1988). These individuals, as do all individuals, have strong predispositions about what is important. As a result, how they choose to organize their work reflects their perceptions of what is "good" to do; that is, perceptions of what they value. Often, these values exist at the "functional" level, depending on individuals' organizational roles-what they are responsible for doing in the course of the day (Quinn, 1988). This argument is closely tied to Weick's loose coupling's bounded rationality and sensitive sensing mechanism argument. In loosely coupled systems, actors only know what they pay attention to according to their own sensing mechanisms, and because of bounded rationality their definitions of a problem might be different and their information-processing speed might be different. As a result, they eventually might respond to the issue of student mobility differently.

The framework suggests that core organizational values can be displayed along two dimensions. As Figure 2 indicates, one dimension of effectiveness distinguishes flexibility, discretion and dynamism from stability, order and control. The second dimension of effectiveness distinguishes an internal orientation, integration and unity from an external orientation, differentiation and rivalry. When intersected, these dimensions form four quadrants, each representing a distinct set of individuals' values.

Adjacent quadrants share an orientation. In Figure 2, Equity and Preservation share an internal focus. Equity and Transition share a focus with flexibility. Preservation

and Productivity share an emphasis on stability. Transition and Productivity share an external focus. Also notable is that quadrants opposite each other on the diagonal represent opposing or competing values. For instance, Equity, with an internal focus and an emphasis on flexibility, is the opposite of Productivity, with an external focus on stability. The CVF captures the influence of environment—an external focus that is addressed by the resource dependence theory. Actors who emphasize the values of Transition (flexibility and external focus) and Productivity (stability and external focus), are responsible for making a smooth transition or survival by reaching out to external resources. The CVF will be able to examine the influence of environment on differently situated actors and their behaviors.

Figure 2

Flexibility and Discretion

| EQUITY | | TRANSITION |

Internal

Maintenance

and Integration

External

Positioning and

Differentiation

| PRESERVATION | | PRODUCTIVITY |

Control and Stability
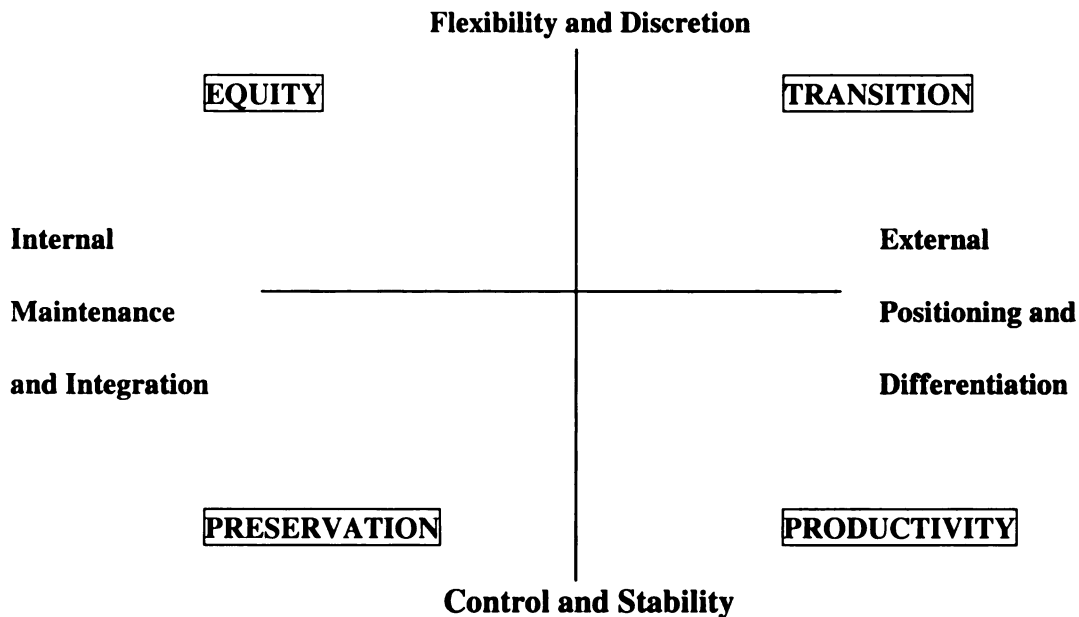
Cameron and Quinn (1999), p.41.

The Competing Values Framework provides a tool for examining complex

educational issues such as those related to student mobility. The framework functions for

individuals at all three levels of the organization. Combining varying responsibilities and

control at three distinctive three levels of the organization addressed by Parsons and the

CVF, when a student comes and leaves, differently situated educators' responses are

identified as follows: at the technical level, teachers provide instruction to a new student

and her class. Their responsibilities are to be equally accessible to all students (Equity)

as well as to maintain their classroom management and classroom stability

(Preservation). Teachers, who primarily hold an Equity perspective, emphasize internal

relations and flexibility. As new students enter their classrooms, they intend to integrate

them into the family because they want them to belong to the group to the same extent as

the long-standing students. To achieve that, they maintain a flexible approach to

instruction and classroom organization. A teacher whose orientation is on stability is

primarily concerned with the maintenance of established classroom practices rather than with the well-being of the incoming student. The teacher monitors the situation, and is likely to exert control to integrate the student into the group.

At the administration level, principals' responsibilities are focused on mediation, administration and coordination, and their characteristics reflect the values of Preservation and Transition. Principals, whose value is focused on preservation, want to maintain school as it is regardless of the flow of students by school or district regulations and policies. Principals who are flexible to student mobility may be more likely to reach out to external support such as parents and agencies for tutors, mentors, monetary resources, books and materials to go through a transitional stage created by student mobility. They are also more like to reach out to parents to get them involved in school activities to create a cohesive, strong school community.

At the institutional level, district administrators both compete and cooperate with external factors, which characterizes the perspectives of Transition and Productivity. District administrators, whose goal is to survive and grow, reach out to external resources that include students. Another responsibility is to produce outcomes like high student enrollment by resource acquisition and certain levels of test scores by implementing district policies aiming at the reduction of student mobility's negative consequences.

As job responsibilities indicate, teachers focus on internal relations, principals emphasize both external and internal relations, and district administrators negotiate with external factors. Although their internal and external foci are different, they all have perspectives and values of flexibility and stability in classrooms, schools and the district. As Weick's loose coupling's adaptability theme suggests, total adherence to the status quo might be as disruptive as total flexibility, so differently situated actors paying attention to

both flexibility and stability would be an effective way to deal with the issue.

At each level of the organization, actors have two different values—Equity and Preservation at the technical level; Preservation and Transition at the administrative level; and Transition and Productivity at the institutional level. Just as Weick proposed, the CVF also suggests "either one value or the other value" solutions are less than satisfactory. By contrast, educators who recognize and utilize the tension by seeking a solution that addresses both ends of the conflict can reach a superior decision. A teacher who seeks a solution to the situation that both integrates students into the classroom family and maintains instructional planning is responding to a complex problem in an equally complex way. Many times, possible solutions to the tension reside in an adjacent quadrant. For example, a solution to the tension just described might come from Transition. The teacher might want to develop an innovative way of addressing the deficiencies of incoming students while at the same time maintaining classroom instruction as planned. An innovative way would include mentoring and tutoring programs, collaborative learning activities and buddy systems that require new resources, such as classroom tutors or aides. Such innovation at a local level is allowed to happen within a loosely coupled system.

Summary of the Three Theories and an Analytic Framework

The loose coupling theory, Parsons' functionalist view of organization and the resource dependence theory are used in this study to make a prediction that actors situated at three levels of the organization would respond to the issue of the student mobility differently. The Competing Values Framework (CVF) is a tool to analyze the actions of actors and examine if or how individuals' responses are loosely coupled; how different actions are related to distinctive functional responsibilities at three levels of the

organization; and how the external environment affects individuals' responses to student mobility.

First, the loosely coupled systems theory helps to predict that actors' responses to the issue of student mobility might be different because their perceptions of the issue would be different due to different sensing mechanisms closely related to role-based responsibilities. Thus, educators' responses to student mobility may be unique to each other and consequently may not be commonly shared. As the organization is loosely coupled in the areas of tasks and roles, it is more difficult to produce system-wide responses across the levels than within the unit.

Second, Parsons' functionalist levels of organization highlights how tasks and roles are determined at the technical, administrative and institutional levels, so that responses to the issue of student mobility from teachers, principals and district administrators are predicted to be different.

Third, the resource dependence theory helps to make a prediction that the interchange between an organization and its external world affects organizational decisions on student mobility and actors respond to external forces differently depending upon how much and how often they deal with them.

Finally, the CVF is a framework to diagnose differently situated actors' actions and to identify tensions around the issue of student mobility. It is important to locate where tensions lie and identify what kinds of tensions exist, and further explain how tensions affect an organizational response to student mobility. The CVF addresses varying values along internal and external factors as well as flexibility and stability. Four quadrants, created based on four different characteristics of values, represent four distinctive values—equity, preservation, transition and productivity. Different values are

created within a loosely coupled system that allows actors to be independent and cultivate their own ways to detect and respond to the issue of student mobility.

Based on the descriptions of the functional roles at three distinctive levels of the organization, teachers at the technical level would value equity and preservation, while principals at the administrative level would value preservation and transition. District administrators at the institutional level would value transition and productivity. Actors at the different levels of the organization have two different functional values, and tensions might be identified by competing values that differently situated actors possess in relation to their perceptions and responses to student mobility.

Chapter 5

Methods

Research Design

This is a comparative case study. Among qualitative research designs, a case study was chosen because several elementary schools were selected as a "case," based on student mobility rates and school characteristics in one urban school district in a Midwestern state of the United States. The case study was appropriate to this research because only one phenomenon—student mobility in seven elementary schools in one urban school district—was explored. The study emphasized exploration of variations across levels of the educational system and organization.

Sample, Population, or Subjects

Based on student mobility rates (calculated as the number of entrances and exits divided by enrollment) and school characteristics (e.g., enrollment, racial diversity and free or reduced lunches), seven traditional elementary schools were chosen in the Renton School District. In order to examine some variation, two different types of schools were needed—high student mobility rates and low student mobility rates. Further, in order to explore the effects of student mobility, schools with similar characteristics were selected. Seven schools were appropriate enough to identify some differences and similarities around the issue of student mobility. Four schools with high student mobility rates and three schools with low student mobility rates were selected. All seven schools had high minority and free/reduced lunch student populations.

Principals of the seven elementary schools and two teachers from each elementary school were interviewed face-to-face by the researcher. Teachers either self-selected or

were recommended by principals. Eight district office administrators were contacted, and six of them completed a face-to-face interview with the researcher.

Data Collection Procedures

As soon as research approval was granted from the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) and from the Renton School District, face-to-face interviews with district office personnel, school building principals and classroom teachers (who experienced high student transience in their classrooms) were conducted in the academic year of 2000-2001. They were asked open-ended questions that contained three different themes: their knowledge of student mobility specific to Renton, perceptions of student mobility and responses to student mobility. The knowledge of student mobility theme had eight sub-questions, the perceptions of student mobility theme had four, and the responses to student mobility theme had between eight and 12. The interviewees were also asked to provide details on their history at the district and their job responsibilities. Teachers were asked to rank the five most important aspects in education from their point of view in order to understand what mattered the most in their classroom. Interview protocols are listed in appendix 1. Six central office personnel, seven school building principals sixteen classroom teachers were interviewed, making a total of 29 interviewees involved in this study. Interview protocols used open-ended questions and lasted on average one and a half to two hours.

In addition to face-to-face interviews, the following existing data and documents were collected and examined. Most statistical data were collected during the years of 2000-2002, with the exception of data collected in the Renton School District Census for

1989-1990, and some school data from the Renton School District and State Department of Education from before 2000.

From the Census Bureau, the following data were collected: a) Renton School District demographic data; and b) demographic data for the city of Renton in relation to population, number of persons under age 18, and stability rates. The data were used to identify how demographic changes such as the population, the number of people of color and the poverty level possibly affected student mobility in the district. The number of children under age 18 actually indicated that the number of school-aged children was declining.

From the State Department, the following statistics were collected: a) enrollment patterns by district and school; b) state aid foundations by school; c) school characteristics in relation to race, free/reduced lunch and performance; and d) documents on inter-district transfer policy and charter school policy. Enrollment data were used to determine the enrollment pattern. The enrollment pattern was further used to determine how it affected state aid foundations. The data on school characteristics were used to select seven schools that had similar characteristics in order to examine and explore the issue of student mobility itself across schools. Documents on inter-district transfer policy and charter school policy were used to describe these two policies.

From the Intermediate School District (ISD), the data on a number of inter-district transfer students by district and a number of charter school students within the ISD boundary were collected. The data suggest the trend of student mobility across district boundaries and also suggest how the trend of student mobility affected student enrollment in the Renton School District.

From the Renton School District, the following statistics were collected: a) student mobility rates at the school level; b) the number of school choice students by school; and c) documents on the intra-district transfer policy. Student mobility rates were used to select four high-mobility schools and three low-mobility schools to compare and contrast these schools. The data on the number of schools of choice students were collected in order to examine how market reform options possibly affected the school's student mobility. Documents on intra-district transfer policy described that parents could continue to send their children to the school even when they geographically moved.

From individual schools, student mobility data were collected from three schools. Furthermore, principal survey results and selected principal interview results (which were conducted for the Schools of choice Project in 1998 and 1999) were also used to add findings and to help analyze the case. Individual schools' mobility data were used to closely examine how teachers' classroom mobility and how it possibly affected teaching and learning. Principal survey results and selected principal interview results were used to support their motives and behaviors.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher was familiar with the district that was studied because she had been working on a research project in the district for the last three years. The significance of the student mobility issue in the Renton School District stemmed from that research project. The research examined how new policies of schools of choice and charter schools possibly affected school improvement in one intermediate school district in which Renton district was competing for students with other school districts. The

researcher had gained access to central office administrators and building administrators through the previous project. The researcher was also familiar with the topic of the research study, because the topic stemmed from the previous research project she had been working on. Even though the researcher had been familiar with the research site, she needed to file a research application at the central office and receive approval before starting the research study. The researcher was familiar with the procedure of the research application, having used it before for a different project.

Data Analysis

In case study research, Yin (1989) discussed dominant modes of data analysis, such as a) the search for "patterns" by comparing results with patterns predicted from theory or the literature; and b) "explanation building," in which the researcher explored plausible or rival explanations and attempted to build an explanation about the case. All names of districts, schools and educators used in the study are pseudonyms. After categorizing themes and synthesizing them with differently situated actors, emerging patterns were analyzed through the framework of organizational theory—a loosely coupled system, Parsons' functionalist view of the organization, the resource dependence theory—and the Competing Values Framework.

The data were analyzed into certain patterns, categories or themes and were then interpreted by using various theories. In order to find the patterns, categories and themes, emerging themes were identified, which include: 1) causes of student mobility; 2) priority given to the issue of student mobility; 3) effects of student mobility on individuals— students, teachers, principals and district administrators; and 4) strategies for student mobility.

As the State Department did not require the districts to document mobility, there was a lack of statistical data at the state level. Because there was no mandated request for mobility data, there was also a lack of consistent mobility data at the district level. Without enough reliable, consistent statistical mobility data at the district and the school level, the data collection and analysis relied heavily upon face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions. As the study was a case study of one metropolitan district in a Midwestern state, there is no generalizability of the mobility issue to different settings.

Validity

Steps were taken to improve the validity and credibility of the study. Stratified purposeful sampling was used to identify cases of high and low student mobility rates to capture variations rather than a common core. The sample was carefully selected to produce information-rich cases from which one could learn about issues of central importance .

Three different types of triangulation—methods triangulation, analyst triangulation and theory triangulation were used to reduce systematic bias in the data. In each case the strategy involves checking findings against other sources and perspectives. Different types of data: face-to-face interviews, documentation and statistical data, were collected. Then, two educators who were interviewed were asked to review the findings and provide feedback. In this way, interviewees were in a position to corroborate or disapprove of the interpretations of the interviews.

Theory triangulation was incorporated to examine the data from the perspectives of various stakeholder positions. The literature review also provided guidance on the scholarly traditions of data interpretation.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, the researcher returned to the data ,

using a constant comparative method to see if the constructs, categories, explanations and

interpretations fit and made sense Data interpretation was, therefore, rarely the product

of a flash of inspiration, but of a thoughtful process designed to enhance the credibility of

the findings.

Chapter 6

Analysis of Educators' Perspectives and Responses to Student Mobility

Introduction

The following five chapters examine perceptions of and responses to student

mobility from three different vantage points: 1) the perspective of teachers; 2) the

perspective of principals; and 3) the perspective of district administrators. While these

three groups of professionals—teachers, principals and administrators—all worked

within the same larger organization and had certain views in common as result, they were

also differently situated actors within that organization and held different opinions on

certain issues. Their views on student mobility were elicited by asking each

group-teachers, principals and district administrators-their opinions of the following: 1)

what they know about student mobility; 2) how they perceive student mobility, and 3)

how they respond to student mobility. Based on interview results from the above

questions, the following themes emerged and are discussed: 1) how actors thought

students were affected by student mobility; 2) what they perceived to be the causes of

student mobility; 3) how important the issue of student mobility was; 4) how they were

affected by student mobility; and 5) what strategies they used to address student mobility.

Each chapter, except for Chapter 6-the effects of student mobility on students-offers

analyses using three theories (the loose coupling theory, Parsons' functionalist view of

organization, the resource dependence theory) if applicable, and the Competing Values

Framework (CVF) as a analysis tool to examine actors' actions predicted by the above

three theories.

These five chapters are structured and organized as follows: Chapter 6—

Introduction and the effects of student mobility on students from the perspectives of

educators; Chapter 7—Teachers' perspectives and responses to student mobility; Chapter

8—Principals' perspectives and response to student mobility; and Chapter 9—District

administrators' perspectives and responses to student mobility.

The loose coupling theory, Parsons' functionalist view of the organization and the

resource dependence theory were used to explain how differently situated actors might

respond to student mobility differently. For example, the loose coupling theory proposes

that actors at different levels of an organization have different sensing mechanisms

reflecting bounded rationality. Thus, actors' perceptions of the issue of student mobility

and how to interpret and respond to it might be different because the identity, uniqueness

and separateness of functions and responsibilities are preserved for individual actors or

subgroups. An individual actor has more room for self-determination and as a result it is

more difficult for individuals or units to affect the entire system because the system is not

well aligned.

Parsons (1960) argues a similar idea in pointing out three distinctive levels of

organizations—the technical, the administrative, and the institutional levels. In this

model, teachers teach students in classrooms at the technical level, principals administer

and monitor school functions at the administrative level, and district administrators deal

with external factors at the institutional level. Parsons also argues that uncertainty is

larger at the institutional level. Combining the bounded rationality and sensing

mechanisms introduced in the loose coupling theory with Parsons' three different levels

of organization, it could be argued that the farther away from student mobility an actor is,

the less likely he or she is to take action. Consequently, because teachers are closest to the issue of student mobility, we might expect that teachers are more likely to take action on student mobility than principals and district administrators.

The resource dependence theory explains that an organization is affected by an external environment that provides resources indispensable to its survival. Market reform options—charter school and schools of choice policies—created some out of district mobility in Renton District and it affected district enrollment. The number of students enrolled in the district is directly tied to the amount of money it receives from the state because Renton acquires state funding based on students enrolled. It is imperative for district survival that it maintains a certain number of students—sufficient resources.

The CVF can be used to analyze the multiple and often contradictory values that individuals or subunits hold. According to their job responsibilities and how they manifest those responsibilities, individuals or subgroups' value orientations can be displayed across two axes defining role-related values. The two axes represent two dimensions: one from flexibility to stability and one from internal to external concerns. An educator whose orientation is structured around an internal focus and flexibility places value on equity. An educator who structures her job responsibilities around internal orientation and stability primarily emphasizes preservation. An actor who maintains an external orientation and flexibility may value transition. Lastly, an actor whose orientation emphasizes both the external and stability primarily values productivity. Different values might create some tensions among educators on the issue of student mobility.

The following section describes how differently situated actors perceived the effects of student mobility on students. Previous research reveals that educators, in general, perceive student mobility as negatively affecting students both academically and socially. Frequent moves between schools are perceived by educators to create a deficit in learning and social bonding for both mobile and stable students. Most research suggests that student mobility negatively affects students' academic performances. In some cases, however, educators perceived student mobility as positive. If moving to a new school creates a fresh start or more stable learning and living conditions, school transfer is considered to be beneficial for mobile students. Some educators also found it easier to create a more cohesive learning and social classroom community when a disruptive child leaves for a new school.

