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ABSTRACT

As part of its school restructuring work with states, the National Governors' Association commissioned the Center for Policy Research on Education to conduct case studies of several local school districts experimenting with new structural arrangements. This case study is based on visits to four such districts: Jefferson County Schools (Louisville, Kentucky); Dade County Public Schools (Miami, Florida); Poway Unified School District (Poway, California); and New Orleans Public Schools (Louisiana). The first chapter describes how each district is restructuring its system. The Jefferson system exemplifies a change approach in an urban setting centered about professional development and increased resources for school staff. Poway exemplifies a suburban system that has empowered teachers by decentralizing most district functions to its schools. Dade County represents a district shifting to school-based management and shared decision-making in the nation's fourth largest school system. The New Orleans system demonstrates how a creative partnership with an advocacy group can facilitate new roles and models for structural change. The chapter closes by summarizing pioneering efforts of five other districts in California, Ohio, Indiana, New York State and New York City. The second chapter analyzes some common problems in approaching structural change and explains how some districts have overcome barriers. The final chapter summarizes district initiatives and discusses implications for state actions. If states do not act to support and reinforce district goals and actions, schools will be trapped by conflicting expectations and be unable to change. Included are 12 references. (MLH)

RESTRUCTURING IN PROGRESS: LESSONS FROM PIONEERING DISTRICTS

RESULTS IN EDUCATION

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NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

The National Governors' Association, founded in 1908 as the National Governors' Conference, is the instrument through which the nation's Governors collectively influence the development and implementation of national policy and apply creative leadership to state issues. The association's members are the Governors of the fifty states, the commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. The association has seven standing committees on major issues: Agriculture and Rural Development, Economic Development and Technological Innovation, Energy and Environment, Human Resources, International Trade and Foreign Relations, Justice and Public Safety, and Transportation, Commerce, and Communications. Subcommittees and task forces that focus on principal concerns of the Governors operate within this framework.

The National Governors' Association Center for Policy Research is the research and development arm of NGA. The center is a vehicle for sharing knowledge about innovative state activities, exploring the impact of federal initiatives on state government, and providing technical assistance to states. The center works in a number of policy fields, including environment, health, training, education, and information management as well as economic development, trade, and agriculture.

The Center for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) unites four of the nation's leading research institutions in a unique venture to improve the quality of schooling. The consortium members are: the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; the School of Education at Michigan State University; the School of Education at Stanford University; and the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, CPRE conducts research on the implementation and effects of state and local education policies. By communicating its findings to policymakers, the Center attempts to contribute to the framing of education policies that will have a positive impact on children in classrooms.

CPRE's research activities are concentrated in five major areas: policies on curriculum and student standards, teacher policies, education indicators and monitoring, new roles and responsibilities, and evolution of the reform movement.

In addition to conducting research in these areas, CPRE publishes reports and briefs on a variety of education issues. The Center also sponsors regional workshops for state and local policymakers.

RESTRUCTURING IN PROGRESS: LESSONS FROM PIONEERING DISTRICTS

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RESULTS IN EDUCATION

CENTER FOR POLICY RESEARCH
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FOREWORD

In the early 1980s, state policymakers and educators began a debate about the purposes, effects, and structures of schooling in America. The first phase of this debate resulted in major state initiatives directed at increasing standards for students and teachers. The second phase, initiated by the Carnegie report *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* and the National Governors' Association report *Time For Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education*, has produced recommendations for major changes in the ways schools are organized and in the rules and incentives under which they operate. If the watchword of the first phase was "excellence," for the second phase it is "restructuring." Interest in restructuring among policymakers and professionals grows from the conviction that schools must change the way they organize the work of students, teachers, and administrators to meet the increasing expectations and demands of society.

Defining Restructuring

A fundamental restructuring of the education system requires attention to several aspects of the current organization and structure of American schooling.

- *Curriculum and Instruction* must be modified to promote the acquisition of higher order skills for *all* students. Modifications should increase flexibility in the use of instructional time, promote learning activities that are substantially more challenging and engaging, and encourage more varied grouping arrangements that promote student interaction and cooperative efforts but are not limited to conventional age-grading practices.
- *Authority and Decisionmaking* must be decentralized, so that the most educationally important decisions are made at the school site rather than the central office or the state capital. Teachers, administrators, and parents should work together in setting the basic direction for the school and in determining the strategies, approaches, and organizational and instructional arrangements required to achieve them.

- *New Staff Roles* must be developed, so that teachers can more readily work together to improve instruction and so that experienced and talented teachers can support beginning teachers, plan and develop new curricula, or design and implement staff development programs. This is frequently not possible under current arrangements, in which the teacher's role is largely limited to instructing and supervising students. Other staff roles must change as well. Greater use of paraprofessionals could be considered. And staffing innovations will require even more of principals. They must supply the vision to help shape new school structure and organizational arrangements, the skill to lead talented teachers, and the willingness to take risks in an environment that rewards performance rather than compliance.

- *Accountability Systems* must clearly link rewards and incentives to student performance at the building level. Currently, schools are bound by state and local rules and regulations. They must have more discretion and authority to achieve expected and desired results and then be held accountable for them. States must develop measures to assess valued outcomes of performance of individual schools and link rewards and sanctions to results.

To sustain the momentum fostered by these national calls for school restructuring and to assist policymakers in implementing their recommendations, NGA has assumed a leadership role to work with states on restructuring initiatives. As part of that work, NGA commissioned the Center for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), headquartered at Rutgers University, to conduct case studies of several local school districts that were experimenting with new structural arrangements. The purpose was to describe these restructuring initiatives so that others could understand in concrete terms what had been essentially a vision limited to the national reports. The case studies were also intended to identify from the early experiences in these pioneering districts the most important lessons for other local and state leaders contemplating similar restructuring efforts.

The case studies are not in any way evaluative; rather, they focus exclusively on local school district initiatives (other NGA work addresses the state role in restructuring), though the authors attempt to distill important lessons for state policymakers as well.

CPRE has been an important partner in this research. It has been enriched by the lessons CPRE researchers have learned in related work on the implementation of state education reforms and on new roles and responsibilities for educators at all levels of the system.

Jane David and her colleagues Stewart Purkey and Paula White have made an important contribution to our understanding of school restructuring with this study.

Michael Cohen
Director
Education Program
National Governors' Association

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper draws heavily on the work of others I am especially indebted to Michael Cohen of the National Governors' Association for his ideas and suggestions. I am also indebted to Stewart Purkey, assistant professor of education at Lawrence University, and to Paula White, doctoral candidate in education at the University of Wisconsin. In cooperation with Dean Honetschlager of the National Governors' Association, they conducted on-site interviews in three districts. Stewart Purkey also contributed helpful insights through his analytic reports on two sites and comments on an earlier draft. Paula White conducted a telephone survey and wrote descriptions of dozens of districts to identify those included in this paper, and assisted with the development of interview protocols.

Above all, this paper rests on the work of the people in the districts. My thanks to the many teachers and administrators in Louisville, Miami, New Orleans, and Poway, California, who so willingly took the time to talk with us. My thanks as well to Larry Cuban and Mimi Stearns for their thoughtful comments.

Jane L. David

INTRODUCTION

Pressure on school districts to restructure is mounting, signaling widespread acknowledgement that the current system is not working. The term "restructuring" clearly connotes change of a broader scope than new programs or stiffer requirements. District leaders recognize that the goal of increasing educational productivity requires new ways of organizing their instructional and administrative staff. Yet, beyond their basic familiarity with such catch phrases as "school-based management" and "teacher empowerment," district leaders are generally unprepared for restructuring.

A system designed to engage the minds of twenty-first century students will look very different from a system created during the industrial era. Time, space, and other resources will be allocated differently. Roles and relationships among staff and between staff and students will shift. Accountability will rest on informed professional judgment and on measures far more sophisticated and relevant to educational goals than multiple choice standardized tests. As in business and industry, flexibility to respond to a rapidly changing world will be built into the system.

How do districts prepare for restructuring given existing economic, political, and social constraints? Although there is no single or best answer, a range of possible paths has been identified by a handful of pioneering districts.

To attach concrete meaning to the term restructuring, the study team sought districts that are reputed to have made substantial operational changes—districts that have begun to create their own interpretation of what it means to restructure. Visits were made to four such districts: Jefferson County Public Schools (Louisville, Kentucky); Dade County Public Schools (Miami, Florida); Poway Unified School District (Poway, California); and New Orleans Public Schools (New Orleans, Louisiana). These are by no means the only districts experimenting with structural changes, but the numbers are not large, and still fewer have a very long history.

