SUSTAINABILITY OF A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM MODEL FROM THE

PERSPECTIVES OF THREE PARTICIPATING PRINCIPALS

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ABSTRACT

School reform is a deliberate process that requires a strong commitment at all levels. The

school leader plays a crucial role in establishing a vision and nurturing an environment that

facilitates reform efforts. School reform efforts have witnessed a change in the role of the

elementary principal from manager to instructional leader. The purpose of this qualitative study

was to examine the role of the elementary principal in sustaining school reform, in the form of

Literacy Collaborative. The study was guided by one research question: how did elementary

principals sustain a comprehensive school reform effort in the form of Literacy Collaborative?

The study purposively sampled three elementary school principals in a northwest Georgia

school district who served as principals from the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative

initiative to the time of the study, a ten-year period. The development of individual case studies

utilized multiple data sources including face-to-face interviews and archival documents such as

literacy team minutes, school evaluation plans, and Literacy Collaborative Fidelity of

Implementation documents. The data were analyzed using a constant comparative method both

within the three cases and between the cases to determine what themes emerged.

The analysis revealed that the comprehensive school reform model, Literacy

Collaborative, was a top-down, mandated initiative that allowed the principal and staff at these

three schools to "buy-in" to the program. The data suggested that Literacy Collaborative

provided a framework that allowed each participant to utilize those aspects they deemed critical

in leading a school as well as allowing them to closely align the program with his/her leadership styles.

The Literacy Collaborative comprehensive whole school reform model, developed by Dr. Irene C. Fountas and Dr. Gay Su Pinnell, encompassed components identified by innovative change leaders to be critical in any reform effort, specifically school leadership. Implications of the research suggested that leaders attempting to sustain whole school reform efforts must: align their leadership styles with a school reform model, employ clear communication, ensure learning occurs at all levels, engage collaborative teams in collective decision making and problem solving, allocate resources, and adapt to change.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to several effective leaders who greatly influence my life each and every day. My husband, Joe; my mom, Carol; and my brother, Bryant, who keep me grounded and who remind me what is really important in life. My precious sons, Smith and Bo, who keep me constantly aware of the impact one's leadership has on others. Finally, my dad, Dr. Thomas Logan Smith, and my mentor, Dr. Donna Goldin Johnson, whom I cannot find the words to capture the impact you have had on my life, so borrowing from the author, Margaret Warren: "Virtually every great accomplishment or movement was started by someone who believed passionately in something-and someone who believed passionately in that person." I am forever changed because of you.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reform is at the forefront of our national education agenda with an emphasis on the need for public education to better equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the 21st century workplace (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). One primary objective in this national effort is increasing achievement levels in the subject areas of both mathematics and literacy.

To achieve this objective, federal legislation and grants, such as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, 2002) and *Race to the Top* (U. S. Department of Education, 2009) have placed a greater emphasis on learning for all and improving student achievement. As school-based educators continue to examine the issue of increasing student achievement levels, the concept of comprehensive school reform, sometimes referred to as whole school reform, is often included within these conversations as a potential solution. Findings from a study commissioned by The Wallace Foundation on how leadership influences student learning concluded that among school related factors, leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Such evidence supports the "wide-spread interest in improving leadership as a key to the successful implementation of large-scale reform" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 5).

The emphasis for the present research study was to examine the practices of elementary principals who have successfully sustained school reform initiatives for an extended period of

time to determine if there are consistencies or commonalities that may inform other principals as they engage in school reform efforts.

Background of the Problem

The *No Child Left Behind Initiative* of 2001 left no question regarding the need for academic improvement in literacy and mathematics. The law placed greater accountability upon schools, allowed greater choice for parents and students attending low-performing schools, and required a stronger emphasis on reading (NCLB, 2002). As the emphasis on accountability increased in the 21st century for public education, educators continued to "work wiser to improve in all facets and dimensions within [the] educational structure" (Cooper, 2012, p. 4). Simply, when given the right conditions, schools can improve the quality of education for all students (Schmoker, 2001).

The concept of comprehensive school reform was viewed as an important change process to build the capacity to improve student achievement (Fullan, 2005). Schools turned to comprehensive school reform models because they were designed to provide a "coherent strategy to improve all aspects of learning for all students in all subjects" (Martinez & Harvey, 2004, p. 5). Regardless of the reform model, comprehensive school reform required collaboration and commitment from the entire faculty (Cooper, 2012; Schmoker, 2006). This type of commitment moved educators from working autonomously to collaboratively. Moreover, the school leader played a crucial role in establishing and nurturing the setting that facilitated this type of reform.

Comprehensive school reform challenged principals to move from a traditional leadership model to a distributive leadership model (Schmoker, 2006). Distributive leadership required leaders to seek contributions from others within the organization (Leithwood et al., 2004). In

addition, distributive leaders developed and supported leaders at all levels, and stressed the importance of collegial relationships (Leithwood et al., 2004). Comprehensive school reform also employed leadership styles that were shared and transformative. Shared leadership styles re-conceptualized instructional leadership, extended the expertise to the school community and empowered competent teachers (Cooper, 2012). In this manner, teachers investigated and solved educational problems together. Transformational leadership was associated with a desire to enable school improvement, rather than simply making changes while facilitating building capacity for continuous improvement (Leithwood et al., 2004). Leaders who displayed transformational styles stimulated and inspired followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes while crafting their own leadership capacity (Cooper, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2004).

Literacy Collaborative was one example of a comprehensive school reform model designed to improve all students' reading, writing, and language skills that also necessitated the use of a shared leadership model within the school where teachers would be asked to think and make instructional decisions (Literacy Collaborative, 2004). The model required collaboration, on-going, school based, job-embedded professional development, and the support of an on-site literacy coach. The Literacy Collaborative model was based on the theories of numerous scholars in the fields of education, human cognition, and psychology, such as Vygotsky and Rosenblatt (Literacy Collaborative, 2012). In short, the theoretical basis of this model was translated into practice through a more collaborative, interactive form of teaching that anticipated a collaborative, interactive stance from the principal as school leader. In any school reform model, shared, distributed, and transformational leadership styles were not necessarily mutually exclusive, but co-existed for a school to maximize the potential of all stakeholders (Cooper, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

      Achieving high academic performance of all students was the greatest challenge for today's public school systems. Federal legislation and grants, such as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, 2002) and *Race to the Top* (U. S. Department of Education, 2009) placed expectations on schools to ensure that every child became literate. To accomplish this goal, many schools and districts purchased comprehensive school reform models, often affiliated with universities or nonprofit organizations. While the growth in the use of these models might have been an indicator of their success, effectively replicating a comprehensive school reform model across different school sites with different cultures was quite a challenging process (Datnow, 2005).

      Given the fact that so many "purchased" whole school reform efforts have been implemented with varying success, the real challenge to whole school reform seemed to be its sustainability. While much of the research (Blair, 2000; Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003; Cohen & Ball, 2007; Hallinger, 2003; Rowan, Camburn, & Barnes, 2004; Rowan & Miller, 2007; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010) regarding the principal's role in comprehensive whole school reform models focused on the adoption and implementation of these models, the present study examined the role of leadership in the sustainability of a comprehensive school reform model, Literacy Collaborative.

      The role of the principal required meeting the demands of standards, assessments, and accountability that ensured that each student's individual needs were met, and at the same time introducing innovations for changing the school. The adoption of comprehensive school reform models was a popular strategy for meeting those surmounting demands. Unfortunately, few reform efforts were sustained, resulting in the lack of research around the role of the principal in leading such reforms.

Rationale for the Study

        Essential for literacy development was the belief that all children can and will learn if they receive the necessary support and assistance. In the new era of change, research recommended high quality instruction in reading. Fullan (2002) and Hargreaves and Fink (2000) recommended that educators invest in long-term measures with sustainability when initiating and implementing school change. The role of school leadership became increasingly important in supporting, leading, and facilitating the transformation of sustainable learning, where literacy was used as a lever for change (Schmoker, 2006).

        As stated above, most research in this area tended to focus on the principal's role and its impact on the implementation of comprehensive school reform models as a means to increase student achievement levels. One reason that so little has been discovered about the sustainability of whole school reform efforts was because most reforms do not last (Anderson & Stiegelbauer, 1994).   Because little was known about how comprehensive school reform models might be sustainable over time and since longevity was commonly seen as an indicator of a successful reform, an effort to learn more about how sustainability of these programs can be achieved seemed to be a worthwhile effort (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000).

        Educators often thought of sustainability as program maintenance: implementing a program, as designed, into an existing school system and making it last (Century & Levy, 2002; Jerald, 2005; LAB, 2000). A maintained program had a well-established core accepted as standard practice while a sustained program moved beyond maintenance and developed the ability to evolve. While innovations put in place have to be maintained in order to sustain, there must be a level of adaptability to new conditions (Datnow, 2005; Jerald, 2005; LAB, 2000). The need for adaptability was critical because changes in leadership, politics, and funding occurred

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regularly within school systems and exerted pressures on educational programs [reforms] (Century & Levy, 2002; Jerald, 2005; LAB, 2000). Leaders of reform programs must find ways to adapt their programs to new conditions while keeping the reform's original core beliefs and values; thus, sustainability, for purposes of this study will be defined as "the ability of a program to maintain its core beliefs and values and use them to guide program adaptations to changes and pressures over time" (Century & Levy, 2002, p. 2).

Theoretical Framework

The process of school reform was complex. It involved creating a school culture that provided a supportive atmosphere where trust was widespread and continuous learning among staff was valued. Fullan and Miles (1992) stated that systems must engage in continuous improvement and learn to view change as a part of everyday business. This continuous improvement was referred to as a paradigm of change (Fullan & Miles, 1992). In this paradigm of change, changing the culture of the institution was crucial. Change entailed identifying new ways to address problems and finding solutions on a continuing basis. Fullan and Miles (1992) advocated systemic supports for school reform. Schools were said to need support and commitment from all levels for a top-down, bottom-up balance.

While growth in the adoption of comprehensive school reform models may be an indicator of success, little was known about whether and how comprehensive school reform models sustained, or became institutionalized, over time. In addition, longevity was commonly seen as an indicator of reform success (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000).

Fullan (1993) stated that institutionalizing a change was embedding or building the change into the entire organization. He stated that many reforms had an influence on

governance, but not necessarily on teaching and learning. Institutionalizing factors included a

focus on the benefits of a comprehensive school reform design that developed a widespread use

of the reform, the removal of competing priorities, and the continued implementation assistance

for all stakeholders.

Although leadership may come from a combination of people involved in the change

process, Schlechty (1997) offered that there was much to learn from studying the principal. The

school principal was identified as a key factor in bringing about successful change in schools and

provided interventions that either increased the potential for the success of a change or allowed it

to fail (Fullan, 2005; Hall & Hord, 2001). The present study examined how the role of the

elementary school principal perpetuated the success of a comprehensive school reform model,

Literacy Collaborative, after 10 years of implementation.

Purpose of the Study

An essential element of comprehensive school reform was the role of the principal

(Leithwood et al., 2004). Studies have shown that:

> One of the primary goals of public school leaders is to lead schools with a purpose of
> sustained and substantive improvement…[requiring] school leaders to be committed to
> empowering others, to distributing and dispersing leadership responsibilities, and to
> create strategic systems and school cultures that enable ordinary people to accomplish
> extraordinary things." (Cooper, 2012, p.7)

However, there had been limited research regarding the principal's role and leadership

characteristics in relation to the sustainability of a comprehensive school reform model.

The purpose of the present study was to examine how the role of the principal, with

respect to personal leadership style, perpetuated the success of the comprehensive school reform

model, Literacy Collaborative, after 10 years of implementation; taking into consideration the

influence of uncontrollable circumstances, such as a change in superintendents, budget

constraints, new state mandated leader and teacher evaluation processes, and teacher turn-over.

Significance of the Study

Literacy instruction became the catalyst for school change (Fullan, 2005; Schmoker,

2006). The principal as the educational leader must create the vision and determine research-

based strategies for the implementation and sustainability of comprehensive school reform

models when faced with external pressures and uncontrollable circumstances (Schmoker, 2006).

There was limited research regarding the principal's influence on the sustainability of a

comprehensive school reform model, primarily because most models were not sustained. Fullan

(2005) stated that insights gained from studying the important findings of successful principals

can help practicing and aspiring principals become more effective. In a similar manner, in order

to help those who are currently utilizing school reform models, it would be extremely helpful for

these leaders to develop an understanding of the role and leadership characteristics of successful

principals in schools that have sustained a comprehensive school reform model. The results of

the present study may inform other principals of best practices for sustaining successful reforms.

Research Question

School reform is a slow, deliberate process that required a strong commitment at all

levels. It had been found that the school principal was a key component in bringing about

successful change in schools (Fullan, 2005; Hall & Hord, 2001). The present study examined the

role of the principal in sustaining the longevity of the comprehensive school reform model

Literacy Collaborative. The study focused on one central question: how did elementary principals sustain comprehensive school reform efforts in the form of Literacy Collaborative?

Overview of Methodology

In order to answer the above research question, the present study employed qualitative methods. The researcher identified three principals from a northwest Georgia school district who had continually served in the role of principal since the initial implementation of the Literacy Collaborative comprehensive school reform model; and, using a holistic multiple-case study replication design (Yin, 2014), the researcher gathered data that informed and addressed the research question stated above. The researcher analyzed multiple data sources that included a series of open-ended interviews with each of the three principals who had been involved in this reform effort from the beginning, literacy team minutes, school evaluation plans, and Literacy Collaborative Fidelity of Implementation documents. The interviews sought to reveal the factors, such as operational and leadership characteristics of the principals, which aided in the sustainability of Literacy Collaborative over the previous 10 years. By using qualitative data analysis techniques, the researcher examined the data and identified any themes that emerged and could be used to answer the research question.

Assumptions of the Study

The following are assumptions that were made in the study. The researcher assumed that the implementation and sustainability of the reform in the three elementary schools had been successful. Further, the researcher assumed the principals provided honest, thoughtful, and accurate information.

Delimitations of the Study

This research study was delimited to the three elementary school principals in a northwest Georgia school district who had continued to serve in this role since the district's initial implementation of the comprehensive school reform model Literacy Collaborative.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study included the geographic area, the number of researchers, and the sample selection. The geographic area for this study was limited to one school district in northwest Georgia. This limitation, in addition to the limited sample size of the study, means that the findings were not generalizable to other districts and principals. Another limitation was that there was only one person conducting this study, therefore, interpretation of the qualitative aspects of the results is subjective. A final limitation was that all three elementary school principals worked in the same school district where the Literacy Collaborative comprehensive school reform model had been implemented via district mandate.

Definition of Terms

Collaboration referred to "a style for direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (Friend & Cook, 2007, p. 7).

Comprehensive school reform model referred to a school model/program that focuses on improving the whole school at all levels. A comprehensive school reform model included a commitment and/or buy-in from the school, specific programmatic elements and structure, professional development, community/parental outreach, and evaluation/follow-up. A model

may target a specific subject such as reading or math, or a specific population such as bilingual students.

Elementary principal referred to an administrator of a school that housed, in any combination, grades prekindergarten through grade five. The elementary school principal was also responsible for carrying out the roles and responsibilities as defined in the term p*rincipal's role*.

Literacy coach referred to a model and a teacher who had expertise in literacy; one who offered support, encouragement, suggestions, and guidance for a school's literacy initiative.

Literacy Collaborative was a comprehensive school reform model based on the work of reading experts Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell in collaboration with teachers and university teams at The Ohio State University and Lesley University. The Literacy Collaborative framework was an organizational guide for balanced literacy teaching approaches in grades prekindergarten through eight.

Principal's role, according to Leithwood and Riehl (2003) was identified by a number of "core practices". These core practices included: a) setting directions, which included identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, and creating high performance expectations; b) developing people, which involved offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support, and providing an appropriate model; c) redesigning the organization, which included strengthening school cultures, modifying organizational structures, and building collaborative processes; d) creating and sustaining a competitive school; e) empowering others to make significant decisions; f) providing instructional leadership; and g) developing and executing strategic plans.

School leadership, according to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), was defined by six key themes: a) facilitating shared vision; b) sustaining a school culture conducive to student and staff learning; c) managing the organization for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; d) collaborating with families and community members; e) acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and f) influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (Lashway, 2003).

School leadership team referred to a group formed by teacher representatives, literacy coach(es), and administrators in a Literacy Collaborative school. The team received training to understand how to support, monitor, and improve the program's effectiveness. The teams shared responsibility for change, so no one individual was responsible for implementing the model, and all stakeholders had an investment in carrying out the implementation even when there were changes in teachers and administrators within the school (Literacy Collaborative, 2004).

Sustainability referred to "the ability of a program to maintain its core beliefs and values and use them to guide program adaptations to changes and pressures over time" (Century & Levy, 2002, p. 2). Sustainability is also used in the present study to mean a phase after initial implementation that referred to the longevity of an established practice (Anderson & Stiegelbauer, 1994).

Transformational leadership referred to:

 … a form of leadership that assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members. Authority and influence are not necessarily allocated to those occupying formal administrative positions. Power is attributed by organizational members to leaders who are able to inspire their commitments to collective aspirations (Miles, Lucas, & Valentine, 2001, p. 4).

Whole school reform, also referred to as comprehensive school reform, referred to a coherent strategy to improve all aspects of a school from instruction to school structure. "This

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approach to school change was sparked by research, entrepreneurs, and philanthropic initiatives and was advanced through direct support from the federal government" (Martinez & Harvey, 2004, p. 5).

Summary

Changing demands on schools required high levels of leadership. In an era of increased accountability and a call for higher achievement for all students, the role of the elementary principal was transformed from manager to instructional leader. Lezotte (1994) stated:

> When researchers find a school where all students master the intended curriculum, they soon realize they are in the presence of an anomaly—a school where the normal flow has been altered by some powerful force. In the individual school, that search for the source of this powerful force leads in most cases to the principal's office. (p. 21)

Leadership in the area of literacy was paramount since reading performance was considered the foundation for school success. The present study sought to identify those factors and leadership characteristics of three elementary principals that aided in the sustaining of the school reform model Literacy Collaborative.

Chapter II explained the history of school reform and school reform models, specifically Literacy Collaborative. Also provided was an in-depth analysis of three contemporary leadership theories including transformational, shared, and distributed and organizational reform.

Chapter III offered a precise explanation of this holistic multiple-case study in which three principals were studied to determine how Literacy Collaborative had been sustained in their schools. The chapter detailed how transcripts from participants and official documents were analyzed to create a realistic illustration of each principal's role and leadership characteristics in his/her respective school and how the principals aided in the sustainability of Literacy Collaborative.

Chapter IV presented the data used to create holistic case studies for three elementary school principals. These case studies emphasized the emerging patterns and themes that could serve to explain the phenomenon of the role of the principal in sustaining a comprehensive whole school reform model. Themes that evolved via cross-case analysis were also included.

Chapter V presented an overview of the study's conclusions and provided a detailed interpretation of the data collected. Implications for practice and further research were also presented.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the elementary school principal in sustaining a comprehensive school reform model. To aid in this study, this review of current literature included elements of organizational development, past school reform efforts, school reform models specific to literacy, leadership theories, administrators' roles, and the establishment of culture and climate for organizational change.

School Improvement and Reform

School Improvement

According to Huberman and Miles (1984), school improvement has many advocates. "Everyone is for it, without having to campaign actively on its behalf…they [advocates] are sure that schools ought to be improved" (p. v). The conflict of school improvement lay within what each individual viewed as improvement. "One person's version of improvement is another's version of wastefulness or even of worsening the schools" and "improvement sometimes turns out to be merely a code word for the directives that administrators have successfully put into place, or for the agreements that teachers have lobbied into being" (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. v).

In the early 1980s, Huberman and Miles (1984) conducted a qualitative study of 12 school districts to examine the process of school improvement initiatives ranging from

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elementary school to career education, from adoption to institutionalization. The study

investigated multiple units of analysis and how their interconnectedness indirectly and directly

affected the incentives and roles of administrators, teachers, students, and community members.

Findings from the study indicated that innovations, specifically those implemented top-

down, could succeed when implementers recognized the complexities of the change process

rather than viewing it as a single event (Huberman & Miles, 1984). District-level administrators

with building-level administrators serving in the secondary implementer role typically initiated

innovations in most sites. Two methods of implementation were noted, "stabilized mastery"

(strong user commitment with good assistance) and "enforcement" (administrative pressure,

assistance from district to school, and little leeway to makes changes in the innovation).

However, the determining factor of success was "amount and quality of assistance that their

users received once the change process was under way" (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. v). Other

findings revealed the power of a clear direction by administrators, shared leadership at all levels,

and adapting the innovation without diluting key components (Huberman & Miles, 1984).

Findings from the Huberman and Miles (1984) study of school improvement concluded

that school improvement efforts could be achieved. Unfortunately, despite the researchers'

detailed qualitative case study, waves of reform efforts have continued to occur with minimal

results showing an increase in student achievement (DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004).

History of School Reform

Linn (2000) suggested that there have been five waves of educational reform focused on

teaching and assessment. Reforms of the 1950s emphasized tests for tracking and selection. In

the 1960s, these tests were used to assess program accountability. Minimum competency test

programs dominated the reforms of the 1970s, while the 1980s ushered in reforms focused on school and district accountability. Finally, in the 1990s, a focus on standards-based accountability systems was put into place and still exists today. As school leaders encountered the increased demands of standards and assessments and meeting the diverse needs of students while fostering school innovations, the federal, state, and local accountability measures increased. Despite these demands, school reform efforts offered hope to support the necessary changes needed to meet the demands of education.

Following several decades of efforts to reform public education, there had been little evidence to suggest that schools had become significantly more effective at ensuring high levels of learning for all students (DuFour et al., 2004). Curtis and Stollar (1996) believed that determinant factors of failed reforms were the lack of clarity of purpose and the lack of a basic working knowledge of the organizational change process. The failure to convey and implement the purpose of reform essentially destroyed the possibility of sustainability (Curtis & Stollar, 1996; Fullan, 2005, 2009). Educators must recognize that the design of schools in which they work required fundamental change in the practices and the assumptions that drove those practices if change was to occur (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

According to Cross (2004):

When the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) became law in 2002, the education world was confronted with a set of issues and a range of accountability mechanisms like none yet created at the federal level. While many of these factors, such as equity in education and standards-based reforms, were present in the 1988 and 1994 reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, NCLB created a sense of urgency in seeing to it that students of every race are being fully educated (p. v).