The following section is organized to explore and examine how educators perceive the effects of student mobility on students in the Renton School District. Negative effects that educators identified include: non-regular attendance, tardiness, low academic achievement, and difficulty of social and psychological adjustment. Positive effects include: more diverse cultural learning and more focus on academics after a fresh start in a more stable living condition.

The Effects of Student Mobility on Students from the Perspectives of Educators[1]

There were both negative and positive effects of student mobility on both mobile and stable students. Negative effects included decreased attendance, tardiness, lower academic achievement and problems in social and psychological adjustment. These Renton study findings were similar to what previous studies suggested. There were,

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[1] In the Renton study, students were not interviewed. Thus, how students were affected by student mobility was solely examined based upon the perspectives on the issue of mobility from teachers,

however, some positive effects, including increased exposure to diverse cultures for stable students and instances in which mobility enabled students to get a "fresh start." These views were held in common across educators at the different levels of organization.

Attendance, tardiness and achievement

Mobility was closely related to attendance, as mobile students tended to miss school during the process of moving. Moving often involved financial, emotional and physical stress, so that schooling for a child sometimes was not given a priority. Five out of seven principals (except Ms. Hughes, a Lynden principal and Ms. Stratton, a Timberland principal) mentioned that attendance and tardiness problems were prominent among mobile, particularly schools of choice students. Schools of choice students tended to miss half days and tended to be late for school or leave early due to their parents' schedule. The principals perceived that situation as a lack of parental responsibility when students did not come to school on time. Accumulation of missing half days and being 20 minutes late for school often created holes and gaps in some mobile students' learning. Principals and teachers also mentioned that parents sometimes neglected to enroll students immediately after a move because they were preoccupied with problems related to the move. As a result, students' absences created discontinuity of instruction. Tardiness associated with mobility was similarly traced to family behavior during and after a move.

Educators in this study were fully aware of the importance of continuity of instruction for students. But, in reality, some students missed school or were late for school, creating "holes and gaps" in learning. Attendance was an issue among mobile

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principals and district administrators who were interviewed in Renton Study.

students, especially students who transferred "school to school" through schools of choice options.

The educators who were interviewed for this study shared their concerns about deficits in learning and social adjustment for mobile students. When mobile students missed school, they missed certain critical curricular elements and, consequently, fell behind the rest of the class. Ms. Mullen, an Akers teacher, said,

"Sometimes, when students move to other schools, they are out of school for three to four weeks before they enroll in a new school. So all during that time, nothing educationally happened to those students."

Moving often created a situation in which students missed school during the move and then were faced with stressful educational situations when they began attending a new school because there was no continuity of learning. Compounding the problem of discontinuity of instruction was the burden of adjusting to new teaching styles in a new school.

Much previous research has suggested (e.g., Benson and Weigel 1980, Benson, Haycraft, Steyaert and Weigel 1979, Ingersoll, Scamman and Eckerling 1989, Kerbow 1996, Ligon and Paredes 1992, Mao et al 1997, Mehana and Reynolds 1995, Buerkle 1997, Morris, Peataner and Nelson 1967, Rumberger and Larson 1998, Rumberger et al 1999, Schaller 1975, U.S. General Accounting Office 1994, Wasserman 2001) that student mobility generally has negative effects on academic achievement. In these research studies, many educators were deeply concerned about the deficits in learning and social adjustment for mobile students. Educators' perceptions in Renton mirrored what previous literature described.

The less students moved, the better their attendance rates. Buerkle (1997) found that attendance was an important predictor of performance for students in the study. Ligon and Paredes (1992) suggested that the longer a student was exposed to a program of instruction, the better the student would learn and acquire skills and knowledge. In other words, schools needed a consistent and continuous period of instruction before they could have a significant impact upon student learning (Ligon and Paredes, 1992, pp.2-3). Thus, continuity of instruction was important to reach a certain educational level.

Social and psychological adjustment

Most educators who were interviewed in this study said mobile students tended to have social adjustment problems. This, too, was consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Jason et al 1992, Buerkle 1997, Rumberger et al 1999, Williams 1996, Elias, Gara and Ubriaso 1985). Since mobile students moved around frequently, educators reported that they tended to withdraw and have difficulty trusting and building social bonds with peers and teachers. Some mobile students felt there was no reason to make friends because they knew they would move soon. Each time they moved, they needed to adjust to new school and classroom rules, which was often difficult for them to adapt to immediately. Adjusting to a new school required the process of 'unlearning' old rules and expectations and 'learning' new things. It took time and energy to make that transition.

Mobility also affected stable students psychologically. Repeated mobility could result in some students feeling numb about the change. Mullen, an Akers teacher, said,

> "Sometimes there is no closure for some children who just disappear. And, it's gotten to the point of some children saying, 'Oh, so and so moved.' There is no

feeling of being sorry about that [or that they] miss him. Just a feeling of, 'He moved.' When the children come in, it's kind of the same way. There is not this- 'We want to make this person welcome.' "

Mullen's experience suggests that students in a classroom with a large number of mobile students may become so used to the influx and exit of students that they have no special feelings for someone leaving or coming in. It could be said that they adopted a survival and adaptation skill to deal with the situation. But, at the same time, it is a sad reality that some stable students also did not develop deep emotional bonding with other students. Without social bonding, it is rather difficult to create a sense of classroom community. As a consequence, learning and teaching are undermined in a classroom lacking a sense of community.

Positive effects of student mobility on stable students

While educators' overall views were that there were not many positive aspects of student mobility, a few were noted. One-third of the teachers indicated that having a frequent influx and exit of students from diverse backgrounds created an important opportunity for students to learn about different views and cultures. As a result of this mobility, students were perceived by these teachers as more open-minded, and more aware and appreciative of differences. Three other teachers also discussed the positive effect of mobility on students when it resulted in a more stable living environment, which better enabled them to focus on academics.

Summary of the effect of student mobility on students

Overall, educators shared that student mobility negatively affected students in the areas of attendance, tardiness, academic achievement and psychological and social

adjustment. Lack of consistent attendance affected students' academic achievement and psychological and social development. Stable students were also affected because an influx and exit of mobile students created an environment that constrained opportunities to build a stable learning community. These negative effects were similar to those reported in previous research studies. In this case study, however, educators noted positive aspects. Mobility sometimes built cultural diversity and introduced life perspectives from which students could learn. The positive effects of student mobility identified in this study are not documented in earlier research and represent an important contribution to the student mobility literature.

As this passage talks about effects of student mobility on students from educators' perspectives, not the values that they hold, the CVF is not useful for analyzing this section. Chapter 7 explores teachers' perspectives and responses to student mobility in four different areas: 1) their perceptions of the causes of student mobility; 2) priority given to the issue of student mobility; 3) the effects of student mobility on teachers; and 4) strategies to address student mobility. At the end of the chapter, a summative analysis is made using the CVF.

Chapter 7

Teachers' Perspectives and Responses to Student Mobility

In this chapter, teachers' perspectives and responses to student mobility are explored and examined in four different areas: 1) their perspectives on the causes of student mobility; 2) priority given to the issue of student mobility; 3) the effects of student mobility on teachers; and 4) strategies to address student mobility. At the end of the chapter, an analysis of teachers' perceptions, responsibilities and responses to student mobility is made using the Competing Values Framework.

Teachers' Perspectives on Causes of Student Mobility

The majority of teachers identified family-motivated transfers as the most prominent reason why students move to a new school. Family-motivated reasons include: rental and housing situations, poverty, lifestyles, upward mobility to suburbs where a bigger house was available, and downward mobility to the places where temporary shelter or inexpensive rental houses were available. School-motivated transfers mainly reflected an escape from a community in which there was a large population of people of color and schools of choice or charter school options. Although some moves were created as a result of parents actively seeking out a better education and a better school for a child, some teachers were frustrated with parents who used market reform options as a threat or a way to escape from reality. At times teachers knew the reasons why their students moved. At other times they seemed to make assumptions based on the previous cases, particularly in cases where the students disappeared without any notice.

Family-motivated transfer-housing, family structural change and poverty

All 13 teachers claimed that housing and rental situations caused many families to move. They also perceived that housing and rental situations in relation to poverty or lifestyles was the number one reason for school transfers. All teachers, except two at Timberland, understood that the school attendance area was relatively poor and had low-cost rental units, attracting a relatively low socio-economic population. Poverty has been shown to create a certain level of mobility in life. Eight teachers also stressed that school transfer was caused by family-structural change, including change in guardianship. Demographic changes also affected student mobility. Morgan, an Akers teacher and Wells, a Timberland teacher, acknowledged that the number of persons comprising the low socio-economic population was increasing in the areas in which their schools are located, and that as a result shelters were built. These brought in families who would live in the area for only four to six weeks. Even though families who lived in the shelters wanted to stay in the same area after this period, if they could not find a place to live, they needed to move. That was often the case.

These perceptions were similar to the findings of a Minnesota study in which: 1) 59 percent of the families interviewed were moving to cope with housing problems that included not being able to find affordable housing, problems with the landlord, bad relationships, abuse, chemical dependency, and other issues that destabilize families; and 2) 21 percent of families were forced to move because of eviction, property condemnation, and dangerous situations (Buerkle 1997).

Family-motivated transfers-upward mobility and downward mobility

When a family grew bigger or became economically better off, that family tended to seek housing and a move to the suburbs. Thus, structural change or

improved economic condition in families created student mobility. Six teachers indicated that some school transfers were caused by upward mobility. Timberland Elementary School served two diverse populations in order to maintain a good racial balance under a court order. Two Timberland teachers believed that middle-class families moved up to the suburbs during the summer for better housing. Two Lynden teachers also acknowledged upward mobility as the reason why some families could afford to live in the suburbs. Upward mobility was another way to change residence and change school (Buerkle 1997). It was implicitly stated that some families moved to a predominantly white suburb in which they perceived the schooling to be better than in the Renton schools.

Getz, a Milford teacher, also indicated that some students who moved to her school reflected downward mobility. There are many low-income or inexpensive rental houses in the area. As a result, many immigrant families, families that moved from out of state, and families who were evicted were more likely to move into this area. As soon as their economic situations improved, they moved to a better housing area. Thus, both upward mobility and downward mobility created student mobility between schools.

School-motivated transfers—white flight

Five teachers indicated that some parents were dissatisfied with an overly represented minority status in school or in community that they lived. These teachers indicated that some moves happened as a result of parents' preference for a larger representation of white students. Young and Wells, Timberland teachers, both understood that the school served two diverse populations—one, relatively well-to-do and the other, relatively poor. Students from the low socio-economic population were

bused in to create a racial balance. They stressed that this kind of externally forced racial make-up was more likely to increase mobility from the neighborhood.

Royal teachers Ponzi and Kiss indicated that some parents were concerned about the peer influence of students who were not like them. Ponzi explained,

"[The one student] left because his mother was dissatisfied with, not necessarily the teaching, but with the environment in which a child was. The peer group that she felt had a bad influence on him."

Another Royal teacher, Kiss, also described,

"…[S]ome white families who don't have enough children [of the same race and the same color] here to play with, were saying, 'I am worried [about the peer influence].' They started pulling students out and going to charter schools. That's another issue that parents are worried about. They want to have their kids in a better environment where students are with other students who have similar backgrounds. That has been…for the last 10 years. The school has been changing in that regard…I have been hearing that from other teachers."

Because of such concerns, some parents sent their children to charter school where there were more white students. Such parents' responses could be explained as a continued pattern of white flight amid court ordered busing.

School motivated transfers-market reform

Over the past several decades, annual rates of residential mobility in the United States have gradually declined, while the rates at which children changed schools have increased (Swanson and Schneider 1999). This rise in educational mobility was partly the result of the increased opportunity to choose among options for public schooling

(Cookson 1994; Schneider, Schiller and Coleman 1996 in Swanson and Schneider 1999). Before market reform policies were implemented, parents' options on schooling were public schools, private schools or homeschooling. Through market-based reform, parents and students were given more opportunities to choose schools based on their own preferences. School-of-choice and charter-school-related school transfers were a part of a recent phenomenon of increased school transfers caused by more educational opportunities for parents and their children. Scott (1998) indicated that in many organizations, parents and students also had some control over their entrance and exit of the school by exercising their right to choose the type or form of schooling. Some parents tended not to take responsibility themselves for such issues as academic or behavioral problems, but instead tried to deflect educators' attention to these issues by using choice as a credible threat. Thus, through schools of choice and charter school options, parents have control over their children's entry into and exit from school.

As stated, all teachers identified family-motivated transfers as the primary reason for mobility. But, even though school-motivated transfers were not as prominent as family-motivated transfers, seven teachers stated that school choice led to increases in student mobility. These teachers (Thompson in Elmwood, Pearson in Lynden, Ponzi and Kiss in Royal and Park and Lynch in Kirkland) viewed such transfers as primarily resulting from parental evasion or inability to address or confront problems that included academic or behavioral issues. They had an unrealistic hope that a new school would magically provide the answer to the problems. Elmwood, Royal and Kirkland had low student mobility rates and Elmwood and Royal had a large number of choice students.

Teachers in schools with low mobility rates and high choice student rates might be more likely to notice the impact of market reform policies on student transfers.

According to these teachers, the major reason for school transfer was parental dissatisfaction with the school. This could be considered, as Rumberger, Larson, Ream, and Palardy (1999) suggest, a reactive rather than proactive response on the part of parents. It is reactive in the sense that parents were escaping a bad situation-social isolation, an unsafe school environment or hostile academic environment-rather than actively seeking out better academic programs at different schools. (pp.ix-x). What Rumberger et al suggested is that the reactive response is to escape from a bad situation while the proactive response is to seek out a better academic and social environment. These seven Renton teachers saw school-motivated transfers as reactive rather than proactive.

Six of the seven teachers who identified schools of choice and charter schools as factors underlying increased student mobility suggested that some student re-entry to public schools after an earlier transfer to charter schools occurred because parents found out that "out there" was not much different than "in here." These teachers also said that because parents and their children made a decision about a new school without much information, they tended to return to the original school when they were not satisfied with the new school. This pattern of withdrawal and re-entry created a 'revolving door situation.' Pearson, a Lynden teacher said,

"It's very easy when you get irritated with a teacher, just move to a school across the street. And, you know, that would happen. And, vice-versa. People who got

irritated with a charter school could come to our school across the street. Parents are looking for a panacea."

Kiss, a Royal teacher, claimed that some parents used choice as a threat. She explained, "I see, as a problem, sometimes, parents who are upset with the way things are handled. They can say, 'You don't solve the problem in that way I see fit, so I am leaving [to charter or another school through schools of choice.]' They kind of use it as a threat. And, the problem is not solved and off they go."

Pearson and Kiss indicated that market reform policies created some revolving student mobility and they were concerned that this kind of move would continue to happen unless parents were willing to work with teachers on their children's academic and behavioral issues.

The above discussion on market reform focuses on parents whose main purpose in exercising choice options was to leave one school. A second, quite different motivation for exercising schools of choice options was: 1) to actively seek out a particular school because of its programs; or 2) because of familiarity with a particular school, and to choose that school for these positive reasons. Six teachers (Young and Wells at Timberland, Getz at Milford, Ponzi and Kiss at Royal and Park at Kirkland) said their schools were popular schools of choice because they could attract certain types of students by providing certain programs and missions such as multi-age classrooms, experiential programs, well-organized before- and after-school programs, both academic and recreational, and open-school programs. Consequently, some parents actively chose the school and stayed there, which created some stability.

According to Table 4, Milford and Kirkland did not have as many schools of choice students as Elmwood and Royal. Although Kirkland and Milford were not as popular choice schools as Elmwood and Royal, there were some appealing aspects of those schools for parents who opted for those schools as a choice. Some parents might pick Milford, for instance, because it had well organized before- and after-school academic and social programs. Some parents who attended Kirkland School themselves liked it so much that they brought their own children back to the school even though they lived in a different attendance zone. Teachers thought that parents who actively chose the school stayed and created stability. Thus, there are two types of parental choice— "proactive" and "reactive." The first category encompasses school choices based on active seeking out of a particular school, while the second category describes choices based on negative feelings about one school, instead of on perceptions about the positive attributes of another school.

Summary of the causes of student mobility

Previous researchers suggest that residential change and economic-related issues such as poverty caused student mobility. In this study, all teachers stressed that student mobility was mainly caused by family-motivated factors that included rental and housing situations related to poverty, improvement in economic situation, lifestyle choice, family structural change or property condemnation. Change in rental and housing situations reflect both upward mobility and downward mobility. Some student mobility was also caused by school-motivated factors such as "white flight" and schools of choice or charter school options, although, from teachers' perspectives, school motivated transfers were less prominent than family-motivated transfers.

Two types of market-reform-oriented transfers are included here: 1) a proactive, selective choice for a better education for a child; and 2) a reactive, non-selective choice to escape a school situation parents did not like. In the first case, teachers generally perceived student mobility as a positive transfer associated with parental support and parental satisfaction. In the second case, however, teachers were often frustrated with parents' decision for school transfer, which often ultimately resulted in a revolving-door situation. Teachers were concerned that market reform options might actually create an opportunity for parents to change schools. Interestingly, teachers in schools with low mobility rates were more likely to speak of the impacts of market reform policies on student mobility. This may indicate teachers could have time to pay more attention to the causes of student mobility because mobility was not high. But, according to teachers' interview results, there appears no correlation between the number of choice students in school and teachers' awareness of the impact of market reform policies. Overall, all teachers perceived student mobility to be primarily caused by family-motivated factors. As such, they felt they could do little or nothing to prevent families from moving.

Is Student Mobility a Priority Issue?

In order to assess if teachers paid attention to the issue of student mobility, 12 teachers were asked to rank the five most important facets of education from a list. The items on the list included student's test scores, student mobility, resources, classroom management, personnel relations, parental involvement, student social and psychological development and behavior, autonomy of implementing the curriculum and pedagogy reflecting their beliefs and styles, involvement in a decision-making process, technology use in classroom and others. Of these 12 teachers, five teachers (Wells at Timberland,

Zuccato at Lynden, Mullen and Osborn at Akers, and Kiss at Royal) selected student mobility as one of the top five concerns. Kiss, a new teacher at Royal, said mobility interfered with her teaching. Mullen at Akers was the teacher who ranked mobility the most important aspect for learning and teaching. Akers had as high as 70 percent student mobility rates. Mullen said that the issue of mobility was recognized and openly discussed in the school. As such, she freely spoke up that her lesson plans, instructional strategies and classroom dynamics were affected by student mobility. She is one of the veteran teachers and throughout her extensive teaching, mobility has interfered with her ability to create a cohesive classroom.

Two-fifths (40 percent) of teachers identified student mobility as an important issue to consider and deal with. These teachers made small, flexible adjustments in order to meet their goals of equitable educational services to all children and to maintain regular lesson plans. They used a "go with the flow" strategy. They also felt mobility was a fact of life and, consequently, they felt powerless to do anything significant to change the situation. Thus even though two-fifths of the teachers felt mobility was important, their attitude toward mobility was rather passive because they felt powerless over family-motivated factors affecting student mobility. This passive response to student mobility helped to explain why there were not mobility-specific strategies.

For the rest of the teachers, mobility was not a major concern. Pearson at Lynden indicated,

> "I probably should have spoken about student mobility. [But], [t]hat's not a very
>
> important issue to me. I guess I learned to adapt because I have been here for so

long. It's a given. It's a given. And, they come in and they go out. You just pick up the pieces and keep going. I am used to that."

Overall, even though mobility was an important issue for two-fifths of the teachers, for most of them classroom management, a student's social and psychological development and parental involvement were the three most important aspects for effective teaching and learning. This finding was a reasonable expectation because teachers were responsible for day-to-day classroom activities. Thus, a "go with the flow" attitude was an effective strategy to accomplish daily goals. Even if the teachers were concerned about mobility, they tended to perceive it as a fact of life they could not change. Osborn in Akers described,

"You just work with mobility. You accept it as a fact of working in a school, although you are frustrated. You complain about it, talk about it with your colleagues. But, at the same time you just accept it and work with it as best as you can."