The Jefferson County Public School system exemplifies an approach to change in an urban setting, change that is centered around providing stimulating professional development and resources for school staff. Poway is a good example of a suburban system that has empowered teachers by decentralizing most district functions to its schools. The Dade County Public Schools represent a system in the early stages of a shift to school-based management and shared decision-making in a huge system — the fourth largest in the nation. The New Orleans system demonstrates how a creative partnership with an advocacy group can result in new roles and models for structural change. In addition to these four school districts, the report draws on published accounts of five others in the process of restructuring: the ABC Unified District in Cerritos, California; the Cincinnati Public Schools in Ohio; District 4 in New York City; the Hammond Public Schools in Hammond, Indiana; and the Rochester Public Schools in Rochester, New York.

Although different in their circumstances and approaches, these districts share a long-term commitment to comprehensive change, guided by a vision of schools as stimulating, productive places for teachers and students. Rather than marginally improve effectiveness and efficiency with add-on programs and changes in procedures, these districts intend to restructure the system by changing the roles of and relationships among district and school staff. Built on broad coalitions of support and new approaches to accountability, their strategies promote experimentation, increased school autonomy, and continuous professional growth for teachers and administrators.

The next chapter describes how each of these districts is restructuring its system. In each district the study team visited schools that exemplified that district's approach; accordingly, descriptions emphasize the positive. Following this account is an analysis of some common problems in approaching structural change, of how some districts have overcome barriers, and of what their experiences suggest to state and district leaders eager to lead and support restructuring efforts.

RESTRUCTURING IN PROGRESS: PIONEERING DISTRICTS

Jefferson County Public Schools (Louisville, Kentucky)

"Your success is our business, our only business."

The leadership of the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) has made a long-term commitment to restructuring their system of 153 schools. JCPS leaders have articulated a philosophy of restructuring, reflecting the premise that long-term fundamental change begins with many small steps guided by a shared set of goals and values. But their work goes beyond a philosophy of education. To create more effective learning environments, they have taken a series of actions that coalesce ongoing activities; define new structures, players, and roles; and increase the skills and knowledge of school staff.

Following many years of turmoil in the district, in 1981 the new superintendent laid the groundwork for redesigning Jefferson County's schools. At the vanguard is a functionally and organizationally unique structure for a school district—the JCPS/Gheens Professional Development Academy. Funded predominantly by the local Gheens Foundation, the academy enjoys the political and financial support of the district and the community. It serves both as a resource for the continuing professional development of JCPS staff and as a center for restructuring efforts.

In just a few years the academy has grown from an abstract idea to an institution with its own building and a staff of sixty. The academy's executive director was selected for his commitment to restructuring both schools and the teaching profession. Staff are drawn from various district offices (staff development, inservice, library) or from schools. Some are assigned by the University of Louisville to work at the academy on a part-time basis. Looking more like an executive training center than a school district building, the academy stands as a visible symbol of the community's commitment to teachers and their professional growth.

The academy sponsors an array of professional development activities for teachers and administrators and serves as a curriculum resource and production center. Designed to

promote and exemplify collegial interaction and intellectual stimulation, it is a place where JCPS staff can meet and discuss new ideas. One principal reported spending a day a week at the academy to pick up new ideas and skills.

Academy staff have introduced JCPS teachers and administrators to recent reports on educational reform and to research on structural change and effective schools as well as to the analogous literature from the corporate world. One teacher noted that: "We have gained a lot from Gheens...; we have things here we'd never heard of before."

The superintendent and academy also have created a climate that encourages teachers and administrators to take risks—to experiment with new instructional and organizational approaches. They have communicated throughout the district a vision of schools as environments in which satisfying work and productive learning take place. At the same time they have encouraged each school's staff to translate this message into images and actions that are appropriate to their particular needs and circumstances, and to assess what they do in terms of their long range goals and vision. Through these messages, the academy also serves as a unifying force for the variety of innovative programs and projects throughout the district.

In addition to its role as a resource for professional development, the academy has fostered Professional Development Schools—a concept akin to teaching hospitals in the medical profession—to translate into action the rhetoric of restructuring. Working with representatives of the teachers' union, administrators, and university staff, the academy developed a concept paper that communicates a vision of schools as satisfying workplaces and productive learning environments. The concept paper was circulated to all school staff.

Schools were then invited to become Professional Development Schools; the criterion for acceptance was a commitment to reorganization by teachers and administrators. Representatives from the twenty-four participating schools worked with academy staff to develop a set of guiding principles and standards for the Professional Development Schools, which were then endorsed by the school board.

The leadership of the JCPS superintendent and the actions of the Gheens Academy have created an environment that is conducive to change. In addition to the Professional Development Schools, restructuring has led to a variety of new structures and practices. It also has provided a framework for helping staff experiment with and evaluate many new and ongoing activities. For example:

- Middle schools are organized into mini-schools, each with roughly 150 students run by a team of five teachers, one of whom plays the role of "team leader." Each team makes its own decisions about instructional methods, curriculum, scheduling, and materials; as one teacher described: "The schedule is entirely up to the team; we don't ring any bells. There was a time when we believed only counselors could do that." This structure has led to more active involvement of teachers in decisions, increased professional exchange among teachers, more willingness to experiment and, as a result, more professional satisfaction. The reduced isolation also makes teachers more visible and therefore more accountable to each other. Because different teams create different learning environments, students who "just don't fit" one team's mini-school can move to another—an option that did not exist before.
- As accountability becomes a shared responsibility, school staff are more actively involved in defining and developing measures of success. Each school writes a school improvement plan based on descriptive school profiles provided by the district. Middle schools use self-assessment procedures developed by the Center for Early Adolescence. Teachers and administrators are learning a variety of ways to increase their reflective examination of classroom practice, including the use of clinical supervision.
- Two elementary Professional Development Schools are initiating an experiment in multi-age grouping in which the same teacher will remain with a group of students for several years.
- Staff from JCPS and the University of Louisville have created "job descriptions" for student teachers that reflect the particular role and responsibilities these teachers will be ex-

pected to fulfill in different assignments. In this way, both the supervising teacher and student teacher share expectations, increasing the likelihood that both will benefit from the experience. This is one of many cooperative ventures between JCPS and the University of Louisville.

JCPS staff are proud of their efforts. Teachers express a growing sense of professionalism; administrators are taking advantage of new opportunities for growth in leadership and management. In contrast to most reform efforts, which put pressures on staff to conform quickly to new standards, the approach in JCPS is to develop their human resources as a prerequisite to the improvement of teaching and learning. The academy is a resource for staff development, Professional Development Schools are an "invitation to invention," and inventing new methods of accountability is a shared and evolving responsibility. As the academy's motto implies, when teachers and students are successful, the academy has succeeded.

Poway Unified School District (Poway, California)

"Decisions should be made at the lowest possible level."

The Poway Unified School District, in the hills northeast of San Diego, is a school system in which there is a balance between centralized and decentralized responsibilities. Under the twelve-year leadership of a superintendent committed to decentralized decisionmaking, Poway combines school-site budgeting and management with shared decisionmaking and staff professionalism. The superintendent's philosophy is that educational decisions should be made by the professionals closest to the students. Poway's size (20,000 students), continuous growth, and predominantly homogeneous, advantaged population have provided a receptive environment for testing the limits of decentralization.

In Poway, school-based management has evolved as the result of a lengthy decentralization and professional development process begun by the superintendent on his arrival twelve years ago. Each school receives virtually all the funds it will expend or allocate during the year, including money for staff-

ing and supplies. Funds allocated for building maintenance, food and transportation services, and most of staff development are retained by the district. At each level of decisionmaking, staff are encouraged – if not required – to participate. (For example, the union contract requires that teachers participate in decisions about the staffing budget.)

School-based management and shared decisionmaking are embedded in a district culture that maintains a focus on student learning, promotes continuous professional development for all staff, and values and rewards hard work. The culture and tone of the district were established by the superintendent and are exemplified by him and his small central office staff. The job of each person – from clerks to associate superintendents – is described in terms of support for student learning. The district invests heavily in staff development that supports instructional improvement.

Teachers are offered an array of staff development programs including clinical teaching, cooperative learning, and hands-on math and science. Despite the absence of financial incentives, most teachers are active participants because participation is expected of professionals. This expectation is communicated through the quality of the training and the comfortable setting. Teachers also are treated to dinner in a posh country club after each program. Principals are encouraged to – and do – attend teachers' workshops (another incentive for teachers). They are required to attend a series of workshops on clinical supervision and on leadership and management techniques.

Planning and decisionmaking at the district level are open to school staff and, in fact, the system could not function otherwise since the superintendent has reduced the district staff to a small number. Thus, all curriculum development is done by committees of teachers rather than by central office staff. The assistant superintendents for elementary and secondary schools act as organizers and facilitators for teachers; there is no district curriculum office or coordinator. Principals participate in the superintendent's annual budget development process. Teachers from each school attend monthly forums with the superintendent.