NCLB was the first reauthorization that required a single statewide accountability system in all schools and districts (NCLB, 2002). With this legislation, the relationship between state and local educational agencies and the federal government fundamentally changed. Its stated

goal was to improve achievement and educational equity in the United States by reducing the achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged groups. To achieve this goal, schools were accountable for producing gains in academic achievement among all subgroups (racial, special education, English as a second language, and low-income).

The final stated goal of NCLB was to achieve 100% proficiency in reading and mathematics in all subgroups by the academic year 2013-2014 (NCLB, 2002). However, accountability was only one piece of the law. It also outlined additional state and district "flexibility" in the allocation of federal education funds, support of the scientifically proven education programs and practice, and increased parental options through school choice and supplemental services for schools that were not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (NCLB, 2002).

Despite NCLB's attempt to improve schools, policymakers at the state and federal level offered another approach to school reform (Wallis, 2008). In 2009, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State Officers began the process of developing national "common core" standards in literacy and math (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). This was followed by the unveiling of Race to the Top (RTTP), a competitive federal grant that provided 4.35 billion dollars to states that agreed to specific guidelines for improvement, including the adoption of the common core standards (U. S. Department of Education, 2010). This reform effort emphasized the focus on instruction as a means to improve education.

Literacy Education and Reform

Literacy was identified as being the key to every student's future and was crucial to the success of an individual's career aspirations and quality of life (Allington, 2001, 2002, 2013;

Fullan, 2009; Schmoker, 2006; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2005). In order to adequately educate all students in literacy, present day schools must be restructured (Fullan, 2002, 2009; Schlechty, 1997, 2009). This was especially true if educators were to address the problem of children who struggled to learn to read and write.

Congress, as part of the Reading Excellence Act, mandated a study to analyze and report on the "status of research-based knowledge, including effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read" (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 1). The National Reading Panel (NRP), comprised of leading authorities in reading research, identified research-based practices and strategies considered effective in teaching students to read. The study concluded that it was essential for teachers to possess an understanding of how students learn to read, knowledge of difficulties and support strategies for students who struggle, and be able to effectively implement instructional practices on multiple levels (National Reading Panel, 2000). To acquire these skills, it was essential for educational administrators to provide high-quality professional development opportunities (National Reading Panel, 2000).

For 10 years, Allington (2002) studied first and fourth grade teachers from six states and discovered that typical classrooms that provided a 90-minute reading block only produced 10 to 15 minutes of actual reading. Rather, students spent an excessive amount of time on workbook activities despite the research on the negative effects of such practice (Allington, 2001, 2002). Researchers (Allington, 2001, 2002, 2013; Fullan, 2009; Schmoker, 2006; Taylor et al., 2005) believed that if the educational system was serious about educating all students, more time should be spend on literacy instruction that prepared students from the earliest grades for life inside and outside of school. This type of instruction required teachers to have expertise in teaching literacy (Allington, 2001, 2002, 2013).

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Pioneering literacy programs based on solid research offer success to school communities striving to achieve high academic success for all students, but such programs must include developing teacher expertise in literacy that is responsive to children's needs (Allington, 2001, 2002, 2013). Literacy-based school change can form a framework for guiding principles to accomplish this goal (Booth & Roswell, 2002). Critical components of comprehensive whole school reform models for literacy-based school change, specifically for school leaders, include: 1) a school literacy team that has a shared vision for literacy; 2) collaborative practices that engage all stakeholders; 3) the utilization of teams to examine teaching practices, explore new ideas, set priorities, and establish shared goals; and 4) ensure that all stakeholders receive credit for their efforts (Booth & Roswell, 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). In order to seriously improve literacy in schools, Fullan (2001, 2002, 2010) stated that expertise in the content of literacy was essential; therefore, he suggested that the focus of school change must be on supporting teachers in their efforts to become more expert and reorganizing all aspects of the educational system so that they can teach as expertly as they know how. Further, Allington (2002) charged school administrators to "craft policies that ensure that more effective teachers are created each year in their schools" (p. 742).

Fullan (2002) explained that two types of expertise were needed in order to seriously improve literacy in schools: one area was expertise in the content of literacy; the other was expertise in leading the change process. He proceeded to identify the requirements to foster effective literacy implementation as principal leadership, principals as learning leaders, strong professional community, time for change, school professional development, district professional development, support for teachers, program focus, and support of parents and community.

Comprehensive School Reform Models

  With the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, 2002), comprehensive school reform models became increasingly popular among individual schools and school districts as a way to increase student achievement. Comprehensive school reform models were diverse in structure, training, and implementation and included locally developed models, business models, and university-based models. In order to receive federal funding, all comprehensive school reform models were required to have the following components: research-based practices; aligned components; high quality professional development; measurable goals and benchmarks; external support; and school-based plans and annual evaluations (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2013). Comprehensive school reform models derived from the research on effective schools suggested that a school should have a coherent vision of its mission and educational strategies that addressed every aspect of its operations, from curriculum to governance to classroom instruction (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002).

<div align="center">Literacy Collaborative</div>

  Literacy Collaborative was an example of a comprehensive school reform model grounded in the constructivist theory of learning and further developed by Rumelhart's (1977) formal theories of story and understanding and letter recognition, as well as Rosenblatt's (1978) theory of literature and learning as an interactive and transactional process. This model was used in grades kindergarten through eighth grade. The Literacy Collaborative framework engaged students in meaningful reading and writing workshops that provided lessons and experiences based on teacher observations. This framework was student-centered and emphasized language

development and student talk as the foundation of reading and writing (Literacy Collaborative, 2004).

As a school reform model, Literacy Collaborative influenced the instructional practices of every teacher within a school as well as the climate and the organizational structure (Literacy Collaborative, 2004). While striving to increase student achievement, teachers were provided with support and guidance from a literacy coach and through long-term professional development that was grounded in the reading theories of Clay (1979, 2001, 2004) and elaborated by Fountas and Pinnell (1996, 2006). The model sought to improve literacy achievement by supporting teachers in becoming experts in the teaching of literacy through the use of an integrated approach. Literacy Collaborative was committed to the idea that teachers need both training in particular approaches and procedures as well as the opportunity to talk about their observations of students with someone who possessed literacy expertise (coach), who deepened their understanding about the reading and writing process.

With any school reform model, the school must commit itself to implementing the elements of the model as intended by the designers in order for deep-rooted change to occur. This school reform model provided districts and schools with a language and literacy framework that significantly increased the literacy achievement levels in students when implemented with fidelity. The implementation required all the following elements: school-university partnerships; leadership team(s); an in-school literacy coordinator; in-school professional development and coaching; registration as a Literacy Collaborative school; books and materials; prevention and intervention; home-school connection; and data to monitor effectiveness (Literacy Collaborative, 2004).

The Literacy Collaborative model called for teachers and administrators to engage in a collaborative relationship with Lesley University whose faculty helped support the implementation of the research-based model. At the school level, a leadership team(s) comprised of literacy teachers representing the grade levels shared responsibility for change so that all stakeholders had an investment in carrying out the implementation. This also provided support for the school when there were changes in teachers and administrators.

One of the cornerstones for this model was the in-school literacy coordinator (coach). In elementary schools, there was one coach for primary grades (K-2) and one for intermediate grades (3-5). These individuals were responsible for teaching students in a classroom for a minimum of 180 minutes a day as well as providing initial and on-going professional development sessions; providing support to teachers through coaching and reflection; and planning and working with the school leadership team. The school's registration with Lesley University and Ohio State University as a Literacy Collaborative school provided coaches with training materials and resources to aid in their work with teachers.

Other elements involved allocating funds for the necessary books and materials to create a rich literacy program and for staffing and training Reading Recovery teachers. These teachers implemented a safety net program for first grade students who were struggling to learn to read and write. In addition, a strong home-school connection was imperative for students' literacy success. It was suggested the school give priority to the allocation of time to communicate with guardians on how to support their children in reading and writing through communication means such as newsletters, informational nights, and parent conferences.

Finally, with the aforementioned elements in place, teachers and administrators alike collected and analyzed data to monitor the effectiveness of the program. These data were also

used to determine the course of study for future professional development. In addition, the school data became part of national data that was used to gauge the effectiveness of Literacy Collaborative as a framework for school reform and teaching literacy.

When attempting to bring about deep, systemic change within a school, collaboration and commitment from all faculty members was necessary. Moreover, the school leader played a crucial role in establishing and nurturing the setting that facilitated this goal (Fullan, 2005). Professional development was at the core of the Literacy Collaborative framework, and it was the prominent instrument used to elicit change in teachers' understanding and teaching of the reading and writing process (Guskey, 2000; Strosberg 2010). Ross and Gray (2006) stated that student achievement was a byproduct of leadership that empowered teachers to work collaboratively, thus influencing teachers' beliefs about their collective capacity and commitment to organizational ideals.

The role of the principal was to be a leader who understood the essential elements of the Literacy Collaborative school reform model and was knowledgeable about what it took to implement the model as it was designed. Lesley University, development site for Literacy Collaborative, encouraged principals to have a basic knowledge of the language and literacy framework in order to identify exemplary teaching in classrooms and in order to support the continued growth of the faculty (Literacy Collaborative, 2004).

Along with having a working knowledge of the Literacy Collaborative framework, administrators also were expected to keep the intricate balance of support and pressure. Because the principal was expected to be the visionary, it was crucial for him/her to provide faculty with the support needed to grow and the pressure needed to continually refine their teaching (Literacy Collaborative, 2004). Support may manifest itself in a variety of ways, such as allocating funds

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for needed resources, creating extra time for professional development, nurturing a "safe zone" for teachers' experimentation with new practices, and providing unwavering support of the literacy coach(es) in every aspect of the role (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010).

The instruction at the heart of Literacy Collaborative demanded teachers to be problem-solvers and to have access to knowledge that supported their work. This model of instruction required teachers to engage in collegial relationships that made it possible for individuals to mutually agree to hold each other accountable to common standards of practice (Biancarosa et al., 2010).

Sustaining Comprehensive School Reform Models

The popularity of comprehensive whole school reform produced numerous pilot projects that were rarely converted into successful school-wide changes (Datnow, 2005). Datnow (2005) explained that effectively replicating a comprehensive school reform model across different locations with different circumstances was quite challenging. Although the reforms differ in their approaches to change, among many of them were shared interests in whole-school change, strong commitments to improving student achievement, new concepts regarding what students should learn, and an emphasis on prevention rather than remediation (Datnow, 2005). While there were numerous schools implementing comprehensive school reform models, few were able to sustain them. Little was known about how these models sustain over time, even though longevity was seen as an indicator of a successful reform (Datnow, 2005).

Elements of Sustainability

Century and Levy's (2002) study of science education reforms determined that those reforms that sustained had developed the ability to evolve. These authors defined sustainability as "the ability of a program to maintain its core beliefs and values and use them to guide program adaptations to changes and pressures over time" (Century & Levy, 2002, p. 3).

Jerald (2005) mentioned that a common misunderstanding of organizational leaders was that sustaining a reform initiative was merely keeping the new practices in place after the initial implementation year. Jerald (2005) stated that there was a significant difference in maintaining and sustaining reform efforts. He noted that maintaining a reform was "to keep it in its existing state, carry on, keep up" (p. 1). Thus, sustaining reform efforts required three steps: "maintaining the improvement effort beyond initial implementation, extending the improvement effort after its initial success, and adapting the improvement effort so that it survives, and thrives, over the long haul" (p. 2).

Fullan (2005) defined sustainability as "the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose" (p. ix). The complexities of sustainability were more expansive than theoretical educational policies; it also included school effectiveness. Sustainability was the ultimate adaptive challenge because its solutions went beyond present day operating procedures (Fullan, 2005, 2009); therefore, building administrators working as change agents and transformational leaders needed to decide how to implement change and how to embed that change into the cultural fabric of the school building.

Fullan (2005, 2009) identified eight elements that must exist for sustainability to take root in a system. Research studies (Blair, 2000; Jerald, 2005; LAB, 2000) identified, in similar ways,

the same eight elements that Fullan (2005, 2009) believed were critical in sustaining reform efforts. These elements included: engaging people's moral purpose; a commitment to changing context at all levels; lateral capacity building; dual commitments to short-term and long-term results; cyclical energizing; and a long level of leadership.

Fullan (2009) began by engaging people's moral purpose. He referred to this element as the "why" of change and believed this element was about improving society via the educational system. This involved change strategies that were for the purpose of fulfilling the moral purpose and communicating a vision (Blair, 2000; LAB, 2000).

The second element for sustainability was the commitment to changing context at all levels, including the beliefs, values, and practices inherent in the school culture within and across all levels (Fullan, 2005). It required broad and purposeful interaction within and across all members of the school community. According to Blair (2000), this step was the most difficult because "there are some invisible barriers. And those invisible barriers almost always reside in the context…and make it more difficult for people to move ahead" (p. 10).

The third element focused on the necessity of lateral capacity building through networks (Fullan, 2005). For an innovation to sustain, leadership capacity building and collaborations with and among multiple stakeholder groups was required. Networks of like-minded individuals must share common visions and ensure that professional growth was designed to increase people's collective power to move the system forward (Fullan, 2009). It supported "the risk-taking needed to make changes for school improvement" (Blair, 2000, p. 7). This "involves developing new knowledge, skills, and competencies; new resources (time, ideas, and materials); and new shared identity and motivation to work together for greater change" (Fullan, 2009).

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The fourth element encompassed intelligent accountability and vertical relationships (Fullan, 2005). LAB (2000) and Blair (2000) referred to this element as encompassing a collaborative culture that worked through concerns and encouraged staff that were resistant to change. Fullan (2005) warned that change initiatives often created interconnected problems that must be appropriately identified and corrected. Communication avenues across and between all levels, along with a shared commitment that was transparent through vertical relationships were critical components of this element of sustainability.

Element five was known as deep learning (Fullan, 2005). Collective problem solving, adaptation, and continuous improvement fostered deep learning in systems. Collective problem solving necessitated interactions between and across all levels. Failure occurred often during early change attempts; therefore adaptation and continuous improvement were imperative.

Dual commitments to short-term and long-term results defined element six (Fullan, 2005). Sustainability required tangible results to be experienced within short time frames. These short-term accomplishments helped maintain motivation and energy levels of stakeholders and were critical for long-term results (Fullan, 2005, 2009). "Celebrating even small successes can be crucial to boosting staff morale in providing tangible results that changes are making a difference" (Blair, 2000, p. 12).

Element seven spoke to cyclical energizing (Fullan, 2005). Fullan (2005, 2009) defined this step as a repeating pattern of energy followed by stable periods to allow for adaption and reflection. Fullan (2005) perceived cyclical energizing as a "powerful new idea" that "needs to be a fundamental element of our sustainability strategizing" (p. 27).

Element eight was referred to as the long lever of leadership (Fullan, 2005). Simply, sustainability of innovations required leaders at all levels. Leadership capacity was built through

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effective change agents throughout the organizations, beginning when innovation efforts were first considered. Jerald (2005) spoke to the importance of distributing responsibilities for leading the reform among staff. A study of schools in California that have sustained reform efforts for over 10 years were compared with schools that had failed at school reform and the findings revealed that in all of the successful reforms a noted factor was strong teacher leadership (Jerald, 2005). By dispersing leadership throughout an organization, reform efforts were able to sustain when there was turn-over in leadership (Blair, 2000; Fullan, 2005; Jerald, 2005). This was because "there are multiple sources of leadership and enthusiasm…[and] there will be enough momentum and alternate leadership available to continue the reform effort" (Blair, 2000, p. 13).

Intentional reform models, such as Literacy Collaborative, must develop in a way that ensured success for all. Fullan (2009) believed that focusing on sustainability "must become more deliberate and precise. It needs explicit attention-it must be worked on in a self- and organizationally-conscious manner" (Fullan, 2009, p. 166).

With public education being under constant scrutiny for ill prepared students for the 21st century workplace, it was essential that schools engaged in second order change (DuFour & Marzano, 2009). Second order change defined by Marzano, Zaffron, Zraik, Robbins, and Yoon (1995) "addresses the existing framework of perceptions and beliefs, or paradigm, as part of the change process" (p. 162). Simply, it is doing something significantly or fundamentally different from what we did before. It was a process that was irreversible: once begun, it was impossible for an organization to return to its prior status. Second order change required new information, transformation, and the creation of a new "mental model" for how school should be conducted (Schlechty, 2009). Bringing about such change called for leadership that extended beyond the

role of the principal. This type of leadership was commonly associated with three contemporary leadership theories: transformational, shared, and distributed.

Organizational Development and the Change Process

Organizational development encompassed planned development and improvements made by utilizing strategies and structures to transfer knowledge to the total system (Fullan, Miles, & Taylor, 1980). The expected outcome of this process was organizational effectiveness. Organizational development affected how a system runs on a short-term and a long-term basis, thus moving beyond the day-to-day managerial duties towards a vision of the future (Fullan et al., 1980). Its decision making processes took into account human potential and encouraged personal participation and development for the success of the organization. This change theory planned for organizational improvement by setting long-range goals, focusing on improving task accomplishment and the quality of life for individuals, and using valid data to inform individual and organizational decisions (Fullan et al., 1980).

Organizational development, a broad term, originated from four significant approaches: applying laboratory training insights to complex organizations; survey research and feedback; action research; and productivity and quality of life (French & Bell, 1999). Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), was asked to assist in the training of community leaders (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). This group became known as the T-group ("T" for "training") through their observations and discussions of observed behaviors of participants. Today, the T-group model is known as team building and was the most common form of organizational development (Burnes & Cooke, 2012).

A second approach that supported the concept of organizational development was survey research and feedback, a specialized form of action research (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; French & Bell, 1999). Likert (1932), through his doctoral dissertation, *A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes*, developed the five-point Likert scale. This approach had been noted for its underpinnings of the change process for organizations (French & Bell, 1999).

Action research, a third approach of organizational development, was discovered by Kurt Lewin, who believed that research needed to be closely linked to action if organizational members were to use it to manage change (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; French & Bell, 1999). According to French and Bell (1999), "action research is a cornerstone of organizational development" (p. 130). "It [action research] was based on the assumption that each organization is unique, and that the change process must be designed with that uniqueness in mind and adapted in light of ongoing experience and emergent learning" (Burnes & Cooke, 2012, p. 65).

The fourth approach contributing to the emergence of organizational development made reference to the productivity and quality of work life (QWL). This approach was based on the work of Eric Trist and his colleagues at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; French & Bell, 1999). This research examined both the technical and human sides of organizations and how they were related.

While the four aforementioned approaches contributed to the concept of organizational development and provided means for assessing an organization, Kurt Lewin's three-step planned change model provided a lens through which to view how change occurred and became a powerful tool for understanding change situations (French & Bell, 1999). His influential change model encompassed three stages of change: unfreezing or motivating change; movement or shifting to a new state; and refreezing or permanent change. These steps captured how

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individuals operated within an organization and the role that an organization played in affecting sustainable change (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; French & Bell, 1999).

Allington (quoted in Marshall (2002)) explained the process of change in this way:

> Think long and move slowly but always move forward. By this I mean, think about what you want to see happening in your school three to five years from now and begin working to get there. Change is hard. Change is anxiety provoking and necessarily slow…when we try to change everything at once, little that matters actually changes. But, someone has to initiate and support the needed change. (p. 101)

In short, change is slow and deliberate (Allington, 2002); therefore, quick fixes and revolving initiatives within school systems contradict deep, lasting change.

Culture and Climate in the School Improvement Process

According to Lindahl (2006), school culture and climate were integral components of the school improvement process. Gruenert (2008) believed that most school leaders were not clear on the distinctions between culture and climate; therefore, they inadequately diagnosed and treated the two as if they were the same. Climate and culture affect and are affected by decisions made throughout the school improvement process, and the lack of clarity around the two concepts affects reform efforts (Gruenert, 2008; Lindahl, 2006). Gruenert (2008) offered a simple analogy to understand the difference in the two terms, "if culture is the personality of the organization, then climate represents that organization's attitude. It is much easier to change an organization's attitude (climate) than it is to change its personality (culture)" (p. 58). Therefore, leaders must understand how culture and climate impact reform efforts and to not underestimate the complexity of the school improvement process (Gruenert, 2008; Lindahl, 2006).

Lindahl believed:

> It is essential to recognize that large-scale organizational improvement does not occur in a vacuum or sterile environment. It occurs in human systems, organizations, which

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already have beliefs, assumptions, expectations, norms, and values, both idiosyncratic to individual members of those organizations and shared. (p. 1)

A school's culture and climate can interact with the school improvement process in numerous ways and in all phases of the process, starting with the planning phase. In this initial phase, the organization's need for change and the nature of the changes inherent in the improvement process must be identified. Lindahl (2006) strongly suggested that the school improvement process, specific improvements and reforms, match the culture and climate of the organization and explained that culture affected organizational behavior and performance, thus shaping the impact and direction of the changes. Experts suggested that understanding the constructs of organizational culture and climate supported the alignment of future reforms with the existing organization (Lindahl, 2006).

School Culture

School culture, though a commonly used term, had varying definitions. According to Peterson and Deal (1998), culture was defined as the stream of "norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals built up over time" (p. 28). It was a set of expectations and assumptions that directed the activities of school personnel and students. Schein (2010) defined culture as "a basic pattern of assumptions…that has worked well enough to be considered valid, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems" (p. 18).

Lindahl (2006) stated that organizational culture was defined most commonly as "the way we do things around here" but further explained that with culture came organizational needs such as common language; shared concepts; defined organizational boundaries; methods for selecting members; allocation of authority, power, status, and resources; norms for handling

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interpersonal relationships, rewards, and punishments; and ways of coping with unpredictable and stressful events. Organizational needs within a shared culture helped to create solidarity and meaning while inspiring commitment and productivity (Lindahl, 2006).

Culture operated both consciously and subconsciously in an organization (Lindahl, 2006). At the most conscious levels, culture was observed through examining behaviors of its members and such things as physical setting, rituals, languages, and stories (Lindahl, 2006). On slightly less conscious levels, an organization's culture was defined by the unwritten rules and norms of behaviors as described by Peterson and Deal (1998) in their definition of culture. At the deepest most subconscious levels were those fundamental assumptions and core values of individuals, groups, and the organization (Lindahl, 2006). According to Wilkins and Patterson (1985), the deepest levels of organizational culture were the most powerful.

According to Lindahl (2006), it was important to understand that members experienced the culture of an organization differently. Subcultures existed whenever small groups shared values, perceptions, and norms that differ from the organization as a whole.

Lindahl (2006) noted that an organization's culture was influenced by contextual variables, such as people's actions within the physical and structural variables. The physical variables; such as light, heat, and noise; were a part of the school culture because they functioned to create conditions where an organization's members were able to interact and work effectively. The structural variables, such as the school layout, supported its members or isolated them from interacting with one another.