Summary of priority issue

Student mobility is an important issue for two-fifths of the teachers—three teachers from high student mobility schools and two teachers from low student mobility schools. The teachers comprising the two-fifths made small, flexible adjustments to meet their goals, including provisions for equitable educational services to all and maintaining regular lesson plans. Most of the teachers adopted a "go with the flow" attitude to deal with the process of transition. Two Akers teachers, among the five who identified student mobility as an important aspect affecting teaching and learning, said that the issue of student mobility was acknowledged and openly discussed in the school. Such

acknowledgment and open dialogue in the school perhaps signals more awareness to student mobility among Akers' teachers.

Even though a large number of teachers perceived that student mobility was an important issue, they also felt they had little or no control over this issue because they believed mobility was primarily caused by family-motivated factors. Even for the teachers to whom mobility was an important issue, there were many other aspects of education-such as classroom management and parental involvement-that were more important than the issue of mobility. Thus, overall, teachers' attitudes toward student mobility were rather passive. Such passive attitudes toward mobility tended to create a climate of "going with the flow." This flexibility might be effective to accomplish teachers' daily goals even in the absence of strategies specifically designed for mobility.

Effects of Student Mobility on Teachers

When interviewed about how student mobility affected them, teachers described both negative and positive effects. The effects indicated were predominantly negative. Four major negative effects of student mobility that teachers identified were: 1) adjustment of instruction; 2) struggle to adjust classroom dynamics and to create a sense of classroom community; 3) added strains on time, and 4) growing pressures to get all children to reach academic standards. Although teachers mainly indicated the negative effects student mobility had on teaching and the classroom environment, some positive aspects of student mobility included: 1) a provision of more diverse perspectives into a classroom resulting from mobile students bringing different backgrounds into the classroom learning setting; 2) more parental support when parents were actively seeking

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a better education for their children; and 3) positive changes in classroom dynamics when troublesome students left.

Instructional adjustment

The teachers' major responsibility is to teach students. Even if a teacher has a relatively stable student population, some kind of adjustment to instruction was required because each student learned differently. Overall, teachers expressed that when a student population changes-by entry and exit of students during the academic year-adjustment of instruction is greater because teachers need to learn new students' academic level or to rearrange classroom activities. These tasks take some time to learn and time to respond to. Thus, adjustment for instruction had negative impacts on teachers in terms of the pace, content and amount of time needed.

The majority of the teachers said they needed to adjust their instruction when students moved in or out during the academic year. One-third of teachers used teaching strategies that focused on repetition and review. And one-third of the teachers indicated that they needed extra time to assess a new student. Such focus took time away from instruction and from other students. Teachers' adjustment in instruction—their focus on repetition and review and the extra time spent assessing a new student—affected their regular teaching strategies, because they sometimes could not cover the content.

The findings here about the ways in which an influx and exit of students affected teacher instruction is closely related to what Kerbow (1992) found in his Chicago school study in which student mobility affected teachers on their classroom instruction. Long-term instructional planning became more difficult. Teachers tended to orient their instructional level toward the mobile students by providing more review-oriented class

lessons. Teachers also needed to spend extra time to assess new students, taking time away from other students and activities.

Mullen described how a teacher needed to adjust when a new student, with unknown academic level, moved into a classroom. Mullen said, "...we are going to make an adjustment and a child is not going to make an adjustment." Her statement indicates that it was the teacher who is responsible for bringing a new student up to the educational level of the class, and that it is the teacher's responsibility to help her or him fit into a new class. Having a new student sometimes slowed down the pace of instruction, which then affected the opportunity for stable students to learn. As facilitator and mediator for classroom teaching and learning, a teacher is also responsible for any shift in instruction and maintaining productive dynamics in the classroom learning community. But they sometimes felt frustrated about changes in classroom dynamics because they also valued the stability of classrooms.

A lack of information on mobile students was related to the issue of record transfer between schools. There appeared to be some glitches in the record transfer system. While the principals thought the record transfer within the district was smooth and quick, some teachers (or example, Lynch at Kirkland and Getz at Milford) thought the records were incomplete and that sometimes it took two weeks to get them. As a teacher's intention is to do the best for the child, it was frustrating and difficult for them to have a child in a classroom without having any information. Getz said that she did not get records for students who moved from charter schools. Private schools sometimes did not release student records when tuition was overdue. Such a management system created a stressful situation for educators who worked in a school setting. Incomplete or

non-existent student records, together with transferring delays, created stress for teachers who needed to evaluate new students, academically place them, and provide appropriate services for them. The absence of student records not only frustrated teachers and principals, but also affected students indirectly. Timely record transfers would help a teacher to assess a new student and place her at the appropriate academic level.

Difficulty in community-building

Bonding and attachment are important factors in creating a classroom community. But, if students moved in and out of the school too quickly, there was less opportunity for creating a stable classroom community. Teachers in the Renton study expressed frustration over their inability to create a sense of classroom community without a stable population of students. Six teachers (three teachers in Akers, a Milford teacher, and two teachers in Royal) identified that mobility undercuts their effort to create classroom community. Four teachers (except two teachers in Royal) work in high-mobility schools. Osborn, an Akers teacher, said,

> "...you get to know kids and they could be just gone next day. You have kids for four weeks and you just get to know them and then they leave. That's very disturbing. I guess it is disturbing as a teacher because you want to make a connection with them, but it's difficult to make connections with kids who are in and out all the time."

What these teachers describe as the characteristics of mobile students resembles the four elements Tinto (1993) mentioned that impede school membership. These elements are adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation. As described in Chapter 6, mobile students are more likely to have difficulty adjusting to the teaching and social settings in

a new school due to the lack of consistency of schooling, and they tend to isolate themselves from their peers and their teacher. Thus, it is clear why it is difficult to create a communal classroom when high student mobility is a factor.

It is also difficult to make long-term plans for the school year when the composition of the class changes as a result of mobility. In some schools like Lynden and Royal, which had a huge influx of new students at a certain grade level-classes were reconfigured. Kiss, a Royal teacher, noted that halfway through the 1997-1998 year, six of her third graders had to move to the all-third grade classroom to create space for the incoming students for her second/third split class. As she explains, this created a difficult situation for herself and her students in terms of planning, as well as classroom dynamics.

"...[T]he first year when I had a split [class], it was most challenging. We had families who were in the school and out and back in. So, students came back to me a couple of times. It means that in my room they are back in and back out to the point we had to, at the middle of the school year, take about six of my third grade students and move them to the woman who's teaching the straight third [grade], so that I can make room for students coming in. So, it's an extremely challenging year because I had, within two-thirds of a school year, an entirely different class. That was really tough."

This kind of classroom reformation creates a gap not only in teaching and learning but also in social bonding between a teacher and students. This lack of bonding interferes with the development and maintenance of a sense of community within the classroom.

Added strains on time

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It was never mentioned by teachers that student mobility affected them in any fiscal ways, but some teachers mentioned student mobility affecting their time. Time was a resource that teachers lacked when they needed to deal with student mobility. They normally had little additional support from volunteers or aides, so they needed to create some extra time to work with the new students. Morgan, an Akers teacher, said that she did not have any aides, nor did she have any pull-out programs. She wished for more time to work with individual students, but it just was not there. Morgan was one of many teachers who indicated they wished they could spend more individual time with mobile students. Even with limitations, three teachers still created extra time to work individually with new students during recess, silent reading, lunchtime, and before or after school. But, with constraints on their own time and no outside help, they could not spend as much time with the incoming new students as they wished. Additionally, some materials such as textbooks and workbooks were short because they were taken by students when they left. Sometimes teachers spent extra time making a copy of missing books or workbooks for new students, which took some of their instruction time away.

Pressures to meet the new standards

Regardless of how long a student received instruction from a particular teacher, that teacher was considered responsible for the student's academic performance. Consequently, the majority of the teachers (five from high-mobility schools and three from low-mobility schools), were apprehensive that mobile students' diminished academic performance—resulting from a lack of adequately sustained instruction-would reflect badly on the teaching abilities of the teachers themselves. Thus, these eight teachers were concerned about being held accountable for statewide standardized tests

and other assessments while dealing with many mobile students. They feared being perceived as incapable and receiving a bad reputation. They also feared that low performance in the classroom might negatively affect school performance and that the school itself would also get a bad reputation.

These eight teachers believed that student mobility created a less-than-ideal teaching and learning environment, for both stable and mobile students, because of the need for teachers to adjust their instruction and adapt to changing classroom dynamics. Academic performance suffered as a result. Teachers felt frustrated about the accountability measurements applied in such an environment. When Morgan, an Akers teacher, replied to the question about how academic gaps affected test scores, she indicated the following about her responsibility:

> "There is nothing I can do about it, you know. (Laugh). I feel very helpless about it because I have to take a child where they were at when they come to me. I don't have time and resources to sit down and teach them on an individual basis. It just doesn't happen..."

Morgan thus expressed her frustration about the situation. with a reluctance to say that she could do little about it. Akers is the Renton elementary school with the highest student mobility rates. As Mao et al (1997) suggested, schools with higher turnover rates tend to have lower accountability ratings. Thus, what Akers' teachers experienced might be a common occurrence at schools with high student mobility rates. It does not mean that teachers in low student mobility schools do not struggle to meet high standards. As the data suggest, three teachers from low mobility rate schools were also apprehensive about their responsibility for meeting high standards.

Positive effects of student mobility

Compared to the negative effects of student mobility on teachers, some teachers indicated that, for them, there were occasional positive aspects of student mobility. These included the opportunity to learn differences, to create better learning classroom dynamics, and to have a more cohesive sense of classroom community. Student mobility sometimes brought in new cultural experiences that provided a teacher and stable students with a learning opportunity. Among few positive aspects of student mobility on teachers, five teachers indicated that having a frequent influx and exit of students (at times from different ethnic and national backgrounds, regions in the United States, or speaking languages other than English) created an important opportunity for teachers to learn different views and cultures. According to teacher interview results, though, there was no evidence that mobile students who entered mid-year were more likely to be from a different racial or ethnic background. Whatever the differences students would bring in, teachers were more aware of and appreciative of the differences. Such an opportunity helped teachers to be more open-minded and more tolerant of differences, and to be more inclusive of diverse perspectives.

The departure of a disruptive child from the classroom improved the learning environment for the rest of the class, and created a more cohesive sense of classroom community. A teacher could redirect the time spent on a disruptive child to her other students. Her students were psychologically and academically more focused because they did not need to fear the disruptive child's misbehaviors. As a result, a teacher could more effectively deliver educational materials to students and help their social and psychological development. Thompson at Elmwood noted that by using a district

disciplinary policy, teachers did not have to deal with "abusive" or non-cooperative children, and in this regard, student mobility was perceived as beneficial. By applying district disciplinary policy, a psychologically, physically or academically disruptive child could be removed from a classroom and sent to a special school. A disruptive child might be sent back to the same school or she might be sent to a new school after a certain amount of retention at a special school. Through this process, the exit of a disruptive child creates a more stable learning environment. Thompson explained her situation when a student with disciplinary problem left.

> "…Sometimes there was someone that they (kids) were glad had gone. He was kind of mean…A lot of times that you were glad that he didn't cause any problems with other kids, but you wondered what happened to him. It eases the rest of students' learning."

Classroom dynamics and a sense of community were important factors for a teacher to create a positive learning and teaching environment. Losing a child who created a strain within the classroom gave more room for a teacher and other students to create a cohesive sense of classroom community.

Four teachers described how student mobility created a positive change in classroom dynamics. Without having recently relocated students with disciplinary issues, it was easier for teachers and students to create a more stable and safe environment to teach and learn. Sometimes, when the parents disagreed with the school's course of action, they chose to withdraw these students utilizing market reform polices. For instance, in an example given by one teacher, a parent who does not agree with a school's

decision to suspend a student may take the student out of that school and transfer him to a charter school. In that regard, market reform policies positively affected teachers.

Other positive aspects of student mobility include more parental support and satisfaction from parents who proactively select a school for their children. Four teachers indicated that they could expect more parental support when parents actively sought out a school for their children. With parental support and satisfaction, teachers could more easily construct a sense of community from the increasingly stable body of students.

Summary of the effects of student mobility on teachers

Teachers perceived that student mobility had primarily negative impacts on them, and occasionally had some positive impacts on them. Negative impacts of student mobility on teachers include instructional adjustment; difficulty in community-building; added strains on time and materials; and pressures to meet the new academic standards.

When students enter and leave, a teacher needs to adjust instruction in terms of pace, content and amount of time spent. Lack of information on mobile students was also related to an overall glitch in the record-transfer system. District-wide curriculum and test policies (aligned curriculum, pacing guides and quarterly assessments) also created some strains on teachers by forcing them to adjust their teaching strategies.

Social bonding is created by continuous attendance and participation by school members. Without a cohesive group of students, teachers had difficulty creating a classroom community.

With the students moving frequently, some materials were taken by the students who moved. As a result, teachers sometimes did not have sufficient materials, such as textbooks, workbooks and library books. "Time" is an important resource for teachers.

Time-stretched teachers wanting to work with new students and others as found it detrimental to their teaching. Teachers were expected to meet high standards, but they were apprehensive about their responsibility for mobile students' academic performance due to not having sufficient amounts of time to instruct them. They were afraid of being measured by the test scores of mobile students and as a result, of being labeled as low-performance teachers.

Positive impacts of student mobility on teachers include diverse cultural teaching environments; active parental participation of classroom activities; parental satisfaction; and departure of disruptive children. With more diverse culture, teachers were more aware and appreciative of individuals' differences. With more parental involvement and satisfaction, teachers had an easier time establishing learning and social community because parents can support what teachers do and provide assistance to classroom activities as tutors, mentors or other types of volunteers. They also commented that after the departure of disruptive children, the process of community-building was more smooth because teachers could focus on teaching, and students felt safer and more connected with other students, thus enabling better focus.

Strategies to Address Student Mobility

Integration of new students and creation of classroom community

Although the teachers recognized that student mobility had more negative effects on teachers than positive ones, they did not formulate strategies specifically in response to student mobility. The absence of mobility-specific strategies may be explained in part by teachers' perceptions of the issue as a family decision over which they had little or no control. Time constraints, resulting from teachers' attention to other educational

responsibilities, also hindered the creation of programs or strategies exclusively for mobile students. Consequently, teachers utilized the same strategies for mobile students that they would use with any student who needed to be reassessed or needed extra help.

These strategies included the academic diagnosis of new students, provision of services such as tutoring and mentoring, buddy systems, and collaborative learning programs to help a new student orient to the new school. With those strategies, teachers were getting some external support-tutoring and mentoring-and utilizing a students' buddy system. Even though the majority of teachers regularly experienced new incoming students, only a few prepared for this—by making packets containing school rules and expectations and having an extra desk and materials ready for anticipated new incoming students. Similarly, few teachers spoke with a new student's parents or her or his former teacher in order to know more about her or him. Teachers quickly diagnosed the new students by computerized system or existing assessment programs, understood their academic and social strengths and weaknesses, and placed them into necessary support systems such as tutoring, mentoring, special needs programs and counseling. Eleven teachers also used a buddy system to make new students' transitions easier because they thought it was their responsibility to make their psychological and social transition as smooth as possible.

Most teachers said they did their best to integrate transient students into the classroom. In order to do so, they used the strategies such as group or cooperative learning. These kinds of activities were based upon the use of "tribes" for community building and seating arrangements. Morgan said,

"I use a lot of activities from the book called 'Tribes.' It's full of how to build a

community in a classroom, and they call it tribes...Tribes mean groups, although I

don't call them tribes. It's really a helpful book."

In order to improve problem-solving skills, the teachers 1) utilized resource materials

such as literature on diversity; 2) integrated individual differences into the curriculum; 3)

reviewed reading materials about moving and change; and 4) participated in discussions

on such issues. Wells, a Timberland teacher, described:

"Well, basically, in order to facilitate these kinds of changes (i.e. classroom

dynamics), I created the structure where I have students work in teams. And,

teams have captains as leaders. They rotate weekly...[If] the child is coming in

new; s/he will be assigned to a team. They have someone in a team that will be a

special helper. The team captain explain things to you, and they can help you,

guide you and assist you...My main reason for developing that kind of structure is

I would like students to be self-directed. But, it also helps mobility."

In order to create a sense of community, two teachers (Pearson at Lynden and Osborn at

Akers) also stressed the importance of understanding and implementing clear, strong

classroom disciplinary rules. This was supported by Bryk and Driscoll's (1988) concepts

around communal school organization with a system of shared value about how adults

and students behaved. Only three teachers (Wells at Timberland, Zuccato at Lynden and

Kiss at Royal) mentioned the importance of parental involvement and communication

with the school staff to community-building. The teachers might think it was a

principal's responsibility to get parents involved in community-building.

In the process of community-building, teachers took under consideration the uncertainty of the environment. Group and cooperative learning worked well in transitional situations because new students quickly got acquainted with other group members through external support. Group and cooperative learning was also considered innovative because it caters to the diverse learning styles among students. Furthermore, this learning strategy helped create a sense of classroom community by helping students learn together, help one another, challenge one another and create cohesive academic accomplishments.

Surprisingly, there were not many teachers who prepared an informational packet (containing school and class rules, etc.), or supplies and materials (desks, chairs, pencils, crayons, books, etc.) for new students. This finding is similar to what Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) found in their California study, in which teachers said they did not prepare for new children because they lacked information about students' arrivals. It might be logical to assume that teachers are more likely to be prepared in schools with high student mobility rates. Paradoxically, this Renton study found that teachers in relatively low-mobility schools tended to prepare packets and materials (for example, Wells at Timberland, Ponzi and Kiss at Royal, and Lynch at Kirkland-lower-mobility schools-and Pearson at Lynden-a higher-mobility school). This may be because teachers in a relatively low-mobility classroom can pay more attention to a new student, compared to teachers in a school with high mobility. This also may well be a teacher's individual personality. Teachers' preparations for new students were aligned with school-wide principles in Timberland and Royal schools. Additionally, there were not many teachers who tried to talk with the parents of new students. There were only two teachers, Pearson

in Lynden and Lynch in Kirkland, who indicated that they talked to new parents. Teachers thought the principals met and talked with them, so they did not feel it was necessary to do the same. Additionally, talking with parents was seen as extra work for a teacher.

Furthermore, even though the student records would not arrive for up to six months, not many teachers talked with the new student's previous teacher to find out more about the child's background. Four teachers: Pearson in Lynden, Mullen in Akers, Getz in Milford and Lynch in Kirkland, spoke with the new students' former teachers to get to know the student better. They had little time to call previous teachers as their time was mostly occupied with teaching. Often, the teachers had to place a child without knowing much about her. Consequently, she might not get appropriate services. This phenomenon was also addressed in the study of Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990).

Although the majority of teachers did not prepare for new incoming students, some did at their own discretion. It is important to not let such initiatives be solely dependent on the conscientiousness or insight of a particular teacher, but instead, as high student mobility has been experienced in all the schools seen, it is important to create a district wide policy for mobile students. A policy would include: preparing packets and school supplies, contacting parents of new students and contacting previous teachers. Such a district-wide policy would be able to help teachers work with new incoming students in a less stressful way.

Closure for students who leave

Most teachers focused on incoming students when they were asked about their responsibilities for mobile students. Only five teachers referred to students who left.

They mentioned that they were responsible for completing the record and filling out the paperwork for departed students. It does not mean that the other teachers did not fill out records, but it appears they did it frequently, so they did not consider the paper work their responsibility. Although two teachers (Pearson and Morgan) said it was their responsibility to meet with and talk with new students' parents, none of the teachers said it was their responsibility to talk with parents when they were leaving. Because many students moved on short notice or sometimes just disappeared, teachers had no chance to speak with these parents. It also reflected how mobility was seen—as a family's responsibility. Although teachers primarily thought there was nothing much they could do with a student's school transfer, Wells and Getz were actively communicating with the new school by informing them of the child's issues. Getz also said she communicated with the former teacher of the new students to get to know them better. It appeared Wells' and Getz's communication styles were rather unique because it was extra work for them to do so.

Summary of strategies

Strategies that teachers used to reduce negative consequences of student mobility included prompt academic diagnosis, tutoring and mentoring programs, the buddy system and cooperative learning programs. Prompt academic diagnosis helped teachers to adequately place a child and to provide any necessary academic help through tutoring and mentoring programs. Sometimes, lack of information on mobile students was closely related to a glitch in the record-transfer system. More systematic record-transfer systems would help teachers quickly understand new students' academic strengths, weaknesses and personality traits and enable them to have appropriate placements in a timely manner.

Buddy systems and cooperative learning programs help teachers to integrate new students into classrooms and to create a cohesive classroom community.

