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ABSTRACT

The Connecticut State Department of Education began the Celebration of Excellence in 1986 as a program to recognize and reward veteran teachers for their development of innovative and exemplary classroom curriculum projects. The program has received substantial support from private and public sectors. This report is a summative evaluation of Celebration's accomplishments in its first decade. So far, Celebration has presented awards for excellence in teaching to 1,125 teachers who designed 770 curriculum projects. Celebration was evaluated through interviews with 56 award recipients and program administrators and a mail survey completed by 25% of the 50 award recipients who were sent questionnaires. Analyses of data indicate that Celebration of Excellence is a success in the opinion of all participants. It has restored teachers' sense of pride in work, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Criticism focused on the program's emphasis on the individual more than on a broader, statewide approach to teacher professional development. Participants also expressed concerns about the quality of some of the curriculum projects and the mismatches between some projects and the actual curriculum needs of different schools. Participants also noted that the demand for work on the program's operations exceeded the capacity of available assistants. It is concluded that the Celebration of Excellence has accomplished its original objectives, and that conditions of education in Connecticut are substantially different than they were when the Celebration began. An appendix presents tables of applicants, awards, and professional activities. (SLD)

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CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

1986 – 1996

Summative Evaluation

September 1996

by

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Abstract

The Connecticut State Department of Education originally started Celebration of Excellence in 1986 as a program to recognize and reward veteran teachers for their development of innovative and exemplary classroom curriculum projects. Over the past ten years, the program received substantial funding from SNET and the Connecticut General Assembly. Currently, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the Connecticut General Assembly are providing support. SNET has chosen to continue its funding at a lower level, with a preference to support educational innovations in technology.

This report is a summative evaluation of Celebration's accomplishments in its first decade. Thus far, Celebration has presented awards for excellence in teaching to 1,125 teachers who designed 770 curriculum projects. The organizational framework includes a Program Director who is appointed by the State Department of Education; a 22 member Advisory Council that is composed of former celebrants and the Program Director; a part-time Program Assistant; a network of all previous celebrants, and representatives from the funding sources. Celebration has developed processes for application, review, award, and development of teachers' curriculum plans. The Advisory Council assumes primary responsibility for the program's operations, including dissemination of announcements and results, review of applications, and workshops for development of teachers' applications and curriculum projects. The Gala is a special annual event when all current celebrants receive honors from their teacher colleagues, school district administrators, and special guests.

Celebration of Excellence is a success, in the opinion of all participants. Celebrants, school administrators, and key participants provided many stories of how the program prevented school teachers from leaving the classroom permanently or from succumbing to burnout and deadness. These occupational hazards that too frequently accompany the teacher's work life they would attribute to the accumulated feelings of bitterness, cynicism, and worthlessness. Celebration restored the

teachers' sense of pride in work, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Teachers said that they felt appreciated by their colleagues and supervisors and were honored to join the ranks of other professional educators.

Criticism, from participants across all categories, focused on the program's emphasis on the individual more than on a broader, statewide approach to teachers' professional development. Participants also expressed concern about the seemingly low quality of some curriculum projects as well as the mismatches between teachers' award-winning projects and the actual curriculum needs of different schools. Finally, participants noted that the demand for work in the program's operations exceeded the work/hour capacity of assistants who were available. A small percentage of the 1,125 celebrants in the network are actively participating .

The conclusion of this summative evaluation by Curriculum Research and Evaluation is that Celebration of Excellence has accomplished its original objectives. CRE notes that the conditions of education in the State of Connecticut are substantially different today from what they were when Celebration began. Thus, the evaluation includes recommendations for addressing the issues identified by participants and for restructuring the program's goals, policies, and operations for success in the next decade.

Acknowledgments

For their willingness to provide the stories of Celebration's success and the many details regarding its operations during the past decade, Curriculum Research and Evaluation wishes to thank the women and men who participated in this study. Also, special thanks go to the following agencies and organizations: Celebration of Excellence, Connecticut State Department of Education, SNET, and the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgments.....	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
Evaluation Design and Methods.....	4
Goals of Celebration of Excellence.....	5
Objectives.....	6
Organizational Framework.....	6
Process and Criteria for Award.....	6
2. Celebration of Excellence: Historical Review.....	8
Individuals and Organizations.....	8
Early History of Celebration.....	9
Recent Events.....	14
Previous Evaluations.....	14
3. Celebration’s Development and Impact.....	16
Management and Organization.....	16
<i>Program Directors.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Advisory Council.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Celebration’s Network.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Celebration’s Publications.....</i>	<i>23</i>
Impact on Teachers.....	24
Building and District Level Impact.....	28
Statewide Impact.....	33
Impact on Students.....	35
4. Issues.....	39
5. Recommendations	41
Revise Celebration’s Goals.....	41
Create a New Challenge.....	42
Broaden the Organization.....	42
Focus Outreach on Professional Development of Teachers.....	43
6. Conclusion.....	45
Biographical Sketches.....	49
Appendix.....	51

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

1986 – 1996

Summative Evaluation

1. Introduction

In 1986, the Connecticut State Department of Education established Celebration of Excellence for the purpose of giving special recognition and honor to the State's public school teachers who develop and implement innovative and exemplary classroom curriculum projects. Principal sources of funding to support the program have been Southern New England Telecommunications (SNET), the Connecticut General Assembly, and, recently, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. After receiving the State's Celebration of Excellence¹ award, teachers have an obligation, during the subsequent year, to participate in a five-day summer institute where they prepare their projects for publication and to share their projects with other teachers throughout the State. The program has a network of awardees, who are called celebrants, to facilitate the process of disseminating teachers' ideas and practices through presentations at workshops and related opportunities for professional development.

¹Celebration of Excellence and Celebration are interchangeable.

This report is an external, summative evaluation by Curriculum Research and Evaluation (CRE) of the accomplishments of Celebration of Excellence over its ten year history. The report begins with an overview of the program. Next, the development since its origin in the early 1980s is discussed. Then, the report presents an analysis of data regarding Celebration's impact on the teaching profession in Connecticut. The conclusion presents a discussion of common themes and issues or concerns related to Celebration's current operations. Recommendations appear at the end.

Briefly, Celebration of Excellence is a program that plays a very important role in improving the personal and professional lives of teachers and for progressively improving the teaching and learning in Connecticut. Curriculum Research and Evaluation collected and analyzed many stories from celebrants that emphatically document the program's life—and career-saving attributes. These celebrants would say that there is nowhere for the teacher to turn when she or he needs something to restore their commitment to the profession's ideals, regain a sense of personal and professional self-worth, and to study and develop the teacher's craft with other like-minded colleagues in the State.

Celebration of Excellence has a strong record of accomplishment with respect to its original goals. Interview data reveals that celebrants "have grown tremendously in self-confidence, risk taking, and self-esteem." Prior to winning the award, many of these teachers felt "lonely in the school, isolated, unappreciated, and discouraged." Due to the Celebration of Excellence award and its network, the celebrants found "a family, a willingness to go on, an opportunity to share ideas with high caliber teachers." Individual celebrants would say that Celebration "instills in me a sense of pride in my teaching accomplishments." Considering its original goals and objectives, Celebration of Excellence is a genuine success, and everyone associated with Celebration should feel proud of its results.

However, the climate for teaching and the context within which Celebration operates have changed dramatically since the early 1980s. Today, public accountability for poor and minority children's learning, systemic school reform, curriculum restructuring, teachers' accountability for instruction, and authentic assessment are among the leading issues in

education.² The State of Connecticut, like other states, is facing the crisis of educating all types of students, while undergoing substantive restructuring on federal, state, and local levels. Poor children, for whom public education was originally established in New England over 300 years ago,³ continue to produce academic achievement records that are far below their peers who come from advantaged families. When considering the condition of education in Connecticut—a decade after Celebration began—the program needs to revise its goals and objectives to address the current circumstances.

In addition to recognizing the individual teacher, Celebration should now rely on its celebrants to broaden and deepen its impact on the State. Celebration should link itself to these current, pressing issues, because its future may depend on making this dramatic shift in emphasis. In these times of low budgets and deficits, private and public sector partnerships are often necessary to support innovative programs. Grants for the improvement of education are highly competitive. Also, support from both private and public sectors is usually contingent upon a program's ability to demonstrate proof of its accomplishments and to contribute, in some fashion, to the goals of the funding agency.

In regard to professional development, there is always room for improvement. More specifically, Celebration should emphasize, and also document, the extent to which its celebrants contribute positively to the improvement of teachers' practice statewide and to the improvement of children's learning. Particular attention should be given to closing the achievement gap between the state's poor and minority children and the children from advantaged families. Celebration always has been concerned with helping underachieving students to learn. Many of its celebrants and their projects impact directly on the lives of poor children. However, thus far, Celebration has not held itself accountable for producing and documenting these particular results. Celebration is not alone in this regard. To accomplish this new goal concerning the impact

²CRE realizes that in these times violence, drugs, teen-age pregnancy, AIDS, race relations, and gangs are very important educational issues, but this report will restrict its focus to issues that are more directly related to school teaching and learning.

³*The Old Deluder Satan Law of Massachusetts* was enacted in 1647.

on children's learning, Celebration should scale-up its program. It should include tiers or levels of professional accomplishment that encourage celebrants to strive for achievements beyond the projects of the past ten years—that include comprehensive development and implementation of effective, standards-based curriculum and instruction along with teachers' professional development programs on building, district, regional, and statewide levels.

This summative evaluation closes with more specific recommendations for ways that Celebration may address the different issues it faces. In every instance, these recommendations stem from the analysis of data. Often, they are verbatim statements from celebrants and other key participants. CRE provides this report and its broad set of recommendations with the goal of helping Celebration realize even greater success in the next decade—to recognize and reward excellence in teaching that improves children's learning and produces high quality curriculum and instruction.