Hinde (2004) illustrated the relationship between school culture and teaching when she wrote:

> [There was] the old saying among anthropologists that fish would be the last creatures to discover water even though it is the most ubiquitous and influential aspect of a fish's

existence. So it is with school culture and teaching. Just as water surrounds and envelopes fish shaping their perspectives and determining their courses of action, culture surrounds and envelopes teachers forming their perspectives and influencing their decisions and actions. (p. 1)

Culture influenced all aspects of schools from the way staff dresses, what staff discusses in the teachers' lounge, to teachers' willingness to change (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000). Donahoe (1997) stated, "if culture changes, everything changes" (p. 245).

A school culture was rarely noticed unless it was unpleasant (Hinde, 2004). The culture of a school positively or negatively influenced its functioning. In any working environment, according to Hinde (2004), employees preferred to work in an environment that was positive and appealing. This type of culture was a place where staff had a shared sense of purpose (Fullan, 2009; Peterson & Deal, 1998); where the underlying norms were of collegiality, improvement, and hard work (Berger, 2003; Peterson & Deal, 1998); where rituals and traditions celebrated students' accomplishments, teachers' innovations, and parents' commitment (Berger, 2003; Peterson & Deal, 1998); where the informal network of storytellers, heroes, and heroines provided a social network of information, support, and history (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Peterson & Deal, 1998); and where success, joy, and humor abounded (Berger, 2003; Peterson & Deal, 1998).

A school with a positive school culture was a place with a "shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn" (Hinde, 2004, p. 3). This type of positive culture exhibited positive qualities where all members were willing to take risks and be open to reforms (Hinde, 2004).

School Climate

Organizational climate referred to the quality and character of an organization's life

(Center for Social and Emotional Education, n.d.). The Center for Social and Emotional

Education (n.d.) defined school climate and a sustainable, positive school climate in this way:

> School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects
> norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and
> organizational structures. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth
> development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a
> democratic society. This climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support
> people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People are engaged and
> respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute
> to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the
> benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning. Each person contributed to the operations of
> the school as well as the care of the physical environment. (p. 5)

Educational reformers such as Dewey (1916), Durkheim (1961), and Perry (1908)

recognized the importance of school climate. However, it was not until the 1950s that educators

began to systemically study school culture (Center for Social and Emotional Education, n.d.).

Thapa, Cohen, Higgins-D'Alessandro, and Guffey (2012) addressed five interconnected

components that were essential to a positive school climate. The first component was safety,

which encompassed the rules and norms of the school as well as the physical and emotional

safety of its members. The second component was relationships. The term relationships referred

not only to relations with others, but also with the self (Thapa et al., 2012). Research had shown

that teachers' work environment, feeling of inclusion and respect, and peer relationships were

critical to the success of school reform efforts that led to student achievement (Center for Social

and Emotional Education, n.d.; Lindahl, 2006; Thapa et al., 2012).

Thapa et al. (2012) believed the third component, teaching and learning, was a critical

component of climate. A positive school climate promoted cooperative learning, group

cohesion, respect, and mutual trust that were all directly linked to student achievement. The

fourth component was the institutional environment. This component encompassed school connectedness and engagement as well as the physical layout and surroundings of the school. These two aspects of the institutional environment dealt with the perceptions of school members, how they were valued as individuals, and the size of the school. Research indicated that the smaller the school facility, the more positive the school climate (Thapa et al., 2012). This supported the idea of forming professional learning communities in larger schools in order to provide smaller environments where members felt safe and valued as individuals (Thapa et al., 2012).

The fifth component of school climate related to the process of school reform. Studies showed that the more positive a school's climate, the more adept the organization was in successfully implementing school reform. Bryk and Schneider (2003) discovered that schools with high relational trust were more likely to make changes that improved student achievement. The findings of Bryk and Schneider (2003) supported the notion that the four aforementioned interconnected components positively working in tandem created a climate that was conducive to successful school reform efforts.

Culture and Climate for Reform

Organizational reform did not occur in a vacuum, nor was it static (Hinde, 2004; Lindahl, 2006). Rather, it occurred in organizations that already had beliefs, assumptions, expectations and norms that had value both to individual members of the organization and the organization as a whole. Shared cultural traits and individual perceptions of climate were greatly affected by the change process (Hinde, 2004; Lindahl, 2006).

DuFour and Eaker (1992) described what a school culture must look like in order for school change to occur. There were three major components: predispositions; collaborative work behavior; and professional productivity. First, predispositions involved educational decisions that were centered on the needs of students. The entire community supported the new ways of teaching and learning, and there were high expectations for staff and students.

Secondly, there was a climate of collaborative work behavior where staff members had common goals, continuous dialogues, shared decision making, planned action, and periodic reflection and feedback. Unfortunately, many schools did not offer this collaborative component for staff, and teachers were isolated from one another. This isolation was not necessarily viewed as a negative factor and arose from several issues. First, teachers enjoyed the autonomy that isolation brings them. Second, they enjoyed teaching according to their personalities and/or values. Third, leadership had not sought to bring teachers together for collaboration. Many principals had been managerial leaders and had focused on the operations of the school.

Finally, DuFour and Eaker (1992) discussed professional productivity, whereby staff members were involved in and concerned about school improvement. The staff members felt a part of a cohesive community, and they had a strong knowledge base about instruction and learning.

As principals shifted from managers to instructional leaders, it was essential that they supported the change process and used proper tools to provide quality staff development. Professional development for administrators was also important in improving their skills and understanding. "If principals do not go out of their way to learn (inside and outside of the school), regardless of what the system is doing, they cannot become a pressure point for positive change" (Fullan, 2005, p. 6). Research indicated that actions such as articulating a vision,

establishing common understanding of concepts, building support among stakeholders, allocating resources, assessing progress, and planning ahead were all part of the change process for school leaders (Bolman & Deal, 1997; DuFour & Eaker, 1992; Schlechty, 2005). Current research indicated that principals needed to take the lead in the change processes that occurred in their schools.

Leadership Theories

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory was first proposed by Burns (1978) and extended into other non-educational contexts by Bass (1987). Commonly regarded today as the preferred approach in organizational development, transformational leadership sought to move followers to accomplish more than the required expectations (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990). Transformational leadership was distinguished from other theories of leadership by its call for long-term visioning, concern for followers' personal development, and the transformation of followers into leaders and moral agents (Burns, 1978). Burns (1978) described this type of leadership as a selfless, inspirational process in which both the leaders and followers learned from each other as they progressed in their moral development.

Kouzes and Posner (2007) found that all transformational leaders engaged in five types of behavior. First, leaders modeled leadership by defining their values and living them out with integrity in a manner for others to see. Second, by knowing followers' hopes, dreams, and values, transformational leaders inspired colleagues to create a shared vision. Third, transformational leaders challenged current processes and created change by recognizing and supporting innovations. Fourth, transformational leaders enabled others to lead by distributing

power to team members. Finally, Kouzes and Posner (2007) suggested that transformational leaders encouraged stakeholders by knowing, appreciating, and celebrating them.

The purpose of transformational leadership in education was to assist the school community in creating a culture of moral commitment to student success and exemplary sustained performance in schools (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Leithwood, 1992). The goal of this type of leadership was to develop the school's capacity for innovation (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) by transforming their systems into a collective unit that worked to improve the entire organization. Leaders who were transformational sought to build the stakeholders' capacity to identify their purpose as part of the educational team (Leithwood, 1992) while supporting the development of changing instructional practices focused on teaching and student learning. Transformational leaders were commonly regarded as charismatic and visionary.

Regarding transformational leadership, Leithwood (1992) stated that "at the reins of today's new schools will be not one but many leaders who believe in creating the conditions that enable staffs to find their own direction" (p. 8). This supported the purpose of transformational leadership to distribute power with a focus on creating a shared vision and community commitment to positive cultural change (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Leithwood, 1992).

Burns' (1978) work in transformational leadership stressed the need for the relationship between leaders and followers to be one where all endeavored to reach common goals, essentially working for the overall good of the organization both in times of success and of hardship. Fullan (2005, 2009) believed that transformational leaders were required to understand and be fully engaged in the change process in order for lasting change to occur. Leaders who transformed an organization acted with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of the people it affected; therefore, leaders must re-culture the organization during the change

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process. This required leaders to have an understanding of the change process and to view change as a complex process as opposed to a checklist of prescribed steps.

Shared Leadership

"Shared leadership re-conceptualizes 'instructional leadership' and extends the expertise to school community and empowers competent teachers" (Strosberg 2010, p. 4). As defined by Leithwood (2005), shared leadership was the attempt to re-direct the principal's attention to teaching and learning and away from the administrative tasks of managing a school. This required content expertise, release of authority, and collaboration (Strosberg 2010). Hallinger's (2003) comparison of the instructional and transformational leadership models led to the discovery that there was a resurgence of the instructional leadership model in schools where "strong leadership" was utilized out of need to rapidly affect school improvement. In schools that were threatened by sanctions if improvements were not made, an instructional leadership model was most often adopted to increase student achievement (Strosberg 2010) due to the limited amount of time to make improvements. Strong leadership, as proposed by Hallinger (2003), was conceptualized along three dimensions, including defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programming, and promoting a positive school climate (Strosberg 2010). Honig (2003) summarized shared leadership as "strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction from the principal" (p. 329).

Contemporary leadership theorists have looked at instructional leadership from a perspective that viewed expertise shared among the organization as necessary to improve student achievement by expanding the source of expert knowledge from only the principals to all organizational members (Strosberg 2010). In addition, the release of authority to enable the

organization to reach desired goals was referred to as "building policy from practice." This

method of instructional leadership did not develop unless there was the release from traditional

leadership roles. Honig (2003) stated that leaders must have built capacity in order to engage in

collaborative dialogues to foster commitment of organizational members.

Thus, shared instructional leadership had been described as "strong leadership," and was

defined as the principal's redirection towards learning and away from managerial tasks. In this

leadership model, the principal resigned power in order to collaborate about instructional

expertise with members the organization. This collaboration facilitated professional growth

through shared professional learning. Effective principals adapted to changes by building the

capacity among their respective staff members (Schlechty, 2009) and created conditions for

organizational learning that focused on student achievement (Hord, 1997).

In order to improve school communities, leadership was shared and extended throughout

the school to all members. These successful school communities of learners shared important

issues and developed important relationships in all efforts to improve student learning.

Schmoker (2006) believed this concept of leadership challenged traditional structures and

required both administrators and teachers to take responsibility for leading, decision making, and

student learning.

Distributive Leadership

As to how schools should approach leadership, Spillane (2006) developed the theory of

distributive leadership. According to Cooper (2012):

> A prescribed definition of distributive leadership includes activities that are tied to the
> core work of an organization; that are designed by organization members to influence and
> impact the motivation, knowledge, affect or practices of other organization members; or

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that are understood by organizational members as intended to influence their motivation, knowledge, effect, or practices. (p. 45)

The framework for distributive leadership involved two main aspects: the leadership-plus aspect and the practice aspect (Cooper, 2012). The leadership-plus aspect was considered to be the cornerstone of distributive leadership; however, it was insufficient if implemented without the practice aspect.

Encompassed in the leadership-plus aspect were seven key areas of needed leadership, three arrangements of leadership responsibilities, and three methods in which leaders were distributed. Spillane (2006), argued that regardless of the type of school, there were seven areas where leadership was key: instruction, management, human resources, micro-politics, external development, culture, and strategic planning. School size, however, did play a role in determining the number of informal leaders who were needed to support the operation of the school. Simply, as school size increased, more informal leaders were needed due to the increased amount of leadership work.

Leadership responsibilities could be arranged in three ways (Cooper, 2012): division of labor; co-performance; and parallel performance. Cooper (2012) referred to Spillane's (2006) longitudinal studies of principals and assistant principals and found that a single leadership position rarely took responsibilities for a specific function; therefore, for schools to help identify, predict, and curtail potential barriers to schools' success, a division of labor was essential. Another arrangement of leadership responsibilities was through co-performance where two or more leaders individually or collaboratively performed a job function. The third arrangement was parallel performance that consisted of two or more leaders performing synonymous leadership duties in separate areas.

Under the leadership-plus aspect, leaders could be distributed in three ways: by design, by default, and by crisis (Cooper, 2012). When leadership was distributed by design, formal leaders and/or teachers might formally designate leadership positions or reframe existing positions to distribute leadership among formal leaders and teachers. Distributed leadership occurred by default when internal or external participants took on leadership responsibilities if others did not assume them within the school organization. Finally, leadership could be distributed by crisis when formal school leaders reacted abruptly to a specific situation requiring immediate attention.

The practice aspect was the second component of Spillane's (2006) distributive leadership perspective. This aspect involved the members of the organization. People, whether in leader or in follower roles, were central to any analysis of leadership practice. The actions people took were critical, but all too often, attempts to analyze leadership practice never went beyond the actions of individuals, usually individual leaders. At most, attempts to analyze leadership aggregated the actions of two or more leaders. In a distributed approach, it was also critical to look how leadership practice took shape in the interactions between leaders and followers (Spillane, 2006).

Further research identified three types of interaction distribution among leaders: collaborative, collective, and coordinated. Collaborated distribution occurred between two or more leaders who fulfilled the same leadership function in collaboration with one another. Spillane (2006) compared this distribution to players in a basketball game, who work together dribbling, passing, and shooting. The second type was collective distribution. This interaction entailed two or more leaders working separately but interdependently to perform a leadership task. Spillane (2006) compared this interaction to those in a baseball game where one player bats

alone, but the action interacted with the pitch from the pitcher. The third distribution of interaction was coordinated distribution. This interaction required leaders to perform functions in a particular sequence. This type of interaction was similar to a relay race where the race was co-performed in a particular sequence (Spillane, 2006).

Spillane (2006) recognized that there were multiple leaders in an organization and that leadership activities were widely shared within and between organizations. Distributed leadership delegated responsibilities to various members of the organization for job enhancement and improvement of instructional outcomes through either configuration or formal distribution of roles (Strosberg 2010). While a distributed model of leadership was primarily concerned with interactions of its stakeholders rather than actions, "it [the distributive model] is primarily concerned with leadership practices and how leadership influences organizational and structural improvements" (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31).

Research studies had provided evidence that distributive leadership made a positive difference to organizational outcomes and student learning (Harris & Spillane, 2008). According to Harris and Spillane (2008), there was a powerful relationship between distributed forms of leadership and positive organizational change. By distributing power, it provided the opportunity to stand back and analyze exactly how leadership was distributed and the difference made, or not made, by that distribution (Harris & Spillane, 2008). In summary, the context within which leadership was distributed and the prime aim for distribution was what mattered. If one merely "flattening the hierarchy or delegation" of leadership, then distributive leadership had not been achieved. (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 57).

Role of the Principal

Large-scale literacy reform efforts typically achieved early results yet soon reached a plateau. Sustainable improvement, according to Hargreaves and Fink (2006) and Fullan (2005), depended on successful leadership. Fullan (2010) referenced a study by Smith and Andrews (1989) of 1,200 school principals and found that effective principals were engaged in four areas of strategic interaction with teachers: as a resource provider, an instructional resource, a communicator, and a visible presence. As valid as these four areas were, Fullan (2010) argued that they had "no sticking power" because they failed to lead to any practical action. Simply, educators knew specifically what an instructional leader looked like; however, Fullan (2010) suggested that to bring about organizational change, specific steps that explained "what" instructional leaders do must be identified. It was observed that the principal was second only to the teacher in his/her impact on the student (Fullan, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004). While Fullan (2010) supported the aforementioned idea, he believed this underestimated the true impact of the principal. He explained, "there is clearly a multiplier effect if the principal helps, directly or indirectly, 30 or more teachers become dramatically more effective in teaching" (Fullan, 2010, p. 14). Sinek (2012) noted that the ultimate role of leaders was to make their stakeholders feel good and strong about themselves so that all experienced increased self-confidence. The fulfilling of this responsibility required a confident leader; one who was confident in what he/she knew and who recognized what he/she did not know (Lipman, 2013; Musselwhite, 2007; Zenger, 2014). This supported the research findings of Lipman (2013), Musselwhite (2007), and Zenger (2014) that revealed effective leaders possess a high level of self-awareness. Each define self-awareness in similar ways to encompass a leader's ability to possess an awareness of his/her

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personal strengths and weaknesses, and to understand the degree to which his/her personality influenced the organization he/she led.

Principal Leadership

Principal leadership was shown to have a significant impact on student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Although this effect was believed to be indirect (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), the principal's influence was substantiated through the alignment of beliefs and actions that improved student learning through human and structural supports.

Kouzes and Posner (2007) had identified five practices and ten corresponding commitments that all exemplary leaders, including principals, demonstrated. Each of the five practices reflected specific actions or behaviors that were consistent with the essential dimensions of learning communities (DuFour et al., 2004; Hord, 1997; Huffman, 2003; Schmoker, 2006). Table 1 is an overview of Kouzes and Posner (2007) leadership model (p. 21).

TABLE 1: The Five Practices and Ten Commitments of Leadership

Practices		Commitments
Model the Way	1	Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared ideals
	2	Set the example by aligning actions with shared values
Inspire a Shared Vision	3	Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities
	4	Enlist others in a common vision, appealing to shared aspirations
Challenge the Process	5	Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and look outward for innovative ways to improve
	6	Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience
Enable Others to Act	7	Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships
	8	Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence
Encourage the Heart	9	Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for excellence
	10	Celebrate values and victories by creating a spirit of community

Current reform literature suggested that the best hope for significant school improvement was transforming schools into professional learning communities (DuFour et al., 2004; Schmoker, 2006). DuFour and Eaker (1998) believed that until educators described the school they were trying to create, it was impossible to develop policies, procedures, or programs that would help bring this ideal to a reality. When a leader communicated a clear destination/vision and the route was flexible, the stakeholders were more willing to overcome obstacles because they were obsessed with the destination and vision (Sinek, 2012).

If principals and school leaders were to effectively articulate the desired outcomes for the organization, the concept of vision had to be understood and applied in the appropriate contexts of learning and improvement (Hord, 1997). DuFour and Eaker (1998) stated that what separated a learning community from an "ordinary school" was the collective commitment to guiding principles that clearly articulated beliefs and goals.

Structures and procedures that would support and reinforce the intended outcome needed to be in place in order for a vision of organizational learning to be realized (Marzano et al., 2005). Huffman (2003) stated that for learning communities to successfully develop, shared leadership, shared vision, and collaborative school culture must be integrated and supported through both human and organizational structures.

Leithwood (1994) described human factors as those relating to the establishment of a shared vision and creation of a school culture characterized by norms of trust, collaboration, and collegial relationships. Huffman (2003) also concluded that norms of trust, respect, and inclusiveness were essential conditions for organizational learning. Sinek (2012) spoke about the importance of trust for an organization. He revealed that the secret to creating a sense of fulfillment within organizational members began when leaders did little things for followers with

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no intention of gaining something in return. The result was fulfillment for the leader. The ripple effect of these actions by the leaders produced followers who did something kind for one another and resulted in fulfillment for members of the organization. In reference to trust, Sinek (2012) suggested doing something for someone and expecting anything in return bred distrust; rather leaders who asked for what was wanted or needed by followers prior to taking action generated a feeling of trust within the followers.

In order to facilitate norms of collegiality and collaboration, frameworks for the organization needed to be implemented in order to promote and develop the capacity of all staff members (Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Liebman, Maldonado, Lacey, & Thompson, 2005). Staff members also needed opportunities to dialogue, function as collaborative teams, and practice leadership through shared decision making, planning, and collaboration (Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan, 2005, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; LAB, 2000; Liebman et al., 2005; Schlechty, 2005).

Role of Teams

Social scientists identified the three most important types of groups relative to daily interaction as being family, friendship, and work groups (Friend & Cook, 2007). In a professional setting, the term "work group" was used interchangeably with the term "team". Lencioni (2012) used the following metaphor to describe the interactions of a team, "a real team is more like a basketball team, one that plays together simultaneously, in an interactive, mutually dependent, and often interchangeable way (p. 36).

While there was a profusion of definitions for teams, they all generally emphasized individuals from a variety of disciplines and experiences who met together in order to reach a

common goal through problem solving with a strong emphasis on clear and direct communication, interdependence, coordination, and clear procedures (Friend & Cook, 2007). French and Bell (1999) defined team as "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (p. 155).

There were two fundamental beliefs regarding teams. First, teams or work groups were considered to be the building blocks of organizations as well as being an important force for improving the functions of an organization (French & Bell, 1999). The second fundamental belief was that teams must "manage their culture, processes, systems, and relationships to be effective" (French & Bell, 1999, p. 91). According to French and Bell (1999), theory, research, and practice attested to the central role teams play in organizational success. Teams and teamwork were parts of the foundation of organizational development" (p. 91).

In effective organizations, there was a strong focus on the empowerment of members in order to increase performance and satisfaction (French & Bell, 1999; Friend & Cook, 2007). The concept of team centered on putting "empowered individuals together to create extraordinary effects on performance and satisfaction" (French & Bell, 1999, p. 91).

There were many reasons why teams were important. First, "individual behavior is rooted in the sociocultural norms and value of the work team" (French & Bell, 1999, p. 91); therefore, when a team changed its norms there was an immediate result in individual behavior. Second, the complexities of many tasks required the effort of many people working together to accomplish them (French & Bell, 1999). Third, the sum of the efforts of team members was far greater than the sum of an individual working alone (French & Bell, 1999; Friend & Cook,

2007). Fourth, "teams satisfy people's needs for social interaction, status, recognition, and respect-teams nurture human nature" (French & Bell, 1999, p. 91).

Effective teams had clear goals, met the needs of their members, had individual accountability, were maintained by group processes, and had team members who possessed leadership skills. In many school reform efforts, the use of teams helped facilitate necessary change. The concept of team rested on the following beliefs: effective organizations were places with clear goals; building the capacity of individual organizational members were vital; and leadership was both formal and informal (French & Bell, 1999; Friend & Cook, 2007).

Summary

This chapter presented a review of related literature relevant to school reform, specifically, comprehensive school reform models. In addition, literature was offered on organizational development and the change process and how the culture and climate of an organization affected the sustainability of comprehensive school reform models. Finally, literature was presented on principal leadership and leadership theories that were found to be critical for the sustainability of school reform models.

Chapter III described the design and methods used to collect and evaluate the data of this qualitative holistic multiple-case replication study. An overview of the procedures for participant selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis was provided.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter described the designs and methods used to collect and evaluate data on three elementary school principals in a northwest Georgia school district and their respective roles in sustaining the longevity of a comprehensive school reform model.   An overview of the procedures that were used to conduct the study included the participants, instrumentation, and data collection. The purpose of this study was to examine how the role of the principal perpetuates the success of the Literacy Collaborative model, as an example of comprehensive whole school reform, after 10 years of implementation.