Each school receives a lump-sum budget, based on school enrollment, for staff and for materials and supplies. The staffing budget is allocated in terms of personnel staffing units (PSUs), each of which equals the average teacher salary plus benefits. (The principal, assistant principal, and school secretary are not included.) A combination of state and union contract rules (such as class size limits) requires that most of the staffing budget is allocated for classroom teachers. However, every school has one or more PSUs over which they have total discretion. One school might choose to hire several aides, another to employ part-time specialists (e.g., a music teacher) or counselors, still another to hold on to the funds anticipating an enrollment increase that might not be enough to justify another PSU.

In addition to the staffing budget, each school receives an annual materials and supplies budget as well as its share of funds from the state-funded School Improvement Program and lottery. An elementary school with 800 students handles a budget of $75,000. Each school has its own process for deciding how these funds will be spent. In some schools, part or all of the budget is divided among the teachers and spent however each teacher wants. In other schools, all expenditures are decided by a schoolwide committee and agreed on by the entire staff. The degree to which teachers are involved in school-level decisions is largely a function of the principal's style, though the district strongly encourages all principals to maximize teacher participation and to expect to be evaluated on that basis.

Poway staff and community are exceedingly proud of their schools. They cite numerous honors and awards from the state and the U.S. Department of Education. Teachers believe they are treated as professionals. The only flaw, acknowledged by all, is the tension between the teachers' union and management, reflecting in large part the anti-union stance of the community and district leadership. Yet even this tension interferes little with the business of education, primarily because salary increases are limited by the funds available. (In California the total is determined by the state.) Also, Poway has begun experimenting with "trust agreements," as a less formal mechanism for reaching agreement on specific issues and con-

cerns. Their current peer evaluation activities fall under this new kind of agreement between the union and district management.

Dade County Public Schools (Miami, Florida)

"We're building a better mousetrap."

The Dade County Public Schools are fundamentally changing their governance structure -- a major undertaking in an urban district of 276 schools. Moving beyond the state's mandates and incentives for faculty participation in school governance, Dade has developed its own approach to the professionalization of teaching through school-based management and shared decisionmaking. Their approach has evolved from a strong partnership between district and union leaders and is based on the premise that student learning requires good teaching which, in turn, demands a working environment that will attract the best and brightest professionals.

Attractive workplaces for teachers are described as those that provide opportunities for exercising discretion in the classroom as well as authority and leadership in school decisionmaking. With the goal of creating such working environments, the superintendent launched a pilot program, directed by a newly created Office of School-Based Management, to devolve more authority and discretion to the school level.

The district acquainted schools with the concepts of school-based management and shared decisionmaking and provided each school with a copy of the report of the Carnegie Forum's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. Schools were then invited to submit proposals to participate in the first wave of school-based management. Of the fifty-five schools whose faculties voted to participate and submit proposals, thirty-three were selected by a joint management-labor team to be part of the pilot. These schools receive the same level of funds as all other schools, based on their enrollment and the district average per pupil expenditure of roughly $3,400 (excluding special program budgets). However, the pilot schools receive their funds as one lump sum, allowing significantly greater

flexibility in deciding how to allocate some 90 percent of their budgets. The rest of the schools in Dade County have discretion over only the materials and supplies portion of the budget, which is roughly 10 percent.

Within the constraints of state law, schools can allocate their budgets however they wish; they can spend more or less on staff or equipment or utilities. If school staff run into barriers posed by school board rules, teacher labor contract provisions, or state department of education regulations, they can request a waiver from a committee established expressly for that purpose. Also, schools are free to set up whatever governing structures they wish, provided that teachers are given a significant role in site planning and decisionmaking.

In addition to a three-day school improvement conference for teams of principals and teachers, each pilot school receives $6,250 for staff development. The teacher-director of the Teacher Education Center, which administers all district staff development, encourages teachers in the pilot schools to determine their specific inservice needs. She has seen teachers in the pilot schools take more initiative for requesting the kind of training they need. Thus, one school asked for training in effective leadership, another in bilingual education, and another in writing.

The partnership between top district officials and the teachers' union is evident at all levels of the School-Based Management Program A union committee reviews waiver requests, and there is an understanding between the district and the union that problems between teachers and principals will be resolved by a joint committee composed of two union and two central office representatives.

Because the school-based management/shared decisionmaking program, a four-year pilot, is still in the early stages, it is premature to assess its full impact. For example, much of the schools' new authority over personnel will not be realized until staff begin to turn over. Although a few schools have replaced teachers with hourly instructors or assistant principals with classroom staff, limitations on class size and reluctance to lay off fellow teachers restrict their immediate options. When teachers retire or resign for other reasons, and when

school staff have had the time to create new visions and structures, opportunities to make significant changes in school structures will increase.

Nevertheless, many immediate effects are already observable. All participating schools have set up new governance structures instead of relying on existing committees or councils. These structures look quite different from one school to the next. For example, one school has a thirty-two-member council representing all constituencies; a subset of nine form the basic working group for creating plans. Another has a ten-member elected committee of teachers and administrators.

Schools have requested and been granted dozens of waivers. They can hire noncertified teachers with special talents to teach classes in their area of expertise; gifted and talented students can take an elective instead of physical education.

School staff have exercised their new authority in a variety of ways. One school added a seventh period to give all teachers a full period to engage in school-based management. Another replaced its pull-out Spanish program with a schoolwide program twice a week. A junior high council replaced an assistant principal with two teachers who devote part of their time to counseling and discipline. Another management group chose to expand their computer program and used funds to purchase computers.

No one argues that school-based management is easy. Teachers are spending much more time on top of an already time consuming job. But in the process they are more enthusiastic and feel more control. Principals are also spending more time on the job, but they understand that sharing their authority with teachers (and in some schools with parents, students, and community members) is a top priority of the district leadership; their efforts lead to the development of creative strategies that enable them to meet the needs of their students and their school community. Central administrators are encouraging schools to take risks, to experiment; they are committed to bottom-up restructuring and will not pass judgment until the completion of the four-year pilot.

Other schools have already asked to become part of this program. From the district's standpoint, this is the ideal way for the program to expand; they will initiate a second pilot program this year. District leaders are reluctant to see school-based management spread too quickly; they are eager to continue to learn from the experiences of the pilot schools.

In addition to school-based management, Dade's reforms include several other major initiatives, such as satellite learning centers (schools at the workplace); Saturday morning classes at schools throughout the district; a nine-week mini-sabbatical program of seminars, clinics, and research for teachers; and a program that enables teachers who voluntarily transfer to schools where they represent the racial minority to complete advanced degrees at a local university, tuition-free.

All Dade County schools, including the pilots, will have their efforts encouraged by the new teachers' contract. In addition to substantial salary increases (averaging 28 percent over the next three years), the new contract contains an entire article, entitled "Professionalization of Teaching and Education," that includes the creation of:

- a pilot peer intervention and assistance program to assist teachers;
- a pilot teacher career ladder program;
- a professional leave bank so that teachers can attend meetings, conferences, and institutes;
- a grant proposal program to fund educational issues forums planned by school faculties; and
- continued teacher involvement in planning and designing new educational facilities and in selecting and assessing principals and assistant principals.

New Orleans Public Schools (New Orleans, Louisiana)

"All children can learn."

The New Orleans Public Schools, along with the local teachers' union and the community, formed an unusual partnership

with the Southern Coalition for Educational Equity to improve instruction in their lowest achieving schools. With funds from Carnegie Corporation of New York, augmented by generous support from many other foundations, corporations, and individuals, the Southern Coalition, an advocacy group working in eleven southern states, asked the financially strapped district of more than 120 schools for permission to implement an effective schools program in their lowest achieving schools and for a commitment to adopt the program should it prove successful. Both have now occurred.

After testing and refining their approach in one junior high school, the Southern Coalition's Effective Schools Project expanded to four elementary schools. Based on the Southern Coalition's success, the school district has expanded the project to three middle schools, using federal ECIA Chapter 2 funds. Projects at both levels are directed by New Orleans-based Southern Coalition staff, all of whom were classroom teachers in the New Orleans public schools prior to this new role. All schools in the program volunteered to participate and survived a rigorous selection process in which teachers and principals demonstrated support for instructional improvement.

The Southern Coalition's approach to school change has three unusual features. First is the partnership among an outside advocacy group, the leadership of the school district, the teachers' union, and the community, a partnership that was initiated by the Southern Coalition. Despite the depressed economy of the state and the district and New Orleans' large, low-achieving minority population, the Southern Coalition (with its own resources) was thus able to spark changes that otherwise would have taken much longer.

The second unusual feature is that the project is managed and staffed by a team of four highly experienced New Orleans teachers who help design and shape the operation of the project. Under the supervision of the Southern Coalition's Jackson office, the staff work with teachers and administrators in four elementary schools and three middle schools. These talented teachers have demonstrated their ability to take on new roles and functions, including day-to-day program design

and management, clinical supervision, and staff development. Project staff spend most of their time working in classrooms, providing training, assistance, and feedback in a nonevaluative context. Their work is focused on helping teachers in grades four through eight increase the reading comprehension of their students; hence, they help teachers learn to select interesting and challenging books, to ask thought-provoking instead of fact-based questions, and to involve students in active learning activities. Project staff also work with principals to enhance their skills as instructional leaders, often bringing in expert principals from outside the district to lead seminars and work with principals in their school settings.