Evaluation Design and Methods

Curriculum Research and Evaluation started work on the summative evaluation of Celebration of Excellence early in the spring of 1996. This evaluation was external by intent and design. The Program Director, Dr. Marie Della Bella, requested an objective study and provided sufficient autonomy for such work by the evaluation team. During the evaluation study, CRE was invited to attend all official meetings of Celebration. Also, Celebration's staff and other participants fully cooperated in the data collection.

The evaluation design included qualitative and quantitative methods. The main question for this study was—What has Celebration of Excellence accomplished during its ten-year history? To answer this question, the study would examine the perceptions of teachers, who are the immediate beneficiaries of the program, and of a wide range of people who have knowledge about the program's effects. In collaboration with the Program Director, CRE developed a series of evaluation questions that encompass the program's goals, objectives, and operations. They used methods that included observation and participation in the program's events, interviews with key participants, mail surveys, and the

collection of documents and artifacts produced for the program. Data collection was heaviest in June—near the end of the current school year.

Based upon documentation supplied by Celebration, CRE prepared lists of random as well as purposefully selected contact persons. The CRE team contacted a total of 89 different individuals to schedule extended, structured telephone interviews. Of that number, 56 people agreed to participate in the study. Either conflict with the participant's own schedule or wrong phone numbers and addresses were the key factors influencing the persons on the list who were not interviewed.

Nonetheless, the telephone interviews sampled representative persons—participants across all categories and throughout Celebration's history. In the final sample, there were 5 key players (8 contacted), 8 school administrators (21 contacted), 10 Advisory Council members (10 contacted), and 33 celebrants (50 contacted). Each interview took approximately one hour to complete. Specific categories for participants included the following: celebrants, school administrators, current and former Advisory Council members, representatives from the State Department of Education, program directors, representatives from funding agencies, and other key participants.

Another set of celebrants (N = 50), who represented the years since the awards began, received mail surveys. From that sample 25% were returned. All but one of the returned mail surveys were completed and, therefore, useful. Analysis of survey data supported the analysis of qualitative data and the conclusions of this study.

Goals of Celebration of Excellence

The three overall goals of Celebration of Excellence are

- To make celebrants feel valued and respected for their work as teachers,
- To build a network among teachers to disseminate creative classroom projects, and
- To enhance the public image of teachers as professionals.

Objectives

Celebration's objectives are

- To salute dedication,
- To recognize creativity in the teaching profession, and
- To support high standards in teaching.

Organizational Framework

The program's organizational framework includes a Program Director, who is appointed by the State Department of Education, and an Advisory Council. The current 22 members of the Advisory Council are public school teachers and former celebrants. New members to the Advisory Council and assistant facilitators of the summer institute are recommended for service by the Advisory Council.

Process and Criteria for Award

Teachers' participation in the program is voluntary and is based on self-nomination. They may apply as individuals (1 or 2 teachers) or as a team of three or more persons. Conditions for application include

- Status as a certified teacher in the State of Connecticut,
- Current responsibility for classroom instruction or certified personnel working directly with certified teachers,
- Employment by a public school district, unified school district, State vocational or technical school, Regional Educational Service Center (RESC), incorporated and endowed schools or academies, or State-approved non-public special education schools.

The program is not available to parochial or private school teachers.

At the start of the program, celebrants received a \$100 cash award along with a modest stipend to support costs entailed in dissemination of teachers' projects. Currently, individual celebrants and two-member teams receive a cash award of \$300, and group participants receive an award of \$500. At a special statewide event, called the Gala, each new celebrant receives official recognition for their professional accomplishments. Celebration publishes an annual catalog of the current Celebrants' projects for other teachers in the state to use as a resource.

Each applicant must follow a particular format and submit an application that includes a three-page description of a classroom

curriculum project and a mini-lesson plan for that project. All applications go through a three-stage process for evaluation that determines whether or not the proposed project deserves the Celebration of Excellence award. The evaluation process includes review by a panel of judges (former celebrants organized by southern and northern regions of the State and representing all subjects and grade levels), review by State Department of Education consultants who specialize in current educational research, and a final screening by a statewide panel.

Each application must satisfy specific criteria. The project must be

- An innovative and exemplary classroom-based project (preschool - adult),
- Developed and successfully used by the applicant(s) for at least two years prior to application and within the previous three years, and
- Specifically based on the Connecticut Common Core of Learning.

Prior to the annual deadline for projects, Celebrants offer workshops to give teacher applicants assistance with writing Celebration's application. The application assistance workshops occur at the six RESCs and in any school district that requests the service.

Until 1994, Celebration placed limits on the number of group projects it would award in a given year. Since then, Celebration has been awarding projects that involve at least two, three, or more teachers. This change in policy is meant to encourage teachers' collaborative curriculum development in the schools.

2. Celebration of Excellence: Historical Review

In this section, the individuals, organizations, and events that are important to an understanding of Celebration's past are discussed. Data for this historical review came from various documents that were given to CRE by the Program Director and other key participants and from interviews with different individuals. There is also a summary of results from four formative evaluations of Celebration.

Individuals and Organizations

The following persons are important for their influence on Celebration's historical development: Marie Della Bella, current Program Director; Marjorie Bradley, first Program Director; Gordon Bruno, of the Graustein Memorial Fund and Connecticut Center for School Change; Thomas Buckley, of SNET; Vincent Ferrandino, former Commissioner of Education; Margaret Klinkscale, teacher at High Horizons School; Corinne Levin, New Haven Teacher Center; Peter Martin, Director of Teacher Center at Colchester; Dan Miglio, Chairman and CEO of SNET; Walter Monteith, Jr., former Chairman and CEO of SNET; Helen Regan, Professor of Education at Connecticut College; former Advisory Council presidents—Jane Hammer, Patricia Procter, Jeanne Martel, and Darlissa Ritter; Theodore Sergi, Commissioner of Education; Betty Sternberg, Associate Commissioner of Education; Gerald Tirozzi, former Commissioner of Education; and Alfred Van Sinderen, former Chairman and CEO for SNET.

Early History of Celebration

As early as April 1981, officials at the Connecticut State Department of Education presented 25 recommendations for improving the professional development of the State's public school teachers. Their report set forth recommendations for attracting good people to teaching, for preparing preservice teachers, and for the continuing education of veteran teachers. One of the many suggestions proposed for veteran teachers was to develop an activity for recognition and reward. Hence, the idea for recognizing excellence in teaching was discussed by officials at the State Department of Education.

On November 22, 1983, Helen Regan, who then was principal of Amity Regional High School, wrote a letter to Commissioner Tirozzi recommending that the State recognize its "mature, experienced teachers—those with at least 10 years of teaching experience—who have done a fine job and who will continue to do a very fine job for the next ten or twenty-five years." In 1984-85, Gerald Tirozzi served on Governor William O'Neill's Commission on Excellence and Equity in Education, which became known as the Triple-E Committee. Alfred Van Sinderen, CEO of SNET, was on this committee which endorsed President Ronald Reagan's policy of improving the American workers' attitudes about their work and lobbied for a program that would recognize and reward excellence in teaching. In 1985, the Connecticut State Legislature agreed with the Committee's proposal and appropriated \$100,000 for its implementation. At the same time, SNET gave \$100,000 to support the program, tentatively called the Exemplary Teacher Recognition Program. This level of support continued until 1990. Since then, the General Assembly appropriated \$25,000 annually to the program, and, recently, the support from the State Legislature was met with \$95,000 in private sector support from SNET.

Celebration of Excellence became the program's official title at a March 14, 1984 meeting of the State Department of Education's Program Committee. In the program's early years, there were no questions or obstacles for receiving funds. Celebration became one of the first examples of state government working with private business. Betty Sternberg, who was Bureau Chief of Curriculum and Professional Development at the State Department of Education, was a leader in

Celebration's initial development. She appointed Marjorie Bradley, a staff member, to develop the idea of and method for recognizing and rewarding teachers. A fundamental condition for approval of the program was that it be based on curriculum excellence, with a focus on the production of outstanding curriculum materials that teachers throughout the State could use to improve children's learning. By May 1985, Marjorie Bradley had formed an Advisory Committee for Celebration of Excellence, which included four teachers, three school district superintendents, three school building principals, two regional directors, an education consultant, and two representatives from SNET.

In order to obtain teacher applicants, Commissioner Tirozzi wrote letters to school superintendents and building principals requesting them to inform their teachers that Celebration invites them to submit their curriculum projects for the possibility of receiving an award.

An excerpt from Commissioner Tirozzi's first letter of October 23, 1985 appears below:

"The Celebration of Excellence program invites teachers to submit to their Regional Education Service Center, by February 3, 1986, curriculum projects which they have developed and used successfully in the classroom. Regional panels of educators, composed mainly of teachers, will review and rate all entries. A representative statewide panel will then select up to 125 projects for special recognition. Each teacher whose project is selected will receive a personal cash award and will be honored at a special statewide ceremony. The selected curriculum projects will be described in a catalog for the benefit of other teachers across the state who may want to adopt projects for their own classrooms."

As indicated in Commissioner Tirozzi's letter, the State Department of Education and the six Regional Education Service Centers (RESC) administered the program cooperatively. The directors of RESC solicited teachers' participation in the program, disseminated projects, and administered funds. Generally, Celebration's operations are the same today. However, since 1990, the participation of RESC has been lower, due at least in part to the lower level of funding.

Currently, Celebration relies on its celebrants almost exclusively for its operations. Individuals in the program send information packets to the school administrators. Teachers apply on a voluntary basis, and they send their projects to ACES, the RESC office in Hamden, Connecticut, where

Celebration has its headquarters. RESCs and school administrators continue their involvement but play low key roles.