Although some teachers incorporated the above strategies to integrate new students and to create a community, the majority of teachers did not prepare an information packet and materials. The majority of teachers did not make time to talk to new students' parents or former teachers. Only two or three teachers did prepare for new students, and talked to new students' parents or former teachers. Thus, it might be considered to have a school wide support to prepare for mobile students. Lastly, the majority of teachers' focus was incoming students. Only two teachers paid attention to students who left. In order to create a new form of community, it would be important to create closure for the students who left, the students who remained and the teacher herself.

Analysis of Teachers' Perspectives and Responses to Student Mobility

In this section, teachers' perceptions, responsibilities and responses to mobility are examined by using the CVF as a tool for analyzing teachers' interview data, bringing to the surface the values that underlie their role-related behaviors. Teachers' responses to questions about student mobility suggest that they primarily value stable classroom instructional routines and equitable learning opportunities for students. At the same time, they recognize the importance of students' achievement levels on standardized tests.

Preservation of Classroom Routines

Teachers' preservation values represent their passivity toward the issue of student mobility; their preference for instructional routine; and their desire for a stable classroom community. Teachers perceived that student mobility was primarily caused by family-

motivated factors such as housing-related issues and family structural change. They understood that school-motivated factors—white flight and charter schools and schools of choice options—also created student mobility, but that these were not as prominent as family-motivated transfers. Teachers acknowledged two types of market-reform-related moves: proactive and reactive. Even though some teachers indicated that students left as a result of student or parental disagreements with teachers or the school, teachers did not feel that they "caused" mobility. As a result of not feeling responsible, teachers somewhat removed themselves from the situation. At a deeper level, however, the mere fact that teachers do not report any responsibility—hence, do not make deliberate changes to deal with mobility—suggests that organizational preservation is a very strong value. The primary value of teachers is maintaining regular classroom routines.

Teachers' responses to mobility focus on the reduction of negative effects of student mobility in the classroom. They do not include eliminating or reducing their own causation of mobility because they see family-motivated transfer as a primary reason for mobility. Teachers' desire to maintain a stable classroom management and community-with adequate time and their planned classroom activities-reflects adherence to the status quo (preservation). Additionally, a cohesive classroom community was more easily created after a disruptive child left school, which helped create more stability in the classroom (preservation).

The majority of teachers adopted a strategy of making minor, yet flexible, changes to instruction while adhering to set lesson plans. For example, a teacher might spend a few extra minutes talking about a lesson with a new student. Two teachers— Ponzi and Mullen-however, described how student mobility disturbed the stability of

their classrooms. One new teacher admitted that student mobility interfered with her teaching. With little experience, this teacher had not yet developed strategies or classroom routines that permitted her to be flexible in adjusting her teaching. An experienced teacher agreed that mobility was a problem in her school. She commented that frequent entry and exit of students was disruptive to her teaching and classroom community and that she preferred stability in her classroom.

Equitable Instructional Opportunities

Teachers' attempts to reduce the negative consequences of student mobility were also related to their primary role of teaching-to deliver instruction and help students to grow academically and psychologically. Student mobility negatively affected the majority of teachers in the areas of instruction, community-building, time and pressures to meet the new standards. Teachers struggled to be inclusive of everyone academically, adjusting their instructional strategies to include mobile students, while at the same time creating a cohesive classroom community. Their change in strategies represents a willingness to be flexible for the circumstances and to provide equitable educational services to all students (equity). Teachers' positive response to the diverse cultures mobile students brought in helped teachers to be aware and appreciate children's differences and to incorporate differences in their own teaching. Thus, awareness and appreciation of diverse cultures help teachers to treat and include every one equally (equity).

Standards for Student Achievement

In addition to their core values of equity and preservation, teachers also felt pressed to produce a certain level of academic outcome under the standardized test

system (productivity). They did not want to be responsible for the possible low test scores that mobile students made on standardized tests, as some students did not receive a sufficient amount of instruction from their teachers. But the district and the public used tests scores to reflect teachers' quality of instruction. As teachers wanted to have or keep a good reputation for their instruction, they were also struggling to improve students' learning in order to meet standards while trying to maintain a balance of the values of equity and preservation.

Tensions Around Competing Values

These three different values—preservation, equity and productivity-create tensions around the issue of student mobility. For example, when a new student comes in, a teacher wants to provide extra time to integrate her academically into the classroom, carefully examining what her strengths and weaknesses are (equity). But a teacher also wants her students to produce high test scores, so she might just look at the outcome by possibly neglecting individual differences (productivity). When a teacher needs to teach to the test for meeting the new standards (productivity), the teacher needs to adjust familiar teaching methods and lesson plans to counterbalance the preservation value (preservation). When a new student comes, a teacher wants to spend extra time with her to integrate her into the classroom smoothly (equity). But at the same time, she wants to maintain her lesson plans and activities (preservation).

These three values create some constraints in teachers' lives: 1) teachers want to create an equitable learning environment for all students; 2) teachers are concerned with maintaining stable classroom routines; and 3) teachers are concerned with the production-

function, that is, the achievement of their students. The tensions in the classroom are represented in the following Figure 3.

Figure 3

Flexibility

Quadrant 1 Equity Equitable education services	**Quadrant 3** Transition External support
Quadrant 2 Preservation Passivity Routines Stable community	**Quadrant 4** Productivity Achievement

Internal Focus

External Focus

Stability
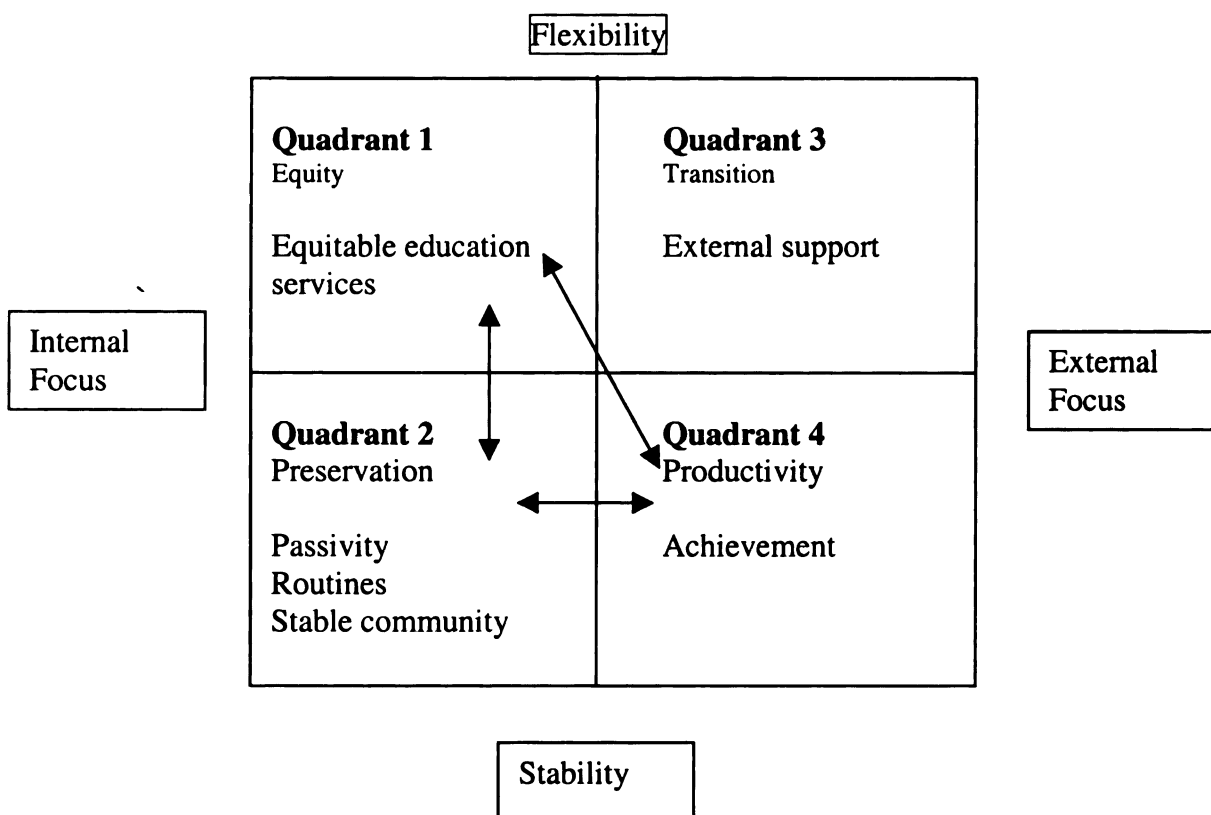
In response, some teachers sought mediating strategies to reduce the tensions. In fact, many teachers turned to Quadrant 3 strategies (Transition), drawing on external support such as tutors, mentors and parents support. By using parent or volunteer tutors to provide students with additional instructional help, teachers responded to their multiple concerns related to student-mobility problems. This strategy is particularly helpful when students enter a school through choice. Parents who proactively choose a new school are more likely to volunteer. Teachers also reach out to the community for support on mentoring and tutoring. Often, external supports in the form of more parental and

community involvement in classroom and school activities are utilized to help teachers ease the tensions created when teachers try to carry out instructions according to plan while trying to integrate new students into the classroom. Incoming students create a new classroom dynamic and teachers may need to adjust instruction. Parents and community support represent resources that can moderate this transition process. Additionally, teachers used creative and innovative teaching and learning methods and activities including buddy systems, and cooperative and collaborate learning to deal with the transitional process (Transition).

With extra help from mentors and tutors, incoming students could maintain their learning. Additional help increases the likelihood of students' achieving at higher levels. Finally, because tutors are addressing the special needs of newly arrived students, the teacher is able to maintain the scheduled pace of instruction. Innovative teaching methods and activities also help students to keep on track academically, and help them to integrate into the classroom socially, as new students have a greater interaction with stable students. These strategies mediate tensions that teachers have, helping to integrate children while maintaining classroom stability. Although only a few teachers prepared a packet and materials for new students, such preparation represents the use of external support to help new families feel welcome in the classroom community (Transition), which thus helps teachers to go through the transitional stage of classroom teaching and organization.

Integrating Analysis with Theory

Parsons' three levels of the organization

Teachers work at the technical level where they mainly focus on teaching and students' learning. They are primarily responsible for internal affairs. As Parsons' job-related functions predict, teachers' perceptions and responses to student mobility reflect the values of equity and preservation.

Loose coupling—the proximity to the issue and Parsons' three levels

Teachers are closest to the issue of mobility so the frequency and magnitude of dealing with student mobility is high and big. Whenever students arrive or leave for a new school, teachers need to deal with the change created by student mobility. As they deal with it on a daily basis, they need to adapt by using strategies that are small-scale and accommodative. For example, when one new student arrived, teachers made time to diagnose her academically and to provide adequate educational and psychological services while adjusting their instructional time or their before- or after-school schedule.

Loose coupling—bounded rationality and sensitive sensing mechanism

Teachers are most concerned about incoming students. They are responsible for accepting and educating whoever comes into their classrooms. They are also aware of the negative effect on their instructional and lesson plans, and classroom dynamics, from new students who come in during the academic year. Thus, their perceptions of student mobility and how they respond to student mobility are directly related to how student mobility affects their classroom teaching. An inflow of students primarily creates a disruptive teaching situation, compared to outgoing mobility. Teachers needed to adjust their routine instructional and lesson plans to overcome disruptions.

Loose coupling-Adaptability

Situated on the CVF, equity and preservation concerns differ along the flexibility and stability continuum, and so represent a tension teachers dealt with regularly. If teachers only focused on equity through adapting instruction for students' needs, their classrooms would be at a risk of losing the stability and continuity of the familiar forms of teaching and learning. If teachers solely focused on preservation, new students might never be integrated and teachers would stagnate in their own norms.

In practice, teachers did not choose either one value or another, something Weick (2001) acknowledged would be neither economical nor sustainable. Rather than selecting one approach or the other, teachers embraced the tensions in the situation, and incorporated individualized approaches with regular classroom routines. Teachers in this study tried to utilize both strategies to find a balance of flexibility and stability in their classrooms, although the data suggest they were geared more toward the stability of the classroom.

Resource dependence theory-achievement

Pressures on teachers to meet the new standards indicate that the institution was influenced by an external environment in which state-mandated standardized tests were implemented and public opinion about school performance was influential. The resource dependence theory suggests that teachers were also affected by expectations to meet the standards in order to maintain a good reputation for student and classroom performance. Teachers did not have power to directly negotiate with the state or public because they did not work at the institutional level. But, in order to survive, they were reaching out to external supports such as parents, tutors and mentors, as well as adjusting lesson plans to

meet the standards in a classroom with a large number of mobile students. As the pressure for accountability increases, productivity values might shift the balance of teachers' primary values away from equity and preservation.

Chapter 8 explores principals' perspectives on student mobility in four different areas: 1) their perceptions of the causes of student mobility; 2) priority of the issue of student mobility; 3) the effects of student mobility on principals; and 4) strategies to address student mobility. At the end of the chapter, an analysis of principals' perceptions, responsibilities and responses to student mobility is made using the CVF.

Chapter 8

Principals' Perspectives and Responses to Student Mobility

In this chapter, principals' perspectives and responses to student mobility are explored and examined in the following four areas: 1) their perceptions of the causes of student mobility; 2) priority of the issue of student mobility; 3) the effects of student mobility on principals; and 4) strategies to address student mobility. At the end of the chapter, an analysis of principals' perceptions, responsibility and responses to student mobility is made using the CVF.

Principals' Perspectives of Causes of Student Mobility

Due to their role, principals appear to be in a position to have a clearer understanding of the distinct sources of mobility. They have more direct information allowing them to identify family, white flight or market mobility. Overall, half of the principals perceived market-reform motivated transfers as prominent, whereas the remaining half of the principals perceived housing and family-related factors to be important causes of student mobility. Their perceptions were based upon what was happening in the school and in their community. Thus, principals' perception of the cause of mobility is very local, changing in its nature, circumstances and effects from school to school. Consequently, there is no pattern of perceptions across schools for the causes of student mobility.

Family-motivated transfers

All seven principals except Stratton, the Timberland principal, commented that family factors caused student mobility, but only half of the principals perceived family-motivated factors as the most prominent reasons why students moved. This may indicate

that principals are more aware of other factors affecting student mobility because they have more accurate information about the reasons for student mobility.

School motivated transfers—white flight

White flight was not the primary cause of student mobility for most of the principals. For example, the Lynden, Akers and Kirkland principals did not perceive race as causing student mobility. As Kirkland and Lynden have high rates of students of color (90 percent and 76 percent, respectively), it might be hard to recognize the effect of race on mobility in schools where the majority of students are of a racial minority. This perception that race has no effect on student mobility might also be related to the fact that three principals are black, but there is no evidence to support this assumption.

The Timberland and Royal principals, however, mentioned the role of race in student mobility. Stratton, the Timberland principal, mentioned that her school, which has a legally enforced racial makeup, motivated some mobility from the neighborhood. Instead of using the term "white flight," Stratton identified upward mobility among fairly well-to-do families moving to suburbs where the population is predominantly white. Those who were moving out of the neighborhood were usually white. Mason, the Royal principal, also stressed the phenomenon of white flight in student mobility. The area where Royal is located used to be predominantly white, but its demography has been changing over time and it now has many residents of color. Royal's principal recognized this demographic change and suggested its effect on student mobility.

School-motivated transfers—market reform

Half of the principals perceived that market reform factors were creating greater student mobility. Principals deal with external factors such as market reform policies

including charter schools and inter- and intra-district schools of choice policies. As a result, they were more aware of the external policy triggers on student mobility.

Through market-based reform options, parents and students are given more opportunities to choose schools than before. The magnitude of the effects of market reform policies on student mobility remains unclear. Most principals had an impression that some parents did not actively choose a better school situation for their children. Instead, parents chose to take their children out of a school in reaction to something that had happened and selected a new school for convenience. This type of reactive choice created student mobility—particularly revolving mobility. These principals experienced increasing administrative and communication duties due to market-reform motivated transfers.

All principals except Mason from Royal claimed that school choice led to increases in student mobility. The principals at Lynden, Timberland, and Elmwood in particular, perceived that schools of choice and charter-related transfers were prominent. As Timberland and Elmwood have high rates of choice students (35 percent and 45 percent, respectively), the principals easily noticed the effect of market reform on mobility-paperwork goes through their office, and they meet all new students and their parents or guardians. Although Lynden has lower rates of choice students than the other two schools, the rate of choice students increased from 11 percent in 1996-97 to 19 percent in 00-01. With such a huge shift in the number of choice students, the effect of choice options on mobility was noticeable.

The Milford and Elmwood principals actually encouraged incoming mobility through market reform options. Both schools recently experienced a decline in

enrollment, so they worked to increase enrollment. The Milford principal's strategy to increase enrollment by luring choice students by promoting the school's unique before- and after-school programs, actually increased student mobility during the school year. But Elmwood's case was different from Milford's. Although the principal acknowledged that market options increased mobility, the school's clear vision attracted new families and their children and many stayed during the academic year. Thus, Elmwood maintained low mobility rates. These two principals used the market reform options to increase enrollment, but its effect on mobility was different.

Royal's principal had a different understanding of the effect of market on student mobility. From her point of view, schools of choice options actually stabilized outgoing mobility. Her experience was apparently contradictory to what other principals experienced. Family-related mobility would normally take students out of the school. However, when these students' parents chose to exercise their market options, they were able to keep their children in the school. Thus, the fact that the school balanced outgoing mobility by schools of choice options.

There appears to be no pattern of principals' awareness of the effect of market on student mobility and high or low mobility rates. Some principals in schools with a small number of choice students spoke of no significant effect of the market on student mobility, while some principals in schools with a large number of choice students spoke of little profound effect of the market on mobility.

Summary of principals' perspectives of the causes of student mobility

Principals appeared to have more direct information on the reasons for student mobility because of their roles and position. Thus, they could identify more clearly what

caused mobility. All principals except one acknowledged that market options increased student mobility. Half of the principals perceived that market-reform motivated transfers were creating greater student mobility, but the remaining half commented that family-related factors were the primary reason why students moved. The Milford and Elmwood principals utilized market options to increase school enrollment to survive, but other principals did not capitalize on it. This strategy increased incoming mobility in Milford, but student mobility rates remained relatively low in Elmwood. Royal's principal was the only one who did not perceive market reform options as increasing mobility. Instead, she seemed to see the schools of choice policy actually stabilizing the outgoing mobility.

Although white flight was not seen as the primary cause of mobility by most of the principals, two—Timberland and Royal-expressed the role of race in mobility. Three principals who did not identify race as a factor affecting mobility are black and their ethnic background might somewhat affect their perceptions of the effect of race on mobility.

Principals' perception of the cause of student mobility is regional because their perceptions depend upon what is happening locally. Thus, another primary finding here is that there appears to be no pattern of perception of the causes of student mobility across schools because the cause of mobility is perceived locally.

Is Mobility a Priority Issue for Principals?

Principals' attention to the issue of student mobility was low. Only one principal identified student mobility as a leading priority. Since student mobility is a low priority, principals had a passive attitude toward it and as they "go with the flow." In order to go with the flow, they did not make major changes to reduce mobility or its negative effects,

but they did make some minor, flexible adjustments in their daily routines. For example, a principal called a school a new student had previously attended to get the student's record.

Most of the principals were aware of the negative effects of student mobility, but other administrative duties were seen as higher priority. Even though half of the principals perceived school-motivated transfers as prominent, they seemed to reluctantly accept the power of the market, over which they felt they had little control. With that passivity toward the effect of market on mobility, the issue, enhanced by market reform, was not a priority for the majority of principals.

Naughton at Akers, a school with very high mobility rate of 70 percent, was the only principal who identified mobility as one of the major issues in school. Akers had the highest mobility rates in the district and, consequently, the issue of was easily recognized. Mobility was caused by both family- and school-motivated factors. Akers students created revolving mobility between Akers and its nearby charter schools. Such revolving mobility was easily recognized because it usually created a disruptive situation. Naughton explicitly raised the issue of student mobility within a school and invited teachers into a dialogue so that the mobility was openly recognized and discussed.

Mobility was not a major issue for other principals. Stratton at Timberland recognized that students moved in and out all the time, but she seemed to perceive this as a fact of life. Maybe it was because the principal thought that she had no control over high revolving mobility created by the students who were bused in to create racial balance under a federal court order. Hughes at Lynden also identified student mobility as a significant concern that should be taken into account when assessing test scores. She

explained that school characteristics and the pattern of mobility were similar to Akers, in that mobility was created by both family- and school-motivated factors. That created all types of mobility-incoming, outgoing and revolving. But Hughes, similarly, seemed to accept it as a given and had become acclimatized to it.