The third unusual feature of the New Orleans Effective Schools Project is a remarkably successful summer program that combines teaching reading to children, strengthening teachers' skills, and providing a visible model of an alternative structure for schools and classrooms. Unlike typical summer remedial programs that recycle school-year worksheets, teaching methods, and readers, this program emphasizes comprehension, analytical thinking, and the active involvement of students.

Created and run by project staff, the summer program has become an integral part of the Effective Schools Project. The program draws both staff and students from the project schools and provides them with an exciting learning environment. This experience has proved to be a powerful way to communicate the characteristics of effective teaching and learning in a way that carries over to school practices during the year. The summer program has grown from 120 students and six teachers five years ago to 500 students and twenty teachers in 1988. The program is structured to provide long uninterrupted blocks of instructional time focused on reading; resources, assistance, and support for teachers; a professional and collegial working environment; and an atmosphere that places high value on academic growth and encourages high expectations of, and respect for, students.

The program opens with a week of intensive training for all teachers. Here teachers are exposed to various new instructional strategies including Reciprocal Teaching and the Great

Books Program, both of which emphasize active involvement of students in discussions of stories and questions that require students to think about and interpret what they have read. Teachers also are trained to manage concurrent multiple classroom activities.

Each day of the five-week program begins with breakfast and a brief meeting of all students and staff, a procedure that helps establish a group spirit and provides students with opportunities to perform before a large group. Students describe interesting books they have read or something they have written, and community leaders give talks about the importance of reading.

A three-hour daily morning reading class offers students a variety of stimulating activities and learning centers, all directed toward improved reading comprehension and the enjoyment of reading. As one teacher said, "Here kids are allowed to think; in regular school kids aren't encouraged to think." Afternoons begin with lunch followed by two one-hour electives (e.g., music, art, creative writing, computers) taught by local high school students who also serve as aides and tutors in the reading classes and as young role models for the students.

Each year documented outcomes of the summer program testify to its effectiveness from several perspectives. On the College Board's Degrees of Reading Power exam, designed specifically to measure reading comprehension, student gains during the five-week program have averaged four to seven points in each of the five years. These are equivalent to gains normally expected for an entire school year. Teachers attest to student progress in speaking and writing as well as an absence of behavior problems and absenteeism. Students do not think of the reading classes as "school"—they are "too much fun." Moreover, teachers (most ten- to twenty-year veterans) rave about their experiences in unprecedented terms. One teacher reported, "I was getting so discouraged teaching. This experience has been so rewarding to me; it's given me new hope and new ideas to take back into the classroom."

The Effective Schools Project demonstrates that teachers in New Orleans classrooms can, in a supportive environment,

dramatically improve both their instructional effectiveness and their job satisfaction. It also demonstrates the truth of the Southern Coalition's motto—that all students can learn. District, union, and Southern Coalition leaders look forward to expanding both the summer and school-year programs.

Five More Pioneers

The ABC Unified School District (Cerritos, California). This district has a very different structure than it did ten years ago. Creative leadership in the district and the teachers' union, combined with a university partnership that brought in new ideas and state funds for mentors and school improvement, have resulted in an increase in both teacher leaders and school-site decisionmaking. To minimize the number of management levels between the superintendent and schools, the size of the district staff has been decreased significantly. This reform, in turn, has freed more funds for the schools. Teachers have taken full responsibility for curriculum development. As a result of these actions, test scores have increased substantially, and both teacher and student absences have declined.

Cincinnati, Ohio, Public Schools. Over the last six years the teachers' union and the school board of the Cincinnati Public Schools have moved from adversarial negotiations focused on teachers' salaries to a cooperative, problem-solving process focused on issues of instruction and policy. The result is agreement on a series of structural changes that reorganize the conditions of teaching and learning. These include decreased teaching loads for teachers, increased planning time, funds for professional development, a four-step ladder with the lead teacher at the top, and mentors to assist and evaluate new teachers. The most significant change lies in the professional working relationship among former adversaries who now jointly plan for the future, a process they hope to extend to teachers and administrators in the schools.

District 4, East Harlem (New York City, New York). Children and their parents have an array of options in both elementary and secondary schools in the district. From two alternative programs begun in 1974, there are now thirty

programs that involve 80 to 250 students—with groups purposely kept small so that teachers can know all the students. Each has been created by the teachers who staff it, and each is characterized by instruction that actively engages students and by minimal administrative overhead. Many alternative schools are housed in one building and are managed by a building principal. Each is managed by a director who teaches part time and an assistant who teaches most of the time. The creation of alternatives and an efficient system for matching students and schools are supported by a strong but very small district administration.

Hammond, Indiana, Public Schools. This district began a school improvement process (SIP) in one school in 1982 and, under a new cooperative agreement between the board and the union, has expanded the process to all schools. SIP shifts decisionmaking to the schools, which create councils of teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Cooperation among the administration, school board, teachers, and community has led to creative solutions to the district's budget deficits and to an agreement that allows school councils to request exemptions from contract provisions. A high school teacher is released half-time to coordinate SIP and provide training; board members sit on SIP councils. Some SIP teams screen and interview principalship applicants; others have significantly altered the school day, through such plans as providing ninety minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction.

Rochester, New York, Public Schools. The superintendent and the head of the teachers' union in the Rochester Public Schools have taken the lead in implementing many of the recommendations in the 1986 report of the Carnegie Forum's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. In 1987 they drafted a three-year contract that redefined teachers' roles and dramatically increased their salaries. Teachers now move through four categories: intern, resident, professional, and lead teacher. Lead teachers—these competitive positions are open only to experienced teachers—spend up to half their time working with other teachers and can earn as much as $70,000 per year. High schools r) longer have attendance boundaries, and internal teacher transfers are no longer based

on seniority. Schools are run by planning committees, giving teachers a voice in school decisionmaking.

Summary

Each of these districts recognizes that restructuring is a process that requires many steps under sustained strong leadership. Some are changing their management structures—increasing school-site autonomy and shared decisionmaking—while some are correspondingly decreasing the size and changing the roles of central office staff. Others are changing how schools are organized—redesigning schedules and curricula, creating schools within schools, and demonstrating new structures in summer programs. Some are changing their accountability structures—shifting responsibility to school staffs and providing parents with choices among alternatives. Others are changing the structure of staff development—offering a range of professional development opportunities to teachers and principals in training centers and on site.

With unique histories and circumstances, various districts involved in restructuring differ in the order of their actions. ("What Restructuring Districts Do" on page 42 summarizes these actions.) Each district described has taken some steps and has plans for the others. For example, Dade County began with school-based management in pilot schools and is now strengthening support for change through increased opportunities for professional development. In contrast, Jefferson County began with an emphasis on professional development for all school staff and is moving toward increased school autonomy. Poway began by delegating some budgetary authority to its schools and added new responsibilities each year. In New Orleans, the Southern Coalition for Educational Equity demonstrated a new school structure and delivery of professional development, alternatives that the district is adopting and expanding.

Although each district has made considerable progress, it is too soon to pass judgment about ultimate success. Each district continues to face hard challenges. Will Dade County's experiment persist beyond the pilot stage? Can Poway maintain its highly decentralized operation in the face of rapid in-

creases in enrollment over the next decade? How dependent is Jefferson County on the Gheens Foundation, and what will the Professional Development Schools look like? To what extent will the New Orleans Public Schools be able to provide the leadership and resources now provided by the Southern Coalition? Yet each district shows positive signs, especially in the excitement and enthusiasm of teachers. The experiences of these laboratories for restructuring offer a wealth of valuable guidance. The next section looks more closely at the steps these districts have taken to restructure their systems.

THE WHY'S AND HOW'S OF RESTRUCTURING

These restructuring districts are in the vanguard of educational change; they have begun to translate into action the rhetoric of restructuring schools and the teaching profession. Yet readers familiar with past school reforms might have a sense of déjà vu. After all, what is so new about team teaching, or committees of teachers developing curricula, or school-site budgeting and management?

What is new is the way these districts are going about their restructuring efforts, the goals they seek, and the kinds of processes they have set in motion. There may be nothing new about the concept of team teaching; but there is something new in Jefferson County, where teams of teachers are creating alternative school designs within schools as one piece of a broad array of "little tries" directed toward restructuring.

Each of the districts has its own unique set of circumstances and, accordingly, its own approach to restructuring. Yet there are common themes that significantly distinguish the approaches of these districts from other reforms. Their approaches incorporate much of what has been learned in the last two decades about the process of changing organizations and improving education.