In 1986, Celebration conducted its first program, with Marjorie Bradley as Program Director and Helen Regan as facilitator of the summer institute and Chairperson of the Celebration of Excellence Advisory Committee. There were seventy-six teachers who represented sixty different projects for awards from Celebration of Excellence. That same year, Celebration established an affiliation with IMPACT II, a national network of teacher recognition programs, for the exchange of ideas and projects with teachers nationally. The first celebrants ended the inaugural year with a meeting on February 28, 1986 at the Yale Inn in Meriden, CT. The purpose of this meeting was to bring the celebrants together to reflect on the year's events and to bring closure to the first cycle.

Documents from this meeting help to reveal the original purposes of Celebration. The following excerpt is from a statement written by a key participant:

"We had three goals in mind (for Celebration): to deepen teachers' sense of the value of their work; to create a network through which great teaching strategies could be shared; to improve the public image of teaching as a profession—that's what we said officially anyway. Unofficially, the way we talked about it was more intangible. We had a dream. We wanted to penetrate the feelings of bitterness, cynicism, and worthlessness that have been too pervasive for too many teachers for too long. We wanted to touch the participants in a personal way. We planned the final event so that we could see if we had succeeded, and the results touched us."

The original goals of Celebration have not changed since its beginning ten years ago. However, as the above paragraph indicates, there were also some intangible goals for Celebration, which were directed more toward the individual practitioner than to the State's public school teachers as a whole.

The unofficial goals remain the same today. From that perspective, Celebration would attempt to relieve celebrants from some serious, perceived occupational hazards of teaching. Somehow, the day-to-day work in the classrooms and school buildings of the State's public schools left some teachers feeling bitter, cynical, and worthless. Celebration would rescue these teachers, build up their sense of self-worth, and

rejuvenate their idealism and commitments to teaching.

According to the same document, this is how the day of the meeting unfolded.

“The day began in small groups with each celebrant describing activities that they have pursued during the celebration year.... Many described special tributes they had received as celebrants. A few reported that they had received little recognition or support from their schools, and it became clear that raising the consciousness of some administrators is a task for the future. Many described special efforts they had undertaken to encourage colleagues to apply in the second Celebration cycle.”

“The major part of the day was devoted to celebrants presenting to each other. Many had said that it was a tease to be among so many other fine teachers with great ideas without having time to hear about them (their projects) in detail. So, the finale provided an opportunity for the celebrants to disseminate their projects to each other. From the discussion in the sessions, it was clear that there would be much application of the projects in classrooms.”

“Teachers who had felt cynical, embittered, misunderstood, devalued were saying that they had found a new place in the scheme of things. We had succeeded!”

Through the process of the summer institute, other year-long activities, and the finale, these first celebrants had rededicated their lives to teaching.

Recent data shows that Celebration adheres closely to this format, maintains the same goals and purposes, and realizes much of the same kind of perceived need for the program from individual teachers. In explanation of the latter point, two celebrants, who have received Celebration of Excellence awards twice in their careers, explained that the unending trials of day-to-day classroom teaching, feeling of isolation from other adults, constant bickering among teachers, and bureaucratic managing from a principal led them to question whether they wanted to continue in this career or seek greater satisfaction outside the K-12 classroom as, for example, in the career of a college professor. However, instead of capitulating, they applied and won another Celebration award. They said Celebration rescued them from either the teacher’s perennial dilemma of almost certain deadness in the teaching career or a quick flight from the classroom.

At the end of the first closing day’s ceremonies, the 1986 celebrants

completed a two question survey. The answers of the first celebrants are almost identical to the answers produced by the celebrants for the present evaluation.

Question One: What will I carry away from the Celebration of Excellence? Representative answers included the following:

"I have found a new direction professionally." "The sharing of ideas with other professionals has been inspirational." "We have finally received the positive recognition which many educators deserve, but all too rarely attain." "It feels good to see our projects actually adopted in another teacher's classroom." "The networking has played an important part in my life."

Question Two: How has Celebration influenced my feelings about my life as a teacher? Representative answers included the following:

"We are completing the year with a positive feeling and a new sense of self-esteem as professionals in education." "I know I have something to offer and others appreciate what I'm doing." "The recognition of the project has given me a great boost." "It has revitalized my teaching." "It's given me the tools to understand the POWER I have as a teacher."

On the basis of this testimony, Celebration accomplished both its official and unofficial goals. Two dominant themes from the first celebrants are desperation and renewal. Among the data collected for this study, there are many long letters from celebrants to the program directors and summer session facilitators that provide detailed expressions of gratitude and satisfaction with the program. Current celebrants express the same sentiments as the first celebrants about their profession and the importance of Celebration for improving their personal sense of self-worth as well as renewing their commitments to the teaching career.

In 1988, Celebration received the National Council of States on Inservice Education Showcase of Excellence award as an exemplary staff development program.

Recent Events

In 1990, Marie Della Bella took responsibility for directing Celebration of Excellence. Her leadership style complemented that of her predecessor, Marjorie Bradley, who focused on development of the idea of Celebration by placing more emphasis on the program's management and organizational concerns. In 1991, Celebration received a Partnership in Education award that acknowledged its ongoing relationship between SNET and the State Department of Education. The following are three major changes in Celebration's operations: lower funding level; less involvement by RESCs; and maintaining only one part-time person, the Assistant Director at ACES.

IMPACT II presented a \$10,000 grant to Celebration in 1993 for the purpose of increasing teachers' awareness of current technology. Celebration held its first statewide conference of award-winning projects in 1994, eight years after its first celebrants received their awards. In 1995, the program celebrated its tenth anniversary with a commemorative dinner at the Yankee Silversmith, a Wallingford, CT restaurant. At that point, Celebration had recognized a total of 1,019 teachers who had produced 717 award-winning curriculum projects (see Appendix, Table 1). At the September 26, 1996 gala, Celebration recognized 106 teachers for adding 53 projects to the program's collection of innovative curriculum projects, thus, bringing the totals to 1,125 celebrants and 770 projects (see Appendix, Table 2). In 1996, after ten years of support, SNET chose to reduce its funding of Celebration and preferred to fund programs that emphasize telecommunications. This year, the Graustein Memorial Fund and the Connecticut Center for School Change provided a major grant to support Celebration. The Connecticut Education Association and the Connecticut State Federation of Teachers also contributed to the program.

Previous Evaluations

Documentation supplied to CRE by Celebration's staff shows that there were four previous, internal, formative evaluations of this program. The main purpose of the first three evaluations was to gather descriptive data on teachers' projects and teachers' perceptions of the impact of Celebration on themselves and their students. The program's leaders and

fundings, or supporters, would use this data to make improvements. The methods for data collection and analysis involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, including phone interviews, mail surveys, and observations.

Results of three of these early studies, which were reported in 1986, 1987, and 1988, are similar for each year. Namely, teachers reported great satisfaction with the Celebration of Excellence program, indicated the extent to which their proposals accomplished their teaching objectives, and described teachers' perceptions of how well their projects tapped "the potential of each individual child." The third report noted that there was no assessment data, nor was there a plan to collect assessment data, to measure the impact of the teachers' projects on students' learning. The recommendations for changes focused on improving public awareness about celebrants' awards and on recruitment of prospective teacher celebrants from the different regions of the State (RESCs), so that awards to teachers would be more geographically balanced.

A fourth evaluation, reported in 1990, involved a comparison of projects that were proposed, awarded, requested, and replicated during the four years from 1986 to 1989. Also, there was a basic statistical analysis of the history of participation during this same period by teachers from the six different RESCs. Results show that the leading participants were CREC, ACES, CES, and RESCUE. Participation by teachers from LEARN and EASTCONN was generally lower than the others, with EASTCONN's rate of participation averaging 6% annually.

The next section presents an analysis of CRE's data on Celebration's development and impact from 1986 through 1996.

3. Celebration's Development and Impact

In this section, the main focus is the analysis of data that was collected by CRE for a summative evaluation of Celebration of Excellence. The principal method for data collection was qualitative. The evaluation team conducted structured interviews with a number of people within each of the categories of participants. CRE also conducted a mail survey to collect quantitative data from celebrants on the same items of interest as the structured interviews. Results from both sources are complementary.

Management and Organization

Program Directors

Marjorie Bradley was the first Program Director of Celebration. She continued in that capacity for five years. Celebrants and other key players described her leadership style as inspirational; she tended to delegate responsibility to others, especially celebrants. For that reason, according to various sources, although she deserves much credit for the program's early development, it was never given to her and is missing from the records. Since leaving her position at the State Department of Education, Marjorie Bradley has maintained a substantial interest in Celebration.

In 1990, Marie Della Bella became Celebration's Program Director. When asked to describe Marie Della Bella's leadership style, one celebrant said,

"Marie is a very effective administrator. She serves really as a facilitator. She is constantly at work behind the scenes to keep us (celebrants) alive in the eyes of the public. She is constantly promoting teachers' work. She knows what people can do for the program and uses them in that capacity. She pushes people to their limits."

This view is representative of what others have said. Participants said that the following are the distinguishing characteristics of the two program directors: for Marjorie Bradley, “she has creativity and plenty of ideas and the ability to implement them;” for Marie Della Bella, “she has ideas, too, but she places a greater emphasis on organization.”

When reflecting on the performance of both program directors, one celebrant said,

“They have always been the people providing the direction to the program. They really encouraged the celebrants to pursue their potential and to continue to work for the program.”

At the times of their appointments, both program directors held full time positions in the State Department of Education, which meant that they had responsibility for other duties in addition to Celebration. In the opinion of celebrants, the program directors’ official jobs at the bureau facilitated their role as liaison between Celebration and the State Department of Education.

Betty Sternberg, Associate Commissioner of Education is another key player in the organization and management of Celebration. The following is a description of Betty Sternberg’s positive influence on the program from a key participant:

“Betty Sternberg was there from the beginning and has remained very committed to Celebration. For instance, she was there when we put the committee of teachers and State Department of Education people together to decide to use the common core as a basis. She helped us tie the application for Celebration more closely to what the State Department of Education would do. What’s her leadership style? She gives free latitude for the program’s development, but when something goes wrong, she is always there to help out.”