"I think the building is so used to having such mobility rates that it doesn't affect [us] one way or another. It's just OK that a child is there. We've got to go with what we have and go from there."

Summary of a priority issue

Student mobility is not an important issue for any of the principals but one. Even though the majority acknowledged student mobility's negative consequences, they presented passivity toward the issue. Although the Timberland and Lynden principals acknowledged that student mobility created some disruptive situations academically and socially, their attitude toward mobility was, in general, passive because they perceived mobility as a fact of a life. The Akers principal was the only one who identified student mobility as a leading priority because mobility negatively affected the learning environment, which resulted into low test scores.

Effects of Student Mobility on Principals

Areas that were affected by student mobility are mainly in the principals' administrative, coordination and communication duties. Principals identified mobility as negatively affecting the following: 1) making a year-long plan; 2) creating a cohesive school community; and 3) meeting the new standards. They also identified two positive effects of mobility on them: 1) more parental involvement in helping to create a cohesive

school community when parents were proactively choosing a school; and 2) creating a more clear school vision to attract and keep parents.

Difficulty making a year-long plan

One of the major effects of student mobility on principals was difficulty planning grade configuration and multi-age groups for the year without knowing the concrete number of students. Particularly when the deadlines for schools of choice were extended, it was hard to plan for the year without a clear picture of how many students were enrolled. Danforth, the principal in Elmwood where there were a large number of schools of choice students, explained how difficult it was to make plans such as multi-grade groups and grade configuration based on student registration because schools of choice deadlines were not firmly set.

"What happened was that those closing dates [for choice students] got postponed or new ones were created. I have to do my planning for my staff for next year in May or June. By the time I lose teachers in June, I need to have programs in place. But, all of sudden, you are told that June 1st is no longer the cutoff date for schools of choice and it's going to be August 15. Because the number of schools of choice students changes, the planning programs such as multi-age group don't work accordingly. I think rules need to be established. Time lines need to be held."

Hughes, the Lynden principal, also indicated that halfway through the school year, she needed to add another first/second grade split class and hired two new teachers because of the large influx of first grade students after school started. Her story reveals the difficulty of advance planning and budgeting, specifically because of student mobility.

"Mobility has affected us. We ended up having to open another classroom in February [2000] ...[A] first and second grade classroom because we had such a big influx of first graders and some second graders. So, February 20th was the day that we opened the new classroom...A long-term sub came in. In fact, we ended up having two new teachers come here from another building because the numbers went up. Actually, yeah, the first grade and kindergarten teachers and the long-term sub for first-second split came in February. So, we ended up having two new teachers this year. First grade and kindergarten."

She needed to coordinate with the district to open another classroom in the middle of the school year, adding work for her to deal with. What Hughes said; however, contradicted what she previously said-the building was so used to having such mobility rates that it did not affect the school one way or another. The evidence is that mobility definitely affected the school. This contradiction might tell us that Hughes wanted to believe that mobility did not affect her school on a superficial level, but on a deeper level, it evidently did.

Difficulty building a sense of school community

Principals mentioned that another major effect of student mobility on them was that it undercut their efforts to build a sense of school community. The majority of principals commented that lack of parental involvement and satisfaction in the school was detrimental to school community. A strong sense of school community was founded on the stability, bonding and commitment of school members. Student mobility was detrimental to these factors, and, consequently, principals faced difficulties creating a sense of community when there was significant student mobility.

Wehlage et al (1989) indicate that there are four components necessary to create social bonding. Those components are: 1) attachment—social and emotional ties to others, 2) commitment—rational calculation of what one must do to achieve goals, 3) involvement—involvement in the activities of an institution; and lastly 4) belief—faith in the institution. Looking at these components within the framework of student mobility, it is clear that student mobility discourages the presence of all these components necessary to build a sense of community. In Renton, principals characterized families of mobile students as follows: parents of mobile students tend to be detached from rather than attached to teachers and school because they do not actively communicate with teachers. Commitment was undercut because some parents do not send students to school regularly. The parents of mobile students were usually not involved with the school. And the final component—belief in the institution—was often lacking in instances where parents were dissatisfied with the school and were moving back and forth, according to educators' perceptions, to escape from problems rather than confront them. Given all these ways that mobility works against all the components necessary to create a sense of community, it was extremely difficult to create social bonding and a sense of communal organization.

Five principals (Akers, Kirkland, Lynden, Royal and Timberland) addressed the difficulty of creating a school community with an unstable student population and a lack of parental involvement. The finding of this study was similar to the studies done by Kerbow (1992) and Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990). Stratton, the Timberland principal, was concerned about the lack of parental collaboration at the PTA because of the conflict between two diverse parental groups—established members of the community and new,

incoming families. She explained how difficult it was to create a sense of community with this kind of diversity,

> "...[O]ftentimes the PTA is a clique, not open, not always welcoming people as they get so used to doing their own things. They oftentimes don't reach out to new families who just moved in."

Other research supports that diverse parental groups have difficulty integrating because of different beliefs and cultures.

Pressures to meet new high standards

One of the major effects of student mobility on principals was to make them accountable for school performance without factoring in how student mobility might affect student academic performance.[1] Principals felt pressures to meet high standards even though they experienced student mobility, which might affect student performance. Principals were skeptical of the accountability measurement of standardized test scores and district-level assessment tests. Four principals (Akers, Kirkland, Milford and Elmwood) said the measurements do not accurately represent school performance if the students were not taught for any meaningful length of time at the school where they took the test. Many principals in this study reiterated that statewide standardized and other test scores were not the best measurement of school performance when they included scores of students who had only recently entered the school.

Shirk, the Kirkland principal, even returned the scores of new children to the schools they attended previously, because she thought the place where they received their education should be accountable for their scores. She explained the situation as follows:

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[1] The new state accountability policy does not include test scores of students who are not in school for a certain period of time. But at the time the research was conducted, the new policy was not yet

"As far as testing and scores, we have had children moving in the day before the tests start, a week before tests start, and so on. It's very difficult to have a child ready for the statewide standardized tests as well as other students who have been in the building for some time. Those particular scores [from new students] were included in our evaluation. And that's a real problem. At one time they came late and I sent back the papers to the other schools (laugh). I did and they accepted them. The reason I did that is because that's the place they got training at. [But] we found lately that some kids who just moved in our building right before the [statewide standardized] tests would be at previous school for only two weeks and then at another school before for one month and so on…So, there is no consistency of education for some children."

Shirk's comments make two important points: 1) the test scores of a student who moves into a school right before the tests should not represent her new school's performance; and 2) some mobile students tend to move around so continuously that there is no one particular place that could be deemed accountable for their instruction. As test scores were often used to assess a school's performance, with awards given depending upon test scores, the inclusion of scores for newly arrived students did not accurately represent how the school did academically.

The Royal and Lynden principals, however, were not concerned about meeting the new standards. This might be explained by the fact that Royal had high test scores, so scores may not be that principal's concern. Even though the Lynden principal said she did not feel pressure to meet the new standards, she contradicted what she had previously suggested-that test scores should be adjusted after factoring mobility rates. This

effective.

contradiction indicates that she might actually be concerned on a deeper level about meeting the new standards.

Positive effects of student mobility on principals

One positive effect of student mobility was more parental involvement and satisfaction with school when parents actively chose a school for their children. The principals from Milford, Timberland and Elmwood shared this view. Timberland is one of the popular schools in the district, and there is a handful of parents who proactively chose Timberland and participate in classroom and school activities. Thus, it might be fairly easy for a principal to experience such a positive effect. The other positive effect on principals was a creation of a more clear vision to recruit choice students and families and maintain them. Elmwood is the most popular choice school and has low mobility rates. Although the principal did not indicate that a clear vision reduced student mobility, it successfully recruited many choice students and maintained them. Thus, a clear vision appears to help reduce mobility.

Summary of effects of student mobility on principals

Some principals identified three negative effects and two positive effects of student mobility on them. Both positive and negative effects are on their administrative, monitoring and communication responsibilities. Principals' responses varied and there are no patterns of the effects of student mobility on principals across schools. This finding also indicates that the issue of mobility is very local-their perceptions of the effects vary because their experiences with the issue of mobility are different across schools.

Negative effects include: difficulty making a year-long plan; difficulty in school community-building; and pressures to meet high standards. Two principals—Elmwood and Lynden—struggled to set grade configuration or multi-grade groups without a fixed number of enrollment. Difficulty of school community building was an issue for principals from Akers, Kirkland, Lynden, Royal and Timberland. Akers, Lynden and Timberland have high mobility rates while Kirkland and Royal have low mobility rates. Thus, there might be no correlation between mobility rates and perceptions of the effect of mobility on difficulty of community-building across schools.

A large number of principals felt pressure to meet the new standards regardless of the negative effects of student mobility on academics. They mentioned that standardized tests would not be the best measurement for school assessment. The Royal and Lynden principals did not feel pressed to meet high standards because Royal showed relatively high test scores. But what the Lynden principal said previously might indicate that she was concerned about meeting high standards on a deeper level. There appears to be no correlation between math satisfactory rates and principals' pressures to meet the standards across schools.

Half of the principals perceived parental involvement and satisfaction as positive for community-building when parents proactively chose a school. Principals from Milford, Timberland and Elmwood shared this view. The Timberland principal saw that Timberland was a popular school in the district, and a relatively large number of parents proactively chose it and got involved in school activities. Thus, it might be fairly easy for a principal to experience the positive effects of mobility as parental involvement. The other positive effect was that a school created a more clear vision. The Elmwood

principal indicated that his school created a more clear vision in order to recruit and maintain students. The data indicate that Elmwood has the highest rates of choice students in the district and low mobility rates. This clear vision might attract many choice students and families, and some choose to stay there.

Strategies to Address Student Mobility

The strategies principals used to address student mobility were not specifically formulated for student mobility. Although principals were aware of negative effects of student mobility on administrative duties, school management and school dynamics, there were almost no strategies specifically designed for dealing with it. The following are some examples of general strategies that principals used to deal with student mobility, even though they were not designed exclusively for mobile students.

Since principals are responsible for administrative services and communications with mobile students and their families, their responsibilities include: working with a student assistant provider (counselor); working closely with parents; establishing an open initial meeting for parents; setting statewide standardized test-preparation sessions, assuring that new students had all school materials such as books; making a packet containing information on school and classroom regulations; and obtaining student records for teachers. Their strategies were created more in terms of administration and mediation duties. Stratton was the only principal who balanced the transient and stable kids in a classroom so that none of the teachers would be overburdened with high student mobility.

"I try to balance out the transient population in classrooms. It's harder to have a classroom that never gets new students and another classroom that gets new

students all the time. Once you have a transient population, sometimes one classroom changes constantly. Once you get a constantly changing population, you always get new kids because you always lose kids to keep the number balanced. Right now we are doing a placement. It's important for me to know who is likely to move in and out and keep the balance of the transient population. We have three first grade classes. And I know that the six families are likely to move out, so I balance those out. So that each one of teachers has influx of children."

At Timberland school, it appeared relatively easy to identify which families were likely to move. The school covered two different attendance zones to maintain the racial balance and students who were bused in to maintain the racial balance were more likely to move. A temporary shelter in school's attendance zones also created student mobility in and out of the school. Thus, it benefited Stratton to make a plan beforehand, whereas most other principals could not predict which families were likely to move, and absent advance knowledge, were less able to balance transient population in a classroom.

Principals also used strategies including: provision of testing to new incoming students (Kirkland, Lynden, Elmwood and Royal) and provision of tutoring and mentoring services (Kirkland and Royal). These responsibilities fell under their instructional leadership role.

The majority of principals (except those from Elmwood and Timberland) paid attention only to incoming students. This indicates that the majority of principals perceived incoming mobility as normally creating more negative effects than outgoing mobility. If principals wanted to reduce student mobility or reduce the negative

consequences of student mobility, it might be best if they paid more attention to outward mobility, trying to keep families and students in the school. There were two principals who paid attention to outgoing mobility. Danforth at Elmwood said he felt it was his responsibility to talk to parents when they were leaving. He believed that some parents sent their children to other schools to escape rather than confront the realities, including behavioral and academic problems, retention, and special needs. Danforth wanted to communicate to parents that working on the issues would be more effective than moving out of the school and enrolling a child elsewhere, especially since moving often damaged children's learning, social and psychological development.

Stratton, the Timberland principal, also mentioned she sometimes informed a new school's student assistant provider of a student. That way, the assistant provider knows about the student and can more efficiently work with her. This seems to reduce student mobility's negative consequences.

Summary of strategies

The principals had no strategies specifically designed for student mobility; and their primary focus was on incoming students, not outgoing students, because incoming mobility was perceived to create more negative effects on principals. If their intention was to reduce student mobility or reduce the negative consequence of student mobility, they could pay more attention to outward mobility, trying to prevent families and students from moving. Only two principals out of seven spoke of their responsibilities for outgoing students. Principals' strategies for mobility were more focused on administration, monitoring and communication. Additionally, some principals also responded to mobility by providing testing, mentoring and tutoring that reflected their

instructional leadership role. There were no patterns of similarities or differences in strategies across schools.

Analysis of Principals' Perspectives and Responses to Student Mobility

In this section, principals' perceptions, responsibility and responses to student mobility were analyzed to bring to the surface the values related to their role-related responsibilities by using the Competing Values Framework. As the CVF suggests, the principals demonstrated all four values. But the principals' perceptions and responses to student mobility primarily reflected their values of transition and preservation. They also had a productivity value to meet the high standards and an equity value to be an instructional leader supporting teachers' responsibility.

Insight, expansion and external support

Principals' values in the transition quadrant are related to adaptation and expansion. Three types of transition values were identified as: 1) insight; 2) external resources and growth; and 3) external support. The major finding in the principals' perception of the cause of mobility is that half demonstrated some insight into market-reform motivated transfers. As principals work at the administrative level, they deal with external affairs, so they are more sensitive to the impact of external forces. Additionally, they have more direct, accurate information on the reasons for student mobility because of their position. For example, principals know which students moved in by school choice options because they are responsible for processing student documents and meeting new students and their families. They are also aware of the deadline and rules for choice-related transfers, so they are more tuned in to detecting the school choice-related reasons for transfers. The principals' perception of market-reform-motivated

transfers indicates their sensitivity to the impact of market force on student mobility (transition). In their administrative role, principals needed to have insight into the influence of market forces on student mobility.

The Elmwood and Milford principals used market reform options to increase enrollment (external resources and growth). An Elmwood principal created a more clear vision to attract new students and families and maintain them. Elmwood is the most popular choice school and has low mobility rates, because many choice students stay during the academic year. The Milford principal also used schools of choice policies to increase enrollment, which had recently experienced a drastic decline. Well-organized before- and after-school academic and social programs attracted many families. Their strategy was logical because as principals, they have responsibility to make the school survive. Thus, reaching out to external resources-new students-to keep the school in business makes sense to administrators. This represents a transition value (external resources-growth).

Lastly, principals reached out to external support such as parents, mentors and tutors to go through the transitional stage. Parental involvement in school activities and their children's schools was imperative to create a cohesive school community, while mentors and tutors were primarily instrumental in helping mobile students to get academic support. It was necessary to have external support to expand and grow through market reform options.

Passivity and administrative routines

There were also three types of preservation values—passivity toward the issue of student mobility; maintenance of routines; and creation of stable community. No matter

if principals perceived mobility to be primarily the result of market forces or family factors, they responded to student mobility with some measure of passivity. Their passivity suggests that they valued the stability of school and preferred the status quo—a preservation value because they were reluctant to make changes. All principals but one did not perceive mobility as a leading priority, and eventually did not pay much attention to it. Even though they were aware of negative effects of student mobility on their administrative duties, they maintained a passive attitude toward the issue. Their low prioritizing and passive attitude toward the issue of mobility indicate that they preferred to maintain their administrative routines and practices (preservation).

Student mobility impedes principals from making a year-long plan and creating a cohesive school community. By expressing this difficulty, principals also indicated that they wanted a firm, predictable structure of grade configuration and multi-grade classes according to certain rules (preservation). This kind of stability is necessary to sustain school functions smoothly. Student mobility makes it difficult to create a cohesive school community. These comments from principals suggest again their value for preserving a stable school community.

The Royal principal had quite a different perspective on student mobility related to preservation values. From her perspective, market reform options actually stabilized outgoing student mobility because parents exercised these options to keep their children in the school even after they physically moved.

Standards for school performance

Two types of productivity were observed: achievement and profit. The principals struggle to meet the new standards, regardless of the impact of student mobility on

academic performance, to keep high public opinion of the school. This value for productivity comes in part from their responsibility to address the recent movement to high standards. Principals were not formally punished for not meeting new standards, but they were concerned about the school's reputations and they wanted to receive monetary awards for high school performance, both for status and survival. A productivity value appears to add stress to the principals' lives. Additionally, the Elmwood and Milford principals' use of schools of choice policies to increase enrollment creates profit (productivity) because new students bring in money through state aid, based upon the number of students enrolled. Additional monetary resources help the school and the district to stay in operation.

Instructional leadership related to equity value

Half of the principals were engaged in providing testing, mentoring and tutoring to teachers for mobile students. These principals were concerned about teachers' responsibility for working with mobile students as well as mobile students' academic and social well-being. The principals' direct involvement in these services indicates they were supportive of teachers and were acting as instructional role models for teachers..

Tensions around competing values (See Figure 4)

Analysis using the CVF suggests that principals react to student mobility according to their values related to preservation and transition, with preservation pre-eminent. Based on the interviews, all principals except one did not identify student mobility as a leading issue, and as a result, there were no strategies specifically designed for it. The few strategies to address student mobility were made to create stability and

routines. Together these facts suggest that principals have a strong organizational preservation value.

The preservation and transition quadrants on the CVF compete with each other, as they are arranged on the diagonal. A tension was there; however, the majority of principals (except Elmwood and Milford) chose to place emphasis on preservation. They did not embrace both competing values, but made an either/or choice. They lost the opportunity to capitalize on transition values.

The principals' awareness of the impact of market on mobility (transition-insight) does not interfere with their preservation value because the majority of principals maintained passive attitudes (preservation) toward market-reform-motivated transfers, and eventually did not do much to address that. Thus, the principals' external antenna detecting the market effect on mobility was part of their job responsibilities, yet they did not transform their perceptions into action to address mobility. Productivity also may create some tension with preservation and transition.

A preservation value and a productivity value may compete with each other. For example, test scores may not improve unless principals change their strategies to address student mobility. The Milford principal felt no responsibility for student mobility, but he felt pressed to meet the new standards. Such passive behavior, however, does not do much toward improving test scores. Another example is increase in enrollment through schools of choice options (productivity-profit), creating a large flow of incoming students. Although it helped the organization to survive, his outreach strategy interfered with the stability of the school community and administrative routines (preservation) because it takes some time for new students and families to integrate into the school, and

meeting new students and families and processing paperwork creates extra work. A transition value and a productivity value also may be competitive with each other. The Milford principal was increasing enrollment by using schools of choice options. Reaching out to external resources—new students—helped the school to stay in business (transition). But this type of external resource created a large flow of incoming students, and a flow of students creates a disruptive learning environment and may discontinue the instruction. This affects students' learning (productivity).

In order to reduce or solve tensions, principals used external support. Some principals reached out to parents who actively selected a school for cohesive community building (transition-external support). Parental involvement helps co-create a cohesive school community with school personnel (preservation) because parental commitment and faith in schooling helps create tight bonding between school and families. When principals closely communicate with parents, it makes the school more accessible and comfortable for parents who want to get involved in school activities. Principals also coordinated testing, tutoring and mentoring to go through the transitional stage of the organization. They coordinated those programs through the district or through local business and community volunteers. External support also helps to improve school performance because tutors and mentors can spend extra time with mobile students who are behind academically to help them meet the standards. Thus, a transitional value can be complimentary and serve to moderate preservation and productivity values.

Additionally, among principals who were aware of the impact of the market on student mobility, the Elmwood principal reached out to parents of students who were leaving for a new school, trying to convince them to stay. Reaching out to parents and

preventing families and students from leaving a school might be the most effective way

to reduce mobility and its negative effects. The Timberland principal also dealt with

outward mobility. She contacted a new school when her student moved there, providing

information on her so that the new teacher and staff would know more about the new

student. That creates better information-processing between schools and also creates an

easier transition for a new student. Reaching out to the parents or new school's staff

indicates their good communication skills.