The following three themes are evident in the directions and actions of each of these districts:

- The goal of restructuring is long-term, comprehensive change guided by a conception of schools as stimulating workplaces and learning environments
- School staff need the skills, authority, and time to create new roles and environments appropriate to their situations.
- Restructuring requires building new coalitions of support and new conceptions of accountability.

These themes are elaborated in this chapter, emphasizing the ways district leaders view what they are doing and the strategic choices they make. Illustrations are drawn primarily from the four districts visited, augmented with information from the five other districts cited in the preceding section.

The Purpose: New Goals, Visions, and Attitudes

What Is New About Restructuring? Current restructuring efforts set in motion and institutionalize new practices and processes which are guided by the goal to create satisfying workplaces and productive learning environments. These efforts are not characterized by the usual prescriptions associated with reforms. They are not designed to add on to or change just one part of the system, they are not targeted to particular students or content areas, and they do not specify learning objectives or outcomes.

Restructuring is systemic and comprehensive—it is intended to change how districts and schools are organized and how individual roles are defined. Although districts have chosen different approaches to change, they share a commitment to systemwide change that results ultimately in significantly different learning environments for students. Thus, it is not a matter of implementing peer evaluation or clinical supervision or school-based management for its own sake, but of seeing to it that each contributes to the larger goal of creating more effective teaching and learning.

Recognizing that restructuring is a very complex process, district leaders do not expect immediate results; they realize that changing an organization means changing people's attitudes, roles, and relationships. Jefferson County, for example, views the creation of Professional Development Schools as a ten-year process. Decentralization in Poway and ABC, and the creation of a system of alternatives in District 4, all evolved over a period of a decade or longer. In an education system that has changed little since its current staff were themselves school children, changing is indeed a long-term proposition.

How Districts Mobilize Schools. To initiate and sustain this new kind of broad-based reform, district leaders have consciously created new images and a new language. They work to communicate the need for and goals of restructuring to staff at all levels of the system, including professional and support personnel. Leaders keep district and school staff informed of the latest knowledge in both education and related fields such as business management.

In Dade County, every school received a copy of the report of the Carnegie Forum's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession; staff in Jefferson County and Poway cite corporate and management books and articles, including the work of Drucker and Peters. In addition to communicating new ideas, this flow of information and images has resulted in a common language throughout each district. Jefferson County's motto, "every teacher a leader and every student a success," is heard from one end of the district to the other.

The process of restructuring starts with current practices and activities in place. By reinforcing the goals of restructuring, the language and images of effective learning environments also provide staff a way to view ongoing practices – to decide which fit their long range goals and which need to be adjusted or phased out. Jefferson County explicitly promotes the notion that staff can participate in restructuring in a variety of ways, as long as their actions are consistent with a set of common values. Restructuring provides an overarching framework that incorporates a variety of pre-existing and new activities, from Professional Development Schools to middle school teaching teams to high school participation in the Coalition of Essential Schools.

District leaders also have avoided two major pitfalls of past imposed reforms by initiating restructuring efforts in volunteer schools. In addition to expressing a willingness to participate, schools are asked to demonstrate significant staff support for change. To become a Professional Development School in Jefferson County or a pilot school in Dade County, or to take part in the Effective Schools Project in New Orleans, school staff were required to vote and write proposals to become candidates for participation. In District 4, alternative schools are established by the teachers who will teach in them.

Districts also encourage teacher participation in restructuring their schools by providing salaries commensurate with responsibilities. Both Dade County and Rochester plan substantial salary increases for all teachers, and a much higher ceiling – more than $60,000 – for those who qualify.

How Districts Encourage Risk Taking. Restructuring schools is not for the fainthearted. District leaders know they

are taking risks, and they encourage the same of their staffs—central office and school-based. Teachers and principals are asked to experiment and to assess continuously the effects of their efforts. Jefferson County's leaders argue that systematic little tries eventually lead to big changes. In Dade, district leaders encourage school staff to learn from their successes and their mistakes. Staff are urged to experiment without fear of punishment for failure.

Because these districts are all moving from the known to the unknown, risks are an essential part of progress. All the districts face the challenge of getting teachers and principals to imagine new ways of organizing their roles and their work. They recognize that risk taking requires knowledge of what to do and how to judge it as well as more encouragement and freedom from constraints.

Top leaders in restructuring districts—superintendents, school board members, and union heads—encourage risk taking by demonstrating their willingness to take risks in a variety of ways. In Jefferson County, hiring a well-known reformer communicated a new attitude to district and school staff. Agreeing to cooperate with an advocacy group signaled a willingness to experiment in New Orleans. Cincinnati's union leadership took a risk in shifting the focus of negotiation to instructional practices and outcomes. Leaders in Rochester took risks in negotiating a costly contract that dramatically reorganizes the teaching profession.

Support for risk taking is signaled by allowing waivers from restrictive rules and regulations. Without relaxing the multitude of constraints on what schools can do (for example, class size, teachers' hours, class schedules, and textbook selection), current practices are pretty much locked into place.

District leaders encourage and reinforce risk taking behaviors by the language they use and the activities they foster and reward. When districts ask schools to volunteer, as in Dade's School-Based Management pilots and Jefferson County's Professional Development Schools, they are inviting school staff to take risks. Jefferson County and Dade leaders communicate to principals and teachers that the way to be recognized is to be innovative.

District leaders are asking principals to take the risk of sharing their authority with teachers. And teachers are being asked to undertake risks—to work with a team where their actions are much more visible, as in Jefferson County, or to try out new teaching strategies that demand less control, such as using students as teachers, as in New Orleans.

The People: New Roles and Relationships

Why Districts Increase School Autonomy. Restructuring districts view the school—the locus of teaching and learning—as the appropriate organizational level for mobilizing change. Schools differ in the make-up of their staff and students, as well as in their resources and facilities, and need flexibility to adapt to those differences. But real flexibility comes only with control over resources and relief from rules that define how those resources are spent. This condition translates into the need for some type of school-based management with budgetary control and relief from intrusive rules and regulations.

In contrast to past reforms centered on school-site budgeting or school-based management, current restructuring efforts are not driven by notions of administrative and economic efficiency. They are driven, rather, by the understanding that innovation and hence change are stifled by strong central control and direction, and therefore that those closest to the students should be free, within limits, to create environments appropriate to their unique student populations and circumstances. Thus, teacher participation in decisionmaking—shared decisionmaking—is an integral component of a school-based management approach, as is a focus on the goal of increased learning.

Central control is not really diminished; it is redirected. It becomes the means for creating innovation at the school site, for maintaining flexibility, and for self-correction. There is no fixed amount of authority that properly resides in schools versus districts. Instead there is an ebb and flow, a movement away from and toward equilibrium in response to external changes, new priorities, or internal imbalances. Because districts retain the authority to inspect results and take actions

accordingly, and because the increased authority for school staff is coupled with increased professional responsibility, these approaches are quite distinct from the "let a thousand flowers bloom/do your own thing" approach of the sixties.

Stimulating diversity and innovation is especially important today because a major barrier to improving education is the absence of good, workable models of stimulating workplaces and learning environments. Creative experiments provide policymakers with concrete options. As they are created, districts might exert more control in order to spread the best of the new ideas. Or, as in District 4, districts might continue to support the development of alternative choices designed to fit diverse students and teachers.

School-based budgeting and management and shared decisionmaking in restructuring districts differ from similar past reforms in other important ways. Such mechanisms are not viewed as ends in themselves. Simply increasing site autonomy, teacher participation, and flexibility is unlikely to result in different learning environments. Such policies must be coupled with access to new knowledge and skills as well as encouragement of and support for change, such as the provision of time for teachers to develop and experiment with new approaches. Without these complementary pieces, school-level planning can easily become an empty yet time-consuming process of detailing objectives and revamping disciplinary policies without touching on issues of learning.

How Districts Devolve Authority. Each district makes different decisions about which funds and functions to decentralize and how much oversight to provide. Often, these decisions are constrained by union or state requirements such as class size limits. In Poway and Dade County the superintendent, with school board approval and union agreement, has given schools major control over their budgets. Both districts provide each school with a budget for staffing and for materials and supplies. Dade County goes even further in giving schools an allocation for building maintenance.

Even in these districts, school staff have little control over staffing, most of which is predetermined by state and contract rules and the fact that the district has final say over who gets

hired and fired. Yet the opportunity to make staffing decisions even at the margins sends a strong signal to school staff. Instead of having no control, school staff highly value the ability to choose several part-time specialists instead of a teacher in Poway and to replace an assistant principal with two part-time teachers in Dade.

Districts also delegate responsibilities previously held by district staff. For example, teachers participate in curriculum development, and district staff play a coordinating, instead of directing, role across schools. School staff may also create or select professional development activities in addition to those provided by the district.

In general, districts delegate those functions that most directly affect teaching and learning while retaining system-wide functions such as transportation and food services.