In regard to questions pertaining to the autonomy of celebrants and their responsibility for Celebration’s performance, there is sufficient organizational support for the program from the State Department of Education. However, the other responsibilities of the Program Director make it difficult to complete all of the work details for Celebration, at least in its present organization. Hence, celebrants should consider obtaining more responsibility for executing its operations.

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is the principal decision making body and operations unit for Celebration. A member of the Advisory Council explained its purpose and operations as follows:

“The job of the Advisory Council is to advise the Program Director. We are a group of people who officially help the Program Director make decisions. The council is structured so that work gets done. We are business-like with an agenda, but friendly. Everyone has a chance to contribute. We help organize Application Workshops, provide technical assistance, and conduct Awareness Workshops. We help design and run the summer institute and the state conference. We also offer whatever assistance we can to communication by publishing the newsletter.”

The Advisory Council’s formal meetings occur once per month.

Currently, the Advisory Council is made up of 22 celebrants and the Program Director. Membership of celebrants on the council is determined through an informal process, whereby active members recommend current or former celebrants for participation, based upon a celebrant’s willingness to help the program, especially during summer institutes. In explanation of this process, one member of the Advisory Council said the following:

“We want facilitators. When we hold a meeting, somebody will come out. You can’t put the criteria on paper. The person shows a certain passion. Enthusiasm. Helpfulness with other people at the summer institute. When choosing these people, something just clicks with them. They come up to the institute’s facilitators and ask for more work to do. You know they would shoulder their weight. It just happens.”

There is no term limit for service on the council. Celebrants usually choose when they wish to discontinue their active involvement. This decision to leave the council increases the work load of other council members and leads eventually to the appointment of new members. There is also no official set of bylaws for Celebration.

The data shows that various sources disagree on the organization and management of the Advisory Council. One of the key participants expressed this concern of others in the following way:

“Some reorganization of the structure and responsibilities of the Advisory Council is needed. There needs to be some new ideas. The membership on the Advisory Council should be less than five years.”

Those serving are wonderful people, but there's a need for new blood. Also, the role of the Advisory Council should be defined. It should not shift with new managers. There should be a balance of power between the celebrants and members of the advisory council, with a secure position for the State Department of Education."

Also, celebrants pointed out that this program (like many others) has experienced some difficulty attracting African American teachers, Hispanic teachers, and teachers who work in the State's largest urban schools of Bridgeport, Hartford, and Waterbury to the application process. Celebrants would say that, there needs to be more money for the program and that more needs to be done by school administrators and the State Department of Education officials in order to build diversity into the program. However, experience would argue that neither increased funds nor directives from supervisors will solve this problem of fostering incentives for teachers.⁴ A better solution would be for Celebration to implement a system of building collegiality among celebrants and schoolteachers of all different races and ethnic groups and from rural, suburban, and urban assignments. In fact, Celebration made an attempt to establish a minority division, but had little success.

In addition, the Advisory Council should consider establishing official bylaws which define the program and delineate titles and duties of all executive officers and decision making bodies. The bylaws should specify criteria for selection and membership, term limits, policies, and routine operations. There is no data to suggest that individual celebrants, the Advisory Council, or the Celebration of Excellence program itself has engaged in wrongdoing. The contrary is true. Celebrants, Advisory Council leaders and members, and the program directors are highly respected on both personal and professional levels. However, data indicates that it would be in the best interests of the program to adopt its own bylaws, so as to prevent the unconscious exercise of bias or errors in judgment that may accompany informal procedures and to avoid at least the implication of impropriety.

⁴Connecticut's public school teachers are among the highest paid teachers in the nation and Hartford's teachers are among the best paid in the State (*Digest of Education Statistics 1995*, p. 85 and "Effort to save leaves schools \$400,000 bill," *Hartford Courant*, August 13, 1996, p. A3.).

Celebration's Network

Celebration's network is an informal organization that offers celebrants the opportunity to interact with each other professionally, to explore common ideas or problems, and to seek new or additional positions in schools and universities. In reference to Celebration's network, an official at the State Department of Education said the following:

"After teachers receive recognition, Celebration serves as a vehicle for providing teachers with a great deal of professional development opportunities."

One of the celebrants described the general significance of the network to her teaching career in the following way:

"The network has people in it that I can call when I have questions, and not just questions about Celebration. I met people through the network and I can ask them professional questions. When I go to any conference or workshop in the State, inevitably, I see one or two or three other celebrants."

The variety of professional development opportunities that were linked in some way to the network included presenting application workshops, increasing access to officials at the State Department of Education, teaching as adjunct professors in local colleges and universities, and serving as co-authors of professional books and monographs (see Appendix, Table 3). For example, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) recently featured *A Teacher's Guide to Performance-Based Learning and Assessment* (1996) prominently as "Best Books on Assessment" in their advertisement of recent publications. Editors for this book included celebrants who teach in Connecticut's Regional School District 15.

Membership in the network is exclusive; it is reserved for celebrants only. According to celebrants, this policy regarding the network helps assure that the highest standards of the profession are maintained. In explanation of this point, a celebrant said the following:

"One of the goals of Celebration is to create a network of professionals for an exchange of ideas and support and inspiration. One of the main things is to help improve classroom practices and help promote excellence among teachers. Celebration is run for teachers, by teachers, and there is a very rigorous application screening process to insure quality and to insure standards. So, you

can't be in the network until you have won."

Data reveals that the celebrants participate in the network on three different levels: active (estimate: 5% of the total number of celebrants), casual (estimate: 25%), and little or none (estimate: 70%). A celebrant who uses the network to its fullest potential enjoys regular contact with other celebrants. The network provides a combination of social and professional benefits, in that celebrants have other, like-minded colleagues with whom to talk and share experiences. In explanation of this point, an Advisory Council member said the following:

"The network is in the suburbs, rural areas, and the cities. It's in all grade levels and all content areas. It really opens your eyes to what is going on in education across the State. You get a more global perspective by participating in the network. You can reach other Celebration teachers. You find out that you are not the only one with problems. You eliminate tunnel vision. The network allows you to see what is going on elsewhere."

A celebrant who is actively involved in the network may also rely on it for assistance with attaining specific career objectives, such as getting a teaching contract from a highly preferred school district. According to one of these celebrants who said the following:

"The networking between teachers provided by Celebration is the best and most needed part. For example, when I wanted to leave the district I was teaching in and go to another, where I really wanted to be, I called up a celebrant on that staff and asked for help. It worked. I was afraid of burnout and didn't want to be like that. I was at the point of questioning whether I wanted to stay in teaching. That career move saved me and Celebration made all the difference."

Concerning the value of the network for professional development in a particular school, one school administrator said the following,

"If I need professional development presenters, I just ask the celebrants and they are here. If they are asked to present in another town or community, they know the answer is yes, with no questions asked."

Celebrants who have been active in the network provided many examples to show how it has been beneficial to them as individuals.

The networking phenomenon works best in schools, like Rochambeau, where there is a large concentration of celebrants. According to one celebrant who said the following:

"The framework for this type of networking is solid. I think Marie has

done an excellent job of building the basic framework to support the philosophy (of collaboration). You have people working together who may have never worked together before. And, of course, what you have there is an administrator who encourages this sort of thing. That's really important. I do feel, however, that it is merely a skeleton."

As the above quote indicates, celebrants considered it very important that the school administration supports the program, especially the building principal or vice principal. In some school buildings, where there was only one or a small number of celebrants and scant support from the school administration, there was little or no networking by the celebrants among themselves or others.

Some teachers made only casual use of the network. The following statement from a celebrant provides an example of casual involvement:

"I met a woman at a teachers' conference and I didn't even know her, but I saw her Celebration bag and all of a sudden we knew a great deal about each other. It's (the network) a very positive thing that way."

Thus, any teacher who became a celebrant at some time in its history could expect to identify another celebrant at a professional meeting by the physical rewards they had received (pins, cups, bags, and business cards). Their casual encounter would at least include a conversation about Celebration. It could lead one or both celebrants to more active participation in the network.

The analysis of data also indicates that most celebrants have little or no involvement in the network. One of the Advisory Council members expressed this concern with candor in the following:

"If I were to say we have a weakness, I would say it is in the area of the network. We talk about the network we develop, but in all honesty, I think we give it lip service. I'm being frank here. We have a large number of teachers who have been past celebrants, and of that number we have very few that we ever tap for anything, that we ever bring back in, that we ever call upon, that we keep alive. We're a network in name, and really not in function. We only tap 5% of the people. We really are not tapping the other thousand people out there, fully."

The network's reliance on informal organization and processes might contribute to the low level of participation by most celebrants. After all, some people will not do work-related tasks unless they are told—with

continuous reminders. It is also plausible that teachers' long-term isolation in the classroom with children makes it difficult for them to socialize with other adults and to break old habits of behavior which are better suited to independence than collaboration. Preferring to be alone when at work, these celebrants may choose not to participate in the network.

Additionally, the benefits that are provided or that somehow accrue to some individuals, due at least in part to their participation in the network, may be a source of tension among celebrants. To bring more celebrants into active participation and at least to avoid creating the impression that it is an exclusive club within the program, Celebration should consider establishing formal policies and procedures for its network. Success with this endeavor would tap the strengths and talents of many more teachers and relieve the work load of the Advisory Council.

Celebration's Publications

Celebrants expressed a high level of pride regarding Celebration's publication of their project. They were pleased that the booklet was printed in a professional format and distributed to all of the school buildings and districts in the State. Some celebrants reported receiving calls and letters from other teachers and celebrants complimenting them on their fine work and requesting more information about their projects.