Figure 4

Equity - Instructional leader	Transition -Insight -External resources- growth -External support
Preservation -Passivity -Administrative Routines -Cohesive School Community	**Productivity** -Achievement -Profit
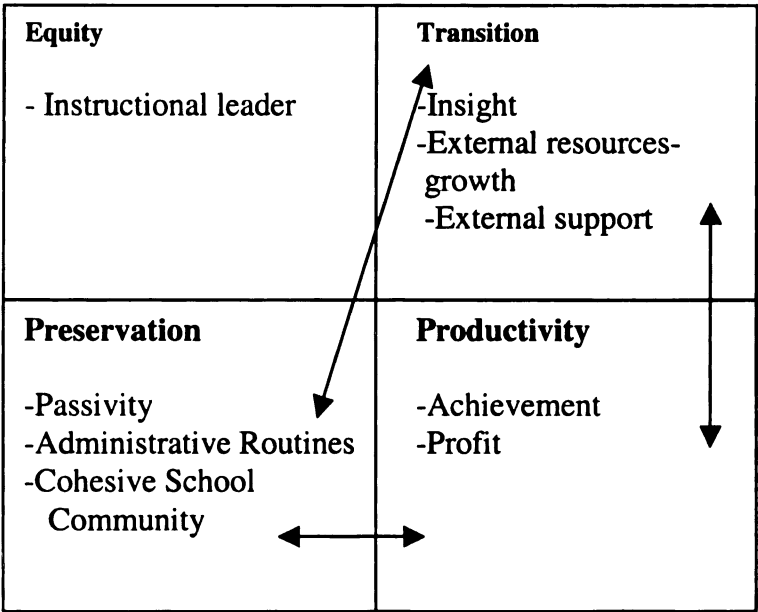
Integrating Analysis with Theory

Parsons' three levels of the organization

Principals function at the administrative level, where they administer school

operation, mediate conflicts or dialogue among people, and coordinate school events and

programs. They are responsible for both internal and external affairs. Principals'

perceptions of student mobility reflect the values of preservation and transition that were

predicted by Parsons' functionalist view. But the majority of principals' responses to student mobility were primarily focused on a preservation value.

Loose coupling—the proximity to the issue and Parsons' three levels

Principals' job responsibilities require them to pay attention to both an internal process (what teachers have an emphasis on) and an external process (what district administrators are concerned about). Thus, principals stand somewhere between district administrators and teachers, in relation to the proximity to the issue of student mobility. Only one principal perceived student mobility as a leading priority, which indicates their attention to the issue is as low as district administrators. Even though the majority of principals did not pay much attention to student mobility, they were accommodating to teachers' needs when needed. They were also making small changes just like teachers, so their responses to student mobility were rather similar to teachers'.

Loosely coupled systems—bounded rationality and sensitive sensing mechanisms

Two findings are explained by bounded rationality and sensitive sensing mechanisms: 1) schools function as a local unit, allowed to adapt to local conditions; and 2) principals primarily pay attention to incoming students.

First, the principals had fairly accurate, direct information on student mobility because of their position in the organization. Information they had access to was bounded by regional conditions, so how they perceived and responded to student mobility appeared to be driven by local situations. Overall, there was no significant pattern across schools, which suggests that schools were loosely coupled. Each school functioned as one single unit of the organization rather than as an integrated part of the big

organization—the entire district. High differentiation and low integration are the primary characteristics of loose coupling systems.

Although schools were part of the large organization and under the greater influence of district and statewide policies and regulations, a school was given autonomy to function like an individual organization to a large extent. In a loosely coupled system, local units are allowed to adapt to local conditions (Weick, 2001, p.388). For example, Timberland served two diverse bodies of student population. The principal had information on who might move soon. Based on that information, she balanced the number of mobile students across classrooms so teachers were equally dealing with the issue of mobility. Royal was a relatively popular school. Royal's principal actually encouraged the families and their children who moved to utilize schools of choice options in order to stay in the school.

Second, the principals were primarily paying attention to the incoming students. They immediately knew when new students arrived because new families and their children came to school and enrolled, and when student records were transferred. But unless parents came in and reported to the office that they were leaving for a new school, principals would not be aware they were going. Furthermore, dealing with incoming students added extra work to their routine administrative and moderation duties. Dealing with incoming mobility interfered with principals' routine work, so they were more aware of it.

Loose coupling—adaptability

The principals of Elmwood and Milford schools were not only aware of the effect of market reform options on student mobility, but they also capitalized on it. They used

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the market options to increase enrollment for school's survival. Thus, these principals balanced two competing values—preservation and transition—by maintaining administrative routines at the same time they utilized market reform options. These principals gave evidence of opportunities for adaptation to local circumstances (Weick 2001). For example, Milford's student enrollment was drastically declining over time. The principal was utilizing the school's unique before- or after-school programs as well as the convenient location for families who commute to work in the city center to attract new families and their children to enroll in the school.

Most other principals noticed the effect of the market on student mobility, but they were not capitalizing on it. They primarily maintained the value of preservation. While principals were aware of the possibilities of market options, they did not seek to benefit from them. Their primary sensing mechanisms were directed internally and market-driven possibilities were out of the bounds of their rational planning. From the competing values perspective, these principals chose an either/or approach—favoring preservation—and did not utilize the value of transition to make a good balance. An either/or approach may not be the optimal strategy to deal with a situation like student mobility. It is important to keep a balance between stability and flexibility. Thus, the Elmwood and Milford principals were perceived to utilize both stability and flexibility to deal with the issue of mobility more efficiently than other principals.

Resource dependence theory-achievement

Pressures on principals to meet the high standards indicate that they were influenced by the external environment—state-mandated standardized tests and public opinions on what made a good school. Although they were not formally punished for low

test scores, they wanted to obtain and maintain a good reputation and receive monetary awards for high school performance. Principals were the heads of the schools, so they were more likely to detect and respond to the influence of such external factors on schools. As principals worked at the administrative level, they were not in a position to negotiate with the public or the state department about the use of standardized tests. But they could negotiate with the district administrators. Akers' principal reported to the district on the school's high student mobility rates and its effect on test scores. Some principals had preparatory sessions for standardized tests as well as using tutors and parents as support to improve students' academic performance.

Resource dependence theory—external resource and profit

The Elmwood and Milford principals' strategy to reach out to external resources (new students and new families) indicates that the schools were affected by external factors such as market reform policies. These two principals were actively utilizing external resources to survive. As the resource dependence theory suggests, survival is the major goal for the organization. As building administrators, they felt responsible for keeping the school in business.

Chapter 9 explores district administrators' perspectives and responses to student mobility in four different area: 1) their perceptions of the causes of student mobility; 2) priority to the issue of student mobility; 3) the effects of student mobility on district administrators; and 4) strategies to address student mobility. And the end of the chapter, an analysis of district administrators' perceptions, responsibilities and responses to student mobility is made using the CVF.

Chapter 9

District Administrators' Perspectives and Responses to Student Mobility

Chapter 9 explores and examines district administrators' perspectives and responses to student mobility in four different areas: 1) their perspectives on the causes of student mobility; 2) priority given to the issue of student mobility; 3) the effects of student mobility on district administrators; and 4) strategies to address student mobility. At the end of the chapter, an analysis of district administrators' perceptions, responsibility and responses to student mobility is made using the CVF.

District Administrators' Perspectives on the Causes of Student Mobility

All district administrators identified market reform options as the primary causes of student mobility. This might suggest that district administrators are most sensitive to the external influence on mobility because they work at the institutional level where they negotiate, collaborate and compete on external forces such as market reform options. Only three district administrators indicated that family-motivated issues were the major reason for school transfer. They understood that upward mobility was creating outward student mobility from the district. District administrators evidently put more emphasis on external factors affecting student mobility, and mobility crossing the district boundary (both inward and outward), because these types of mobility create the flow of students and money resources for the district. But it was not clear whether the district administrators perceived mobility as being largely the district's responsibility or the responsibility of both school and families.

Family-related school transfer-upward mobility

Three district administrators (Torias, Ochoa and Goulvitch) mentioned that the city lacked the upper-middle-class housing that created an upward mobility to the suburbs. This kind of residential lack created student mobility out of the district. Interview results suggest that district administrators put more emphasis on out-of-district mobility because this form of mobility creates an outflow of students and resources that might negatively affect the district's state aid funding and budget.

School-motivated transfers-market reform

The major finding in district administrators' perception of the causes of student mobility is that all district administrators claimed that market reform options led to increases in student mobility. They had a clear sense that charter schools and schools of choice increased mobility and market-reform-motivated transfers were profound. Haggard and Goulvitch stressed the great effect of charter schools on mobility. Charter-school-motivated transfers were a major contribution to declining enrollment in the district and, as such, to an increase in student mobility. They felt charter schools were a threat to the district's survival. Additionally, Torias said some families used school choice to move to affluent schools without physically moving. Thus, schools of choice policy was another factor affecting the district's outward mobility.

These administrators were clearly focusing more on out-of-district mobility. In other words, their focus was not so much on student mobility from school to school within the school district because such mobility did not create any outflow of students from the district. Thus, interview results might suggest that their focus was on monetary resources across school districts. The resource dependence theory argues that an organization is most critically attentive to those elements in its environment such as

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charter school and schools of choice policies, which provide the resources important to its survival (McPherson et al, 1986, p.197).

The rise in educational mobility was partly the result of the increased opportunity to choose among various options for public schooling (Cookson 1994; Schneider, Schiller and Coleman 1996 in Swanson and Schneider 1999). In a market-based reform, parents and students were given more opportunities to choose schools based on their preferences. This theory explains that recent student mobility in the district was primarily caused by charter schools and schools of choice policies.

Three administrators (Torias, Ochoa and Wedmeyer) understood that a large number of school-of-choice and charter-school-related transfer students sought 'choice' to escape from reality and such problems as low academic performance, behavioral issues, retention, and dissatisfaction with public schools. They indicated that market reform options appear to be unused by parents, at least as they were intended to be used. Lastly, Wedmeyer claimed that most within-district school-of-choice transfers were not so much education-oriented as oriented toward the convenience of parents or guardians. These reasons include: the school being closer to the parent's work place; and the school being located in an area where a child's babysitter lives.

Summary of district administrators' perceptions on the causes of student mobility

District administrators understood market reform options as representing the most profound factors affecting student mobility. District administrators negotiate, collaborate and compete with other actors on external forces, such as market reform options at the institutional level so they are sensitive to the effect of market force on student mobility. Their emphasis was more likely to be on both inward and outward mobility as it crosses

the district boundary—and causes the inflow and outflow of students and monetary resources. They were not emphasizing within-district mobility because this does not create the outflow of financial resources. Even for the three district administrators who mentioned that family-related factors also had created mobility, their focus was on out-of-district mobility—upward mobility to the suburbs. Thus, overall, district administrators paid more attention to the mobility that crosses district boundaries. This finding makes sense, based upon district administrator's responsibilities of maintaining and increasing students' enrollment.

District administrators understood that the majority of parents who change schools through school-of-choice options choose to reactively escape from the problems or issues at an old school rather than proactively select a new school for their children's better educational and social growth. Additionally, within-district school transfers were perceived to be more for convenience than for educational purposes. Thus, interview results suggest that schools-of-choice-motivated transfers do not reduce student mobility, but rather increase student mobility.

Is Mobility a Priority for District Administrators?

It was evident that mobility is not a leading priority for district administrators. When they were asked questions about mobility, they often turned to the issues of enrollment and academic performance. Even though they were fully aware of the market effect on student mobility, mobility itself was not an issue as long as students stayed within the district, although they frequently moved from one school to another within the district. District administrators' lack of attention to the issue of mobility might suggest that they have no district-wide strategies solely designed to reduce student mobility.

Effects of Student Mobility on District Administrators

District administrators' primary concern is to meet the standards, regardless of high student mobility, because they believe the public uses test scores to rank and measure the school district. School district ranking affects consumers' decision-making on where to live and where to school their children. Thus, ranking largely affects the district enrollment and plays a role in district survival. On a superficial level, district administrators commented that mobility did not affect student performance. Instead, they were turning to teachers, saying that they were concerned if teachers used mobility as an excuse to lower their expectations of student performance. As a result, with their low expectations, teachers might not teach mobile students up to the high standards. This eventually affects the overall scores of the school district. Thus, on a deeper level, the administrators were concerned that mobility might affect student performance due to teachers possibly lowering their expectations and not teaching mobile students up to the standards.

Pressures to meet the new standards

On a superficial level, district administrators did not believe that student mobility affects student performance. These administrators provided research evidence to building principals and classroom teachers that student mobility had no effect on student academic performance. Their intention was to ensure that teachers and principals would not use mobility as an excuse to lower expectations and standards. They wanted to make sure that teachers conducted instructions based upon the aligned curriculum. They believe the public, particularly the media, uses standardized test scores to rank and evaluate the school district. Based on test scores, the public makes judgments on how good or bad the

school district is. Some people decide to stay in the district, move out of the district, or move into the district, depending upon information related to the test scores. Consequently, people's decisions affect the flow of people, and that of students. As described earlier, the flow of students affects the district's state aid funding and budget. District administrators intended to improve test scores to have a good reputation for the district in order to attract and maintain families and their school-aged children. There were also some monetary incentives to the schools and district for higher test scores. They were also at risk of a state takeover for low test scores—the result being a loss of autonomy and the freedom of local control.

Torias looked at test scores and mobility rates at the building level for the last several years and found there was no correlation between mobility and statewide standardized test scores. Her findings contradicted what Mao et al (1997) claimed about the relationship between mobility and test scores. While Mao's study was a large-scale statistical analysis, Torias' findings were gathered through a case study that compared and contrasted data manually without controlling factors. Although her analysis was not scientific, she indicated that regardless of the high student mobility rates at Milford school, students' reading scores were relatively high. Torias' finding resembled several research studies (e.g., Heywood, Thomas and White, 1997; Reynolds 1999; Heinlein and Shinn 2000; Bolinger and Gilman 1997) that suggested no relationship between student mobility and academic performance.

Although Haggard claimed that there was no correlation between mobility and student performance, she also commented that students who moved to a new school right before statewide standardized tests had lowered scores. She also mentioned that the

office did not evaluate the difference in test scores between mobile and stable students, but they planned on doing so in the future. Her statement indicates that, on a deeper level, the district administrator was concerned that student mobility actually affected academic performance. And, her concern was primarily coming from her doubt that teachers adjusted instruction based upon their lower expectation of mobile students. Thus, she was concerned that teachers used mobility as an excuse not to expect the mobile students to meet the standards. She described,

> "[The research group] did not find and another district also indicated [that] mobility was not necessarily the factor for our schools. There were other reasons why students don't learn, don't achieve. It's not always mobility as the reason. A lot of it has to do with classroom instruction and ability of a teacher to be in touch with the needs of a child."

Summary of the effects of student mobility on administrators

District administrators mentioned that their responsibility was to meet the high standards. They were also responsible for making sure that principals and teachers understood-by providing research evidence-that there was no correlation between student mobility and student performance, so teachers and principals would try to meet the new standards. Their focus on high standards comes from a concern that the public would use the test scores to rank and measure the quality of the school district. Based upon the ranking and test scores, some people make decisions on whether on not they stay, move out or move into the district. People's decisions affect student mobility, particularly the enrollment that is directly related to the flow of financial resources from the state. As district administrators are responsible for external forces such as state-mandated

standardized tests and public opinions, they are also sensitive to their need to meet the standards.

District administrators believed that there was no correlation between student mobility and test scores, on a superficial level. But, they also claimed that test scores were negatively affected by students who moved into schools right before the test. This comment suggests that district administrators were also concerned about the effect of student mobility on student performance, on a deeper level. Their intention to evaluate the correlation between student mobility and students' test scores would support the argument that, on a deeper level, they are actually concerned that mobility might actually affect student performance.

Strategies to Address Student Mobility

Although district administrators did not develop specific strategies for student mobility, they used existing programs to reduce the negative effects of student mobility and to reduce student mobility itself. Strategies for reducing the negative effect of student mobility include: 1) district-wide aligned curriculum, pacing guides and quarterly assessments; and 2) an informal network system to track down mobile students. The main strategy for the reduction of student mobility was the implementation of magnet schools, owing to school's additional provisions for transportation.

Reduction of the negative effect of student mobility

The majority of district administrators indicated that the aligned curriculum, pacing guides and quarterly assessments were the major district policies created to help reduce the negative effects of student mobility. Aligned curriculum had been implemented since the mid-1990s, whereas the pacing guide and quarterly assessments

were implemented in the year the interviews took place. At the time the interviews were conducted, pacing guides and quarterly assessments were made for math and language arts. Pacing guides tell what and when to teach in an organized way. Quarterly assessments were made based upon the pacing guides, and implemented every nine weeks. Torias was excited when she explained the positive effectiveness of the pacing guides she created. She strongly believed that it would fill the gap in learning and knowledge of the child. This logic of pacing guides and quarterly assessments filling the gap comes from the assumption that all teachers across the district teach the same content at the same time and as a result, even though a child moves from school to school, a child would not miss any content. This argument makes sense as long as the mobility takes place within the district. Haggard also believed that the quarterly assessments would tell the teachers what areas a child was missing so that she could follow it up and help fill in the gaps.

District administrators strongly believed that pacing guides and quarterly assessments would help improve mobile students' achievement because students would not miss any content despite moving. Furthermore, the quarterly assessments indicate a child's weaknesses and a teacher can follow up to help a student grasp the content she did not understand before. However, as the pacing guides and quarterly assessments were only recently implemented, it might take some time to assess the programs' effectiveness.

As to the strategy to reduce the negative consequences of student mobility, there was an informal network to track down mobile students and communication among personnel. This informal network would help bring a student back into a school system

so they would miss fewer school days. That would help reduce the negative effects of mobility on student's academic and social aspects.

Reduction of student mobility

The magnet schools were about to open within a couple of months of when the interviews took place, and the majority of district administrators mentioned that magnet schools would reduce mobility. They believed that parents and students would value magnet schools' unique focus so much they would stay. Magnet schools also provide transportation. If students stayed, mobility would be reduced. The provision of transportation is an important issue for many mobile students and their families. The reason they cannot send their children to the same school for the whole year is often that they do not have their own means to transport them when they move. Thus, the provision of amenable transportation would certainly reduce student mobility.

Summary of district administrators' strategies for student mobility

District administrators did not develop and implement strategies specifically addressing student mobility. Their primary focus on enrollment and resources suggests their lack of attention to student mobility itself, and this might explain why there were no strategies solely designed for student mobility. Besides enrollment and resources, they were also primarily concerned about test scores. Strategies that the district implemented to improve test scores—aligned curriculum, pacing guides and quarterly assessments— were also perceived to reduce the negative effects of student mobility on students'academic performance. District administrators strongly believed that the pacing guides and quarterly assessments would fill the deficit in students' learning because students could keep up with the content and the pace of the subject even when they

moved within the district. Thus, they would not miss out on any lessons. Quarterly

assessments further help a student to acquire the content of the materials that she initially

might not understand. These strategies were perceived as important because they were

tied to the improvement of test scores. Utilizing informal networks to track down mobile

students was also perceived to be an effective strategy for reducing the negative effects of

student mobility because these students would be in the school system without losing

many school days.

As for a strategy for reducing student mobility, magnet schools with a

transportation system were believed by district administrators to reduce student mobility

because they felt that parents and students would choose to stay in these schools because

of their unique programs and visions. Furthermore, the transportation magnet schools

provide was believed to stabilize the mobility of students because parents did not have to

rely on their own transportation.

Analysis of District Administrators' Perspectives and Responses to Student Mobility

District administrators' perceptions, responsibilities and responses to student

mobility are analyzed by using the Competing Values Framework (CVF). The findings

are also connected to three theories. District administrators' perceptions and responses to

student mobility primarily reflect the values of transition and productivity. Their

responses to reduce student mobility or reduce the negative consequences of student

mobility also reflect the values of preservation and equity.

Sensitivity to external resources

District administrators' awareness of the influence of market reform options on

student mobility tells of their responsibility for negotiating, cooperating, and competing

with external actors and external resources (transition). In order for the district to survive, they need to seek out external resources—students-to sustain their business. Their attention to outward mobility from the district and upward mobility to suburbs also indicates that they are concerned about the effect of the outflow of resources on the district's survival. This growth-based value of transition is closely related to the profit-oriented productivity value. In the next section, district administrators' productivity values are examined.