Research Design

The design chosen for this research was a holistic multiple-case study replication, a design that, according to Yin (2014), had been used extensively in social science research. The unit of analysis that was studied in this design was the principal at each of the three elementary schools selected. While the direction of the overall design evolved as data collection and analysis commenced, the following represented the initial research paradigm for this study based on Yin's (2014) replication approach to multiple-case studies.

- Investigation of the phenomenon through review of the related literature
- Purposeful selection of the three cases for investigation

- Design of preliminary data collection and analysis protocol, including initial interview protocol, field collection form, and preliminary data collection schedule

- Gathering of single case data through interviews and review of archival documents, such as district and school literacy team minutes, school evaluation plans, and Literacy Collaborative Fidelity of Implementation documents (Appendix A)

- Analysis of individual cases through pattern/theme development and writing of individual case report overviews focusing on significant themes

- Performance of cross-case analysis through further pattern/theme development and replication strategies

- Relation of outcome to literature and knowledge base

- Development of hypotheses based on individual analysis, cross-case analysis, and relation to literature that applied to the research question

This study employed purposive sampling of three elementary principals who served in their current positions as principal since the initial implementation of the comprehensive school reform model, Literacy Collaborative. The three principals became a part of the study upon receipt of a signed informed consent form (Appendix B). The informed consent form guaranteed confidentiality and outlined procedures for how data would be obtained, secured, and destroyed. Archival documents, such as team minutes, school evaluation plans, and Fidelity of Implementation documents were collected for each of the three participating principals. Initial interview questions were developed. Additional questions were constructed based on the data that emerged from the initial interviews (Appendix C). The researcher personally recorded and transcribed each interview and checked the transcriptions against the recorded interviews to

ensure accuracy. Once all data were collected and analyzed, three single case studies, one for

each principal and a cross-case analysis were developed.

Research Question

This holistic multiple-case research study addressed one central research question: how

do principals sustain comprehensive school reform efforts in the form of the Literacy

Collaborative?

Participants

The present study employed purposive sampling of three elementary school principals in

a northwest Georgia school district. These participants were selected after meeting certain

selection criteria. It was important that each participant served as principal in the school district

from the time of the initial implementation of Literacy Collaborative through the time of data

collection for the present study. Of the three participants, two had served as principal of the

same elementary school since the model's initial implementation while the remaining participant

had served as principal in two elementary schools within the school district since 2004.

Additional background information and descriptions of each principal was included in the

introduction to each case study in Chapter IV.

TABLE 2: Participants' Experience as Principal since the Literacy Collaborative Reform
Implementation in 2004

	Dr. Andrews	Dr. Bates	Mrs. Carter
2004-2009	Arrow Elementary	Brook Elementary	City Elementary
2009-2014 (present)	Ark Elementary		

During the ten-year period prior to the study, two superintendents served in the school district. Each superintendent had his own focus on literacy improvement and reform initiatives. Each brought a unique and personal vision for the district. Prior to 2004, each school often worked in isolation with its own approach to teaching reading and writing. Schools used a variety of instructional approaches and programs such as SRA Direct Instruction (S. Engelmann, Engelmann, & Seitz-Davis, 1997), Harcourt (2003) basal reading series, and The Shurley Method-English Made Easy (Shurley, 1997). Over time, teachers and administrators in the district observed that the majority of the students were reading well below grade level. In 2003, after reviewing scientifically-based reading research on best practices and through the visionary leadership of the newly elected superintendent, this northwest Georgia school district selected a comprehensive literacy school reform model, Literacy Collaborative, to implement as a district-wide reform. Through the actions of this superintendent and his successor, the district utilized local, state, and Title I funding to implement this literacy initiative that allowed for a focused, common direction in the approach to literacy instruction in all six elementary schools beginning with grades kindergarten through second grade.

Over the 10 years leading up to the present study, the district trained literacy coaches and trainers for the primary and elementary school levels and literacy coaches for the middle school level through university partnerships (Appendix D). The district had implemented Literacy Collaborative, a long-term professional development program for literacy instruction that consisted of focused, professional development in literacy for teachers and administrators. Due to this endeavor, this northwest Georgia school district developed the capacity to maintain and sustain the literacy initiative even during the economic recession that began in 2008. Therefore, this study focused on the district's three elementary school principals who served in the role of

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elementary principal since the model's inception, with the intent to identify how the role of the elementary school principal perpetuated the success of the Literacy Collaborative comprehensive whole school reform model.

Ensuring Trustworthiness

Methods were taken to ensure both the validity and reliability of this qualitative study. Internal validity was achieved by triangulation of multiple data sources (interviews and archival data) and the utilization of member checks. As data were gathered, interview transcripts were created from the recordings and were sent to the participants for verification of the accuracy of those comments.

Researcher Positionality

Having worked in two school districts that utilized the Literacy Collaborative comprehensive school reform model as a way to increase the reading achievement level for students, it became evident to the present researcher that the principal's role was one of significance in terms of its sustainability.

While serving as a classroom teacher, the present researcher understood that the principal of the school in which I worked supported Literacy Collaborative and the structure of the model. I was provided with professional learning, support from an on-site literacy coach, and the necessary resources to ensure my success and the success of the students.

For 10 years, I served in the role of a primary grades literacy coach in the district of study. I worked in this position since the district's initial implementation of Literacy Collaborative and had noticed that the principal had tremendous impact on the Literacy

Collaborative implementation and sustainability. Working closely with other school-based

literacy coaches and observing the role of the coach within each school, it became clear that the

principals utilized staff, resources, and data in different ways. When the district of study endured

change in district leadership and encountered a budget crisis that required each district initiative

to be evaluated for renewal, my interest in the role of the principal deepened as I worked

alongside the principals during these trying times.

My experiences working for various district and school-based administrators utilizing the

Literacy Collaborative comprehensive whole school reform model led to my interest in further

study of their respective roles in sustaining a school reform model. My personal experience and

the review of related literature served as a flexible framework for organizing data that emerged

in this study.

Because the present researcher served as a district literacy coach, it was understood by

peers that the present researcher was an advocate for the comprehensive whole school reform

model, Literacy Collaborative. In conducting this research study, the researcher maintained a

heightened awareness of researcher bias. To help reduce bias, the researcher clearly

communicated to each of the participants that the present research study's intent was not to

evaluate the success of the Literacy Collaborative implementation. Rather, the research study

focused on the participants' day to day thoughts and actions that aided in sustaining Literacy

Collaborative at their respective schools, given that it was a district mandated initiative and that

the district's history included several past failed initiatives.

Ethical Considerations

Upon approval of the research proposal, an application was submitted to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval to conduct the present research study. Part of the application process included securing approval from the school district to conduct the study, and upon IRB approval (Appendix E), the three participating principals signed informed consent forms, outlining the study, guaranteeing anonymity, and explaining the procedures for collecting, analyzing, and destroying of all data. It was at that point that data collection began.   All interactions with the participants were on an individual basis and no communication regarding other participants occurred during the study. Interviews were scheduled at a convenient time for each participant. During the interviews, I maintained a neutral disposition and was careful to avoid the use of any evaluative language. Due to our positions in the school district, interactions at district and school level meetings were common. Therefore, I ensured that my conversations and interactions with the participants during work-related events did not insinuate their participation in this study.

Case Study Protocol

While there were a variety of research designs that might have been appropriate, the research question for this study lent itself most closely to a qualitative holistic multiple-case replication study. According to Yin (2014) the need for case studies arose out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena. School reform was indeed a complex social phenomenon. Because schools were places where one action caused many reactions and interactions, this study sought to investigate the role of the principal in sustaining Literacy Collaborative, a comprehensive whole school reform model.

There are many definitions for case study. Yin (2014) defined a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigated a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context were not clearly evident. This study took place at each principal's elementary school in order to better understand and examine the role of the principal in his/her natural working environment.

Data Collection Procedures

Purposive sampling was utilized to select subjects for this study. According to Patten (2005), purposive sampling was described as "seeking individuals who will be 'rich sources of information'" (p. 143). The subjects for this study were three elementary school principals in one small rural school district. Each subject had been employed as an elementary school principal within the district since the Literacy Collaborative implementation in 2004.

Data collection strategies used were: open-ended interviews with each principal and the review of archival documents since 2004, including literacy team minutes, school evaluation plans, and school Literacy Collaborative Fidelity of Implementation documents (Appendix A). Data collection began by contacting the primary district literacy trainer requesting documents relevant to this study for each of the three participating schools. Documents spanned the time period from 2004 to the time of the study (2014) consisted of school literacy team minutes, school evaluation plans, and Fidelity of Implementation documents (Appendix A). The documents obtained did not disclose any confidential information regarding school personnel. Once documents were collected, the first of two rounds of semi-structured, opened-ended interviews were scheduled and conducted individually with each participant. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Questions that arose from the document analysis and round one of

interviews aided in shaping questions for the second round of interviews. After individual

interviews were scheduled, conducted, and transcribed; data analysis began.

Data Analysis

In the present study, a primary goal was to make meaning of a particular phenomenon,

the sustaining of a school reform initiative, Literacy Collaborative. As data were gathered for

each individual case, the researcher searched for emerging patterns and utilized repeated

observations.

Individual case studies, with focus on significant themes that emerged, were developed

from all existing data. Subsequent to the individual case study analyses, a cross-case analysis

was conducted to determine if any consistency in themes between these cases existed. In cases

where similar results occurred, literal replication was said to exist (Yin, 2014).

The data were analyzed utilizing the constant comparative method. According to Lincoln

and Guba (1985), constant comparative method analysis was the process of identifying, coding,

and categorizing the primary pattern in the data, even when applied to the same case study. For

imbedded units of analysis, such as the principals in this study, where there are emerging themes,

the constant comparative method lent itself to a cross-case analysis, as well. The steps in the

constant comparative method analysis began with data collection in searching for important

issues that served as the basis for defining categories. This was known as unitizing (Lincoln &

Guba, 1985). Additional data were collected that provided examples of the categories of focus.

The present researcher used this additional data to look for diversity within each category and to

write about the categories in a way that described and accounted for all the incidents within the

data and from the resulting themes. In doing so, basic processes and relationships were

discovered. This step was identified as categorizing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Generally, qualitative data produced seven to 10 categories, and, after coding, and writing the analysis, these categories became the emerging themes. These steps continued in a recursive fashion where data were continually collected, coded, categorized, and analyzed until the case study was completed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Validity and Reliability

Measures were taken to ensure both the validity and reliability of this study. Internal validity was achieved through the following approaches: triangulation of data (interviews and archival data); utilization of pattern matching; and involvement of informants in this research. As data were gathered, the resulting information was reviewed by participants in this study for input and verification of accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

External validity was achieved by creating a holistic case study for each elementary principal. The themes and patterns that were generated served to add to the existing knowledge base in this area, and thus were of benefit to those in formal and informal leadership positions.

In this multiple-case study approach, reliability was achieved by examining the existence of like patterns or themes across cases. A major insight, according to Yin (2014), was to treat multiple cases as one would treat multiple experiments; with replication logic. In this study, the researcher examined whether literal or theoretical replications occurred.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology that was used in the present study. The results of this qualitative multiple-case study were presented in narrative form. Holistic case studies of

three elementary school principals were developed through analysis of data from all sources. These case studies, including identification and description of patterns and themes in the three individual cases, were reported in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative, holistic multiple-case study was to examine how the role of the principal, with respect to personal leadership style, perpetuated the success of the comprehensive school reform model, Literacy Collaborative, throughout the 10 years of implementation that have transpired. During this time, the principals encountered a change in superintendents and district leaders, budget constraints, and teacher turnover, yet were still able to sustain the program after it was implemented. Three principals from a northwest Georgia school district individually participated in open-ended, face-to-face interviews from December 2013 to March 2014. Multiple sources of data, including school evaluation plans, literacy team minutes, and Fidelity of Implementation documents (Appendix A) were also examined to address one central research question: how do principals sustain comprehensive school reform efforts in the form of Literacy Collaborative? The case studies presented in this chapter were constructed according to the qualitative procedures outlined in the preceding chapter and developed as data emerged. Once collected, the data were grouped by case, reviewed, and coded to reflect general themes. Individual case study themes revealed similarities and contrasts between each participant, and themes were specifically referenced in individual cases (Appendix F). Six themes emerged from the data: aligned principal's leadership style with Literacy Collaborative, employed clear communication, valued learning at all levels, engaged

collaborative teams in collective decision making and problem solving, allocated resources, and adapted to change.

Because the Literacy Collaborative comprehensive school reform model was adopted as a mandated district initiative, a brief description of the school district was included along with the three case studies of each participant and a cross-case analysis. For the purpose of anonymity, the district was assigned the pseudonym Dawson Public Schools and three cases were discussed as Case Study A, Case Study B, and Case Study C, with pseudonyms assigned to the principals (Appendix F).

Overview of the Dawson Public School District

In 2003, the then current superintendent embarked upon reconfiguring the design of elementary schools within the Dawson school district. At that time, Dawson Public Schools served students in four elementary schools (pre-kindergarten-3), one intermediate school (4-5), one middle school (6-8), one high school (9-12), and one International Academy (4-12).

Concurrent with the district's reconfiguration of the elementary and intermediate schools, the school system adopted a new literacy initiative based on the projected demographics of the local community. In 2000, 41% of the adults living in this northwest Georgia community did not have a high school diploma (Parker, 2002). In 2002, the number of white-collar jobs was declining. By 2012, there was projected a minimal number of white-collar jobs leaving the majority of employment opportunities to blue-collar occupations requiring workers to receive work related training (Parker, 2002).

Further research revealed those communities with higher percentages of adults with lower levels of education resulted in several outcomes: the attraction of industries dependent on

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employees with lower skill levels, fewer opportunities to attract new residents with higher educations, and difficulty in maintaining "homegrown" young adults with college educations (Parker, 2002). Adding to the challenge of increasing the graduation rate within Dawson Public Schools was the rise in number of non-native English speaking families who moved to the northwest Georgia area. In summary, Dawson Public Schools recognized that if the system continued to educate children in the same manner without adapting educational approaches to reflect the dynamics of the community, the negative educational outcomes would become exacerbated. It was this realization that motivated the school district to seek to reform the entire Dawson education system, beginning with literacy instruction (Appendix D).

The literacy instruction of the district, prior to 2004, was based on behaviorist theory using a direct instruction model. Students were passive participants in their learning and were taught discreet basic skills in a recall manner. With a new superintendent who believed that students should be active participants in learning rather than passive, Dawson Public Schools chose to implement Literacy Collaborative, a comprehensive school reform model designed to improve the reading, writing, and language skills of children.

Prior to 2004, literacy instruction experienced constant redesign, implementation, and evaluation. But with the introduction of Literacy Collaborative, Dawson Public Schools developed the capacity to maintain and sustain the literacy initiative, even with the change in leadership at the district level.

Since the 2005-2006 school year, the district reconfigured its schools to serve students in six elementary schools (pre-kindergarten-5), one middle school (6-8), and two high schools (9-12). In 2012-2013, Dawson Public Schools served approximately 7,225 students grades pre-kindergarten through 12 (Dawson Public Schools, 2014).

Analysis of the interview and documents data revealed that the preparation and rollout of the Literacy Collaborative reform model was a critical factor in creating the conditions for sustainability of the initiative. While implementation of Literacy Collaborative was not the focus of the research study, each participant noted the implementation process. The top-down implementation involved the principals in every facet; something no previous district initiative had done. When asked how this initiative sustained over the other district reform efforts, Dr. Bates responded, "We [principals] were brought along with the Literacy Collaborative and we had professional growth training and learning so it wasn't something just pushed down on us." All three principals mentioned that they were included in the implementation from its inception. They specifically noted that their experience learning about the reform model, how it aligned with their leadership styles, and how to lead a school during a reform effort were instrumental in their efforts to sustain the program in their schools. The importance of "buy-in" by those tasked with implementation during top-down reform efforts was noted by Huberman and Miles (1984), and it was very interesting to learn how closely the Literacy Collaborative initiative paralleled the districts in that study.

In 2002, the Dawson Public School district hired a visionary superintendent, Dr. Parker, who had deeply held beliefs that students should be active participants in their learning if they were to be productive citizens of the world. Superintendent Parker had a clear vision that he articulated consistently and created a sense of urgency among the necessary stakeholder groups by communicating the dire forecast of the community's future if the then current methods of education did not change. Superintendent Parker's "State of the South and Our Community" (Parker, 2002) address presented data that was logical and also spoke to the heart.

Superintendent Parker began preparing the district for the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative school reform model when he removed structural barriers, such as aligning all elementary schools to serve grades (pre) kindergarten through five with the addition of one elementary school. He allocated all Title I money brought into the district to go to the six elementary schools in order to staff each school with the necessary materials, a school-based literacy coach, and a district literacy coach. For many people, this was a radical move, but as one principal noted, "it worked." The byproduct of aligning all elementary schools created equality among grade levels served, allocating the district's Title I funds to the elementary school's literacy implementation. The decision to staff a district literacy coach, Dr. Debra Johnston, was strategic in unifying, nurturing, and developing the implementation; and the person selected for this position was critical.

As facilities were constructed and reconfigured, principals were immersed in professional learning about Literacy Collaborative as a reform model. The three principals who participated in the study noted that this implementation was different from any previous endeavor because they were able to participate as learners and leaders from the beginning. Further, the superintendent's vision was evident and his expectations were clear.

Time, space, and manpower were provided and were utilized in an orchestrated way that was transparent. District reform took place as elementary school administrators and school-based literacy coaches learned to work in concert with one another and among schools with the support of the district literacy coach and the superintendent. Communication and learning occurred at every level. This foundation for the implementation of Literacy Collaborative was a key factor in sustaining Literacy Collaborative and allowed the principals involved to use the

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techniques and styles described in these case studies to ensure that the reform would be sustained.

Case Study A: Dr. Andrews

Overview of Ark Elementary School

Ark Elementary School opened in August 2000 and served students in grades two and three. Pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade students were added the following year due to district reconfiguration of elementary schools. From 2005 through 2014, Ark Elementary School served grades pre-kindergarten through five. In 2008, 129 new students were added due to yet another district reconfiguration and, as a result, 17 additional classrooms were added.

According to Ark Elementary School's 2012-2013 Title I Plan, the school employed approximately 87 certified, classified, and secretarial staff that served over 772 students (Appendix G). The student population was 85% Hispanic, 9% Caucasian, 3% African American, 1% Multi-racial, and 1% Asian. Academically, 32.9% of its students qualified for Early Intervention Program Services, while 26% received English Language Learner services, 7% received Exceptional Student Services, and 4% received Gifted Education Services. In 2009, based on the school's 98.44% free/reduced population, the school qualified as a Provisional II school, which allowed all students to receive free lunch.

Dr. Andrews' Professional Background

Prior to Dr. Andrews becoming an elementary school principal, he spent nine years as a teacher and three years as a principal in Honduras. When he returned to the United States, he served five years as principal at the International Academy in the Dawson school district, a

school that served fourth through twelfth grade students who were new to the county. In 2005, Dr. Andrews accepted a position as elementary school principal at Arrow Elementary in the Dawson school district, the same year the district began implementing Literacy Collaborative at the school level. In that same year, all elementary schools became kindergarten through fifth grade. In 2009, Dr. Andrews moved to a sister elementary school in the district, Ark Elementary School. Upon becoming the fifth principal in Ark Elementary School's six-year history, Dr. Andrews spoke of the many challenges he encountered including learning about and improving the school culture, building relationships, and sustaining Literacy Collaborative. After interviews with Dr. Andrews and as other data were collected, analyzed, and triangulated from multiples sources, six themes emerged that addressed how he helped sustain the comprehensive school reform model, Literacy Collaborative. The six themes that emerged were: development of instructional leadership style with Literacy Collaborative; clear communication; participated as a learner; engaged collaborative teams in problem solving and decision making; allocated resources; and adapted to change. A triangulation of multiple sources of data, including document analysis of meeting minutes and fidelity of implementation data, further supported these themes.

Developed an Instructional Leadership Style with Literacy Collaborative

The school's Literacy Collaborative Fidelity of Implementation documents confirmed interview data that suggested Dr. Andrews' desire was to be the instructional leader of the school. Regarding his view of "the role of the principal," he suggested that it was crucial for him to be knowledgeable about the instructional practices of the school. Dr. Andrews stated that prior to becoming an elementary principal and being immersed in the Literacy Collaborative

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school reform model, he was more of a manager than an instructional leader. Regarding this shift, he explained, "my first principalship in Honduras was very managerial," and noted his responsibilities were operational, such as planning, budgeting, and staffing, rather than instructional. He described his principalship at the International Academy to be "less managerial and more programmatic and more about let's get something instructional to latch on to [*sic*]." As a result of implementing Literacy Collaborative, Dr. Andrews said, "I have grown instructionally and as an instructional leader…I fully believe I am better at thinking about instruction and better at analyzing and looking at instruction." In addition, he stated he felt comfortable having conversations with teachers about instruction. Dr. Andrews said, "If you're in the school as the leader of instruction, then what's going on in the classrooms is the most important thing that happens every single day in a school. If I can't participate in that [instruction] in some way . . . then I feel I am still a manager." Dr. Andrews stated that his role was to ensure there was a clear focus on instruction and explained that doing so required him to support learning at all levels, clearly communicate the district and school's vision and expectations, engage in collective decision making and problem solving, provide the necessary resources, and make adaptations when necessary.

Dr. Andrews clearly articulated his beliefs about student learning, his responsibilities as principal within Dawson Public Schools, and how he would respond when/if the two conflicted. Regarding his beliefs about leading, he was clear that he was called to support district initiatives at the school level while balancing the needs of his staff in order to support student learning. While his beliefs about student learning had created a strong conviction about the day-to-day operations of the school, he knew that his duties as principal in a Dawson Public School prevailed over his personal beliefs about education while he was employed as principal within

the district. However, his beliefs were so strong, he stated that if he were asked to go against what he believed, he would make a decision whether or not to "sign up" for another year.

Demonstrated Clear Communication

Dr. Andrews implied that it was essential for him to support the entire Literacy Collaborative implementation in every aspect. "I think day to day I support the instructional philosophy whether it's monetarily, through the message I give, the observations I go in to do, providing the literacy coaches with the opportunity to provide professional learning, and being visible."