Shared decisionmaking asks principals and teachers to assume new roles. Districts follow different strategies to insure that this change occurs. Neither Dade nor Poway specifies how shared decisionmaking should operate; each school is free to devise its own mechanism. As a result, there is variety in school governance, ranging from huge schoolwide councils that do most of their work in small committees to schools that vote simply to divide the non-staff budget among teachers and have representatives make staffing decisions.

Leaders in both districts take steps to guarantee that teachers have the opportunity to participate. In Poway, the union contract requires that teachers participate in decisions about the staffing budget; even stronger signals come from central office staff who pressure principals, through evaluation and hiring criteria, to involve their staffs in all school-site budgetary decisions. In Dade, though no formal procedures have been established, district leaders clearly signal principals that the sharing of authority is highly valued by the superintendent and will play a major role in the way their performance is judged. Thus principals are not only asked to change their roles, but also feel some pressure to do so.

Districts grant flexibility to school staff in different ways, usually based on agreements negotiated with teacher unions.

In Dade, a formal process exists for teachers and principals to request waivers from the union contract, district rules, or state statute. Waivers are usually granted; for example, one elementary school has gotten permission to have a common dismissal time instead of following the district policy of staggered dismissals. Another received permission to shift their Spanish program from a pull-out program to a mini-immersion program. Hammond has devised a process by which schools can test a new program idea for a limited time even if it violates a contract provision.

In addition to providing the professional development opportunities described on the pages that follow, district leaders take other steps to facilitate and support school-site decisionmaking. Maintaining open lines of communication with school staff is one means of support, visible in Poway where there is no middle management and in Dade where pilot schools report directly to the central office instead of to their area offices. In Jefferson County, there is direct communication between school staff and the Gheens Academy.

Districts also support school-based management by responding quickly to requests. Poway's efficient purchasing and distribution system gets materials and supplies to school staff within three days if the items are in stock, and within two weeks if an outside vendor is required.

The Emergence of New Roles. Restructuring provides opportunities for a variety of new roles and relationships throughout a district. It signals a major shift in how people in school systems think about roles and relationships. The shift is from a system characterized by controlling and directing what goes on at the next lower level to guiding and facilitating professionals in their quest for more productive learning opportunities for students.

This shift is a difficult one for district staff because teachers have been conditioned to be told what to do and administrators are accustomed to telling others what to do. Both Dade County and Jefferson County administrators try to communicate the goals of restructuring to school staff without prescribing what staff is to do differently.

Top district leaders communicate a vision of effective learning, both to the community and to staff, and help provide immediate staff with the leadership and management skills they need to transmit the same message to the next level. The role of middle managers becomes more focused on providing services directly to schools in a variety of ways: by improving the management and instructional skills of principals and teachers, by responding to requests for assistance from them, or by relocating to the school site.

In Poway the superintendent shifted over a period of years to a small flat district organization. This shift resulted in new kinds of responsibilities for the remaining district staff and in more resources for schools. For example, central office staff in Poway spend much of their time working directly with school staff, delegating responsibilities—curriculum development, for example—that were formerly district activities. ABC operates in a similar fashion. The reduction of the size of the district office in Poway and ABC also frees up funds which go directly to the schools and are evident in additional materials and supplies as well as staff positions; for example, in Poway each high school academic department has a full-time clerk to assist teachers in preparing lessons.

Beyond school-site management and shared decision-making, district leaders take actions that shift the roles and responsibilities of principals. One vehicle is requiring principals to participate in professional development activities, including instructional practices, clinical supervision, and leadership and management skills. Opening the annual district planning and budgeting process to principals is another such strategy.

But the greatest variety of new roles are those being assumed by teachers in these districts, either as a direct or indirect result of district actions. Teachers are helping to create the conditions that enable them to facilitate learning in the classroom. Beyond the classroom, teachers are taking on new leadership roles as managers, program designers, and lead or mentor teachers, among others. These roles are summarized on the next page.

EXAMPLES OF NEW TEACHER ROLES IN RESTRUCTURING DISTRICTS

- Teachers on the staff of Jefferson County's Gheens Academy help respond to the professional development needs of school staff.
- Teachers serve as team leaders who manage mini-schools within Jefferson County middle schools.
- Teachers create and manage alternative schools in District 4 (East Harlem).
- Teachers, like personnel managers, create job descriptions and interview student teacher applicants in Jefferson County.
- Teachers are a program management team responsible for running the New Orleans Effective Schools Project and Summer Program.
- Teachers act as coaches who observe and give feedback to teachers in the classroom in New Orleans, Poway, and Cincinnati.
- Teachers design programs and provide professional development in Dade, New Orleans, and Poway.
- Teachers are developers who have full responsibility for designing and adapting the curriculum in Poway and ABC.
- Lead teachers in Dade County manage satellite learning centers located at parents' workplaces.
- Mentors and lead teachers in ABC, Dade, Poway, and Rochester work with new and experienced teachers by:
  - assisting teachers in specific areas such as teaching critical thinking, incorporating literature into subject areas, or integrating computers in their instruction;
  - establishing networks across schools to exchange ideas and coordinate improvement efforts; and
  - directing districtwide teacher education centers and mini-sabbatical professional development programs.

How Districts Cultivate New Roles. Inadequate time, information, and skills severely constrain the creation and evolution of new roles, especially for teachers. In every district, teachers are already stretched to the limit preparing for and teaching large classes. Without district support and encouragement, few school staff would have the opportunity to take on new roles and additional responsibilities.

To increase available time, district leaders provide planning time, release time, and paid time in the summer for planning and curriculum development. Cincinnati's latest contract reduces teaching loads for all teachers to insure that they have adequate daily planning time. Principals and teachers are careful to maximize the efficiency of meetings; in Poway, principals limit faculty meetings to items requiring group discussion and provide all necessary background information in writing in advance so that meeting time is not wasted.

The ability of principals and teachers to create better learning environments is a function of their knowledge and skills. The more principals know about good instruction and the provision of useful feedback to teachers, the more effectively they can support and strengthen their schools' learning environments. The more teachers are exposed to new knowledge through formal development activities, informal exchanges with colleagues, and visits to other schools, the more they have to draw on in creating their own effective learning environments. Thus, professional development plays a very important role in these districts.

The failure of many past reforms can be traced to the absence of ongoing, high quality, instructionally related professional development opportunities for school staff. Each principal and teacher can benefit from different mixes of formal workshops, collegial interaction, reading, observing others, and good feedback on practice, but all need some of each. No amount of district leadership, school autonomy, or budgetary control can compensate for an absence of opportunities to increase one's knowledge and skills.

It is hard for most education professionals to hear "inservice training" or "staff development" without negative associations. The combination of poor quality, faddish "spray and

pray" workshops and teachers' motivation for attending often insures that they generally are considered a waste of time. However, in Poway and Jefferson County current professional development programs include a broad array of interesting workshops, meetings, training sessions, and access to knowledge and resources, all directly tied to classroom practices. In these districts teachers and administrators often seek out professional development opportunities for intrinsic satisfaction instead of the usual extrinsic rewards (pay or course credit).

Professional development also encompasses induction of new teachers into the system, as in Jefferson County's Professional Development Schools. Analogous to teaching hospitals, these institutions provide on-the-job training for new teachers in settings that exemplify the best practices. Cincinnati, Dade County, and Rochester enable experienced teachers to work part-time with new teachers. Dade County's mentor teachers work with apprentice teachers who are college graduates but who lack education degrees; after eighteen months, apprentices are qualified for certification.

How Districts Promote Professional Development. All districts tackling structural change recognize the importance of professional development, though their resources for providing it vary considerably. At one extreme is Jefferson County, which has an entire center and (currently) twenty-four schools built around professional development. The very existence of the Gheens Academy communicates to everyone the importance associated with ongoing professional development for staff. In Poway, too, the superintendent has helped create a climate in which professional development is viewed as a valued resource for everyone. For example, district office clerical staff are trained to see how their actions contribute to the education of the district's students.

Jefferson County and Poway leaders have similar views of professional development. They believe it is important to create a climate in which ongoing professional development is viewed as desirable and even prestigious; to provide new knowledge and skills that teachers and administrators want and need; to connect all professional development to student

learning; and to invest substantial resources in professional development. Even courses on management, leadership, and team building are designed to use these skills to achieve stimulating work and learning environments. More specifically, workshops on classroom instruction focus on ways to engage students actively in learning to think, solve problems, and work in teams. They also focus on ways teachers can interact with colleagues and grow intellectually.

In Poway, for example, district leaders strongly urged principals to attend teacher workshops on instruction and required them to participate in intensive training in clinical supervision. In fact, most principals had to attend several instructional workshops in order to be present when different groups of their teachers participated. In this way, principals demonstrated their support for instructional improvement and learned instructional skills themselves. They reported that the training in clinical supervision changed the whole tone and effectiveness of their teacher evaluations by giving them ideas on what to look for and how to deliver constructive feedback.