District's survival through profit and achievement

District administrators' leading priority is apparently to negotiate the influence of external forces such as market reform policies and state-mandated standardized tests. Their goal is to ensure the survival of the organization and to acquire more autonomy and freedom from external constraints. Generating profits through external resources is imperative for the district to stay in business as it has recently experienced a decline in enrollment due to demographic changes and the effect of market reform. Besides their responsibility for monetary resource acquisition, the district administrators felt pressured to meet the new standards because board members, the public and media use test scores to judge the quality of the school district. The indicator for test scores affects inward and outward mobility in the district because people make a decision about which school they send their children. The district might also possibly face state takeover if the test scores are exceptionally low. In order for the district to maintain its autonomy, and freedom from the state, district administrators are responsible for producing and maintaining a certain level of academic performance. Their expectation of teachers to teach mobile students up to the new standards and to implement the pacing guides and quarterly

assessments indicates not only a productivity value, but also their need for organizational preservation. In the next section, the value of preservation is examined and analyzed from an administration standpoint.

Formal district policies holding the organization together

District-wide pacing guides and quarterly assessments were perceived in part to reduce the negative consequences of student mobility. The intention and goal of these strategies is to fill the mobile students' learning deficit by aligning teachers on what and when to teach, by pacing guides, and also by helping teachers to identify what students' weaknesses are through quarterly assessments so they can follow up. These formal district policies are intended to give teachers and schools well-defined schedules and content to teach, and to stabilize students' learning experience even when they move during the academic year.

Additionally, district administrators perceived that magnet schools would help reduce student mobility. Specialized programs with a clear vision in five magnet schools were believed to attract students, maintain them and lower student mobility. Transportation provided through magnet school programs would also help reduce student mobility. Parents often are not able to send their children back to a former school after moving because they lack their own transportation. Thus the provision of transportation creates stability among some students.

Helping mobile students back into the system

District administrators also developed an informal network to track down mobile students and get them back into the school system as soon as possible. Their intention by creating such a network is to minimize the negative academic and social effects of

student mobility on mobile students. Their concerns about students indicate their commitment to students' learning (equity). Pacing guides and quarterly assessments are also considered as tools to provide equal educational opportunities and services to all students, including mobile students. It is fair that all students are given an opportunity to achieve at a certain level of academic performance. Quarterly assessments are used as an indicator of a student's weaknesses. With knowledge of a student's weaknesses, teachers are able to provide a more individualized approach to help a student to understand certain content, or to solve problems. Thus, such an individualized approach would create equity for the student's learning.

Tensions around competing values (See Figure 5)

District administrators' perceptions and response to student mobility primarily reflected the values of transition and productivity. District administrators negotiate, cooperate and compete with external actors and external forces such that their motivations and behaviors around the issue of student mobility indicate they were sensitive to the influence of the external factors affecting their survival and freedom from external constraints. Their sensitivity to the effect of market reform options on student mobility (transition) and the use of market reform options to generate resources to survive the district (productivity) go hand in hand. But, their pressures to meet the standards (productivity) appear to be in competition with the use of the market to expand. They wanted to improve test scores in order to have a good reputation, while the frequent in-and-out movement of students was considered to be disruptive to students' learning. In order to ease the tensions between these two values, the district implemented

policies—pacing guides and quarterly assessments—to reduce the negative effects of student mobility.

Pacing guides and quarterly assessments are believed to reduce the negative consequences of student mobility on mobile students. These policies align teachers on what to teach and when to teach, by pacing guides, and help teachers to identify the weaknesses of students through quarterly assessments. District administrators believed that mobile students would not miss much content even when they moved. Students would receive the same content from their new teacher in a new school because teachers would teach the same content at the same, or similar time, of the year based on a pacing guide. With this policy, the deficit in a mobile student's learning was expected to be reduced. Additionally, district administrators expected teachers to fill the gaps in a mobile student's learning by identifying her weaknesses through quarterly assessments and by providing some special services to address the deficit. With these policies, teachers and schools are more aligned and consequently this alignment creates more cohesiveness (preservation) through formal rules and policies.

Figure 5

Equity Equitable educational Services Inclusion	Transition Insight External Resources Growth
Preservation Stability Cohesiveness	Productivity Profit Achievement
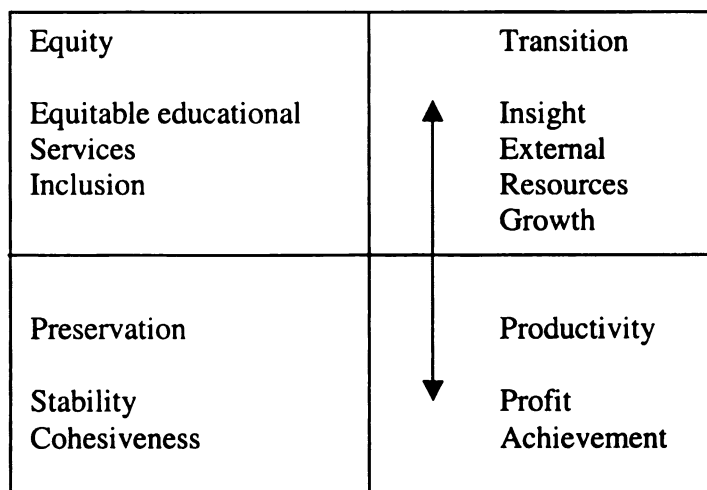
Integrating Analysis with Theory

Parsons' three levels of the organization

District administrators deal with the issue of student mobility at the institutional

level where they negotiate, compete and cooperate with external actors and external

constraints. They are primarily responsible for external affairs. As Parsons' functionalist

view predicted, their perceptions and responses to student mobility mainly reflect the

values of transition and productivity.

Loose coupling-the proximity from the issue-and Parsons' three levels

District administrators were farthest from the issue of student mobility. As such,

they were the most uncertain about the issue because the frequency and magnitude of the

student mobility they dealt with would be rare and low. Their own lack of direct

experience with student mobility might explain that: 1) none of the district administrators

perceived student mobility as a leading priority; and 2) they believed that there was no

direct effect of student mobility on test scores. But they were concerned teachers'

lowered expectations of mobile students' academic performance might affect overall test

scores.

Loose coupling—bounded rationality and sensitive sensing mechanisms

The district administrators were concerned about student enrollment, because

state funding is based on the number of students in the school. This reality drove district

administrators to explore market reform options to increase enrollment. As a result,

increases in enrollment increased student mobility. As increases in enrollment were

accomplished by student mobility, student mobility was perceived as a solution by the

district administrators. Their definition of what students are and what student mobility is

determined what kind of mobility they most paid attention to. They primarily considered outward and inward mobility from the district because it created an outflow or inflow of monetary resources. The flow of money would directly affect the district's survival.

Loose coupling-adaptability

District administrators who work at the institutional level are responsible for negotiating, cooperating and competing with external actors and external forces such as market reform, state-mandated standardized tests and public opinions. Because of their job responsibilities, they have knowledge of and are sensitive to the external constraints and factors affecting the district's own survival. They are aware of and utilize the values of both transition and productivity and maintain a balance between flexibility and stability on the issue of student mobility.

Resource dependence theory—achievement

It was important for the district to maintain good test scores in order to acquire autonomy and freedom from external constraints. In order to meet high standards, the district administrators were responsible for making sure that principals and teachers maintained expectations of mobile students' academic performance. They provided the research evidence that student mobility did not affect test scores. District-wide policies such as pacing guides and quarterly assessments were believed to help reduce the consequence of student mobility. With pacing guides, mobile students would not miss much content when moving to a new school, because teachers were supposed to teach the same content at the same time across the district. With quarterly assessments, mobile students' weaknesses would be identified, so teachers could give them special support. Thus, pacing guides and quarterly assessments were believed to improve mobile students'

academic performance. With good student academic performance, the district market

value might increase and as a result the district would attract more families and children.

Resource dependence theory—external resources and profit

In order to survive, as described above, the district administrators were

capitalizing on market options to increase the enrollment, which created an increase in

student mobility. As the district has been experiencing a decline in enrollment , caused

by demographic change and the impact of market reform options, they needed to market

the district with unique programs to attract students. Survival was the most important

agenda among the district administrators. As mentioned earlier, pacing guides and

quarterly assessments were believed to reduce the negative consequences of student

mobility. Magnet schools were also believed not only to reduce student mobility but also

to attract students outside of the district. With popularity resulting from good test scores

and unique programs, the district would be able to attract more new families and their

children, and acquire more autonomy and freedom from external constraints.

Chapter 10

*Analysis of the Educators' Perceptions and Responses to Student Mobility
Across Three Levels of the Organization*

Previous chapters have shared findings related to this study's first question:

how do differently situated actors learn about, make sense of, and formulate responses to

student mobility. This chapter highlights how actors' perceptions and responses to

student mobility varied by location within the organization; and what explains such

variations. It also discusses how tensions among responses contributed to organizational

responses to student mobility.

Five major findings about actors' responses were identified. They were: 1)

Tensions were primarily found between district and school-level actors (principals and

teachers) and reflected difference is certain, primary values. 2) Proximity to student

mobility determined actors' perceptions and responses. 3) Organizational approaches

conflicted with local adaptability. 4) Access to mobility related information shaped what

actors knew and what was important for them. And, 5) Actors responses did not seem to

differ fundamentally by school, no pattern across schools, which suggests that schools are

loosely coupled within their district contexts.

Where Tensions are Most Likely to Exist

Actors at different levels of the hierarchy perceived and responded to student

mobility in identifiable ways. Teachers and the majority of principals seemed to share

the value of preservation, in both cases working to maintain school and classroom

routines and stability. Teachers seemed geared towards maintaining planned lessons and

classroom community. For example, when new students entered classrooms, teachers

focused on diagnosing academic strengths and weaknesses and using a buddy system in order to integrate the student into existing routines and norms.

Similarly, a majority of principals showed a preference for preservation by emphasizing concerns that student mobility not disrupt their administrative routines and functions. For example, they worked closely with student service providers around new students' psychological and behavioral issues, and let student service providers take the lead on those issues. When a new student's record came, the principals asked a secretary to process it. They also utilized external support--such as parents, tutors and mentors--to re-create stability. Having extra support from school staff and volunteers, the principals tried to maintain their administrative routines.

Though similar in primary values, teachers and principals differed somewhat in their secondary values. Teachers concerns with integrating new students into classroom communities demonstrated some concern for matters of equity. Principals, on the other hand, tended to consider how, in some cases, mobility might serve desired transitions. For example, some principals were aware that certain forms of mobility might be a positive development for their schools.

Overall, however, both teachers and principals shared a general passivity towards the issue of student mobility ('it happens, there isn't anything you can do about it"), indicating that they were not willing to make major changes to priorities or routines. Most of their suggested responses to mobility focused on external supports (tutoring, before and after-school programs) that could be added to existing school organizational routines.

In contrast, district administrators functioning at the institutional level linked the issue of student mobility to their negotiations with external actors and factors. Their attentions were focused on the acquisition of external resources, achievement numbers and enrollment expansions, all of which stressed the values of transition and productivity over preservation. District administrators were fully aware of the relationships between mobility and recent market reforms and accountability measures. They related to mobility more in terms of how it might help or hinder their ability to attract and retain needed student enrollments and to maintain academic achievement outcomes that would keep their districts in good, competitive standing.

While teachers' and principals' primary job responsibilities were fundamentally different, they shared the core value of preservation—the maintenance of routines and stable community. District administrators, on the other hand, emphasized transition and productivity. Tensions between these competing values may be further explained by the proximity to the issue described next.

The Role of Proximity

Proximity to student mobility also seemed to influence actors' perceptions and responses. Actors' proximity to mobile students affected the priority given to mobility and the degree to which it was perceived to affect student achievement.

Proximity and mobility as a leading educational priority

Teachers were closest to mobility as an issue affecting their daily work. They were most aware of how student mobility affected students' learning and needed to find flexible ways to accomplish job responsibilities while maintaining their instructional

routines and stable classroom community. Consequently, two fifths of the teachers

identified mobility as a leading educational priority.

District administrators, however, were furthest from mobile students. They did

not encounter the issue of mobility as frequently as teachers did. They also did not know

exactly how mobility affected classroom teaching. Consequently, none of the district

administrators perceived student mobility as a leading educational issue. A conversation

between the Lynden principal, Hughes, and a district administrator, Goulvitch, illustrated

the discrepancy of understanding between district and school level actors.   Hughes had a

visit from Goulvitch, and shared the following:

> "Goulvitch was here. He and I were talking. And, I mentioned those numbers, the
>
> number of mobility student. He looked and said, "Say that again." And, I said
>
> [the number]. Goulvitch was shaking his head and he said, "Is that true? How
>
> can you...?" I said, "This is the thing that the public doesn't understand...when
>
> you have that going on." He said, "My Gosh. When can I learn?" I said, "That's
>
> it." You know teachers have to re-teach and re-do things many times."

Goulvitch was surprised to learn how high the mobility was, something that he didn't

know before his visit. This suggested that the district administrator might not really

understand what the school was actually dealing with.

Principals' awareness of the issue was closer to the district administrators' than to

the teachers', with only one principal identifying student mobility as a leading priority.

Whereas the teacher perceived student mobility as a problem, the principal did not see it

in the same way as the teacher. For example, Ponzi, a Royal teacher, mentioned that her

principal was not proactive about this issue:

"I wish I had more leadership [on strategies for mobility]. I think it's kind of

amazing to me that teachers who have been there for many years still struggle

with what I am struggling with. Nobody has held together and figured it out yet?

Or what? You know I was the one who brought up the issue that a [new] kid

showed up at the door [without any prior notice]. This is not right, first of all, for

a student. [So,] we pulled welcoming packets together. Then we talked about

how to welcome new students who showed up in school without any notice.

Now, the building has a small packet for the parents and new students to read in

the principal's office while teachers are informed of the new students and get

things ready for them."

However, the Royal principal did not perceive student mobility as an urgent issue;

mobility rates at her school were lower than most in the district and student performance

levels were relatively high. The Royal principal said,

"In this particular building, most of mobility happens during the summer. We, as

far as student mobility during the school year, are fairly stable, compared to other

schools. Parents will move but they are up to schools of choice and bring them

back...So, although mobility may affect other schools more than Royal School,

right now ours is not too bad."

Different perceptions of student mobility between a teacher and a principal created a

tension around the way to respond to the issue of mobility. Such a tension caused

unnecessary stress on teachers who needed to integrate new students who showed up at

the door without any notice. Although the majority of principals did not perceive student

mobility as a leading priority they were receptive and accommodating to teachers' needs when necessary.

Proximity and the effects of mobility on achievement

Those farthest from mobile students were also the most likely to discount relationships between mobility and test scores. District administrators seemed less likely to think that mobility itself negatively affected student performance. Rather, they were concerned that teachers' lowered their expectations of mobile students and that this negatively affected student performance. This may explain why they believed pacing guides and quarterly assessments might reduce the negative consequences of mobility.

Although teachers and principals also felt pressured to meet the standards, their understanding of the effect of mobility on student academic performance was fundamentally different than the district administrators'. Teachers and principals believed student mobility had direct negative effects on student performance. Thus, they were not content with how district administrators identified the relationship between mobility and test scores. Getz, a Milford teacher said that the district provided literature arguing that mobility and test scores had no correlation:

> "[The district] quoted research saying that student mobility has no effect on test scores...I said that's not true from what I read. But, they said from what they read that it is true. [There is also a tension] when we say how we should or could be responsible for test scores for a child whom we've never taught. We shouldn't get a credit or blame. [There is] great lack of understanding [between the district and classroom teachers]."

Teachers change strategies to meet the standards were small scale, accommodative, and sporadic. They sought to make small adjustment to accommodate students' understanding of the materials and content.

While the majority of interviewed principals were also not convinced that pacing guides and quarterly assessments would help fill gaps in mobile student's learning, two principals—those at Lynden and Royal—commented that they could. Hughes stated:

"As for the district doing pacing guides and quarterly assessments, those are going to be more positive. That is because hopefully no matter where a child goes in the district, s/he can be close within the same area of what they are learning. There won't be gaps that they had before."

Overall, however, principals functioned as did teachers, being flexible and reaching out to external supports for assistance.

Consequently, a tension around the enforcement of pacing guides and quarterly assessments—an organizational adaptation—was obvious between the district administrators and school-level actors, particularly teachers. The majority of teachers did not like the district wide policy and they did not think the pacing guides and quarterly assessments would reduce mobility or the negative consequences of it. The teachers argued that pacing guides were based upon assumptions that mobile students were at grade level and without lost time in school between moves. At the same time the policy would take away from teachers opportunities to make small, local adjustments in response to mobile students.

Because it was too early to make a judgment on whether or not new district policies were helping mobile students' academic performance, the issue would need to be followed up and evaluated to weight its impact and success.

Organizational Adaptation versus Local Adaptability

In order to manage student mobility, teachers and principals made small, flexible changes whenever they encountered a new student or a student leaving. Small-scale, flexible changes at the classroom and school level are considered examples of local adaptability. In a loosely coupled system teachers and principals were given freedom to make flexible changes. The district response to student mobility—through the institution of pacing guides and quarterly assessments—minimized flexibility, however. An organizational approach did not incorporate local differences. This organizational adaptation was in tension with the local adaptability on the part of teachers and principals. Weick (2001) indicates that organizational adaptation requires a tight coupling system in which teachers and schools are not allowed to have much differentiation. Schools, however, persisted in being loosely-coupled organizations. Teachers resisted organizational mandates around instruction, as they did in this study. Thus, tension was created from the contrasting approaches utilized by district administrators and school-level actors.

Incoming versus Outgoing Mobility

Access to information shaped what actors knew and focused on. Consequently, there were clear differences in actors' attentions to particular types of student mobility. Teachers paid the most attention to incoming students. They were confronted with disruptions to their instructional routines and were responsible for integrating students

into their classrooms. While they clearly knew when new students came, however, they often did not know when students would leave. Once students did leave, they left the teachers' field of concern.

Principals also focused on incoming mobility. Dealing with incoming students negatively affected principals' administrative routines and school community building far more than outbound mobility. Principals had more accurate information on the reasons why incoming students had just moved, but few of them seemed to capitalize on this information by developing strategies to respond to incoming students. As described earlier, they maintained a generally passive attitude toward the matter. This sometimes created frustrations among teachers who wanted more proactive approach towards incoming students.

For district administrators, much greater attention was placed on outgoing mobility, particularly outgoing mobility that crossed district lines. They spoke most often of the impact of demographic changes and market reform options on outward mobility, and the consequent outflow of important dollars.

Mobility as a Solution versus a Problem

District administrators more often capitalized on the effect of market reform options to bring new students into the district. Thus, they tended to perceive student mobility as a potential solution whereas the majority of principals and teachers perceived it as a problem.

For the district administrators, students were perceived as resources as well as learners. They utilized schools of choice and charter school options to increase student enrollment.

For the majority of principals, students were primarily identified as learners although two principals, those at Milford and Elmwood, expressed a similar view of students as resources.

While student mobility might improve enrollments and help a district or school survive, it remained a problematic disruption to instructional and administrative routines of teachers and principals. For all the teachers and the majority of principals, students were mainly perceived as learners, thus increases in student mobility were disruptive to teaching and learning.

The tensions between mobility as a solution versus a problem were also seen in one of the cases study schools. At Milford, the teacher Getz, shared that the principal tried to increase enrollment through school choice options. Getz was concerned about losing the sense of a neighborhood school if choice students pushed out neighborhood children. She said,

> "...as I understand it, [our enrollment is] supposed to be 157 or 160. At one point we had 190 students...My point of view was that you should take me to 17 and 18 or 19 community [or] local children because we get more children coming in through schools of choice or whatever. And, we don't have room for community children. This is a community school. I am seeing the grass root level..."

She continued saying that she considered the problem at the student level while her principal looked at it at the building level.

These differences, both in attention to inward versus outward mobility and to mobility as either a solution or problem, suggest why proactive strategies at the school level, or district wide policies on mobility, are difficult or awkward to forge.