Clear, honest, consistent communication about the district and school's vision and expectations was one way Dr. Andrews supported Literacy Collaborative. Referring to Literacy Collaborative being a district implementation, he recalled the superintendent's speech to the principals that "we [Dawson Public Schools] were going to do it [Literacy Collaborative] as a district. This was part of our directional systems and this was part of the fabric of [Dawson] Public Schools." Therefore, Dr. Andrews stated, "I say to people over and over again, 'we are a Literacy Collaborative district, we are a Literacy Collaborative school and this is what we're going to do and we don't have a choice about it. You don't have a choice about the matter. The only choice was if you don't do it, then you're choosing certainly to put yourself at risk.'" Dr. Andrews, while noting he believed Literacy Collaborative was an effective framework for literacy, said that as principal, he must clearly communicate the district's vision for literacy. Ark Elementary School's Literacy Collaborative Fidelity of Implementation documents affirmed that Dr. Andrews' clearly communicated the district and school's vision for literacy implementation and the continued need to focus on the Literacy Collaborative framework despite time

constraints. Further, Ark Elementary School's Fidelity of Implementation documents from 2011-2014 stated, "Administration communicates the expectation that all teachers will participate in both professional development and coaching sessions."

Dr. Andrews not only clearly communicated the district's vision, but also communicated effectively to his staff regarding expectations at the school level. Dr. Andrews discussed the school's turmoil when he started as the fifth principal in six years. Accusations of nepotism and favoritism created a culture and climate of chaos and bitterness that required Dr. Andrews to clearly communicate that expectations, specifically those related to Literacy Collaborative, were the same for all individuals at the school.

<div align="center">Participated as a Learner</div>

As principal, Dr. Andrews allocated time during the school day for teachers to engage in on-going professional learning and coaching. He kept abreast of the needs of the teachers and students through frequent conversations with the school's literacy coaches around both quantitative and qualitative data. Dr. Andrews believed that his role as principal was to support student learning by supporting teachers in their learning as well as to increase his own understanding of the reform model. As stated in the school's 2013 Title I plan, "We [Ark Elementary School] believe academic goals should be clearly communicated and understood by all stakeholders. We strive to ensure that professional learning is directly related to staff and student needs."   Providing time during the day for professional learning was considered imperative and included school evaluation plans, literacy team minutes, and Fidelity of Implementation documents.

When the district initially implemented the Literacy Collaborative reform model, he participated in professional learning with Irene Fountas, developer of Literacy Collaborative, and attended conferences as well as engaged in learning through district literacy team meetings. Dr. Andrews acknowledged that he desired the knowledge the classroom teachers and literacy coaches had regarding instruction. While he expressed a desire to participate in the school-based professional learning opportunities, he cited that the "administrivia" tasks of the principalship took too much of his time. In lieu of regularly attending school professional development sessions, Dr. Andrews deepened his understanding of Literacy Collaborative through classroom visits and frequent conversations with teachers. He stated that he frequently engaged in conversations with literacy coaches and teachers about what he observed in classrooms. He added, "Fortunately, I can ask pretty good questions and think about instruction in a way that is kind of a little bit more general" as a means to gather more information.

Engaged Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving

As a leader, Dr. Andrews shared strong convictions that one of his duties, as a principal, was to develop others' capacity to lead. One way Dr. Andrews claimed leaders develop was through collective problem solving and decision making. Dr. Andrews understood when to agree with the consensus of the group, when to compromise, when to "let it go", and when to stand firm. When the discussion turned to decision making and problem solving, he stated, "I really try to be about weighing the issues when possible and have the most conversations as possible. Two or three heads thinking about a problem and moving forward are better than asking the right questions."

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Dr. Andrews also participated in the school's "Data Wednesday" meetings. "Data Wednesday" occurred once every three weeks, and it was a time that Dr. Andrews engaged in discussions about student progress with each grade level. According to the school's 2013-2014 Title I plan, Data Wednesday was a time for individual classroom teachers to present information regarding any student who was not making adequate progress. A team of teachers, administrators, and support staff met to discuss various strategies to use to support each of these students. "We talk about students a lot. What [referring to the type of work] are we grading? What do grades mean?" Through these conversations with teachers, Dr. Andrews said he deepened his understanding about literacy and learning as well as helped to develop others' capacity to lead as they engaged in collective problem solving around supporting student learning and decision making opportunities.

Allocated Resources

Dr. Andrews understood that in order for the students to receive the highest quality of educational experiences, he must allocate resources (time and money) to support the professional learning and well-being of the teachers who serve them. Dr. Andrews stated,

> One of the things I try to keep in the forefront of my mind is that this [Literacy Collaborative] is such hard teaching. It's different, not the basal readers where you have the instructions. This [Literacy Collaborative framework] is such hard teaching really preparing for instruction, thinking about what you are doing, thinking about the kids' responses. It's much more time consuming. This causes me to be a little more flexible and to think about how to be more supportive of the teachers, so it impacts everything from staff meetings [and] professional learning to [the] demands I put on the teachers.

Dr. Andrews upheld the school's vision of a strong focus on instruction by providing time for professional learning by the school's literacy coaches and by minimizing distractions such as meetings, paper work, and any unnecessary tasks. By removing some of the

responsibilities for the teachers, Dr. Andrews freed them to focus on designing quality

instruction for the students. He made sure that teachers were given time to devote to

professional learning and coaching by the school's literacy coaches during the school day. In

addition, each classroom was to have an uninterrupted 2.5 hour-3 hour literacy block every day.

After school, 60 students in grades three through five identified as most at-risk had the

opportunity to attend "Cat University" which provided extended learning focused on content

reading.

According to teacher surveys administered by the school, teachers perceived that

adequate resources were provided to ensure quality instruction for all students. Dr. Andrews

stated in one interview that, "Every single year, I have said to the literacy coaches, 'tell me how

much [money] you need'. Last year $15,000-$20,000 of our money went into literacy."

Adapted To Change

When asked about making adaptations to the Literacy Collaborative implementation, Dr.

Andrews stated:

> We follow district lead and district policies and certainly have some flexibility. I try to
> be as flexible as possible and want to comply with district expectations and
> implementation of Literacy Collaborative, not just for the sake of complying but because
> it is important. At the same time, I have to look at where the teachers live and I have to
> look at what is going on.

When Dawson Public School District was faced with budget concerns, Dr. Andrews

opted to adapt the role of the literacy coaches. The adapted role called for both coaches to share

a third grade classroom and still serve as literacy coaches in a half time position in order to

generate funds for their positions. In reference to its impact on the literacy implementation, he

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revealed that, "by the coaches being in there [the third grade classroom], it picked up and raised the level of that whole grade level through conversations and planning together."

Smaller adaptations to the Literacy Collaborative model were also made. Such adaptations Dr. Andrews noted dealt with time and utilization of resources. Dr. Andrews followed the Literacy Collaborative Standards that stated the model required 2.5 to 3 hours of uninterrupted time for literacy instruction. Dawson Public Schools desired 3 hours of uninterrupted literacy instruction, therefore, adaptations had to be made because some teachers were only able to allot 2.5 hours to literacy instruction. Other adaptations Dr. Andrews made were in the resources used for guided reading instruction. While traditional guided reading materials are texts that are leveled using the Fountas and Pinnell (2010) text characteristics, he noted in an interview that teachers expressed the need to teach students how to gather information from textbooks. He allowed these materials to be used in guided reading instruction for the purpose of teaching students how textbooks are organized.

Summary of Dr. Andrews' Case Study

Analysis of archival data and interview transcripts that were the basis for this case study of Dr. Andrews, revealed him to be a leader who listened to all stakeholders and made informed decisions with everyone's best interest in mind. He viewed his staff as colleagues rather than employees and believed that developing others' capacity to lead was critical for success. He communicated in a manner that was consistent and clear and operated under the premise that fair does not necessarily mean equal. He was humble and willing for others to see his vulnerability by actively participating in professional learning and admitting when he made a mistake. When asked if Literacy Collaborative had any impact on his leadership style or leadership skills, he

humbly replied, "When Literacy Collaborative came along it really, I believe, helped me and other principals really think about instruction at a deeper level, thinking about data, thinking about this is what you see your kids doing, how can you as a teacher respond to those needs? I'm not sure I could've done that kind of work without Literacy Collaborative."

Case Study B: Dr. Bates

Overview of Brook Elementary School

Brook Elementary School has been in its current configuration serving grades pre-kindergarten through five for nine years. According to Dr. Bates, Brook Elementary had always been the school to house students during times of transition and reconfiguration when new schools in the district were being built or rezoning occurred. Dr. Bates referred to his school as the district's "holding tank" during these times. Brook Elementary was centrally located in the Dawson Public School district and served the largest population of students with diverse backgrounds at the time of this study.

In 2012-2013, Brook Elementary served approximately 809 students of extremely diverse ethnic backgrounds, with the majority of the student population being of Hispanic ethnicity (Appendix G). Of these 809 students, the population consisted of 65.8% Hispanic, 17.9% Caucasian, 7.5% African American, 5.2% Multi-Racial, 3.5% Asian, and .1% American Indian. Academically, 33% qualified for Early Intervention Program Services, 28.55% of its students qualified for English Language Learner Services, 5.31% received Exceptional Student Services, and 2.84% received Gifted Education Services. Economically, 88.75% of the students were on free/reduced lunch; therefore, Brook Elementary was observed to have the second highest poverty level among all schools in the district.

Dr. Bates' Professional Background

Dr. Bates has been part of the faculty of Brook Elementary School for 27 years. He has been principal of Brook Elementary School for 21 years and prior to becoming the principal, he served four years as an assistant principal and two years as a classroom teacher. Dr. Bates, when asked about his wish for the students at Brook Elementary School, responded that, "Every child that comes to Brook Elementary School will be passionate about life and make a contribution to the community that is larger than themselves [*sic*]." After interviews with Dr. Bates and as data were collected, analyzed, and triangulated from multiple sources, four themes emerged: aligned principal's leadership style with Literacy Collaborative, valued learning at all levels, engaged collaborative teams in collective decision making and problem solving, and planned for the future. Triangulation of multiple sources of data supported each of these themes.

Aligned Principal's Leadership Style with Literacy Collaborative

Dr. Bates expressed the belief that the role of the principal was to be the instructional leader of the school. He believed professional learning, collaborative problem solving, data based decision making, and knowing the staff were imperative measures to ensure student learning was the main focus. Dr. Bates had very strong beliefs that the principal should be involved in all aspects of the school, specifically instruction. He posed the question, "Why would there be a meeting about a role in a school or functions in a school or program in a school that didn't involve the principal?" In order for a principal to support the learning and instruction at all levels, Dr. Bates believed that the principal must be informed and included in all decisions regarding instruction. Dr. Bates stated, "Building-level administrators are supposed to be the leaders of leaders, and lead learners and not just be managers in the building."

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Throughout his career as a school leader in Dawson Public Schools, Dr. Bates led his school through many grade level reconfigurations and the resulting personnel reassignments (Appendix D).

Valued Learning at All Levels

Dr. Bates believed that learning was on-going, for students, staff, and for himself. When Literacy Collaborative was first implemented, he participated in professional learning with other administrators in Providence, Rhode Island and Boston, Massachusetts. Within the district, he engaged in learning as a participant on the District Literacy Team, with other principals, with the district literacy trainer, and with the superintendent during the initial implementation of Literacy Collaborative. He also engaged in professional learning at the school level with his school literacy team, as well as in training designed and conducted by the school's literacy coaches. One of his strengths, noted in interviews and various team minutes, was taking what he learned in Literacy Collaborative and aligning it with new learning, such as "Teacher Keys Effectiveness System" (TKES) (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). He believed that learning was active and should not be done in isolation of content or other students.

Dr. Bates stated, "The message that we want to send to our staff is that professional learning and growth are important. If we have a staff where everybody is a learner then it's going to be reflected in the capacity of the kids to learn." This belief was substantiated by Dr. Bates' allotment of time to on-going professional learning in literacy and math tailored to the needs of the teachers and organization. The professional learning sessions occurred in timeframes that allowed teachers to maximize their learning while minimizing their time out of the classroom.

Engaged Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving

Dr. Bates' approach to decision making and problem solving echoed his belief that learning was an active, social process. Early in his career, Dr. Bates worked with the University of Georgia in a shared governance program that involved teachers in the decision making process. When Literacy Collaborative came to the district, this reform model created a symbiotic relationship between the new framework and Dr. Bates' pre-existing vision of leadership. Dr. Bates and his assistant principal worked together for numerous years and viewed themselves as a leadership team. Dr. Bates stated, "We've always worked together to make decisions...we kind of know what each other thinks." They expanded their leadership team to include the school's two literacy coaches and math early intervention teacher.

Effective communication skills were essential, per Dr. Bates, if you are to work effectively with adults. Therefore, he mentored the coaches on how to effectively communicate and problem solve alongside the classroom teachers they served. He mentioned that a key point he learned from one of developers of Literacy Collaborative, Irene Fountas, was that the coach is not an administrator; therefore, Dr. Bates was careful about intervening with difficult situations between the literacy coaches and teachers. However, he considered it was his responsibility to support the literacy coaches by mentoring them on how to approach difficult interactions. In one interview, Dr. Bates referred to one particular situation when he mentored one of the school's literacy coaches on how to effectively communicate expectations while maintaining a collegial relationship with each teacher. He said, "Ultimately, you have to answer the question, 'what is the impact on kids if I don't address [the problem]?'"

Planned for the Future

Dr. Bates stated, "You have to look ahead and keep the big picture in mind while living in the present." He mentioned keeping in mind both the operational aspects and the interpersonal aspects of the school when preparing for the future. Further, he believed that it was essential to communicate with his staff about future initiatives and state mandates. In doing so, he believed it helped prepare teachers mentally and emotionally. This past year, he discussed upcoming changes with his staff [regarding the Georgia teacher evaluation process "Teacher Keys Effectiveness System" (TKES)] (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). He positioned the staff to build their knowledge and understanding of the process during the pilot year before it was enforced the following year.

Dr. Bates believed his biggest investment was in people. When he became aware that Title I money might be cut, he "projected forward…and banked it [Title 1 Distinguished School money] with the Schlechty Center…so we have it as we need it." Because of this forethought, he was able to continue training when professional development monies were cut.

Another example can be inferred from Dr. Bates' proactive stance in preparing others for future roles in the school. After experiencing turnover in the school's literacy coaches and having little say as to replacements, he decided to spend school funds to train a successor for the position in order to sustain the integrity of his school's Literacy Collaborative implementation.

Summary of Dr. Bates' Case Study

A qualitative analysis of the available data suggested that Dr. Bates viewed his role as a principal to be that of a capacity-builder of other people: students, teachers, parents, and community. He believed the best investment was in professional learning because it impacted

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every individual that entered Brook Elementary. Dr. Bates believed in sharing leadership and did so by utilizing a distributive leadership style. His ability to keep the big picture in mind and plan for the future while living in the present caused district leaders and others to consider him a visionary. Dr. Bates understood that details of the day-to-day operations of the school play a significant role in student achievement. The district's selection of Dr. Bates to lead one school through several location changes emphasized the presence of the aforementioned characteristics.

Case Study C: Mrs. Carter

Overview of City Elementary School

For many years, City Elementary housed pre-kindergarten through second grade. In a system reconfiguration in 2001-2002, third grade was added. In the 2005-2006 school year, another system reconfiguration added fourth and fifth grades and transferred the pre-kindergarten program to other elementary schools in the system, but this program returned in the fall of 2006.

City Elementary School served approximately 570 students at the time of this study, who made up a very diverse student body with a vast array of learning styles and learning rates (Appendix G). The school's 2012-2013 Title I plan indicated the student body was comprised of 47.3% Caucasian, 39.2% Hispanic, 5.6% African American, and 7.7% other ethnic backgrounds. Academically, 12.1% qualified for Early Intervention Program Services, 10.4% received Gifted Education Services, 9.3% received English Language Learner services, and 4.4% received Exceptional Student Services. Economically, the school data indicated that 55.6% of the students at City Elementary qualified for free/reduced lunch.

Mrs. Carter's Professional Background

Mrs. Carter began her career as a speech pathologist. She served in that role for 21 years, including 17 years at City Elementary. Mrs. Carter then became the school's assistant principal for two years before becoming the principal in 2001. After interviews with Mrs. Carter and as data were collected, analyzed, and triangulated from multiple sources, five themes emerged: aligned principal's leadership style with Literacy Collaborative, employed clear communication, participated as a learner, engaged collaborative teams in collective decision making and problem solving, and valued relationships. Triangulation of multiple sources of data supported the aforementioned themes.

Aligned Principal's Leadership Style with Literacy Collaborative

Mrs. Carter described herself as a servant leader. She stated,

> I'm a coach because I coach my teachers. I'm not evaluative and I don't want to be evaluative. I don't want to be in charge. I want to be someone who is a servant leader who helps other people…I'm a strong believer in learning organizations and I believe in empowering my teachers.

She believed that collaboration and communication were paramount in creating a learning environment that was successful for students, parents, and teachers. Mrs. Carter explained that she strived to serve her staff by anticipating problems and eliminating those problems before they began to interfere with the positive learning environment the school strived to maintain.

Employed Clear Communication

Mrs. Carter understood the needs of the parents, students, and teachers at her school. She knew that the parents were actively involved in their child's education and as a result, took

responsibility for communicating clearly, accurately, consistently, and respectfully to the parents, students, and teachers to ensure success for all. When Literacy Collaborative was implemented, she, along with the literacy coach, created a document that would inform parents about Literacy Collaborative, the implementation at the district and school level, and factors to notice and understand about their child's physical and social environment at school. In addition, parent meetings were held two to three times per year in order for parents to learn about the school reform model and how they could support their child's learning at home. City Elementary School's literacy team minutes and Literacy Collaborative Fidelity of Implementation documents (Appendix A) noted that one of the challenges the school encountered was, "parent understanding" of the initiative. Therefore, as the years passed, parent meetings and conferences continued as a means to inform them about report card changes and the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010) rollout. Family nights provided experiences for parents to understand that the guided reading component of Literacy Collaborative was not a means of competition among students, but rather a tool to use to instruct their child at his/her instructional level.

Mrs. Carter articulated that as a servant leader she prepared her staff to support the parents in the initial literacy implementation. In addition, she supported them in being effective leaders and designers of work for the students. When preparing the staff for the initial implementation of Literacy Collaborative, she was clear about the district and school's expectations with the staff. She stated,

> I knew where we [the district and school] were going, and the staff knew where we were going, and people who didn't have a seat on the bus or were still wandering around [referencing the Collins (2001) book, Good to Great]. I gave them time to figure out if they wanted a seat on the bus and those who didn't want to even be on the bus are no longer here because I felt if you won't change and I can't help you learn a different way to do this and you don't see where we're going, then you're just holding us back.

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Documentation from City Elementary School's first year of implementation to the time of this study revealed that Mrs. Carter had "made literacy expectations known to all staff through conferences and by showing support for the literacy coaches."

Mrs. Carter's ability to clearly communicate in a consistent, honest, and respectful manner with students, parents, and teachers reduced the amount of unnecessary chaos that could occur. Due to her use of clear communication, stakeholders trusted Mrs. Carter and knew that she had everyone's best interest in mind at all times. The solution Mrs. Carter offered for rising problems was "Communicate with people. Don't sit and complain. We'll [assistant principal and herself] help you figure it out or if something is really wrong or there is some process you can't figure out, come talk to me about it."

Participated as a Learner

Mrs. Carter spoke to the importance of continually learning. She modeled learning by participating in professional organizations at the state and district level as well as at the school level. These learning experiences, for example, being President-Elect for the state's principal association and co-chair of the District Literacy Team, afforded her the opportunity to increase her professional reading. She stated, "I read a lot and try to make connections and pass things along [to the staff]."

Mrs. Carter's servant leadership style was evident in her participation as a learner with the teachers in her building. She participated in the Year One Literacy Collaborative course (40 hours) for both primary and intermediate grades when these courses were first offered. Mrs. Carter participated in progress monitoring meetings with classroom teachers and the literacy coaches. Mrs. Carter learned along with her staff, and she took her learning to the application

level. She explained, "The year before last, I taught 3rd grade's lowest group from January until the end of the year. I enjoyed it very much. I would do it again, but I don't have all the training everyone else has had, and I actually did it." Mrs. Carter's participation as a learner with teachers in professional learning and her willingness to apply her learning with a group of students who were struggling provided an example of servant leadership.

<center>Valued Relationships</center>

Mrs. Carter believed in people. She believed they were striving to be and to do the best they could and that her role was to support them in being their very best. Mrs. Carter stated that it was imperative to know the dynamics of the group with whom you are working in order to be effective. Mrs. Carter referred to this as "knowing your who" and this included knowing each person's likes, dislikes, and capabilities.

During the initial implementation of Literacy Collaborative, Mrs. Carter anticipated the fears and concerns of the parent population at City Elementary. To ward off as much negativity and fear as possible, Mrs. Carter and the staff held numerous parent meetings to explain the new literacy initiative. She said, "We had individual conferences, group conferences, and grade level conferences for the first five years." These parent meetings and conferences were documented in literacy team minutes, school evaluation plans, and Fidelity of Implementation documents (Appendix A). In the implementation phase of Literacy Collaborative, City Elementary School created a document for parents and community members that explained Literacy Collaborative as a school reform model, its framework components, the look of the classrooms, design of literacy lessons, and documentation regarding student progress and test data. Thus, Mrs. Carter exhibited a proactive stance in preparing the parents for the instructional changes.

The school's Design Team minutes indicated that Mrs. Carter valued each individual teacher and provided experiences for teachers to internalize their sense of belonging at City Elementary School. Along with team members, Mrs. Carter shaped school norms that centered around "being honest, respectful, and keeping confidences" and provided staff with a document entitled "Why I Belong at [City Elementary] School." Mrs. Carter's focus on soft skills in her team, such as feelings, emotions, and insight into themselves and others, further supported her genuine care and concern for others at her school. Mrs. Carter believed that by focusing on soft skills with teachers and students, she would improve each person's ability to interact effectively with others. She believed this emphasis would not only enhance personal successes within the school but would also benefit interactions outside of the school.

Engaged Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving

Multiple sources of documentation provided evidence that Mrs. Carter understood the power of collective decision making and problem solving. Combining her genuine concern for people and the value of relationships, the idea of collaboration was often present in endeavors designed to support the success of students, parents, and teachers at City Elementary School. City Elementary School's Literacy Collaborative Fidelity of Implementation documents identified collaboration as an integral element in five of the document's ten areas to address. The documents noted scheduled time for teachers to collaborate with other members of their grade level and their literacy coach (via professional learning and coaching) and to use data and other colleagues to provide interventions for students who were struggling in literacy.