Concerning the preparation of these materials, some celebrants would say that the work involved in the preparation of their project, especially during the summer institute, was very demanding. For example, one celebrant said, "It was like the week from hell." Apparently, some of the new celebrants have had little prior experience with curriculum development. Nonetheless, data from observations and documents shows that celebrants in the 1996 summer institute had a busy schedule. Also, based upon first-hand experience by the principal evaluator, the processes for review of all applications, planning and implementing of the summer institute, and editing of final copy by the facilitators were labor-intensive and time-consuming.

One celebrant raised the following concerns about the dissemination of projects. This view was shared by other participants.

"More awareness of the projects should be promoted. Usually it just

sits on a table and nobody reads it. We need to do marketing and demonstrations of the projects. There should be more conferences where Celebration winners can display their work.”

In regard to the booklets, another celebrant said the following:

“The catalog is not as useful as it might be. It doesn’t really explain the program very well or explain how teachers can get access to the projects.”

A school administrator had had the following to say about the program booklet:

“It’s impossible to disseminate this information with only one or two booklets and 85 people on staff.”

Most participants would say that, in terms of content and style, Celebration produced high quality publications. However, there were concerns for the need to improve marketing of these materials, for better description of the Celebration of Excellence award, and for better access to the catalog within buildings.

Additionally, CRE received notice that teachers, who are not celebrants but who want to apply, report that they cannot obtain the application forms in their schools and that there is little or no official notice of the program or its application due date. Celebration has reason to be proud of its publications. It needs to make improvements on the development and distribution of materials to assure the maximum returns on this investment.

Impact on Teachers

When CRE inquired about Celebration’s impact on individual teachers, the response from a majority of participants in the study was positive. A representative sample of these responses, arranged according to different categories of participants, appears below. There are many similar examples in the data set.

A program director had the following to say about Celebration’s impact on individual teachers,

“Principals tell us over and over that the teachers’ experience in Celebration has created better teachers. Teachers tell me about how they have become more courageous. They have grown in self-confidence to do work and in risk-taking capacity.”

According to a representative from a funding source who said the

following:

“This award provides teachers with recognition for performance in the classroom. It is viewed that way by the educational community. It makes teachers feel very professional. Celebration is a high class program and teachers feel very special by their selection. When I talk to teachers after the gala, they are so full of pride. It is a good way to say ‘thank you’ for a good job.”

Two building principals offered the following comments. One principal said,

“This is the only significant award teachers receive for good teaching. It has merit and is very good.”

Another one said,

“Teachers who win this award receive a real shot in the arm. They are more likely to volunteer for curriculum development projects, special projects in the building, and so on. The teachers feel like they are part of an All Star team and they are very proud.”

A school superintendent said,

“Teachers who win the Celebration of Excellence award are involved in the district. They are risk-takers. They are not afraid to express themselves, to involve themselves, and share their ideas.”

These comments from key participants and supervisors revealed that a positive influence flows from Celebration to individual teachers. These sources would say that celebrants see themselves as different from the norm and that celebrants feel re-energized after receiving the award.

What do celebrants say about Celebration’s influence on their personal and professional lives? Several Advisory Council members, who are former celebrants, offered the following comments regarding Celebration’s impact on individual teachers:

“This program gives teachers an opportunity to open their doors and share teaching and learning with other celebrants throughout the State.”

“Celebration makes teachers feel good. Winning has a profound effect on your belief in yourself. You have increased self-esteem. You are more willing to take risks and move on to higher challenges. I would never have done the things I did without it. The effects of the award are ongoing. Teachers can make it into something great.”

“Celebration helped me to believe that what I was doing was right, especially when I didn’t agree with the school administration.”

“The Celebration award changed the whole direction of my

professional career. This recognition for excellence has given me the freedom to do things I think are right. I have confidence in my work. It also got me involved in other professional activities that I never would have really dreamed I would have ever gotten involved in."

Celebration's original goals were to make celebrants feel valued and respected for their work as teachers, to build a network among teachers to disseminate creative classroom projects, and to enhance the public image of teachers as professionals. The documentation presented above indicates that Celebration has satisfactorily accomplished these goals for the celebrants, at least in the opinion of the program's participants and supervisors. The impact of Celebration on teachers' professional lives was greatest in the areas of self-confidence, self-esteem, risk-taking, networking with other celebrants, and pride in their accomplishments. The third goal, to enhance the public image of teachers as professionals, is elusive. Changing the public image of teachers might be a long-term, residual effect of these other improvements.

CRE also received some critical commentary on Celebration, in general, and on its impact on teachers, in particular. Although the critical comments were not as numerous as the positive ones, they were not anomalous. They also bore a common theme. The following excerpts from the data set are useful both as separate statements and when combined. In this first statement, there are really two concerns. A celebrant said the following:

"The primary benefits of this award go to elementary school teachers, who are isolated and laboring in the trenches. They seem to have fewer opportunities to participate in more professional endeavors."

The first concern alludes with empathy to the different circumstances for elementary and secondary school teachers and suggests that elementary school teachers might have a greater need than secondary school teachers for the particular kind of award offered by Celebration. The second, related issue raises a question about the appeal of Celebration to high school teachers. How can a program have the same criteria and offer the same award to both groups? Celebration is not alone in this quandary. School administrators, teachers, and education researchers struggle with the problem of teachers' non-interaction across elementary and secondary school lines.

In this next quote from a celebrant, there is a problem that, at first glance, seems to be only minor, or something a neophyte might struggle with,

“One problem with this award is that I now feel obligated to teach this project every year, since I won an award for it.”

On closer inspection, however, this comment raises a question about the breadth and depth of the projects. If Celebration rewards teachers for preparing isolated lessons, then they are likely to be stand-alone pieces. Although they could be the highest quality lessons or projects, they wouldn't necessarily fit within a broader curriculum plan, such as a teacher might design for an entire school year, a whole grade level, or a whole school. Hence the celebrant's predicament: “since I won an award for it, I now feel obligated to teach this project every year.” Indeed, parents and children who live in that school district might expect the teacher to do so.

A school administrator addressed this concern poignantly in the following statement:

“Teachers in my building see Celebration's application process as busy work, but they also see it as a service to the profession, an opportunity to share their ideas. That's why I encourage them to submit applications. However, as a profession made up of State Department of Education personnel, teachers, and administrators, we can do better in recognizing excellence in education. We need to do more with this award than recognize a simple lesson plan. In a certain sense, this award appeals to the weaker teachers. In my school, we have had people working in collaboration for ten years developing programs based on philosophies and theories of education. And they have been giving presentations nationally as well as in the State. Perhaps Celebration should encourage teachers to become interested in working on projects that are intriguing to the mind.”

This school administrator has focused attention on the level at which Celebration grants its award. Other celebrants and supervisors also perceived the challenge (i.e., a single curriculum project) to be set too low or too narrow—not sufficiently differentiated or encompassing grade levels within a school building or district's curriculum needs and not based in some kind of pedagogical rationale, theory, or philosophy. To resolve this issue, Celebration may have to create different sets of criteria

and awards.

Building and District Level Impact

In this section, there is a discussion of Celebration's impact on school buildings and districts. To examine this concern, the analysis of data draws more heavily than previously on the perspectives of school administrators and other key participants. The results show that the following sharp division exists between the participants in this study: (1) those who see Celebration as a positive influence at these levels and (2) those who are skeptical about its impact and raise questions about its goals and policies. The following quotations are representative examples from a larger data set. Thus, each example serves to illustrate a different aspect of the general concern for Celebration's impact within the building and district. The discussion begins with the positive views.

Celebration's award to a teacher would identify or at least confirm the presence of a good teacher. For example, a school administrator said the following of a teacher in his building:

"The impact this award had on our school was that it alerted us to this top quality teacher and made his teaching style an example for all."

Some school officials saw the award as an indicator of high-level professional development in their building. Two school administrators explained their viewpoints as follows. One said,

"We look at the winners as staff developers. They are involved in many areas and always come forward on their own. They have been vital in our district."

The other administrator said,

"Teachers who have won Celebration's awards are very involved in sharing their ideas and working with all aspects of the project. The projects have pulled up weaker teachers, especially in the area of interdisciplinary lessons."

Occasionally in the data collection process, a celebrant reported that he or she had been approached by other teachers or celebrants for copies or more information about their project. Concerning this point, one celebrant said,

"Another teacher in my school tried my project this year and a third teacher is interested in doing it next year."

In some instances, a school official described a very positive school-wide

sense of pride in the celebrants' accomplishments. For example, one school administrator said,

"Our celebrants have had a positive effect on their colleagues. The entire faculty is proud of the accomplishments and that pride can be motivating."

In the following quote, a key participant explains the rationale for a school administrator's endorsement of Celebration and for giving accolades to the celebrants:

"Building principals use the program as a way to promote teachers. Principals give applications to teachers who they want to compliment."

Likewise, comments collected from celebrants revealed their awareness of the award's value to school administrators and the school. One celebrant said,

"Administrators pat you on the back and say, 'Nice job.' They like the press it gives them. Winning is good PR for the school."

The participants who recognized Celebration's positive contributions to school buildings and districts emphasized the following points. School administrators are proud to announce to their staff and the parents that the school has a celebrant who works there. Some school administrators are building a cadre of celebrants in their buildings and rely on these teachers to provide a building-level professional development program. Also, pride in the recognition of excellence in teaching may spread from the individual celebrant to encompass the entire staff of a school building. Finally, some building principals think of the Celebration of Excellence award as a vehicle for enhancing their school's image in the community and, thus, projecting their effectiveness as school administrators. Some celebrants, although aware that administrators use the awards for their own purposes, think of Celebration as a mutually beneficial process, in that it enhances the careers of building principals and teachers simultaneously.

The concerns and questions that participants raised about Celebration of Excellence were not as numerous as the positive statements, but they were nonetheless salient and well-supported. The following themes are present in the critical commentary: (1) poor fit with the department or building-level curriculum plan, (2) hollowness of PR (Public Relations), and (3) granting awards to low-level teachers.