Patterns among Actors Were More Predictable Than Those among Schools

While there were some clear patterns among actors in Renton, there were few clear patterns among its schools, suggesting that loose coupling at the district level leads to very local adaptations to student mobility

The interview results indicate that principals' perceptions and responses to student mobility were closely related to what was happening in the community and in the school. For example, demographic change greatly affected some schools, e.g. Royal and Milford. Thus, principals' perceptions and responses to student mobility were related to the demographic changes—the decline in population, the increased number of people of color, and the increased number of rental houses. The existence of a charter school nearby greatly affected Akers, creating revolving door mobility. Akers had the highest mobility rates, so the principal was fully aware of the effects of student mobility, and he even reported to the district about the negative consequences of mobility on students. A federal court order to create a racial balance affected student mobility in Timberland. Many families moved out of the area to the suburbs to avoid school integration. The principal was experiencing a diverse population of parents and students, which thus created a complex mobility pattern.

Weick's adaptability argument (2001) explains that schools are adapted to the local conditions and principals' views were pretty much bounded by the local condition.

Thus, mobility rates were not a determinant factor indicating some similar or different patterns across schools. Furthermore, allowing local units to adapt to local conditions—without requiring changes in the larger system—reduces coordination costs for the system as a whole.

Summary of Educators' Perceptions and Responses to Student Mobility

In summary, tensions primarily existed between the district and school-level actors due to the difference in the primary values they held. District administrators had the main values of transition and productivity while teachers and principals shared the primary value of preservation--although there are some exceptions. Their different primary values reflected various ways of perceiving and responding to the issue of student mobility.

The proximity to the issue of student mobility also determined differences in educators' perceptions and responses to student mobility. The closer to the issue, the more priority given to the issue of student mobility. Teachers, who were the closest to the issue, experienced student mobility most frequently and directly. So, more teachers perceived the issue of student mobility as a leading priority than did principals and district administrators.

On the other hand, educators higher up in the organization tended to be more aware of external factors, such as the educational standards measured by state standardized tests. District administrators implemented a district-wide policy—pacing guides and quarterly assessments as organizational adaptations—to address student mobility. Teachers and principals, however, made small, local changes to accommodate the transitional changes created by student mobility. Small changes were considered to

be examples of local adaptability and did not require a major change in the system. The organizational adaptation to student mobility required a tight coupling in which much differentiation and local adjustments were not allowed across classrooms and schools. The local adaptability, on the other hand, required a loose coupling system in which individuals and subunits were not well aligned with one another. The conflicts between organizational and local adaptations created big tensions between district administrators and school-level educators, particularly teachers.

Access to information also determined what educators knew and what was important to them. Teachers and principals primarily paid attention to incoming students because they knew when incoming students came and that incoming mobility was generally disruptive to instructional and administrative routines. District administrators mainly paid attention to outward mobility from the district because it directly affected the district budget. The different foci on various types of student mobility among educators created a tension. Additionally, district administrators perceived student mobility as a solution because increases in student mobility contributed to increases in student enrollment. Teachers and principals saw student mobility as a problem because mobility was disruptive to instructional and administrative routines and stable community. Their different concept of student mobility—solution vs. problem—created a tension between the district administrators and school-level actors.

The tensions mainly exist between the district administrators and the school-level actors around: 1) the degree of priority given to the issue; 2) organizational adaptation vs. local adaptability; 3) outward mobility from the district vs. incoming mobility; and 4) the concept of the student mobility—solution vs. problem. All these tensions indicate the

difficulty of addressing student mobility in an organizational, more structured way. Furthermore, organizational adaptations to student mobility that minimize local adaptability at the school level may not be most effective because it does not incorporate local differences in the process of change. Overall, tensions between the district administrators and school-level actors appear to make an organizational approach to address student mobility difficult.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

The Difficulty of Policy Creation on Student Mobility

Taken together, the findings of this study suggest why the district has not developed and implemented system-wide or formal policies regarding student mobility. The study found that educators at different levels of the organization filter the issue of student mobility through distinct lenses and respond differently. These differences create tensions that occur primarily between district administrators and school-level professionals—principals and teachers. These differences reflected primary values that each group held. District administrators' attention was directed toward external processes because of their responsibility for organizational transition and productivity as they primarily negotiate, compete and collaborate with external forces for students and resources. On the other hand, school-level educators focused on internal processes that reflected their desire to preserve the organization because they were mainly concerned about the maintenance of planned classroom lessons, classroom management and school management. Thus, district administrators' focus on external processes and school-level educators' focus on internal processes created a tension around student mobility.

These tensions include differences in 1) the priority given to student mobility, 2) the focus on outward versus incoming mobility, 3) approaches towards student mobility as a potential solution versus a fundamental problem, and 4) the organizational response and adaptation to mobility. In addition to tensions existing across different levels of the organization, no patterns across schools were found. This indicates that each school was adapted to local context and responded differently according to local context.

The priority given to student mobility

Although two fifths of teachers and one principal identified student mobility as a leading priority, over all, education actors expressed largely passive attitudes regarding student mobility. All the teachers and one half of the principals strongly believed that family related factors were the primary cause of student mobility. With such a perception, a majority of educators understood that student mobility was largely a family's responsibility, not a school's responsibility. Their strong belief in the primary family effect on student mobility created a lack of desire in educators to actively manage student mobility. Such perception and belief seemed to be one explanation for their general passivity toward the issue of student mobility. As a result, educators in the Renton School District have not developed polices and programs exclusively addressing the issue of student mobility.

Outward versus incoming mobility

The findings strongly suggest that sub units of the organization demonstrated different foci and interests in student mobility. District administrators paid the most attention to outward mobility that affected enrollment and state aid. Principals and teachers primarily focused attention on incoming students because that issue was perceived to be disruptive to those educators. Thus, district administrators' focus on outward mobility and school-level educators primary focus on incoming mobility created an unresolved tension.

Student mobility as a potential solution versus a fundamental problem

District administrators perceived student mobility as a potential solution to the district's survival or economic well being whereas principals and teachers saw student

mobility as a fundamental disruption to school management and classroom instruction. Diverse interests and incentives around the issue of student mobility made it hard to create a systemic policy acceptable to multiple actors. For example, a policy organized for incoming mobility may not be effective for dealing with outward mobility issues and vice versa.

Organizational response versus local adaptation to mobility

Organizational adaptations to mobility at the district level may have some positive effect by creating a bond between a teacher and mobile students. But, organizational responses largely have the effect of minimizing local adaptability at the school level. With pacing guides and quarterly assessments—a centralized approach, students were expected to perform at a certain academic level. The centralized approach would maintain high standards and teachers' high expectations of mobile students' performance. In theory, it would seem to be a good approach to help all children including mobile students, to meet the standards. Having a high expectation for mobile students to meet the standards and focusing teachers' attention on them would create a close relationship between mobile students and teachers. In turn, mobile students might feel cared for by teachers and, as a result, want to stay in school and work harder to achieve.

However the problem of the centralized approach is that it does not incorporate any local level differences. The findings suggest that mobile students tended to miss classroom instruction between school transfers, and, as a consequence, they got behind academically. In order to fill gaps in students' learning, teachers in the study needed to make small adjustments each time a new student came into their classrooms. The teachers did not like the centralized approach because it did not take into account the

small adjustments for student mobility needed to address student mobility issues in the classroom. Historically, small local adjustments have been instrumental in creating and adapting to change in the U.S. decentralized education system. Thus, this work suggests that district level policies that constrain school-level actors ability to work with student mobility may not be an effective response to mobility.

The above tensions, observed primarily between district- and school-level educators, were addressed in this study. In addition to tensions, no patterns of educators' perceptions and responses across schools were found, which suggests that schools were loosely coupled and were adapted to local conditions. Student mobility varied due to local conditions that included demographic change, proximity to other school districts, and the effects of charter schools and schools of choice. Each school had adapted to local conditions and responded to student mobility uniquely.

All of these findings suggest why it may be difficult to develop effective centralized policies on student mobility. State- or district-wide policies are generally made in a top-down manner, and tend not to incorporate school-level actors' values and local differences. Thus, these policies tend to hinder local adaptations. Policies that minimize differentiation between schools and school-level educators, may in fact increase tensions and not bring effective solutions to the issue of student mobility.

Approaches that Integrate Local, Building Level Actions to Reduce Student Mobility and Its Negative Effects

Even though this research suggests the difficulty of responding to student mobility in a more structured, systemic way, it may be possible to implement approaches that support the efforts of teachers and principals to make local adaptations that improve the classroom experience of mobile students. This Renton study suggests that approaches

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and supports advocated in earlier work are held in common among many school level actors.

Added support and assistance

Previous research (e.g., Jason et al 1992; Fisher & Matthews 1999) suggests that tutoring, mentoring, counseling and before-and after-school programs in the classroom or at school can help mobile students to improve academically, socially and psychologically. Interview results in this study suggest that teachers and principals also see these responses as the most needed and promising. Suggested approaches need to support school-level educators to make local, flexible adaptations based on their unique situations. Approaches that reduce the negative consequences of mobility included: 1) expansion of support for providing tutors, mentors, and before- and after-school programs, particularly for mobile students, and 2) integration of classroom activities that promote community building and team work.

Expansions of tutoring, mentoring and before- and after-school programs might be done with additional external support from a variety of agencies. Agencies include corporations, universities, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA and other non-profit organizations. It is important to connect such resources to mobile students to help them academically and socially.

As a matter of fact, external support provided to struggling students including mobile students has already been expanding to meet students' needs. The recent expansion of such support and assistance indicate that the number of students who need extra help, both academically and socially, because they do not get the help they need to learn during the regular school year, has been growing. The additional assistance is

important if there is a gap between what is taught and what students actually can learn during an academic year. Expansion of before- and after-school programs also indicates that an increasing number of families want their children to stay in school longer due to family structural changes (i.e., double income families and single parent families). Besides the external support that teachers utilized to respond to student mobility, the Renton study indicates that teachers have incorporated cooperative learning and team learning activities to create academic and social bonding between new students and stable students. Such activities helped mobile students integrate into the classroom both academically and socially. Integration activities or programs help mobile students to academically improve because of peer support. Social bonding created in integration programs, is also an important aspect of stabilizing the school and the classroom (Wehlage et al 1989; Tinto 1993). Thus, social bonding created in the classroom would help mobile students to stay in the school. Such classroom practices can reduce the negative consequences of mobility. Teachers in classrooms with high levels of student mobility, should be encouraged to use these practices.

More attention to exiting students at the school level

The interview results illustrate that teachers and principals primarily paid attention to incoming students. In order to reduce the negative effects of student mobility, it is important to pay much more attention to outgoing mobility. Teachers and principals should strive to talk to families who plan to move during the academic year about the disadvantages of school transfers. Mid-year school transfers normally create gaps in academia and social isolation in a classroom for mobile students. It may also help to establish better exiting procedures, or exit packages that help new schools to work

with incoming students. Teachers and principals themselves may need to become change agents to educate families and to take a more active role in assisting outgoing students.

A majority of teachers mentioned that incoming mobility was disruptive to their instruction routines and classroom dynamics, particularly without much information on a new student. Creating exiting procedures at a classroom and school level that would produce information on where a student moves to, why she moves, what academic strengths and weaknesses she demonstrates, and what behavioral backgrounds she has, would help a teacher in a school to which a student would move to place her more efficiently. Exiting procedures might take less time than integrating a new student in a classroom. Thus, for teachers, who have many time constraints, focusing more attention on procedures for exiting students would help them to manage student mobility more easily.

Information systems

In this study, many teachers complained about the slow process of student's record transfers. As a result, teachers needed to spend extra time to academically diagnose students and determine what additional resources might be needed. Luckily, the state department has been developing a single student records database. When this statewide database is activated, school-level educators will have immediate access to more accurate and comprehensive information on new students. Prompt access to the student record helps teachers and principals to place new students at the appropriate academic level and to provide with adequate educational resources. This kind of organized system would be a significant improvement over Renton School District's informal system for tracking down information on mobile students. The question,

however, still remains whether or not this type of information is as helpful as contact with former teachers and the types of attention given to exiting students. But, the statewide student-based database would be a fall back to little or no information on students.

Community and family education

In Japan, where I am originally from, there is almost no occurrence of student mobility. Even if family events produce turmoil during the school year, families keep their children in the same school until the end of the school year. Families there understand that stability of schooling is an important strategy for a child's academic and social growth. These beliefs are the major factor for the extremely low student mobility rates in Japan.

Using Japan's example, it would seem important to educate families about the effects of student transfers during the academic year. Rumberger et al (1999) suggest that it is imperative for families to understand the advantages and disadvantages of changing schools. Education and outreach to families and their children may reduce mobility or ease transitions. Renton school District hired a parental involvement coordinator who has been working with building principals on various programs and activities. She is responsible for developing and implementing community and family education programs at the school site.

Future Research on Student Mobility

As to future research on student mobility, it is important to study model mobile student induction programs to develop a better vision for schools and districts with high mobility rates. Fisher & Matthews (1999) identified three effective program components: 1) consistent in-school programs; 2) establishment of caring relationships; and 3) the

belief that all students could succeed. In addition to Fisher & Matthews' findings, we want to add the following component as an effective concept for mobility--the idea of school as a community center. It is imperative to evaluate the programs that contain these qualities to see if they do indeed reduce the negative impact of mobility on students and classrooms.

In addition to evaluating effective programs across the nation, two programs should be evaluated in the Renton School District: 1) the effectiveness of pacing guides and quarterly assessments on mobile student's academic performance; and 2) school as a community center concept. Although teachers complained about pacing guides and quarterly assessments, it is possible that they have assisted mobile students by introducing achievement standards and expectations. Students may respond positively to teachers' high expectations by working hard. Therefore, teachers' high expectations coupled with the use of pacing guides and quarterly assessments of students may create a stronger, more caring relationship between teachers and students. A strong bond is needed to reduce student mobility and its negative effects.

We should look at student mobility at schools which provide community services such as health care services, job training and family counseling to students and their families in order to assess if community based services keep some families from moving. Akers, one of the case study schools, started their community services by including a residential social worker on site. There is no data on whether community services in Akers have reduced student mobility, but it will be important to follow up to determine its effect. In the Renton School District, one middle school functions as a community center where health care is provided. In this middle school, it would be good to evaluate

the effectiveness of community services such as medical care and legal advice. The concept of the 'school as a community center' creates a sense of belonging to the community. This may keep some families in the community. Developing a sense of community is a key component in reducing student mobility.

Lastly, future studies should look at other countries that are experiencing rising rates of residential and student mobility to see what strategies positively impact studnets and classrooms. We also need to see what kinds of policies and programs other countries utilize to minimize student mobility and its negative effects. Because the U.S. appears to be going in the direction of more educational centralization, we can effectively learn through this process how to implement state- or national level policies and programs. Considering the U.S. context, we need to evaluate the feasibility of implementing centralized policies and programs in the U.S. setting. Also, in many communities across the world unique programs are being developed and implemented to adapt to local settings. We should ultimately integrate the most effective policies and programs from local, state and national levels to better manage the issue of student mobility.

Appendix: Interview Protocols

<u>Questions for School District Personnel</u>
1. How long have you been with the district? How long have you been serving in that role?
2. Brief job description.

<u>Knowledge of student mobility</u>. (Data at least for questions 1, 2, 3, 4 should be attainable as existing data, not through the interview)

1. Describe <u>enrollment patterns</u> at the district level over last ten years.
2. Describe <u>student mobility rates</u> at district/school levels over years. (across districts and within district) and where to/from?
3. Describe <u>timing of moves</u>.
4. <u>Who moves? (ethnicity, poverty, and test scores)</u>
5. Describe any similarities/differences between mobile and stable students at an aggregate level.
6. What are the <u>reasons</u> for moves?
7. Describe <u>impacts of demographic change on enrollment and student mobility</u>.
8. Describe <u>impacts of school choice policies on enrollment and student mobility</u>.

<u>Perceptions of student mobility</u>.

Schools-of-choice related incoming and outgoing mobility:
1. List any positive aspects of student mobility (probes: <u>resources</u>)
2. List any negative aspects of student mobility (probes: <u>resources, record transfer; MEAP, unstable student population, attendance, tardiness</u>)

Parent's socio-economic status related to in and out mobility:
1. Any positive aspects? (probes: <u>resources</u>)
2. Any negative aspects (probes: <u>unstable enrollment, MEAP scores, unstable student population, record transfer, attendance, tardiness</u>)

<u>Responses to student mobility</u>

1. How do you deal with <u>demographically declining enrollment</u> (change policies on disciplines)?
2. How do you <u>promote your school district for schools of choice policies</u>?
3. How do you deal with <u>within-district student mobility</u> (get the intra-district transfer policy document)?
4. Have you ever <u>negotiated with the apartment renting agencies</u> to suggest to them to make the renting contract end around the end of the school year? What's the renter's reaction?
5. What is the <u>student record-transfer system</u> within the district and across the districts?

6. How do you coordinate the <u>curriculum</u> for mobile students?
7. <u>Educating parents about negative effects</u> of frequent school change.
8. What are <u>your responsibilities for mobile students and the consequences of high student mobility?</u>(what do you need to do?)

<u>Questions for School Building Principals:</u>

1. How long have you been with the district?
2. How long have you been the building principal?

<u>Knowledge of student mobility (</u>try to get the data at least for Qs 1-4 from the existing data rather than interview).

1. Enrollment data were obtained.
2. Describe <u>student mobility</u> in your school over years (possibly from district). (incl. Where to/from)
3. Describe <u>timing of moves.</u>
4. <u>Who moves</u>? (ethnicity, poverty, and test scores)
5. Describe any similarities/differences between mobile and stable students in your school.
6. What are reasons of moves?
7. Describe <u>impacts of demographic change on enrollment and student mobility</u> in your school.
8. Describe <u>impacts of school choice policies on enrollment and student mobility</u> in your school.

<u>Perceptions of student mobility.</u>

<u>Schools-of-choice related incoming and outgoing SM</u>:
1. List any positive aspects of student mobility (probes: <u>resources, new good students, getting rid of disruptive students; clear school mission?</u>
2. List any negative aspects of student mobility (probes: <u>resources, cream-skimming, paperwork, curriculum, MEAP scores, lack of sense of community; lack of parental involvement, attendance and tardiness; lesson plans</u>)

Parent's socio-economic status related to incoming and outgoing SM:

1. List any positive aspects of student mobility (probes: resources)
2. List any negative aspects of student mobility (probes<u>: paperwork, curriculum, MEAP scores, school as community</u>)

<u>Responses to student mobility</u>

1. How do you deal with <u>shifting enrollment</u>?
2. How do you <u>promote your school for schools of choice policies</u>?

3. How do you deal with <u>disruptive students</u>? (probe school choice—what types of student leave and come)
4. How do you deal with <u>students who leave/come in middle of school year</u> (conversations with the parents; any special programs/curriculum/strategies)?
5. <u>Parenting education</u>?
6. What is <u>student record transfer system</u>?
7. Do you coordinate <u>curriculum for mobile students</u>? How?
8. What are <u>your responsibilities for mobile students</u>?
9. What are <u>your responsibilities for school as a community with mobile students</u>?
10. How does <u>district policy on student mobility affect the building</u>? (i.e. schools of choice policy, pacing guides, etc.)
11. How does <u>a teacher's response to student mobility affect you</u>?
12. <u>What factors do/don't you control</u>?

Questions for Classroom Teachers:

1. How long have you been with the district? How long have you been a classroom teacher in the building?
2. What grade level/s have you been teaching?

Knowledge of student mobility.

1. Describe # of in/out students over an academic year.
2. Describe timing of moves.
3. Who moves? (ethnicity, poverty, and test scores, disruptive students, behaviors?)
4. Describe any similarities/differences between mobile and stable students in your classroom.
5. What are reasons for moves?
6. Describe impacts of demographic change on student mobility in your classroom.
7. Describe impacts of school choice policies on student mobility in your classroom.

Perceptions of student mobility.

School choice related incoming and outgoing mobility:
1. List any positive aspects of student mobility (probes: good incoming students, getting rid of disruptive students)
2. List any negative aspects of student mobility (probes: cream skimming; no stability of classroom as a community, MEAP scores)

Parent's socio-economic related incoming/outgoing mobility:
1. List any positive aspects.
2. List any negative aspects (probes: no stable student body→ no stable learning community → lower academic achievement)

<u>Responses to student mobility</u>.

1. What are special programs or services for new entrants and for students who leave during the academic year?
2. What are strategies to teach in an unstable learning community?
3. How do you deal with disruptive students?
4. What are your job responsibilities for mobile students?
5. What are your job responsibilities for a classroom as a learning community with mobile students?
6. How does a principal's response to student mobility affect you?
7. How does the district's responses to student mobility affect you?
8. Rank educational aspects.

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