Poway leaders also pride themselves on keeping up with the latest and the best in professional development, drawing from both the world of education and the private sector. A young Poway teacher enrolled in a graduate education course noted that she had already been exposed to each new technique or practice introduced in the course through professional development training in the district.

In New Orleans the Effective Schools Project is designed around the principle that workshops introducing general strategies combined with classroom-based professional development are essential for instructional improvement. Thus the backbone of both the school year and the summer program is intensive training for teachers and classroom-based coaching. In Dade County, pilot schools are encouraged to request what they want in the way of staff development and technical assistance from the district's Teacher Education Center.

Even in a climate in which workshop attendance, for example, is valued by teachers, there are limits to the amount of time and energy available for professional growth. Both Poway's and Jefferson County's extensive offerings include

provision for released time for teachers – time to attend training sessions, to review new materials, and to visit other schools. Dade County's new teachers' contract calls for joint management-labor task forces to develop a range of professional development programs including a Professional Leave Bank and a school-based Educational Issues Forum.

The Political Context: New Coalitions and Accountability

Building New Alliances. Restructuring requires new kinds of alliances, some between historical adversaries and others involving partners outside school districts. Because restructuring is comprehensive and long term, a superintendent needs the support of the school board, the teachers' union or other professional organization, and the community. Conversely, other district leaders who initiate restructuring are unlikely to succeed without the leadership and support of the superintendent. School boards must approve changes in budgeting processes and governance. Any significant changes in the roles and responsibilities of teachers typically conflict with union contract language. Whether or not restructuring conflicts with union rules, district leaders recognize the need both to inform teachers and gain their support before launching restructuring efforts.

Partnership to create new alliances and broad-based political support can exist from the outset or result from a lengthy process of bargaining and negotiating. Whether the school board, superintendent, union leadership, advocacy group, or foundation initiates the process, each can work as part of a cooperative venture. All parties must agree on the goals so that efforts are not thwarted prematurely as a result of miscommunication, mistrust, or unrealistic expectations.

Collaborative efforts between district management and teachers' unions create trust among teachers that their interests have been protected. Dade County and Rochester exemplify such cooperative ventures between districts and unions. The superintendent and union head of the United Teachers of Dade County jointly created the School-Based Management/Shared Decisionmaking program and negotiated details in advance, including a process for waiving

contract provisions. The recently negotiated contract raises teacher salaries to perhaps the highest in the country and adds provisions for leave time for professional development. The Rochester Teachers Association in cooperation with the superintendent developed the terms of their landmark 1987 agreement that restructured the teaching profession and increased salaries dramatically.

School boards have assumed critical roles in promoting restructuring, ranging from the hiring of superintendents committed to restructuring to sitting on school-site councils. Their trust and flexibility are essential to restructuring efforts. For example, the flexibility and scheduling of school-based budgeting in Poway do not mesh with the school board's annual budget preparation. Without the school board's confidence in district and school staff, the process would fall apart because schools cannot provide detailed data on expenditures to the board until the end of the school year, after the board has completed its budget process.

Restructuring has brought new players into local educational reform. The Southern Coalition for Educational Equity may be the first advocacy group to initiate an alliance with a school district. Obtaining broad-based financial support, including that of many local contributors, and investing the first year in building a coalition with the superintendent, the school board, the teachers' union, and the community were essential to the successful implementation of the Southern Coalition's programs.

A number of private foundations—local and national—are involved in restructuring activities in a variety of new ways. Jefferson County exemplifies a unique collaboration of the local Gheens Foundation, the superintendent, and the community. With substantial financial support from Gheens (reflecting the moral support of the business and civic community), district leaders established the Gheens Professional Development Academy. The growth in the size and importance of the academy, however, could not have been achieved with funds alone. It required district leaders to pull together the political support of the school board, the teachers' union, and parents; it also required the willingness of district leaders and

the union head to hire a strong reformer and educational leader to head the academy.

The report of the Carnegie Forum's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession has influenced the restructuring of many districts. The financial support of Carnegie Corporation of New York and other organizations has made possible the Southern Coalition's work in New Orleans. The Matsushita Foundation provides assistance to restructuring districts, including Dade and Jefferson Counties, through a group of consultants and through communication links among pioneering districts. Similarly, local business communities, universities, and parents are playing much more active roles in stimulating and supporting efforts toward structural change.

The impetus for creating new coalitions need not necessarily come from the superintendent. In Jefferson County, for example, it was a combination of the superintendent and the opportunity afforded by the Gheens Foundation. In Cincinnati the impetus came from the head of the teachers' union, in New Orleans, from an outside advocacy group.

Restructuring districts also demonstrate new cooperative ventures between local universities and school districts. Since 1980 the ABC District has participated in a partnership of districts, community colleges, and county offices. Established by UCLA and codirected by John Goodlad, this privately funded collaboration has exposed the districts to new ideas, new theories of change, and a new shared vocabulary. Rochester's plans include provisions for outstanding teachers to spend part of their time as adjunct professors in the teacher education program at the University of Rochester. The Dade Education Compact, a collaboration of Dade County, the teachers' union, and the University of Miami, has created a variety of innovative programs, including an apprenticeship program for liberal arts graduates, tuition-free graduate work for teachers choosing schools where their race is in the minority, an adjunct faculty program, and a hotline for direct access among the three organizations.

In Jefferson County, the University of Louisville has assigned nine faculty members to the Gheens Academy on a part-time basis. The university offers courses through the academy;

for example, a course on action research demonstrates how teachers can do classroom research and publish the results. Cooperation between Jefferson County and the University of Louisville is facilitated by the tenured professorship awarded by the university to the Gheens Academy director. The academy and the university also have received federal and state grants for joint improvement ventures including the creation of a center jointly administered by the director of the academy and the dean of the school of education, supporting collaborative efforts between the two institutions. Collaborations with other neighboring colleges and universities are also underway.

Restructuring Accountability. How can districts tell if efforts to restructure are achieving their desired goals? Those involved in structural change realize that such efforts will die prematurely if their future is tied to immediate gains on standardized achievement tests. Yet people at all levels of a school system, as well as the public, want and need to know how well they are doing—especially when they are changing the way they do things. Teachers experimenting with new approaches need to know they are successful, just as students need feedback on their progress toward learning goals. Because accountability is usually discussed in terms of schools and districts, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that these organizations consist of people whose success determines the success of the system.

Districts recognize that restructuring schools to create more productive teaching and learning environments must be accompanied by restructuring accountability to reflect progress toward this goal. Not surprisingly, restructuring accountability recapitulates many of the themes of restructuring schools: the need for measures that match new goals, the need to involve teachers in creating criteria for success, and the need to create new measures that capture more complex student outcomes and go beyond measures of compliance.

Districts have taken early steps in restructuring accountability. They are striking new kinds of bargains with schools; in exchange for increased authority and flexibility at the school site, principals and teachers must demonstrate results. But

such demonstrations rest more on professional responsibility than on narrow paper-and-pencil instruments. Based on informed judgment, teachers and principals document what they are doing and what the results are. In Poway, for example, extensive training for principals in effective instruction and clinical supervision makes them better judges of good teaching practices.

New kinds of accountability offer more flexibility than was available in the past: an emphasis on multiple measures, both qualitative and quantitative; a shift from paper measures to on-site inspection of practices and perceptions; and, most important, a focus on the instructional goals and results of restructuring instead of compliance with rules and procedures. Accountability is also being redefined in a more realistic timeframe—it takes more than a year or two to change people's skills and roles. Jefferson County and Poway leaders talk in terms of ten years. District leaders are willing to declare that test scores will not go down over the next few years, but they are less willing to commit to increases because the measures are so poorly matched to the new goals they seek.

At the same time, district leaders are creating accountability devices that are more suited to their restructuring goals. In Jefferson County, for example, the first step has been to create, with teacher participation, a document that specifies the goals and standards for their professional development schools. The document characterizes expectations for results in terms of the working environment, the learning environment, and staff roles, as well as student roles and student success.

When goals are explicit, results can be measured against them. District leaders view the development of assessment instruments and procedures for measuring progress toward these goals as integral to the development of the professional development schools.

Jefferson County's approach, and that of other districts, places accountability in a different light. Accountability is a vehicle for assessing progress rather than a means of external control. This approach does not preclude district leaders from rewarding success or penalizing failure. In fact, some rewards

and penalties are already built into the restructuring process — for example, removing principals who are unwilling to share their authority with teachers. But the emphasis is on a shared sense of professional responsibility for success. In Dade County, for example, pilot schools create their own formative evaluation plans with the understanding that summative judgments, including test scores, will not occur during the first three years. At the same time, the district tracks various school-level indicators, including grade point averages, detentions, teacher absenteeism, and staff turnover.