Collaboration was also valued by other teams within the school. Mrs. Carter spoke with enthusiasm about hearing about the students' progress and believed she was able to add to the

conversation and thinking about these students because she was able to look at these students from a different perspective and ask what she perceived to be a "stupid question but it ends up being something actually simple." The Design Team meeting minutes indicated that all staff were to assist in the development of the school's "new and improved beliefs." Further, once beliefs were established, goals would be based on the school's beliefs.

Summary of Mrs. Carter's Case Study

Mrs. Carter was a leader who valued people and understood the power of relationships, both personal and professional. Students' academic success was the primary focus for Mrs. Carter and she achieved that goal by supporting the parents and teachers who interacted with students on a daily basis. She believed that by developing the social and emotional side of people, academic achievement occurred at higher levels. Her responsibility as principal was to ensure that every individual associated with City Elementary School understood that he/she was wanted, needed, and had the capability to achieve great results should he/she choose to do so.

Findings from the Cross-Case Analysis

In developing the individual case studies, emphasis was placed on emerging themes that could serve to explain the role of the principal in sustaining the school reform model, Literacy Collaborative. These findings were indicated in the previous discussion of each individual case study. To further explore the data collected from the three principals, a cross-case analysis of the individual case studies was conducted, and, as a result, the following six themes emerged: aligned principal's leadership style with Literacy Collaborative, employed clear communication,

valued learning at all levels, utilized collaborative teams that engaged in collective decision making and problem solving, allocated resources, and adapted to change.

<center>Aligned Principal's Leadership Style with Literacy Collaborative</center>

Leadership style substantially impacted the sustainability of Literacy Collaborative in all three schools. Each of the three participants articulated his/her leadership style and data from multiple sources supported his/her perceived style. Each participant expressed the desire to lead rather than manage a school. Leadership, specifically the role of principal, was similarly defined by the participants as to inspire the collective community to continually improve all students' educational experience which required developing leaders at all levels and sharing in decision making and problem solving through collaborative teams. Each participant mentioned the role of the principal was to be focused on communicating the district and school's vision and setting the direction for the school while motivating and positioning people to succeed both as individuals and as a learning organization. Individual participants mentioned having responsibilities to manage the day-to-day operations, such as planning, budgeting, staffing, and organizing time and structures to optimize efficiency but spoke with conviction that a principal was to be a leader of leaders and learners and not merely a manager of people and resources.

While all three principals had similar beliefs and convictions about the role of a principal, each had a personal style by which he/she led. Mrs. Carter described herself as a servant leader. The desire to serve others was supported in her talk and her actions. She stated, "I have an open door policy and these doors are open all day long. I don't want to be in charge. I want to be someone who is a servant leader who helps other people." Dr. Andrews and Dr. Bates mentioned leadership characteristics that indicated shared instructional leadership. Dr. Andrews

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referred to himself as the "jack of all trades" and mentioned the importance of "having people manage positions that really hold deep knowledge and keep you [principal] informed of what's going on." Dr. Bates mentioned the importance of teams in decision making and problem solving and the idea of shared governance. In summary, all three principals had the same convictions regarding the role of principal. The contrast lay in the style by which they lead.

Each of the three principals clearly articulated his/her strengths, weaknesses, and how his/her own persona impacted others inside and outside of the school. Each principal acknowledged the need to improve his/her practice. Each modeled this idea by actively participating as a learner and member in all aspects of the school. Each also noted instances of being aware that not all facets of the organization were working cohesively and acknowledged he/she relied on his/her beliefs and vision for the school as a lens for how to think about possible solutions. Each scenario discussed was characteristic of the participants' leadership style.

Each principal provided examples of formally and informally soliciting feedback. For Dr. Andrews, when he became his school's fifth principal in six years, he solicited feedback from the staff on how he could best support them as they strived to become a learning organization. Dr. Bates solicited feedback from his staff when he sensed that tensions were high. Dr. Andrews, Dr. Bates, and Mrs. Carter mentioned having informal conversations with students, parents, and/or teachers to gauge their impact on the organization. As school principals, each participant recognized that in the formal position of principal each was held responsible for all aspects of the school. However, their leadership styles embraced shared leadership in various ways at all levels and was supported by multiple data sources.

Employed Clear Communication

Dr. Andrews, Dr. Bates, and Mrs. Carter clearly articulated the district and school's vision for Literacy Collaborative as well as their beliefs about student learning. Therefore, each leader's vision for his/her respective school was communicated consistently to all stakeholders. All three principals referenced specific examples where the district's and school's vision and expectations were clearly communicated to the staff.

In addition to communicating the vision and expectations to all stakeholders, the principals referenced that communication was essential in problem solving and decision making. Among the fellow principals within the district, clear communication proved to be essential for sustaining the fidelity of the Literacy Collaborative implementation. Mrs. Carter provided an example of a time where a district administrator's decision to implement a math initiative conflicted with the philosophy and beliefs of the current superintendent and the vision he set forth with Literacy Collaborative. After expressing her concerns to her principal colleagues, she decided it was necessary for the integrity of the Literacy Collaborative initiative and the hard work put forth by the classroom teachers to communicate her concerns to the district administrators. Further, at the school level, each principal provided examples where his/her communication with the staff was imperative to ensure that anxiety levels did not escalate. Dr. Bates and Mrs. Carter noted examples of preparing their respective staff members for upcoming changes, such as the TKES (Georgia Department of Education, 2014) process and the integration of literacy into the content areas.

The principals provided examples of clearly communicating with their parents, students, teachers, and district level colleagues. However, each of the three principals stated that he/she desired for the stakeholders to also communicate with him/her and with others in a manner that

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benefitted the learning organization. Therefore, the principals served as mentors to others on effective communication skills.

The data also revealed that participants communicated inevitable changes ahead to their respective staff members. One recent example each principal mentioned was in regards to Georgia's new teacher evaluation process. Each conveyed his/her concerns to his/her respective staff members and discussed how this evaluation process conflicted with his/her leadership style and the school's collaborative culture. Each principal warned that the outcome of this evaluation process had the potential to cause competition among teachers that conflicted with his/her leadership style that embraced collaborative teams and shared leadership. Further, the process itself was noted by the principals as being extremely time consuming and could result in less time being available to participate in professional learning, collaborative teams, and in classrooms. Therefore, principals provided opportunities for teachers to pilot this evaluation process prior to the state mandate in 2014-2015.

In summary, all three principals understood that the absence of clear communication created tension, anxiety, and chaos that would negatively impact student learning. Each principal spoke to effective communication as an essential component in learning communities where trust, respect, and growth of all stakeholders were present.

Valued Learning at All Levels

According to all three principals, the message they wanted each respective staff to understand was that professional learning and growth was important. Dr. Bates stated, "If we have a staff where everybody is a learner, then it's going to be reflected in the capacity of the kids to learn." All three principals believed that in order to make informed decisions and to

support the work of the teachers, it was essential for them to understand the content that teachers were learning, therefore, they actively participated in ongoing professional learning alongside the teachers. To not do so, in their opinion, placed them in the role of evaluator rather than instructional leader. Mrs. Carter suggested that principals should engage in professional learning with the teachers so "you're not just trying to evaluate and coach teachers on something you don't understand." Dr. Bates stated, "I feel it's important that [my assistant principal] and I model that professional learning is important to us." He provided examples of how he modeled the importance of professional learning by participating as a learner alongside the classroom teachers as well as facilitated professional learning experiences for the staff. He summarized his perspective on professional learning as an instructional leader by saying, "it's not just going in the classroom observing teachers teaching, but it's being involved with them in a professional learning." Dr. Andrews said that when time allowed, he attended professional learning at the school; however, he said he learned a great deal by visiting classrooms and followed up on his learning with frequent conversations with classroom teachers and the school's literacy coaches.

At the district level, the three principals participated as learners with other administrators in their monthly District Administrative Team meetings. During these meetings, principals engaged in learning, collaborating, and problem solving at the district level. While all three principals mentioned their learning with other administrators had shifted from a focus on Literacy Collaborative, they kept abreast of new ideas through frequent conversations with their literacy coaches.

Outside of the district, the principals also participated as learners in state and national professional organizations. Mrs. Carter discussed her participation in the state's principals' association where she served as president-elect. In this position, she mentioned "constantly

reading things" such as research journals, publications from various professional associations, and professional texts that supported and extended her thinking around school improvement.

Whether the principals were participating in learning within or beyond the school, they ensured that whatever they learned they shared with others. Dr. Andrews, in addition to being a principal, taught Spanish at the college level. He noted this experience provided an opportunity to apply what he had learned from participating in professional learning around Literacy Collaborative to support the instruction of his college level students. Dr. Bates and Mrs. Carter mentioned making connections to what they were reading and passing information along to people at the school and district level and beyond. Mrs. Carter specifically mentioned sharing an article regarding the Common Core Curriculum (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010) with the District Literacy Team and her new learning and thinking with a group of teachers around guided math as a means of structuring math instruction in a way similar to Literacy Collaborative.

All three principals participated in professional development, modeling what they learned within the school for both staff and students to observe. Mrs. Carter shared that for the second half of a school year, she used Literacy Collaborative and taught a group of 3rd grade students who were identified as struggling in reading. Dr. Andrews and Dr. Bates both shared their experiences facilitating professional learning on a recurring basis during the school day with every grade level. In summary, the data revealed that all three participating principals valued professional learning and provided time and resources to ensure learning occurred at all levels.

Engaged Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving

All three principals actively participated as learners and team members at the school and district level. In doing so, they modeled behaviors that were essential in a learning organization such as taking risks, showing vulnerability, and allowing others to be the expert. Each principal discussed the utilization of a variety of team structures, such as grade level teams, curriculum teams (e.g., literacy team, design team, progress monitoring team, and management/resource team) that provided insight into how the physical space and resources could be optimized.

Each principal noted that his/her participation in meetings supported student learning, such as progress monitoring around students who are struggling, design team and literacy team meetings where they exhibited positive learning behaviors and engaged in collective problem solving around learning. Dr. Andrews said, "I am fortunate to have frequent conversations with teachers on our Data Wednesdays. I see all day long every single grade level talking about the neediest kids we have and ultimately, [then] Literacy Collaborative comes up, running records comes [*sic*] up, guided reading, and whatever data comes up and opportunities to reinforce what we do." He continued explaining how these purposeful interactions provided an opportunity for him to fully engage with teachers in problem solving around instruction for students. Mrs. Carter shared her enjoyment of attending progress-monitoring meetings. Much like Dr. Andrews, Mrs. Carter engaged with teachers in deep discussion and analysis about students who were struggling academically. She said that she was able to offer different perspectives on students and was able to offer objective views because teachers who were with these students every day developed tunnel vision. Mrs. Carter understood that her formal position as principal carried authority and could grant permission for ideas teachers believed to be right, but might be viewed as risky. By being a participant on various teams, it allowed her to grant permission for

teachers to do what they believed was best for students. Mrs. Carter stated, "I don't have an authoritative aura" and through the researcher's observations of the frequent, informal conversations Mrs. Carter had with teachers while principal interviews were conducted, it was apparent that this statement was accurate.

The presence of collaborative teams supported the participants' beliefs about shared leadership and provided opportunities for all three principals to engage in problem solving and decision making alongside the school's stakeholders. These opportunities created experiences for individuals to develop leadership skills.

Allocated Resources

The allocation of resources, such as time and money, was noted in multiple data sources as a means to support the Literacy Collaborative initiative. Each principal provided time for professional learning and collaborative meetings. Dr. Andrews provided his staff a two and a half hour block every two weeks during the school day. Dr. Bates provided an entire school day several times throughout the year for teachers to engage in professional learning while a substitute teacher carried on with classroom instruction. He selected this method because it reduced the overall amount of time teachers had to prepare for substitutes; therefore, providing more time for teachers to be fully engaged with students. Mrs. Carter provided substitutes periodically for her teachers, but given the lack of funds to pay substitutes, most of their training was after school. To compensate, Mrs. Carter minimized after school faculty meetings.

All three principals were strategic in how they utilized time to ensure instruction was the focus. Every classroom in all three schools was allocated two and a half hours to three hours of an uninterrupted block of time for students to engage in literacy learning. To minimize transition

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time and optimize student learning, students who were provided additional support services were taught in a mainstream setting by a support teacher. There were a few circumstances where students were served in a resource room setting in order to best meet their instructional needs. Collaborative team meetings, such as grade level, design, literacy, and progress monitoring, were held after school or in a time slot during the school day when instruction would not be interrupted.

Funding was provided for resources that supported student learning. Principals referenced conversations with the literacy coaches about resources needed to support literacy instruction. Because of Dr. Andrews' school's population, Title I provided a large amount of money for needed materials. Dr. Andrews noted that every year he met with the literacy coaches to determine how much money was needed to add or replace materials. He mentioned that on average his school budget allocated $15,000-$20,000 on materials such as leveled texts for guided reading, high quality literature for interactive read aloud, and other materials that supported literacy instruction. Dr. Andrews also revealed that he carefully examined purchase orders submitted by teachers to ensure that the materials requested supported the Literacy Collaborative framework's approach to instruction. Mrs. Carter mentioned that her school received very little funding from Title I that required her to utilize the school's parent organization and to seek out additional resources through the district's central office. Mrs. Carter mentioned her principal colleagues dispersed carry over money to her and another principal who did not receive a lot of federal funds for resources. Nonetheless, she said her school does not go without and that whatever was needed to support student learning, she found a way to provide it. Dr. Bates' school received Title I funds comparable to Dr. Andrews' school. He discussed having frequent conversations with the literacy coaches about materials needed for

instruction. While he ensured that materials were provided, he stated that he used the majority of the school's money on professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Adapted to Change

Principals referenced how they adapted the Literacy Collaborative model for each respective school. For all participants, it was adapting the model to fit other content areas. Specific to schools, Dr. Andrews' adaptations regarded resources while Dr. Bates adapted school-based teams. For Mrs. Carter, her adaptations were more aligned with learning new content and frameworks for teaching. Mrs. Carter noted, "we play with [pilot] a lot of stuff…and things we're doing [piloting] in the building are voluntary. You want to come see it? If not, you don't have to. This is just where the district's headed, at least think about it."   This example supported Mrs. Carter's idea that there is only so much knowledge one person can assimilate at a time.

Dr. Bates made adaptations to his school's literacy team as a means to improve productivity and invited more staff members to participate in the learning and evaluation of the Literacy Collaborative implementation. Dr. Andrews and Mrs. Carter adapted how the students were sectioned in classrooms as a means to improve student learning and maximized opportunities for support teachers to engage with students who needed additional support.

Interviews and multiple data sources documented that in 2007-2008, a personnel change in the system's district literacy coach position affected the interactions between the district office and school level principals and literacy coaches. One participant noted, "We [district] were going in the right direction and everything was transparent." The result of this transition was that principals, assistant principals, literacy coaches, and district office personnel moved away

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from meeting together to meeting as separate groups, thus breaking down communication. All three principals adapted to this change by holding meetings at their schools with the assistant principal and school literacy coaches so that everyone had the opportunity to communicate with one another. During the economic downturn, the district was forced to reduce spending, and one solution was to adapt the role of the literacy coach in order to generate funds to supplement a portion of their salaries. This decision was left up to the principals as to how this would be accomplished. All three principals met with their coaches and determined that the coaches' role would be adapted to serve half of the day as a literacy coach and the remaining half to serve in a classroom in some capacity. The literacy coaches at Dr. Andrews' school shared a third grade classroom. Dr. Bates and Mrs. Carter made accommodations for their respective coaches to serve in a support teacher role.

Summary of Chapter IV

Through data analysis procedures based on the unitizing and categorizing of the qualitative data collected, individual case studies were developed for each of the three elementary school principals. In developing these individual case studies, emphasis was placed on emerging patterns and themes that could serve to explain the role of the principal in sustaining the comprehensive school reform model, Literacy Collaborative. Themes were analyzed via cross-case analysis to compare and contrast each of the participating principal's actions in reference to his/her role in sustaining the comprehensive school reform initiative, Literacy Collaborative.

Chapter V presents an overview of the research study and focuses on the conclusions derived from the findings in Chapter IV. In addition, implications for practice by principals in sustaining school reform, as well as recommendations for future research are presented.

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CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine how the role of the principal, with respect to personal leadership style, perpetuated the success of a comprehensive whole school reform model, Literacy Collaborative, after 10 years of implementation. During this ten-year period, the district endured a change in superintendents, budget constraints, changes in state leadership and policies, and teacher turnover; yet the program as implemented was sustained. The idea of attempting to determine how this reform model was sustained centered on answering one central question: how did elementary principals sustain a comprehensive school reform effort in the form of Literacy Collaborative?

The study employed purposive sampling of three elementary principals. Each principal in this study was a participant in the preparation and implementation of Literacy Collaborative in his/her individual school within the district. The researcher approached each participant and requested his/her participation in this study. The goal was to have each person share his/her unique experiences of leading a school where a school reform model was sustained for 10 years. Each principal consented to participate.

The present study employed qualitative methods. Using a multiple-case study replication design, data were collected through interviews, document analysis, and on-site observations. The data sources included open-ended interviews with each principal and district documents

from 2004 through 2014 related to the implementation and on-going use of Literacy Collaborative.

As data were gathered for each individual case, a constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis was used to search for emerging themes among the narrative data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This method of analysis was used to segment the broad narrative data. The researcher then categorized each resulting unit and gave a descriptive name to each resulting category. To insure that each unit had been properly categorized, the researcher repeated the process, and, if necessary, moved the units from one category to another, deleted the unit, or perhaps created a new category. Each theme that emerged from individual case studies and through cross-case analysis highlighted areas the principals expressed as being important to the success of the reform. These areas were the alignment of the principal's leadership style with Literacy Collaborative, the employment of clear communication, the valuing of learning at all levels, the engagement of collaborative teams in collective decision making and problem solving, the allocation of resources, and the adaptation of the reform model in changing times. The findings derived from the data analysis illustrated the impact the role the principal had in sustaining school reform, and by extension, the impact that effective leadership had on students' academic success.

This chapter provides conclusions drawn from the findings reported in Chapter IV. In addition, recommendations for practice that were drawn from these conclusions and may be informative for principals engaged in school reform efforts are also provided. Finally, as no research study can provide complete and total insight into a topic, including the present study, recommendations for further research on this topic are also included in this chapter.

Findings and Conclusions

<div align="center">Elements that Supported Sustainability of Top-Down Mandates</div>

Huberman and Miles' (1984) research of 12 school districts' school improvement initiatives examined the roles of administrators, teachers, students, and communities. Findings from their study revealed that implementation of initiatives by way of "enforcement" scenarios could be "quite effective if the 'muscle' was accompanied by 'tutoring and tenderness'" (p. 279). School reform efforts examined by these researchers went through transitions over the past four decades that oscillated from top-down/bottom-up to bottom-up/top-down approaches. Huberman and Miles (1984) found that top-down reform could work successfully, if certain criteria were met. Despite the Huberman and Miles (1984) study, some researchers continued to view top-down mandates as ineffective (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). The present study appeared to support the Huberman and Miles (1984) findings that given the right conditions, top-down reforms, such as the Literacy Collaborative initiative were sustainable.

While this study focused on the role of the principal in sustaining Literacy Collaborative and not on the adoption and implementation of the reform model, the data analysis revealed that the process associated with the adoption and implementation of Literacy Collaborative had an impact on its sustainability. More precisely, the top-down mandate that led to its implementation was a key aspect of the sustainability of the initiative. For example, Huberman and Miles (1984) found districts where an initiative was sustained when the adoption resulted from a perceived problem and the innovation that posed a solution was mandated by the central office. Likewise, in the present study, Dr. Parker, the superintendent who initiated the program in Dawson School District, perceived a problem with the district's current literacy instruction. He, like most other central office leaders that Huberman and Miles (1984) studied, turned to an outside initiative

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(Literacy Collaborative) for a solution to the district's literacy problem. He then became the prime advocate for the initiative and relied on building level administrators for implementation.

While the Dawson School District's past failed initiatives and the Literacy Collaborative initiative all stemmed from top-down enforced mandates, the difference in sustainability lay in the principals' experiences as learners and leaders during the planning and implementation phase of Literacy Collaborative. The aforementioned components coupled with the Literacy Collaborative initiative's alignment with the principals' leadership style, provided a critical foundation for sustainability. Huberman and Miles (1984) referred to such a foundation as a "stable platform" that was required for effective change (p. 281). Data revealed that the Dawson School District's level of leadership by Superintendent Parker and Dr. Johnston, the district literacy coach, provided that "stable platform" for the participants by providing them with the necessary experiences and support, all of which the three participating principals then replicated for their staffs in their respective schools.

The data implied that Literacy Collaborative provided a framework that allowed each participant to utilize those aspects he/she deemed critical in leading a school as well as being closely aligned with each individual's leadership style. Two of the three participants noted that their leadership style did not change as a result of Literacy Collaborative, and the remaining participant indicated that Literacy Collaborative helped him shift from a managerial style to that of an instructional leader. Thus, each participant perceived himself/herself to have leadership style alignment with the reform model's design.

In addition, Literacy Collaborative provided a lens for thinking about instruction differently. Content areas such as math and social studies morphed into a similar framework as

Literacy Collaborative. Further, the utilization of data to inform day-to-day instructional decisions appeared to have deepened and became "a way to do business".

In summary, the conclusions drawn from the data analysis were that the principals were able to sustain the Literacy Collaborative comprehensive school reform model within their respective schools because the initiative, although a top-down mandate from the district office, provided a vision for how literacy instruction could be improved, followed by "buy-in" from principals, literacy coaches, and teachers in the district. Combined with the fact that the Literacy Collaborative initiative included professional learning opportunities for the principals that allowed them to provide true instructional leadership in their schools, all combined to create an environment that allowed the reform initiative to sustain.

The three principals indicated that they were able to align their leadership style with the needs of the reform initiative, while it allowed them to be true to themselves as leaders. They felt that the initiative provided the necessary support to allow them to sustain the initiative. Simply, Literacy Collaborative being a top-down district mandate could only have been successfully sustained the way that it was implemented in combination with the roles that the principals provided to the process.

The truly interesting part of the sustainability of the initiative was that the program was set up in a fashion that might be described to a degree as symbiotic. While the principals carried out their roles in a manner that helped to sustain the program, in some ways, Literacy Collaborative helped to sustain the principals. In particular, Dr. Andrews noted that it was the focus and training that Literacy Collaborative provided for him that he credited with transforming him into an instructional leader.