The first point of criticism addresses a teacher's work for the Celebration award that, upon close inspection, represents a poor fit with curriculum development at the building-level. School administrators would say that Celebration's awards sometimes recognize teachers for completing their ordinary or expected curriculum duties, and they would not characterize such work as excellence in teaching. A school administrator said the following:

"In each case, the projects recognized by Celebration were the result of and a part of our department's curriculum, so the award did not impact on our school, since these projects already exist and were developed by all members of the department."

Hence, this school administrator questions the "excellence" in the award, if the products are actually the result of regular duties and expectations of teachers.

Some participants questioned giving the Celebration of Excellence award for a teacher's lesson that might be interesting as a stand-alone piece or an attractive item in the teacher's professional portfolio, but it does not coordinate with the curriculum at the school. On this point, a school administrator said the following:

"The Celebration project in our building enriched her teaching agenda, but was unrelated to the curricular goals of our school. In this way, it neither benefitted our school nor the children."

Analysis of data revealed some justification for this concern. A number of celebrants, Advisory Council members, and other key participants said that, in recent years, there has been an increase in the incidence of "resume building," where teachers seek the Celebration of Excellence award mainly for its benefits to the individual teacher.

Nonetheless, schools are complex institutions, where all sorts of things will influence the fate of a celebrant's project. In the least, conditions change over time. For instance, an Advisory Council member said the following:

"My second project was real effective, but the curriculum at my school changed, so I don't do it any more."

The important point for celebrants and their school administrators to realize is that no project is *the final accomplishment*. Instead, celebrants must employ their projects creatively, always be prepared to invent new ones, and do their part to reconstruct the curriculum.

Some school administrators frankly acknowledged their use of Celebration for PR. In regard to this point, a school administrator said the following:

“The Celebration award is important to administrators, since the central office and building level principals like to have awards to share with the community. That’s why I have encouraged our teachers to apply. The greatest value of this award is the PR potential.”

However, some participants in the study questioned the substance of the award when it is recognized and used for personal or political advantages. A celebrant described the hollowness to her of the award in the following words:

“One of my colleagues congratulated me for winning an award ‘for myself.’ Since I nominated myself and submitted my own name, it really isn’t seen as that special. My principal attended the gala for political reasons only.”

Also, analysis of data revealed that the positive or instrumental use of this award by a building principal may entail negative consequences for Celebration’s image and ultimate purpose. How so? When a school administrator controls the application process, he or she might employ an unfair process, such as allowing only teachers who follow the administrator’s directives to receive requests to apply for the award. Or, instead of exercising such a direct influence on the process, a building principal can simply control the general distribution of Celebration’s materials (including descriptions of the program, the booklet of award winning projects, and, especially, the application materials) by not making them publicly available. Celebrants and prospective applicants described these maneuvers by building principals and expressed concern that this impacted negatively on their interest in the application process and their appreciation of the award itself.

Data from school administrators and other key participants revealed that there were occasions when a Celebration of Excellence award had been given to teachers whose actual practice at their school (including methods of teaching, interaction with children, curriculum development, and/or professional conduct) was questionable or became the subject of direct administrative supervision. For instance, a school administrator said the following:

“This is a great program, but when a selection of a poor teacher is made, it can severely affect the integrity of the program for other teachers, parents, and especially administrators. It should also be an embarrassment to Celebration.”

Another school administrator said,

“In our case, I do feel that the project selected is excellent. It is just that the teacher is not. Celebration has to ask itself what its mission really is. In the school, we see more recognition of the teacher rather than the project. I’m not sure how, in this profession, we can separate a project from a teacher.”

This is a Catch-22 for Celebration. On the one hand, recognition and reward of teachers for excellence in developing a curriculum project is an effective way, with full justification, to say “thanks for doing a good job” and to make the teacher feel highly appreciated. On the other hand, if the award carries with it the celebrant’s permanent identification—the State’s seal of approval—as an excellent teacher, there are going to be problems.

In the first place, the teacher might not be deserving of the award, since the building principal and teacher colleagues might correctly see this teacher’s performance as less-than-satisfactory. Also, a particular celebrant’s performance after the award is received might lapse into a disreputable form and, thus, eventually justify non-renewal by the school administration. This teacher could now use the award as sufficient evidence to prove that her or his practice has been recognized as excellent in the eyes of colleagues and the State Department of Education. The teachers union, to whom the teacher would go for support, would rely on this evidence to maintain the teacher’s renewal and undermine the school administration’s authority and responsibility for the evaluation of teachers’ competence with professional duties.

The last quote in this section also presents a reminder of another very important point. To the last participant, including especially those who volunteered critical commentary, everyone said that Celebration of Excellence is an asset to the State and that the award contributes positively to the improvement of teaching. They recognized Celebration for its accomplishments thus far and for the award’s potential to improve the teaching profession in the future. The critical commentary is not a contradiction, but rather calls attention to issues and problems that the participants recognized and sincerely hoped Celebration would resolve.

The problems discussed above suggest that Celebration should broaden the base of participants in the decision making process to include school district administrators, men and women from other occupations, and other professional organizations.

Statewide Impact

What has been the impact of Celebration of Excellence statewide? The analysis of data pointed to three important, positive results. First participants expressed high regard for both Celebration's commitment and its accomplishments regarding the collection of quality lessons and projects.

The following quotes concern comments that different participants made about the catalog. A key participant said,

"The availability of the lesson plans is good for other teachers whether or not they are selected."

An Advisory Council member said,

"These projects do go on file. We promote them when we go out to offer the workshops with other teachers. They become aware of the availability of these projects and will actually get the project in hand and do something with it. Whether they use the whole thing or a part of it, they do something that enhances their classrooms. Also, they're (projects) in the catalog and teachers sometimes see these catalog."

A celebrant said,

"I think the catalog makes the community aware. Someone might say, 'Look at this innovative project that this teacher is doing. That is a teacher I want my child to have.' It puts pressure on other teachers, the ones who come in two seconds before they have to be in class and leave with the bell."

Participants see the catalog as an important vehicle for professional development and an enhancement of the teaching profession.

There was also high praise for the program's positive influence on the individual celebrant's professional development. A program director said,

"I have heard from teachers over the years that this is the best professional development experience in their careers, because they had a chance to be recognized for their curriculum work. They have also had the opportunity to get together with other celebrants to share their work and to network."

On this point, an Advisory Council member said,

“For teachers who become celebrants this is the most comprehensive staff development package. It includes teaching, presenting, and speaking skills. It also provides the opportunity to get together with a whole bunch of people like yourself to brainstorm with. Due to this networking, celebrants produce higher level activities.”

Also, celebrants, Advisory Council members, and other participants indicated that parents want good teachers, and Celebration exists for the purpose of recognizing and rewarding good teachers in Connecticut. The results help parents make choices about the teachers they want for their children—they want celebrants. According to an Advisory Council member who said the following:

“Parents are very pleased for the teachers who receive the award. When a teacher wins, the requests from parents to have that teacher go up tremendously.”

The criticism of Celebration’s statewide impact focused on the need for high level staff development for more teachers and the extent to which Celebration is used for image-making by individual celebrants.

In a rhetorical question, a key participant drew attention to the outreach of Celebration by asking the following question:

“Is it meeting the needs of all teachers?”

From this participant’s viewpoint, Celebration should expand its program to meet the needs of more teachers and encourage more teachers to participate.

Celebrants, Advisory Council members, and other key participants expressed the concern that Celebration does not provide enough staff development for the State’s teachers. Data shows that Celebration itself has grappled with this concern. An Advisory Council member said the following:

“We would like to become more involved in local staff development. If we could just work out the logistics of substitutes, Celebration could take over responsibility for providing local staff development.”

There is a relationship between the participants’ perception that Celebration does not yet provide sufficient outreach for statewide professional development of teachers and the view that some celebrants exploit the award to aggrandize themselves. Quite simply, if too many individuals use the award for personal gain, there will not be enough hands to do the state-level work. In the following quote, a celebrant expresses regret over the use of Celebration for image-making, and

frankly explains how one can accommodate these shortcomings,

“Celebration is about image-making for the individual teacher. Research opportunities and the exploration of ideas are really what energize me and I believe that it is through these types of programs that real improvement of the curriculum occurs. I think Celebration does a good job of doing what it does and it should continue for that reason, but I prefer other types of professional development.”

The above quote also serves as a reminder that, on the whole, the celebrants are movers and shakers and, as such, are constantly seeking new challenges. An increase in Celebration’s commitment to outreach services would change (or at least balance) the benefits equation from serving individuals to serving the profession. It would also have important implications for Celebration’s statewide profile. On the concern for Celebration’s broader, public image, an Advisory Council member said the following:

“I don’t think this award or program really sticks in the heads of people, even parents. Celebration hasn’t really made a name for itself yet.”

Celebration should consider how best to channel celebrants’ creativity and energy to improve upon the professional development of teachers statewide and thereby enhance the image of the program as well as individual celebrants.

Impact on Students

Finally, CRE asked participants to answer this question: What has been the impact of Celebration on students’ learning? The most common response of celebrants was a general belief that there is some kind of a positive, *affective* educational experience for the students. The following quotes are representative:

“The lessons had a positive effect on my students. They (students) gain a lot in the attitude core.”

“I guess, any time you can raise the enthusiasm of students, something must carry over.”

“A lot of the projects improve the confidence of the students and improve their commitment to education.”

Some celebrants acknowledged that there is (or at least there should be) a relationship between teaching with high quality lesson plans and students’ learning. However, these teachers would say that either they

have not done anything thus far to document the effect or testing interferes with good teaching. The following quotes are representative examples:

“I have not seen a specific increase in scores. I have no doubt that there might be some if measured.”

“Putting too much of a focus on the CMT (Connecticut Mastery Test) and CAPT (Connecticut Academic Performance Test) scores will kill teachers’ creativity and produce less effective products.”