Districts are experimenting with a variety of accountability devices that rest on professional judgment. Poway is experimenting with peer evaluation for teachers, as well as educating principals to make sound judgments and recommendations on instructional practices. School staff also participate on teams that review schools in other districts (and are assessed themselves by visiting teams). Composed of teachers and administrators, school review teams began as part of California's School Improvement Program in which each participating school draws up a three-year improvement plan. In response to limits of test scores and compliance measures, these "quality review" teams now spend three full days visiting a school.

Review teams observe classes, interview staff and students, and inspect documents based on the school's own goals and plan for improvement. Their detailed report goes to the state, the district, and the school The report contains an assessment of each curricular area, characterizing instructional techniques, materials, and content. It also includes assessments of planning and decisionmaking processes, leadership, and staff development. Recommendations for improvement in each area are also presented. School staff may not always agree with the assessments, but they appreciate being judged by peers. Moreover, those who participate on review teams (for which they are trained) gain perspective on their own school.

Not incidentally, some aspects of restructuring have accountability built into them. In Jefferson County's middle schools, every teacher is a member of a team, an arrangement

that makes their actions visible to others—in contrast to the usual closed-door protection. Visibility provides a built-in incentive to maintain professional standards. High standards and results are also reinforced by the ability of parents to shift their children from one team (mini-school) to another. Similarly, in District 4 the ability of parents to choose among alternative schools is an implicit accountability device. Schools that do not attract children will not survive.

LESSONS FROM PIONEERING DISTRICTS

Summary of District Actions

Restructuring school systems is a complex, time-consuming process. Districts involved in restructuring are not taking shortcuts; they are taking multiple, reinforcing actions that fundamentally change relationships between schools and districts and, ultimately, between teachers and students.

These districts accept the fact that the current structure of districts and schools stifles the development and exercise of sound professional judgment that is prerequisite to productive learning. District leaders assume key roles in articulating goals and visions for the future, devising strategies to achieve them, building alliances that support comprehensive change, and communicating images of effective teaching and learning environments to district and school staff and the community.

Leaders of restructuring efforts facilitate change through a combination of actions: devolving authority, relaxing regulations, encouraging experimentation, and directing resources and assistance to school staff. In exchange, districts are asking schools to become more professional organizations where teachers and principals are responsible for creating the conditions that make more effective teaching and learning possible.

These districts differ considerably on which actions to take first. But they share the underlying philosophy that restructuring requires a series of complementary actions sustained over many years; there is no quick fix or single answer. Districts must provide strong leadership, create new structures, and give the support necessary for teachers and administrators to change. "What Restructuring Districts Do," on the following pages, summarizes these actions.

As more and more districts work toward change, narrowly defined school-based management threatens to become the "quick fix." Lessons from the restructuring efforts described argue for great caution. Productive learning environments require skilled, dedicated professionals. To be effective, teachers require supportive working environments and opportunities

WHAT RESTRUCTURING DISTRICTS DO

Provide Leadership

- Make long-term commitment to comprehensive change
  - guided by goals not prescriptions
  - characterized by many reinforcing strategies and steps
- Communicate goals, guiding images, and information
  - to create a language for change and a focus on student learning
  - to have direct communication between schools and top leaders
- Encourage experimentation and risk taking
  - that begin with schools that volunteer
  - by granting waivers from constraining rules
- Demonstrate and promote shared decisionmaking
  - by involving staff in developing goals and values
  - by limiting meetings to action items

Create New Structures

- Participate actively in building new alliances
  - that are cooperative agreements with teachers' unions
  - that are new joint ventures with foundations, advocacy groups, businesses, and universities
- Devolve authority to schools and to teachers
  - by giving schools staffing and materials budgets
  - by providing incentives for principals to involve teachers in school-site decisions

- Promote creation of new roles
  - for teachers as leaders, evaluators, curriculum developers, facilitators of student learning
  - for administrators as facilitators of teachers and instructional leaders
- Develop and demonstrate new models during the summer
  - for restructured programs for staff and students
  - to support teachers to develop curriculum and materials
- Create new forms of accountability
  - that match the comprehensive nature and timeline of restructuring
  - that use multiple measures including those defined by schools

Provide Support and Assistance

- Provide a broad range of opportunities for professional development
  - such as on-and off-site assistance to teachers and administrators
  - by including such topics as techniques in management, clinical supervision, instruction, and content
- Provide time for staff to assume new roles and responsibilities
  - such as time for planning, working with colleagues, and site decisionmaking
  - such as release time for professional development activities
- Seek supplementary sources of funding and assistance
  - from state and federal grants
  - from local businesses, private foundations, and individuals

for continuing growth. School-based management is only one of many ways to achieve this goal; districts must also involve teachers in decisionmaking, relieve schools from restrictive rules, provide administrators and teachers with access to new knowledge and skills, and provide the time and resources to put them to use.

Each school's staff will vary in the amount and kind of assistance they need to create new learning environments. Some schools will be able to create effective planning groups, assess their weaknesses, develop new approaches, and mobilize staff to implement these approaches with little more than access to professional development. Others will need help for one or more of these steps. Still others will need intensive on-site consulting assistance throughout the process.

Districts in the vanguard of restructuring are creating new models for policymakers as they experiment with balancing central control and school autonomy. They recognize that structural change will not bubble up from the bottom without leadership, nurturing, and resources from the district. Nor will change dictated from the top affect schools unless they are full partners in creating new teaching and learning environments.

Implications for State Actions

The focus of this report is on the actions districts take to restructure their systems; state influences on these districts were not investigated. However, there are clear parallels between actions districts take to promote restructuring and those states can take. District leaders inspire and support school change by communicating goals and expectations for results coupled with the authority, flexibility, and skills for school staff to reach them. Similarly, state leaders can inspire and support district change through analogous roles and actions.

States have a dual role in promoting structural change: reinforcing the goals and actions of restructuring districts, and inspiring and assisting restructuring efforts in districts that do not have the leadership and capacity of those described in this report. Even the exceptional districts described here have

depended on external help from foundations, advocacy groups, and others—sources that cannot possibly help all 15,000 school districts in the nation.

States can profoundly influence districts and schools by setting the tone, language, and terms of the discussion on educational change. The districts described in this publication are exceptional by definition—they are in the vanguard of structural change. Most district and school staff are conditioned to think of education in terms of uniformity, standardized test scores, specific learning objectives, prescriptive rules, compliance monitoring, and wave after wave of discrete programs and approaches. These are concepts and terms that maintain the status quo and discourage thinking about new ways of organizing instruction and increasing learning.

State education leaders can begin to replace these deeply ingrained concepts and terms with the goals and language of restructuring. Providing districts and schools with concrete visions of effective learning environments and desired outcomes is one vehicle. Facilitating communication networks among districts for sharing successful strategies is another. States can also support district efforts to help schools create new ways of measuring progress.

Most important, state leadership in restructuring education requires aligning restructuring with the goals and language of state mandates about curriculum, special programs, and accountability. If state curricular goals emphasize basic skills and factual knowledge instead of problem solving and conceptual skills, there will be little room for schools to change what they do. If state programs are regulated in ways that result in fragmented, compliance driven services for students, districts and schools will not have the flexibility to adapt these extra resources in ways that strengthen the entire educational program for targeted students.

Similarly, state mechanisms for accountability and instruments for assessment can undermine the long range goals of structural change. The ways in which states judge districts and schools must include more varied and performance oriented measures of student outcomes, qualitative outcomes, and a longer timeframe in order to match the goals of restructuring.

States can help districts restructure by proving access to training that districts may not have the motivation, resources, or capacity to provide. For example, states could offer training that introduces superintendents and school board members to the concepts and goals of restructuring and to leadership skills. In addition to providing training, states can promote professional development for administrators and teachers through resources for release time and summer stipends.

States also can assist districts to restructure by providing information on research, policy, and experiences of other districts; and by offering to provide on-site consulting expertise to facilitate restructuring. Just as districts must adapt their assistance strategies to the capacities of each school, states will need to provide training or on-site assistance to meet the individual needs of each district.

Like districts, states face the challenge of creating an appropriate balance between central control and local autonomy, a balance between setting goals, standards, and expectations and providing districts enough authority and flexibility to choose their own paths. States will want to insure that schools and districts move in constructive directions, without penalizing students, as they experiment with new approaches.

Restructuring school systems to provide more students with the skills needed to function productively in society is a long-term undertaking. Districts that have embarked on restructuring have uncovered its complexity and are not looking for quick fixes. If states do not take actions to support and reinforce the goals and actions of these districts, schools will be trapped by conflicting signals and expectations and unable to change. If through their actions, states promote and support the same goals, restructuring districts will be able to sustain their efforts. Similarly, just as very few individual schools are able to implement comprehensive, long-term change without the leadership and support of their districts, most districts will need inspiration and assistance from state education leaders to launch and sustain restructuring efforts.

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