The consistent enforcement of the district's vision and implementation of Literacy Collaborative from the top-down provided the necessary structures for sustainability. Embedded in such structures were the elements Fullan (1993, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2010), Huberman and Miles (1984), and Schlechty (1997, 2009) found to be critical: a well-articulated vision; adequate initial preparation and implementation; leadership and learning with assistance at all levels; adaptation that resulted in positive outcomes; and collaborative structures developed and nurtured in a way that ensured trust, mutual respect and accountability measures were practiced.

Findings from this study were organized into six themes that, when smoothly orchestrated, moved the organization towards continual improvement. The six themes identified by participants in this study as critical factors in sustaining a reform model included: aligned principal leadership style with Literacy Collaborative, employed clear communication, valued learning at all levels, engaged collaborative teams in collective decision making and problem solving, allocated resources, and adapted to change.

Aligned Leadership Styles with Literacy Collaborative

The data analysis presented in Chapter IV revealed that Literacy Collaborative provided a framework that allowed each participant to utilize those aspects of his/her leadership style the participant deemed critical in leading a school. Both Dr. Bates and Mrs. Carter noted that their individual leadership styles did not change as a result of the Literacy Collaborative implementation; rather each of these two participants had an existing leadership style that aligned with the reform model. Mrs. Carter focused more on the social and emotional aspects of change, which illustrated her servant leadership stance. Dr. Bates, exhibiting characteristics of a distributive leader, focused on the operational side of the implementation.

In contrast, Dr. Andrews spoke candidly about his desire to grow as an instructional leader and of the changes in his leadership style. He clearly articulated how his leadership style became less managerial as the reform model continued and became more in line with shared instructional leadership. This supported the balance between the operational and instructional components that emerged from his case study.

This researcher concluded that, as a reform model, Literacy Collaborative offered the latitude for the principals' leadership styles to nurture the growth of the model within their respective schools. Statements made by two participants supported this conclusion. Each exhibited a different leadership style, yet each perceived the reform model as supporting that style. One possible reason Literacy Collaborative was able to sustain over time was its ability to accommodate some differences in leadership styles.

In contrast, one participant made significant changes in his leadership style. His interview responses indicated he viewed these changes as being productive for him as a leader and for his school's growth as an efficient organization. This researcher concluded that a reform model that offers learning opportunities for school leaders could support principals who wish to make changes in their leadership stance. As was the case with Literacy Collaborative, this support could be a component of the reform model's structure.

<center>Employed Clear Communication</center>

Communication goes beyond what is said. The participants in this study referred to experiences with district leadership that "walked the talk" and the power that explanation followed by demonstration had on the Literacy Collaborative implementation. These lived experiences provided a model for the principals to replicate at the school level. For example, the

superintendent encouraged both central office personnel and school principals to attend on-going informational sessions about the reform model and to visit implementation classrooms to gain an understanding of how the theory of the model looked in practice. This researcher concluded that it was valuable for principals to experience this kind of alignment of verbal and behavioral communication from their superintendent. The superintendent's communication alignment gave his message credibility; the implementation of the reform model was of supreme importance. Thus, the principals had a first-hand experience with the power of aligning verbal with behavioral communication and recognized the potential impact it had for their work around the reform's implementation at the school level. As a result, principals felt comfortable in providing release time during the school day for their teachers to participate in both professional learning sessions and to visit model classrooms.

In addition, an important outcome of providing on-going clear communication was the increase in the level of trust and respect between school leaders and staff. When a leader stated a belief once, it probably was of little value; when a leader stated that same belief regularly and aligned it with consistent action, the result was powerful. For example, Mrs. Carter stated her belief that consistent guided reading was necessary for students' literacy development. In addition to stating this belief, she aligned the statement with action by teaching a guided reading group regularly for half of the school year. This researcher concluded that the aligned communication from Mrs. Carter sent multiple, positive messages to her staff. One message was that the professional learning of everyone (guided reading instruction, in this instance) should be applied; another message was that the principal welcomed the opportunity to be a fellow teacher in addition to being the school's leader.

The present study included other examples where principals employed clear communication such as conducting informational meetings about the initiative for stakeholder groups and writing articles for inclusion in parent newsletters. Each of the participants was proactive in clearly communicating changes the reform would bring to the school in advance of its implementation.

In the present study, the employment of clear communication served as a valuable tool to help participants regularly interact with their various publics regarding the on-going phases of the reform model. On-going verbal and behavioral communication aided in the sustainability of the reform model.

Valued Learning at All Levels

The participants in the present study shared the significance of their experiences participating in professional learning sessions led by Superintendent Parker and the district literacy trainer during the initial implementation of Literacy Collaborative. These learning experiences served as models for how learning impacts the development of a reform model. Such learning experiences afforded principals the opportunity to learn about Literacy Collaborative both as a reform model and as an instructional framework. The present researcher concluded that the engagement of the principals in professional learning about the reform model and its instructional components provided a frame of reference for these principals to utilize as they engaged in collegial conversations with teachers.

Participants ensured that learning occurred at all levels, beginning with themselves. Each of the participants noted the importance of his/her personal learning and its impact on his/her respective school. For example, by participating in on-going professional learning alongside

classroom teachers, each principal modeled being a learner and "in turn" communicated there is always something new to learn. Further, it provided a level of understanding of the content that aided each principal in being a more effective evaluator. For example, when a principal participated in professional learning sessions about literacy practices and then evaluated a teacher's literacy instruction, he/she reported being able to make more informed evaluations because each had knowledge of what he/she was evaluating. Another byproduct of participating in professional learning at the school level was that the principal not only deepened his/her understanding of the content studied, but he/she also gained insight into the climate of the school. For example, if teachers' communication and participation occurred in a disgruntled or weary manner, the odds were that an unhealthy school climate existed. In contrast, if teachers interacted with each other in a constructive manner, the odds were in favor of a healthy school climate being in place.

Participants also ensured that teachers were provided opportunities to engage in professional learning inside and outside of the school building. Dr. Bates stated, "If we have a staff where everybody is a learner, then it's going to be reflected in the capacity of the kids to learn." Therefore, he, as well as Mrs. Carter and Dr. Andrews, ensured that teachers had opportunities to engage in professional learning. For example, Dr. Bates provided the resources for two teachers who showed promise of growing as school leaders to attend a conference focused on leadership. In addition, he encouraged his literacy coaches to train on the evaluation process for Georgia, not to become evaluators, but to serve as an additional support for teachers in thinking differently about instruction.

The researcher concluded that when principals participated as learners alongside classroom teachers, they communicated that learning is essential for everyone. Further, by

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providing teachers with a variety of professional learning opportunities tailored to their needs, it

increased the likelihood that their new learning would be applied back in the classroom. Thus,

the application of the new learning increased the level of instruction for students. It is the

researcher's conclusion that when everyone, from the principal to the student, engaged in on-

going learning, the organization, specifically the reform model, was strengthened and improved.

Engaged Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving

All participants supported the use of teams to develop others' capacity to collectively

problem solve, make decisions, and focus on ways to continually improve the educational

experience for all students. Further, the utilization of teams positioned its members to both lead

and be led while fostering ownership of the learning environment.

Participants used collaborative teams in various ways. All participants utilized progress-

monitoring teams, with classroom teachers and support teachers as members, to discuss students

who were struggling in specific content areas and to develop plans for remediation and support.

Interview data from both Dr. Bates and Mrs. Carter revealed that each utilized his/her school's

Design Team to focus on improving the school climate.

This researcher noted that both the principal and team members experienced a positive

effect from participating on a team composed of people with varied responsibilities within the

school (for example, classroom teachers, media specialist, physical education teacher, etc.) and

with different strengths (for example, visionaries, critical thinkers, planners, etc.). This group

configuration ultimately created not only a deeper understanding of discussion topics but also

provided a more productive focus for the entire school. For example, when a literacy team

included some members who were relatively new to literacy teaching in addition to those who

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were literacy experts, not only did those who were less proficient gain deeper understandings, but also those who were experienced found themselves having more clarity about literacy practices as a result of these conversations. This outcome reflected LAB's (2000) idea that a team should be focused on using individual and group strengths and based on the belief that "everyone is good at different things" (p. 22).

In addition, principals valued the opportunities they had to participate in and observe school teams. These opportunities gave them a deeper knowledge of what each staff member currently knew and provided information to support the work of the school, such as determining what resources might be supportive for different teachers and for different grade levels. Team meetings also appeared to give the principals an excellent sense of those individuals who exhibited strong leadership qualities, who worked well with their colleagues, and who might become academic coaches for the school. Therefore, the principals considered how these individuals might become part of the leadership succession for their schools as a support for the sustainability of the model.

Collectively, the principals expressed the positive impact Literacy Collaborative had on student learning and attributed the role of the literacy coach as a key factor in the success. Interviews with each principal revealed that turnover in one or more of the school's literacy coaches created undue stress on the school. As each of the principals discussed dealing with turnover, each indicated that those who initially served in the coaching positions were indeed literacy experts; however, they lacked the necessary skills or the desire to work with adults. According to Mrs. Carter, the literacy coach must be "people savvy" and Dr. Andrews and Dr. Bates declared this quality to be more essential than expertise in literacy. Dr. Bates said, "You've got to look beyond the individual you've got in positions and know that if you're going

to sustain, you've got to build capacity within your school for other folks to be able to step in and take on those roles." This supported the literature that reform efforts sustained when the leader valued internal leadership and developed "homegrown" leaders (Jerald, 2005). Principals noted that their work as members of school teams assisted them in identifying these potential "homegrown" leaders.

Thus, the work of collaborative teams unexpectedly served a purpose in addition to strengthening group members' problem solving and decision making abilities. These collaborative teams helped principals identify potential leaders who could help sustain the reform model and strengthen the work of the entire organization.

In addition, this researcher noted that collaborative teams appeared to serve as a unifying factor for each school, both in terms of reaching common goals and of affording principals a view of the school's fidelity of implementation of the reform model. It is believed that the principals' ability to have on-going conversations within and among teams about the progress of the reform assisted in sustainability of the model.

Allocated Resources

Each participant discussed how he/she allocated resources, specifically time and money, to aid in the sustainability of the reform model. Time was allotted in a variety of ways to ensure the fidelity of the reform model. Each participant designated at least 2.5 and up to 3 hours to create an uninterrupted block of time for literacy instruction. In addition, time was provided during the school day for teachers to engage in collaborative team meetings and participate in professional learning and coaching alongside the school's literacy coach.

Money was another resource that aided in the sustainability of the reform model. Money was allocated for the needed materials for effective literacy instruction. Such materials included high quality books for interactive read aloud, leveled texts for guided reading, and magnetic letters for word study. Because on-going learning was a top priority noted by each of the three participants in this present study, money was earmarked for substitute teachers to cover classrooms while teachers were engaged in professional learning.

The researcher concluded that principals understood resources had to be allocated in various ways in order to sustain the reform model. Further, the researcher noted that the degree in which each principal allocated resources to sustain the reform model was indicative of what he/she valued about the reform model. For example, Dr. Bates allotted most of his school's time and money to professional learning because he valued learning and viewed professional learning as an investment in people.

Adapted to Change

Sustainability of any initiative required moving beyond program maintenance and developing the ability to adapt to changing circumstances (Century & Levy, 2002; Jerald, 2005). Century and Levy (2002) and Jerald (2005) noted two types of adaptations. The first was proactive adaptation (Century & Levy, 2002), also referred to by Jerald (2005) as selective adaptation. The second type was reactive adaptation (Century & Levy, 2002) or as noted by Jerald (2005), as fine-tuning.

Proactive adaptation, when an organization tries new ideas and discards those that prove ineffective (Jerald, 2005), occurred in all three elementary schools represented in the present study. In-house accommodations, such as adapting how parent conferences were conducted,

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determining membership participation on the literacy leadership team, allotting time for professional learning, and utilizing resources were mentioned by the participants and noted in each school's evaluation plans, Fidelity of Implementation documents, and minutes from school meetings. A proactive adaptation also encompassed piloting new ideas that were strongly aligned with the school's vision. In one classroom, Mrs. Carter experimented with a flexible schedule. Mrs. Carter's reason for this trial classroom was to experiment with letting the content of study drive the schedule rather than allowing a particular allotment of time to dictate the amount of content that could be explored in a single session.

The second type of adaptation, reactive adaptation, required organizations to tweak "individual reform elements to ensure they are successful as the environment around them changes" (Jerald, 2005, p. 5). One of the most significant reactive adaptations was restructuring the role of the school literacy coaches during the budget crisis. As a means of sustaining Literacy Collaborative, the coach's role had to be adapted to half time literacy coach and half time classroom or support teacher in order to generate funds. This adaptation sustained the implementation for the duration of the significant budget cuts. Beginning in 2012, the original role of the coach was restored after funding increased. Another reactive adaptation was changing the mode of reporting of grades to parents by designing a standards-based report card as a result of the roll out of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

These data indicated that the reform model benefitted when proactive adaptations were considered. For example, Mrs. Carter's experimentation with a flexible schedule indicated a proactive stance of inquiry. She wondered how literacy instruction could be conducted within a flexible timeframe. As she pondered the potential benefits of this flexibility, she deepened her

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understanding of the rationale for all components of the reform model.   In the end, it did not matter whether or not she decided to adopt the flexible schedule. What mattered was that she posed questions that increased her understanding of the reform model's rationales. Her actions were examples of what Jerald (2005) found important in sustaining a reform initiative by adapting the improvement effort so that the model survived and continued to thrive over the long haul.

In relation to the reactive stance, this researcher concluded that, while reactive adaptations were sometimes challenging, they did not necessarily prove to be detrimental to the sustainability of the reform model. When the Dawson Public School District experienced budget cuts, the role of the literacy coach was redefined rather than eliminated. All elementary principals within the district supported this decision because it was the only way to fund the coaching component of the reform model. This action of pausing in order to preserve indicated that second-order change had occurred and that the reform model would be sustained. The district had come too far in its knowledge and understanding to turn back.

Recommendations for Practice

As the role of the principal evolved, it was imperative that for principals to have an understanding of leadership over management and a set of skills that led to practical application for leading a school. Today's principal can no longer expect to meet the demands of standards, assessments, and accountability coupled with meeting the needs of each student while leading with a management skill-set. While comprehensive school models have been an answer to these pressures and have grown in popularity among school districts and individual schools, the sustainability of these models were few (Datnow, 2005).

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The Literacy Collaborative comprehensive whole school reform model, developed by Dr. Irene C. Fountas and Dr. Gay Su Pinnell, encompassed components identified by innovative change leaders to be critical. Such components included: on-going job embedded professional learning by a trained coach; a school-based leadership team; and an instructional model that supported individualized teaching based on on-going assessments and safety-net resources while aligning with the state standards. Even with the aforementioned components in place, a school reform model cannot be sustained independent of school leadership. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the elementary school principal in sustaining the Literacy Collaborative comprehensive school reform model. The following were recommendations for principals striving to maintain a school reform initiative. Each recommendation was identified by participants in this study as a critical factor in sustaining the fidelity of this district's comprehensive whole school reform model, Literacy Collaborative. However, it is important to note that none of these components were mutually exclusive. Rather, they needed to be smoothly orchestrated in a way the moved the organization towards continual improvement.

Align Leadership Styles with a School Reform Model

In the present study, the selected reform model provided a framework that allowed each participant to utilize those aspects of his/her leadership style that he/she deemed critical in leading his/her school. In addition, the reform model provided learning opportunities that supported one participant in developing a style that was in line with the reform's structure (moving from a managerial style to a shared leadership stance, in this instance.)

This data suggested that it is important for a principal to determine the alignment of his/her leadership style with the reform model's requirements. If a major conflict exists between style

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and requirements that cannot be resolved over time, this difference will most probably make sustainability of the reform difficult if not impossible (Datnow, 2005). It is suggested that a school leader carefully examine any proposed reform model before its adoption to determine what will be required of him/her as a leader, not only to begin the reform but also to nurture and sustain it over time. If he/she perceives there are leadership style characteristics that he/she wishes to develop, he/she should determine what resources are available to him/her. Does the model itself offer professional learning for leaders? Would college coursework be helpful?

The bottom line is that a reform model is designed to change an organization over time. If the principal's leadership style allows him to fully support the reform initiative, his/her support can serve to ground and strengthen the model as it grows and develops. If a mismatch exists but he/she believes the reform model is of value for his/her school, then the principal has an excellent opportunity. He/She can exhibit leading by offering the personal example of welcoming and initiating a change within himself/herself.

Employ Clear Communication

Principals must have a clear image of where they are going and what it is going to take to get there (Schlechty, 2005). Principals should know the motives, beliefs, and values of the individuals they lead (Schlechty, 1997; 2005; 2009) and have a realistic perspective on the culture of the organization. Prior to the rollout of Literacy Collaborative, Mrs. Carter explained that she spoke with her staff about the district's direction with Literacy Collaborative and asked those staff members who did not want to change or try to change to please find somewhere else that was a better fit, but do not hold them [City Elementary] back. Dr. Andrews and Dr. Bates had similar conversations with their staffs about the district and school's direction and

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encouraged people to critically think about whether or not they could support it. Sinek (2012)

noted the importance of this in leading an organization. He mentioned that when a group knew

the destination, they were more resilient to the barriers that are ahead (Sinek, 2012).

Principals who wish to sustain a reform model should consider the many benefits of

clear, ongoing communication with a variety of publics. This researcher noted that

communications about the reform model most always occur during the initial stages of

implementation but may fade and disappear over time. One suggestion to support sustainability

is to consider the importance of continuing to communicate with all publics. For example, when

was the last time I [principal] was intentional in informing various stakeholder groups

(community members or parent groups) about the current state of the implementation? Have I

[principal] had meetings with teachers or parents to discuss the model's purpose and growth

from its inception to the present time? Do I [principal] tend to have as many conversations about

the learning celebrations and improvements in practice over time as I [principal] have about

challenging aspects of ongoing implementation?

Another recommendation is for principals to communicate from the rationale stance in

relation to modifications staff may wish to make in the implementation. For example, if a teacher

asks if it is OK to try (something) and the principal is able to reply that the purpose of this

component of the reform is to (gives rationale) and then to ask if the teacher's proposal would

serve that purpose, then a conversation can take place. The benefit is that the teacher leaves with

a rationale by which to make the decision rather than leaving with a yes/no answer to a question.

The principal, in turn, will be better equipped to clearly communicate rationales for aspects of

the reform model because his/her understanding has increased. This one example can have a

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multiplier effect as staff members begin to converse among themselves in this manner. It is more likely to sustain a reform model when discussions are centered on clearly understood rationales.

Ensure Learning Occurs at All Levels

The analysis of the data in this present study confirmed the positive impact that learning at all levels had on the sustainability of the reform model. When principals and teachers alike engaged in on-going, job embedded professional learning, the means of improving student learning increased.

Fullan (2010) noted one factor "twice as powerful as any other factor with respect to the principal's role [in affecting student outcomes]…was the degree to which the principal participates as a learner in helping teachers figure out how to make progress" (p. 14). Thus, principals who wish to sustain a reform model should participate in professional learning alongside classroom teachers. This could be accomplished by dedicating time each month to attend professional learning sessions before other commitments are scheduled. Doing so communicates that learning is vital. Principals who participate in professional learning alongside teachers are more likely to have a deeper understanding of the content and of the climate of the school that could influence many of their decisions. For example, principals could reexamine interview questions for prospective teachers that would reveal candidates' stance towards such aspects as continual learning and collaboration.

Engage Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving

The analysis of data in the present study confirmed the notion that organizations that fostered a collaborative culture valued relationships and engaged in collective decision making

and problem solving processes. As teams engaged in these processes, "an underlying belief is that people affected by decisions should be involved in shaping those decisions" and "ensure coordination toward common goals" (LAB, 2000, p. 26).

For principals who wish to sustain a reform model, it is essential for those school leaders to keep the big picture of the organization in mind when making decisions or solving problems. Reform models often suggest the inclusion of school teams as a part of the decision making and problem solving process. An important factor for principals to consider will be composition of each team. Each team should be comprised of team members with varied responsibilities and strengths to ensure the resulting team reflects aspects of the larger organization. This variety of members will assist the principal in developing an accurate perspective of both the people in the school and the fidelity of implementation of the model. The principal should be aware that numbers matter. A team that is too large can often be unproductive due to the size, and a team that is too small is prone to follow the lead of the most domineering member. In addition, the principal should consider how he/she could operate in the context of transparency. If team membership is by invitation, the entire staff needs to know the rationale for this decision. Otherwise, teams could be viewed as exclusive and team membership could serve to divide the staff rather than unite the school as the reform model continues. If the dynamics of operating as a collaborative team are new to either the principal or the majority of the team members, then these participants will need to learn how to be contributing members.

In addition, serving as a team member often requires a new set of behaviors from the principal. He/she will now serve as a participant who is both a listener and a learner. In this role, his/her leadership is now shared. If the principal nurtures the positive dynamics of the group, it

is likely the group will gain momentum and continue to be productive. Teams that operate effectively benefit both the sustainability of the reform model and the entire organization.

Allocate Resources

Resources, such as time and money, are essential to the sustainability of the reform models. Time must be allocated for stakeholder groups to collaborate and learn. Money must be allotted for materials for effective classroom instruction as well as additional professional learning experiences.

For principals who wish to sustain a reform model, it is essential to allocate resources in a way that supports the entire initiative. Time must be allocated for professional learning and collaboration around the reform model. The structure of the school day must support the reform model's rationale. For example, if the design of the model required an uninterrupted block of time of 2.5 hours to support the instructional components, the school day must be structured in a manner that ensures this amount of time is provided. To not allocate time to support the initiative's components undermines the reform model's fidelity.

In addition to time, money is an essential resource to support the reform model. A principal is advised to closely analyze all purchase orders so that money is spent only on items that support the reform model rather than conflict with the model's intent. For example, if a school employed a literacy reform model that was designed to support teachers in providing instruction based on the needs of students, a purchase order approved for classroom workbooks would be in conflict with the model's rationale and send mixed messages to the staff about the intent of the reform model.

Adapt to Change

If a principal wishes to sustain a reform model, this researcher suggests that he/she consider the importance of modeling a proactive stance for his/her staff. A significant benefit of modeling a proactive stance is helping the teachers learn how to ask important questions in relationship to the requirements of the model. A principal's willingness to consider how certain aspects might be conducted indicates that the reform model is a structure and not a rigid program. In order to make wise decisions about proactive adaptations, the principal must have a firm grasp of the reform model's requirements and rationales so that the adaptations do not damage the fidelity of the model.

In addition, the data show that principals should understand that reactive adaptations probably would have to be made as the model is sustained over time. These unforeseen adaptations do not have to cause the failure of the initiative. It is wise to first consider the anticipated length of adaptation. Identifying the anticipated timeframe enables a principal to consider questions such as: Which position(s) will this adaptation affect? How can the current level of implementation be maintained with reduced funding? Is it possible to phase in the adaptation?