“There must be something, but I’m not sure of the effect.”

“Measuring a change in students’ achievement is hard to assess.”

Of course, “too much testing” would not be good for students or teachers. However, no one is advocating extreme, unnecessary, or inappropriate measures to document the positive influence of good teaching on students’ learning. If celebrants believe that excellence in teaching is the highest achievement of the profession and that it should be recognized and rewarded, then they must also acknowledge that excellence in teaching would serve no purpose without recognizing at least one student who benefits from the teacher’s practice. How different that effect on the student would be, for instance, if the teacher’s practice is at a significantly lower level or is the opposite—bad teaching. To the contrary point, good teaching should produce acceptable levels of students’ achievement in the core knowledge and skills set forth in the school curriculum.

Thus far, Celebration has not focused on the possible relationship between the celebrants’ lessons or projects and students’ achievement. An Advisory Council member said the following:

“There have been no studies (by Celebration) of the impact of the projects on the CMT or the CAPT scores. There is no hard data.”

As a condition of applying for the award, Celebration does not require assessment or documentation of a project’s impact on students’ learning. Data shows that celebrants are generally unsure of and have a low interest in documenting students’ achievement as it relates to their award-winning projects.

School administrators and State Department of Education officials see things differently. They would acknowledge the common sense view that positive results would follow positive actions. They would also say that good teaching should produce at least some indications of excellent

learning by students. A school administrator said the following:

“Good curriculum projects and a sincere feeling of ownership by the teachers must connect in some way to student achievement and, in turn, to the mastery tests.”

Data shows that the school administrators are waiting for celebrants to take the initiative on this important issue.

Other key participants were also concerned about the need for Celebration to document its impact on students’ learning. For example, one said the following:

“I hope it (celebrants’ teaching) has an impact on students, but I recognize it is a loosely coupled connection. I do believe that as teachers have developed their curriculum it has to have a positive affect on their classrooms and on their students. Celebration needs to establish a direct connection between the curriculum plans and student achievement. There are many different ways available to us. For instance, they could require that the teachers’ application include a student exhibit, portfolio, video, or actual examples of the students’ work. There should also be a written discussion of what has been done to really change students’ achievement. If this was done, we wouldn’t need to go through principals to double-check questionable teachers or projects and would avoid having an administrator affect the application of a teacher, who was very good, but did not please the administration.”

This key participant recognizes the difficulty of establishing and documenting the teacher’s impact on students’ learning but is nonetheless convinced that evidence of the effect can be found and that there are valid, systematic means for collecting and reporting it. Also, if Celebration of Excellence establishes this linkage and creates valid and systematic procedures for teachers to document the impact of their projects on students’ learning the content and skills, there will be no reason for reviewers and the statewide panel to question the teachers’ applications. Everyone wins, including students and parents.

Advocates for school reform and teacher accountability challenge schoolteachers’ beliefs that there is, at best, only a fuzzy relationship between teaching and learning or students’ achievement and that it is unfair and intrusive to document or measure students’ learning as a result of the teachers’ method of teaching. Today, there are few professional pursuits that transpire behind closed doors and without

mechanisms to determine the extent of influence attributable to the practitioner and/or their tools of the trade. Also, increasingly in this era of budget cut-backs, downsizing or restructuring, and deficit reduction, private and public sector funders are requiring their educational grant recipients to provide documentation to show that a program they sponsor contributes to significant achievement gains for students. Celebration should consider changing its policies for application to include documentation to show that a teacher's project has had a positive impact on students' achievement.

4. Issues

The following list of issues stems from the analysis of data. The recommendations for improvement which follow are based on this list.

- *Celebration of Excellence has no bylaws to define the program's purpose, policies, key positions and decision making bodies, operations, and so on.*
- *Celebration's goals, objectives, and operations served the program well in the past ten years. However, the current situation in the State of Connecticut requires more emphasis on outreach for the improvement of school curriculum, students' achievement and assessment, and teachers' professional development.*
- *Celebration's benefits for teachers as individual members of the profession are more conspicuous than their accomplishments with solving longstanding problems of the teaching profession. The approach treats the symptoms realized by individual persons (including isolation, bitterness, cynicism, and worthlessness) but doesn't go as far as it might with curing the occupation's ills. Hence, classroom teachers who seek greater accomplishments and satisfaction in their careers must recycle themselves periodically through the program for renewal.*
- *Advisory Council and celebrants should attract more teachers from minority groups and from the State's largest urban school systems.*
- *A substantial amount of Celebration's professional development activity concerns workshops in which celebrants help other teachers prepare their applications for the Celebration of Excellence award.*
- *Celebration's endorsement by teachers unions is a liability. There is not much evidence in the history of teachers unions that supports teachers' risk taking, creativity, and accountability for improving students' achievement and teachers' professional development.*

- *Celebration's acceptance of a first-year teacher's project for award and the high incidence of repeat awardees suggests that, in these times, there may not be a sufficient challenge for veteran teachers.*
- *The process for disseminating the award-winning curriculum products is not as effective or efficient as it should be. There is a low level of public awareness of the program. Many teachers are unaware that this program exists. It is difficult for teachers to obtain application materials.*

5. Recommendations

The set of recommendations put forth is both bold and far-reaching by design. CRE invites Celebration to study, revise, and/or adopt these recommendations according to its wishes.

Revise Celebration's Goals

Consider revising the original list of three goals to establish one encompassing vision. Consider this statement as an example:

To provide assurance that all of Connecticut's children will have the best education possible, Celebration of Excellence will develop the climate and provide maximum support—including recognition and reward—for school teachers to realize the highest accomplishments in the teaching profession.

Then, write specific statements (revised and updated every 3–5 years as needed) that provide guidance over the long term for the aspiring teachers to create and develop their curriculum projects in order to help Celebration accomplish its goal. For example, Celebration might choose to recognize teachers during the next 3, 5, or 10 years for exemplary contributions to the development of innovative:

- *Curriculum K–12 (e.g., reading or mathematics) that both highlights and integrates the disciplines and challenges children to perform at their highest ability levels.*
- *Methods of instruction that stem from normative practice, current research, or theory and that lead to significant improvements in children's learning, especially for poor and minority children.*
- *Assessment tools that measure and document children's learning of formal school subjects and skills from basic through advanced levels of achievement.*
- *Home and school partnerships and activities that provide the highest quality educational climate for disadvantaged children and their families.*

Create a New Challenge

Consider establishing a variety of progressively challenging levels for Celebration of Excellence awards to individuals and small groups of teachers for exemplary contributions to the profession. Applications would indicate that the teacher(s) had designed and taught (or implemented) the project. There would be documentation to describe and explain the extent to which the project improved students' learning, teachers' practice, and/or school organization. Minimum time period for implementation should be two years.

For example:

- Level 1: curriculum project or lesson for application to one or more classrooms.*
- Level 2: curriculum project applied at the whole team, grade, department, or building level.*
- Level 3: all school, district-level curriculum development or restructuring project.*
- Level 4: professional development program for teachers and/or school administrators and support staff at the district or statewide level.*

Broaden the Organization

Consider the following recommendations for broadening Celebration's organizational framework and extending its outreach to new territory.

- *Broaden participation for decision-making and public awareness by creating a Board of Directors that includes teachers, administrators, and non-educators, such as representatives from other professions, business and industry, government, and universities.*
- *Cultivate positive relationships with other leaders in the state, including different professional and occupational groups, corporations, and community organizations. Discover and act upon what Celebration can do for them, so as to capture their interest and appreciation of Celebration.*
- *Discontinue the program's endorsement from the teachers unions. Instead, consult with the unions on union-related issues and appoint a union representative to the Board of Directors. In*

this way the representatives from teachers unions, which are torn between supporting teachers who want the status quo and those who are reform-minded, will sit at the same table and participate with the same amount of influence as the other constituents who are so important to Celebration's future.

- *Advocate that the search for and recognition of excellence in teaching be institutionalized as a professional accomplishment. The process should involve recommendations from students, parents, and local organizations, in addition to school administrators and colleagues.*
- *Establish a consulting panel of school administrators. In order to obtain statewide participation, membership on the panel should be on a rotation basis. These consultants would provide an official response to Celebration on matters that are relevant to school administrators. This practice would help to keep administrators informed about the program.*

Focus Outreach on Professional Development of Teachers

Finally, CRE recommends the following items to Celebration for development of a statewide outreach program for the professional development of teachers:

- *Increase the program's outreach services to provide curriculum enhancement and professional development opportunities, so that more of the State's schools and teachers will realize the benefits of the program.*
- *Concentrate the program's impact and increase the scale of its operations at the school building and district levels to develop cadres of teachers who commit themselves to local reform of the profession and restructuring schools and curriculum.*
- *Establish a minimum requirement of 3–5 years full time classroom teaching experience before a teacher may submit a project for review.*
- *Establish a high quality, statewide substitute teacher system to facilitate the celebrant's professional development activity and assure skillful, temporary replacements of all teachers.*

- *Create a teachers' research and development consultancy for the improvement of teaching statewide and with regard to improving Connecticut's urban education, specifically. For example, consider establishing a website for teachers of urban, poor, and minority children in all types of educational institutions.*
- *Invite parochial and private school teachers in the State to participate in Celebration of Excellence in teaching. There should be no boundaries, no exclusivity, for this award.*
- *Establish a forum (or different special interest groups) for the teachers' ongoing research of current issues, curriculum development, and innovative school reform, such as charter schools, technology, and urban education. Several celebrants have indicated to CRE that they plan to open their own charter schools in the near future. These teachers described Celebration as a positive force in their decision.*
- *Lessen the program's role in the teachers' preparation of their applications and final projects. Revise and edit information in the published materials about Celebration to present a clearer identity for the program and to make a relatively simple process for application and development of curriculum materials. Give teachers instructions and examples that enable them to do this work on their own time. Include a full description of the Celebration of Excellence program in all publications, especially the annual publication of awards.*
- *Renew Celebration's membership in Impact II.*
- *Seek adequate additional funding from private and public sources.*

6. Conclusion

Celebration of Excellence has accomplished its goals. Indeed, a key participant said it best in the following concise assessment of the program's ten year history:

“Celebration of Excellence has accomplished what we wanted. It has focused attention on excellence.”