Remember it may be necessary to "pause in order to preserve". If a principal values the sustainability of a reform model, he/she will make intentional decisions to help sustain it rather than allow it to collapse by default.

Recommendations for Further Study

The findings of this study led to the development of several additional questions for further empirical research. The first question developed as an extension of the present study

where interview data was generated by the principals in regard to their roles in sustaining a reform model. An extension of the present research could be to determine if teachers' perceptions aligned with the school leader's perceptions of himself/herself.

The second question arose from this researcher's pondering of a statement made by Dr. Andrews, who was a participant in the present study. Dr. Andrews stated that his work within the reform model assisted him in moving from one leadership stance to a different style. In a broader context, this researcher wondered if changes in leadership style were common occurrences as reform models were sustained. If so, what characteristics of a reform model's design supported this change?

The third question arose as this researcher noted the frequency with which participants in the present study referenced portions of the reform model's implementation stage even though the interview questions were focused on sustaining the model. This researcher wondered if most reform models that sustain have certain characteristics embedded in the implementation stage that are critical to the success of sustaining the model.

A final question that emerged for this researcher was a finding within the present research that not all participants in this study exhibited the same leadership style. The question arose as to whether or not, when a larger participant pool is examined, one preferred leadership style could be identified as offering the most support for sustaining a reform model. That question is posed in question four.

The following are recommendations for further study relative to the sustaining of a comprehensive school reform model from the principal's perspective.

1. How was the principal's perspective aligned with the teachers' perspectives regarding sustaining a school reform model? Was the principal's perception of what he/she did to sustain the model validated by the teachers?

2. Is it a common occurrence to find that working to sustain a school reform model assists a principal in significantly changing his/her leadership style? If so, what characteristics of reform models' design support this change?

3. To what degree does the implementation process contribute to the sustainability of a school reform model? If the implementation process as a whole is of significance, which particular aspects of the implementation process are most important in sustaining the reform model?

4. When school reform models are sustained, does the use of one particular leadership style offer the best support for this sustainability? If one particular style is identified, what characteristics of that style are most important for leaders to utilize in sustaining a reform model?

Summary

Leadership was paramount in the sustainability of this particular school reform effort, Literacy Collaborative. Moreover, leaders who modeled the thoughts, actions, and desires of the organization sustained school reform efforts. Leaders who had a high self-awareness, specifically a realistic, honest perspective of their strengths and weaknesses, provided a level of vulnerability that invited others within the organization to operate in a similar manner. Thus, all members of the school operated within a context that supported change. Leaders who solicited

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feedback and engaged in collaborative efforts to solve problems made decisions that produced experiences that allowed others to grow as leaders.

Findings from the present study revealed the impact of the principals' experiences in the planning and implementation phase alongside the district's school superintendent and district literacy trainer. Each principal's experience in helping the Dawson Public Schools become a school district rather than a district of schools through collaborative efforts with fellow principal colleagues and literacy coaches provided a model for how to plan for, implement, and sustain Literacy Collaborative.

Any leader who wishes to sustain a school reform model should remain constantly aware that the intent of the reform model is to reform. It is not to say the school changes when it actually remains the same. It is not to make minor and insignificant modifications and call those slight shifts a reform. It is not to impact a few individuals who are probably already the most innovative members of the school. Instead, the purpose of the reform model is to provide a context where transformation occurs throughout the entire organization.

Sustaining a school reform model is not an endeavor for the faint of heart. It is hard work and it takes time. Be assured that the results of transforming an entire school are worth the grueling effort. When all members of an organization, from students to leaders, have a context where each is able to operate in a productive and successful manner, the principal has initiated and sustained his/her adopted school reform model. This researcher extends her best wishes to each principal who embarks on this journey of reform.

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APPENDIX A

LITERACY COLLABORATIVE FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION DOCUMENT

Literacy Collaborative
Fidelity of Implementation Tool

Academic Year: _____

District: _____

School: _____

Principal: _____

Literacy Coach
(Level –Primary (P), Intermediate (I),
Middle School (MS) and year trained) _____

Literacy Team Members and Role in School

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Lesley University
Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative
29 Everett St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 349-8798

 "As educators we need to remind ourselves to look back and see from where we came so that it will energize our continued movement forward."

12 Keys to Effective Coaching p.46

Dear School Literacy Leadership Team,

We are sending you the *Fidelity of Implementation Tool* and want to share our vision of how it can be used to reflect on literacy practices in your building. We have provided descriptors of facets of a coherent whole school literacy initiative. We believe all of these facets work in concert to cultivate a school culture of professional learning that results in ongoing progress of student achievement over time. As a literacy team, reflecting annually on your successes and current challenges around implementation of Literacy Collaborative will allow you to establish and prioritize goals for the upcoming year.

When reflecting on your implementation, there are several elements that will be helpful to consider. Included in the packet are the following:
-Fidelity of Implementation Document
-A guideline for recording data results from your first year of Literacy Collaborative implementation to the present. (This could include state tests, benchmark or writing assessments, coaching frequency data, teacher surveys, or other data you collect with a brief description of change over time.)

The Fidelity of Implementation document with data analysis can be used across the school year.
- We suggest you start to discuss the factors of implementation with your team mid-year.
- By year's end it will be helpful for the team to fill out the Fidelity of Implementation document to identify the year's successes and challenges and prioritize future goals for the literacy team.
- Reviewing the document in the fall will help to develop a yearly agenda for your literacy team.
- The team can reference this tool throughout the year as it continues to assess implementation, and act upon specified goals.
- Once again in the spring, the team can use the Fidelity of Implementation tool to assess accomplishments and set goals once again for the following year.

As your university partner, it will be helpful to review your implementation document and provide feedback. Therefore, after the team has completed the document, please send a copy of it and your data to your university liaison. Some schools have preferred to finish compiling their data analysis after they receive test scores in the fall. If this is the case for your school, please let your Lesley University liaison know when she can expect the document package.

We look forward to working with you through this process. Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or thoughts about this Fidelity of Implementation tool and let us know about its effectiveness for you and your school.

Sincerely,

The Literacy Collaborative Faculty

Literacy Leadership Team

Shared leadership strengthens the literacy implementation and the school literacy team plays an active leadership role through its regular meetings. The role of a Literacy Leadership Team is to utilize data to guide the implementation of Literacy Collaborative to ensure continuous school improvement.

The team is responsible for:
- Meeting at least monthly
- Developing and communicating a written vision statement related to literacy teaching and learning to school staff, central office, and other stake holders.
- Sharing successes with each other and the entire school community
- Considering and problem solving the factors of implementation
- Monitoring student progress, program evaluation, and interventions
- Communicating with and involving families and community members
- Ensuring the individual needs of all literacy learners
- Sharing agendas and meeting notes with the school staff
- Managing literacy materials including the leveled book collection

Team membership includes:
- The Literacy Coaches
- Grade Level Representatives
- Principal and/or assistant principal
- Representatives for Special Education, English Language Learners, Title One, and Reading Recovery
- Media specialist, librarian

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes

Challenges

Action Items

Administrator(s)
- Attend professional development sessions
- Keep abreast of all professional development content and teaching expectations related to learning.
- Provide support to literacy coaches through regularly scheduled meetings, at least once a month.
- Guide alignment of the school's instructional practice with literacy vision.
- Communicate the expectation that all teachers engage in continuous professional learning that includes attendance at professional development sessions, coaching and the full integration of the teachers' new learning into their daily practice
- Actively participate in leadership team meetings
- Liaise with central office personnel to influence policy to assure effective implementation

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes

Challenges

Action Items

Literacy Coach (LC)

- Teaches in the classroom daily
- Designs and delivers professional development to all teachers who are participating:
  - Teach initial training at least once every two weeks
  - Teach on-going training once a month
- Schedules and provides coaching sessions to all teachers who participate in professional development:
  - Coach initial training participants at least once every two weeks.
  - Coach on-going training participants at least once each month
- Actively participates on the Literacy Leadership Team
- Actively participates in ongoing professional development provided by the affiliated university
- Meets with the administrator at least monthly
- Maintains confidentiality and develops trusting professional relationships

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes

Challenges

Action Items

Roles of Partners:

All partners understand the importance of their own roles in the shared leadership of the implementation.

All partners are aware of others' roles in the implementation.
- Superintendent
- School administrators
- Literacy coach
- Teachers
- Literacy team members
- University partners
- Board of Education
- Caregivers
- Community members

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes
Challenges
Action Items

Teaching/Learning

There is sufficient time for teaching reading, writing, and word study daily
- Half day kindergarten: 90 minutes
- Primary and intermediate grades: 2.5 – 3 hours
- Middle school grades: 1.5 – 2 hours

Teachers implement instructional practices they are learning about in professional development.
- Teachers build understandings and their practice through regularly scheduled coaching sessions with literacy coach
- Teachers provide experiences that are authentic, meaningful, and engaging.
- Teachers establish effective management systems and develop a community of learners in their classrooms.
- Teachers have systems in place for ongoing observation, assessment, analysis, and record keeping.
- Teachers consistently communicate student progress in reading and writing to parents.
- Teachers engage in discussing and problem solving about instruction and its effects on student learning.
- The frequency of ongoing progress monitoring is included in the intervention plan.

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes
Challenges
Action Items

Data Driven Decision Making

- The evaluation plan designed by the school guides the types of formative assessments used to guide instruction.
- Data and evidence is used on an on-going basis to inform both student instruction and Literacy Collaborative implementation.
- Data is used to monitor progress at the individual student, class and school level.

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes

Challenges

Action Items

Interventions
- Classroom and intervention teachers work together to monitor student data, successes, challenges, expectations and teaching strategies to develop and refine action plans for the students they share.
- Universal screening occurs at the beginning of school year.
- Regular and frequent literacy assessments inform intervention plans for students who are reading and writing below grade level.
- Intervention plans are regularly updated based upon the individual needs of the learner and vary in the intensity and frequency according to need.
- The frequency of on-going progress monitoring is included in the intervention plan.

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes
Challenges
Action Items

Professional Development (PD)
- Teachers in the initial professional development receive a minimum of 60 hours across two years.
- Initial professional development class size is recommended to be no larger than 10 participants.
- Teachers who have completed the 60 hours of initial PD participate in 10 – 20 hours of ongoing professional development per year.
- Ongoing professional development is based upon available student data, coaching data and teacher input.
- Administrators attend professional development regularly.
- Teachers, literacy coaches and administrators read professional resources to stay abreast of new educational information.
- PD sessions build teachers' understandings and rationales of literacy to strengthen practice.

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes

Challenges

Action Items

Coaching

- Adequate time is provided for coaching to insure each coaching session includes a pre-observation conversation, a lesson observation, and a post-observation conversation.
- Frequency of Coaching:
    - ☐ *In-training teachers* receive coaching a minimum of two times per month
    - ☐ *Teachers beyond initial training* receive coaching at least monthly
    - ☐ *Teachers who need further support* receive additional coaching
- To accomplish this coaching rotation, ideal ratio of literacy coach to teachers is no more than 1:20.
- Teachers are coached in all areas of the framework.

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes
Challenges
Action Items

Communication

- There is an awareness of the roles and responsibilities of all partners in the literacy initiative. The partners include: school boards, school and district administration, teachers within the schools, families and their partner university.
- Implementation is strengthened when central office and individual school representatives have common beliefs and understandings about the literacy initiative, and meet regularly together to share information and problem solve.
- The principal and literacy coach meet at least monthly to discuss implementation at the school level.
- Teachers in the school develop a common language to engage in professional dialogue about teaching and learning.
- School communicates and engages with families and the greater community around literacy teaching and learning.

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes
Challenges
Action Items

Books and Materials

Classroom libraries and school bookrooms provide a selection of books that allow all students to read at both their independent and instructional levels. These books will include a variety of genre and books for independent reading and small group instruction. See your Professional Development Guide for specifics.

- Classroom libraries including a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts at levels suitable for all readers - **Primary (P), Intermediate (I), Middle School (MS)**
- Interactive read-aloud - **P, I, MS**
- Poetry - **P, I, MS**
- Guided Reading - **P, I, MS**
- Books for genre or author study - **P, I, MS**
- Big books - **P**
- Literature Study - **I, MS**
- Materials to support teaching include magnetic letters, chart paper, post-its, white boards and a kidney shaped table for small group instruction are beneficial.
- Professional books and resources for teachers.

Please provide concrete examples as evidence of successes and challenges. This will help you reflect on how far you have come and provide details about challenges and how you plan to address them. It will also help your university partners better understand and support your implementation.

Successes

Challenges

Action Items

Summary and Action Plan Priority

To facilitate your literacy team agenda for the following year, please summarize your greatest successes and challenges and prioritize your action items based on this analysis.

Summary of Greatest Successes:
Summary of Greatest Challenges:
Priority of Action Items:

Fidelity of Implementation: Achievement Data

Monitoring your Evaluation Plan and data recorded over time is a significant part of evaluating your school's literacy program. Below are some models for how you can capture this information through tables, percentile graphs, bar graphs and line graphs. All have brief explanations accompanying the graphs. Annually as a literacy team, you will want to analyze results from your evaluation plans and your achievement data to discuss implications for implementation and professional development. Please send your data documentation and analysis to your university faculty liaison at your affiliated university.

Review your evaluation plan. How does your data help you answer the evaluation questions? If possible include a chart or graph to help illustrate your answers. Add a sentence or two that offers a theory about what you see in the data.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

November 13, 2013

Dear _____:

I am a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. John Freeman in the College of Health, Education, and Professional Studies at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. I am conducting a research study to determine factors, such as operational and leadership characteristics of three elementary principals that have aided in the sustainability of the comprehensive school reform model, Literacy Collaborative.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve a series of open-ended interviews. Your participation in this is study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at ay time, there will be no penalty. Data from interviews will be collected with the use of audio recording equipment. Each recording will be transcribed for data analysis. All recordings will be kept in a secure, locked location until the completion of the study and then destroyed. The transcriptions will not identify you by name, thereby maintaining confidentiality throughout the data collection and analysis process. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at (706) 463-1259 or e-mail me at bethann.browning@dalton.k12.ga.us or rfj591@utc.edu.

This research has been approved by the UTC Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any question concern the UTC IRB policies or procedures or your rights as a human subject, please contact Dr. Bart Weathington, IRB Committee Chair, at (423) 425-4289 or email instrb@utc.edu.

Sincerely,

BethAnn Smith Browning
32 Deer Trail Drive
Tunnel Hill, Georgia 30755

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the study and I have received a copy of this consent form.

Participant: _____ Date:_____

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocols

Following are interview protocols for the three participants in two interviews. It must be emphasized that such protocols served as a foundation for the line of questions in each individual interview. The development of probing questions, specifically employed in Interview Two, varied from participant to participant due to emerging data. Each question posed served as a springboard for further probing techniques.

Interview One:

- What is your general working definition of the Literacy Collaborative school reform model?

- What changes, if any, did you find in your leadership style/philosophy as implementation of Literacy Collaborative has continued?

- What support and learning opportunities have been provided to you for the implementation of Literacy Collaborative?

- How do you utilize your Literacy Coach?

- How do you utilize the classroom teachers in your school in the Literacy Collaborative model?

- How do you make use of funds to support your school's literacy implementation?

- How do you utilize time in order to sustain your school's literacy implementation? (structure of personal schedule and school schedule)

- How do you assess the desired effectiveness of the Literacy Collaborative model?

- How do you assess the lack of success of the Literacy Collaborative model?

- What modifications have you employed to sustain the model?

Interview Two:

- What have been/still are some challenges you have encountered with the Literacy Collaborative implementation? How did you handle them?

- In the beginning of the Literacy Collaborative implementation, what was your level of involvement? In what ways were you involved?

- Has your level of involvement changed? If yes, how so?

- At what point do you think it changed?

- What is your opinion about this change in level of involvement?

- What adjustments have you made to ensure Literacy Collaborative was sustained with fidelity?

- As the principal, what additional support would you have liked to receive for yourself in regards to Literacy Collaborative?

- There has been turnover in the literacy coaches at your school. Were you included in the decision making process in regards to who would fill this position? If not included, how did it affect your enculturation of the coaches? If so, how did it affect your enculturation of the coaches?

- What is your opinion as to whether the coaches are filled in-house or from outside? Why?

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- If you had to name the critical elements that make Literacy Collaborative work for you, what would they be?

- What advice would you offer principals about sustaining Literacy Collaborative?

- The Literacy Collaborative reform model has sustained two superintendents and a major financial downtime. How?

APPENDIX D

DAWSON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT'S LITERACY COLLABORATIVE

IMPLEMENTATION

JULY 2002-JUNE 2014

Dawson Public School District's Literacy Collaborative Implementation (July 2002-June 2014)

2002-2004	District	Prepared for implementation of Literacy Collaborative in all elementary schools; Planned for reconfiguring K-3, 4-5 schools to K-5 schools with the addition of one elementary school
	Superintendent Parker	Charged principals with learning about and supporting the district's directional system with Literacy Collaborative
	Principals	Participated in site visits to other Literacy Collaborative schools
	Literacy Collaborative	Spring 2004, District Literacy Coach (Dr. Debra Johnston) hired and seven Primary Literacy Coaches (PLC)
2004-2005	District	Construction of Bridge Elementary School
	Superintendent Parker	
	Principals	Dr. Andrews named principal of Bridge School
	Literacy Collaborative	PLCs in training and housed at current K-3 schools; principals and PLCs met together as a district to learn about Literacy Collaborative
2005-2006	District	All six elementary schools were K-5
	Superintendent Parker	
	Principals	Continued learning about Literacy Collaborative at district and school level
	Literacy Collaborative	Eight primary teachers were involved in Literacy Collaborative training with PLC at base school
2006-2008	District	
	Superintendent Parker	
	Principals	
	Literacy Collaborative	Literacy Collaborative rolled out into intermediate, 7 Intermediate Literacy Coaches were trained, 2 additional District Literacy Trainers were hired (1 primary, 1 intermediate), Dr. Debra Johnston (2008) retires
2008-2009	District	Prepared for budget cuts due to economic downturn
	Superintendent Parker Superintendent Hilton	Superintendent Parker retired 6-30-09, Superintendent Hilton began 1-5-09; Superintendent Hilton began communicating with Dawson Public School District employees to ensure transparency
	Principals	
	Literacy Collaborative	
2010-2014	District	Committees were formed to address budget concerns. Budget cuts were implemented
	Superintendent Hilton	
	Principals	
	Literacy Collaborative	Literacy Coaches served dual roles (½ time literacy coach, ½ time classroom teacher or support position)

APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT

CHATTANOOGA APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

MEMORANDUM

TO: BethAnn Browning   **IRB #13-174**
                          Dr. John Freeman

FROM: Lindsay Pardue, Director of Research Integrity
                         Dr. Bart Weathington, IRB Committee Chair

DATE: November 21, 2013

SUBJECT: IRB #13-174: Sustainability of a Comprehensive School Reform Model from the
                         Perspectives of Three Participating Principals

The IRB Committee Chair has reviewed and approved your application and assigned you the IRB number listed above. You must include the following approval statement on research materials seen by participants and used in research reports:

> *The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project #13-174.*

Please remember that you must complete a Certification for Changes, Annual Review, or Project Termination/Completion Form when the project is completed or provide an annual report if the project takes over one year to complete. The IRB Committee will make every effort to remind you prior to your anniversary date; however, it is your responsibility to ensure that this additional step is satisfied.

Please remember to contact the IRB Committee immediately and submit a new project proposal for review if significant changes occur in your research design or in any instruments used in conducting the study. You should also contact the IRB Committee immediately if you encounter any adverse effects during your project that pose a risk to your subjects.

For any additional information, please consult our web page http://www.utc.edu/irb or email instrb@utc.edu

Best wishes for a successful research project.

APPENDIX F

INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

Overview of Case Studies

	Case Study A	Case Study B	Case Study C
Principal	Dr. Andrews	Dr. Bates	Mrs. Carter
Themes	Overview: Ark Elementary School	Overview: Brook Elementary School	Overview: City Elementary School
	Dr. Andrews' Professional Background	Dr. Bates' Professional Background	Mrs. Carter's Professional Background
	Developed an Instructional Leadership Style with Literacy Collaborative	Aligned Principal's Leadership Style with Literacy Collaborative	Aligned Principal's Leadership Style with Literacy Collaborative
	Demonstrated Clear Communication	Valued Learning At All Levels	Employed Clear Communication
	Participated as a Learner	Engaged Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving	Participated as a Learner
	Engaged Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving	Planned for the Future	Engaged Collaborative Teams in Collective Decision Making and Problem Solving
	Allocated Resources		
	Adapted To Change		

APPENDIX G

CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS' SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

2012-2013 TITLE I DATA

Case Study Participants' School Demographics
2012-2013 Title I Data

	Grades Served	Students Served (approximate)	Free/Reduced Lunch
Ark Elementary	Prek-5	772	98.44%
Brook Elementary	Prek-5	809	88.75%
City Elementary	Prek-5	570	55.6%

Ethnicity

	Hispanic	Caucasian	African American	Asian	American Indian	Multi-racial	Other
Ark Elementary	85%	9%	3%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Brook Elementary	65.8%	17.9%	7.5%	3.5%	.1%	5.2%	0%
City Elementary	39.2%	47.3%	5.6%	0%	0%	0%	7.7%

Academic Services

	Early Intervention Program (EIP)	English Language Learner	Exceptional Student Services	Gifted Education
Ark Elementary	32.9%	26%	7%	4%
Brook Elementary	33%	28.55%	5.31%	2.84%
City Elementary	12.1%	9.3%	4.4%	10.4%

VITA

BethAnn Smith Browning is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Logan Smith and sister of Thomas Bryant Smith. Mrs. Browning graduated from Habersham Central High School in Mt. Airy, GA in 1997 and obtained a B. S. degree in Elementary Education from Mercer University in 2001. After graduation, she worked as a second grade teacher in Habersham County, GA.

Mrs. Browning earned her M. Ed. degree in Elementary Education from Piedmont College in 2002. In 2004, she earned her Ed. S. degree in Instruction from Piedmont College. After graduation in 2004, Mrs. Browning accepted a position with Dalton Public Schools in Dalton, GA as a literacy coach. She is currently serving as the District Primary Literacy Coach in the Dalton Public Schools system.

Mrs. Browning is presently an Ed. D. candidate in Learning and Leadership at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and is preparing to graduate in December 2014. She looks forward to spending more time with her family, especially her sons, Smith and Bo, and her husband, Joe.