Celebration enhances teachers' self-confidence and self-esteem. It rescues teachers from the occupational hazards of teaching. Testimony from celebrants reveals that Celebration prevents some innovative teachers from leaving the classroom in search of another career. It opens doors for celebrants to other, like-minded colleagues and more advanced levels of professional activity. To the celebrants, especially, Celebration creates a sense of pride in the profession and in one's self-worth and accomplishments.

In its ten year history, Celebration has honored 1,125 teachers for their development of 770 innovative curriculum projects. The women and men who received the award expressed gratitude that something—especially an official program—was there to support teachers' pursuit of excellence in teaching. The recognition for outstanding work by Celebration's review team, confirmation from the State Department of Education, and the reward and recognition from colleagues and supervisors in the school buildings were positively overwhelming honors. Teachers who once said they tasted only bitterness, cynicism, and worthlessness in this profession now said they tasted their greatest joy of teaching—recognition and reward for excellence in the art of teaching. Many of these celebrants felt stimulated to pursue additional professional accomplishments. Some of the celebrants won two, three, or four additional awards from Celebration.

Indeed, it was difficult for CRE to understand why a teacher would apply for additional awards. The celebrants' answers to this question almost always focused on the importance of the award to maintaining their self-esteem and self-confidence. After winning their first award and, then, spending another two or three years in the classroom, they found themselves once again at the edge of teacher burnout or deadness. To explain this point, a celebrant who had received the award twice said the following:

"Look at the classroom teacher who is going to be there for 30 or 35 years. You are so isolated. Closed. You are in a room with all these children, which is where you want to be, but you don't have a chance to share with people over the age of ten, for example. There are discipline problems, the day-to-day routines get to you, or you have a bad year. You have to have some professional development or you won't make it. Celebration provides professional development for teachers."

Some repeat awardees said that, in the years after receiving their first award, they continued to develop other innovative projects and, one day, they decided to see if they could still win a Celebration of Excellence award. Winning a second or third time gave celebrants further recognition, as one celebrant said,

"Celebration gives teachers a needed boost. I will apply every other year for the rest of my career."

Teachers who saw themselves facing burnout and deadness said that they wanted to change direction and, therefore, applied for a Celebration of Excellence award with just as much enthusiasm and desperation as the first time.

Near the time of Celebration's beginning, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983)⁵ alerted citizens and teachers in this state to the generally poor qualifications of the nation's teaching force. Good teachers everywhere were devastated. Parents were worried. The Connecticut State Department of Education wisely took up the challenge it faced by emphasizing the positive. It created Celebration of Excellence to recognize and reward excellence in teaching. The

⁵U.S. Department of Education, National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983).

celebrants, exemplars of the teaching method, would lead the way to improving the teaching profession.

Good teaching depends on both high quality pre-service programs for teacher preparation and professional development programs for the in-service education of veteran teachers. Celebration came into existence because of a widespread concern about the plight of veteran teachers. How could the State prevent good teachers from succumbing to the occupational hazards of the teaching craft? Celebration would give reward and recognition for excellence in teaching.

In the current year, the State Supreme Court made a landmark decision when it found that Connecticut is responsible for desegregated schooling in Hartford (and by extension, all of the other cities in the State). This legal decision has focused the educational spotlight sharply on students' achievement—where it will remain for years to come. Now the State must do something effectively to maintain its high standards for all children as well as close the achievement gap between poor and minority children and children from advantaged families. The State Department of Education is in the process of establishing curriculum frameworks that are integrated with formal assessment instruments for a coherent, standards-based educational program.

Excellence in teaching is one of the most important keys to solving this longstanding problem of improving children's learning. Ten years after Celebration started, the circumstances in the State are different. It may be time for Celebration of Excellence to take pride in its accomplishments from the first decade and adjust its program to fit the current educational climate.

The conclusion of this summative evaluation by Curriculum Research and Evaluation is that Celebration of Excellence has accomplished its original objectives. During the past ten years, more than one thousand teachers received recognition for the development, implementation, and dissemination of innovative curriculum projects. The celebrants and other key participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the summer institutes, application workshops, and processes for review of applications. Celebration created the Gala to give teachers "one shining moment." When the teachers receive this honor from their colleagues and special guests, it brings tears of joy, gives a deep sense of pride, and

strengthens their commitment to the teaching profession.

In the light of this evaluation, Celebration may decide to stay the course, with renewed emphasis on its original goals. Doing so would continue to provide the State's public school teachers with recognition and reward for excellence in classroom-based curriculum development. Or, Celebration may decide to introduce substantive changes in its goals, policies, and operations. The course of change would engage celebrants in a critical analysis of Celebration's role with respect to the following issues: long-term program development; funding; school choice and charter schools; assessment of students' achievement; teachers' accountability; and teachers' leadership roles in systemic school reform, curriculum restructuring, and professional development.

In light of the current educational climate, CRE recommends a substantive revision of the program to address more effectively the needs of the teaching profession and the State's educational issues and problems. These changes might also make Celebration more attractive to a broader array of public and private sector funding agencies. The program's leadership has recently taken steps to make some changes in the program. For instance, the Advisory Council is in the process of adopting a set of bylaws. Also, the Program Director and some Advisory Council members said that they intend to link students' achievement with the teachers' award-winning projects by requiring future applicants to provide documentation of a project's impact on students.

Biographical Sketches

Curriculum Research and Evaluation is a firm that is devoted to research and development of programs in the field of education. CRE's specialities are: to provide services in order to evaluate the quality of education programs for private business and industrial companies, public and private funding agencies, and schools; and to develop and guide the implementation of curriculum and instruction.

Charles Bruckerhoff is Principal Evaluator and Research Associate for Curriculum Research and Evaluation. He received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. His research interests are curriculum theory and development, philosophy of education, effects of public policy on the classroom teacher, and school restructuring. He is the author of *Between Classes: Faculty Life at Truman High* and has written articles on curriculum development, qualitative research, urban collaboratives, and disadvantaged youth.

Theresa Bruckerhoff is Operations Manager and Research Associate for Curriculum Research and Evaluation. She has a Bachelors in Elementary Education and a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction. She has sixteen years of teaching experience ranging from preschool to the middle school levels. She taught in gifted programs, special education programs, and is an experienced classroom teacher. She has held executive board positions for child care centers and a nursery school. Currently, she studies state and national programs for teachers' professional development and school restructuring.

Diane Colwyn, CRE's editor, is President of Di Co Editorial Services, a firm specializing in many types of editorial projects. She has experience as an editor with a major textbook publishing company and, also, as a classroom teacher.

Mary Rizza is a doctoral student at the University of Connecticut in the Department of Educational Psychology–Gifted Education. A certified

school psychologist, Mary works in private practice helping families and schools understand the special needs of high ability students. In addition to program evaluation, she maintains research interest in cognitive development, gender issues, interest-based learning, and portfolio assessment.

Appendix

Celebration of Excellence supplied the data for the following tables.

Table 1
Record of Applications and Awards: 1986-1996

Year	Applications Received	Projects Selected	Teachers Awarded
1986	655	60 (9%) ⁶	76 (1.3) ⁷
1987	345	80 (23%)	96 (1.2)
1988	512	85 (17%)	104 (1.2)
1989	507	89 (18%)	112 (1.3)
1990	419	84 (20%)	105 (1.3)
1991	266	78 (29%)	120 (1.5)
1992	314	77 (25%)	120 (1.6)
1993	292	56 (19%)	83 (1.5)
1994	255	58 (23%)	112 (1.9)
1995	224	50 (22%)	91 (1.8)
1996	234	53 (23%)	106 (2)
TOTALS: (1986-1996)	4,023	770 (19%)	1,125 (1.5)

⁶Percent of projects selected from total applications received.

⁷Average number of teachers per project selected.

Table 2
Record of Applications and Awards for 1996

Year	Apps. Rcvd.	# of Tchrs	Prjcts. Scrnd.	# of Tchrs.	Prjcts. Slctd	Tchrs. Awd.
1996	234	440	139	276	53	106

<i>Honorable Mentions</i>	
Projects	Teachers
60	130

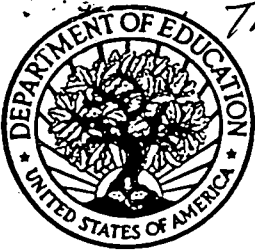
<i>Grade Levels Represented by 53 Projects</i>		
Elementary School	Middle School	High School
21	19	13

Table 3
List of Celebrants' Subsequent Awards or Professional Activities

Award or Professional Activity
• school or district curriculum facilitator or coordinator
• school or district department chair
• local district teacher of the year
• Connecticut Teacher of the Year
• Connecticut Teacher of the Year—semi-finalist
• Milken Family Foundation National Education—awardee
• teacher intern at the Connecticut State Department of Education
• consultant at the Connecticut State Department of Education
• Beginning Educator Support and Training program
• central office administrator for special programs
• cooperating teacher program
• college or university professor (full and part-time)
• program director at Regional Educational Service Center
• vice principal at elementary, middle, and high school levels
• elementary school principal
• Presidential Math and Science Awardee—Connecticut and federal levels
• presenters at local staff development program, state, and national conferences
• presenters at three state Celebration of Excellence conferences

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• advanced work at college and universities for administrative or curriculum degrees
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connecticut Education Association, professional leadership conference workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Board Certification
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• publications in state and national professional journals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• leadership positions in professional organizations

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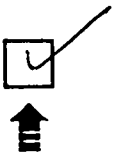
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