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ABSTRACT

This paper describes case studies involving two Canadian high schools. These schools, recognized nationally and provincially as outstanding schools in dealing with multiple changes, provided a venue to explore the conditions that contribute to successful change. The research is based on the assumption that organizational learning is a valid framework for the study of how schools cope with change, illuminating the conditions that allow some schools to overcome barriers to innovation and to appear more successful than others in implementing various initiatives. The paper assesses the leadership approach that contributed to the schools' success to determine the extent to which the teachers' role was consistent with the six domains that Fullan claims are required if schools are to be "learning organizations." Data for the study consisted of interviews of teachers and administrators of both schools, as well as review of various documents, such as school academic-achievement reports. A leadership survey was administered to the entire school staff. The results demonstrate the dynamic, complex nature of change. The findings also demonstrate that such complexity does not prevent change, but often presents new opportunities. All principals were overtly engaged in the change process but also initiated structures that provided for distributed collaborative leadership. Contains 38 references.  
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# Leadership Approach, the New Work of Teachers and Successful Change

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### Abstract

*This paper describes case studies of two Canadian high schools. Within the context of the literature that is replete with references to failed reform, these schools, recognized nationally and provincially as an outstanding school in dealing with multiple changes, provided a venue to explore the conditions that contributed to successful change. The study is based on the assumption that organizational learning is a valid framework for the study of how schools cope with change and what conditions allow some schools to overcome barriers to innovation and to appear more successful than others in implementation of various initiatives. The particular focus of the study was to assess the leadership approach that contributed to the schools' success and to determine the extent to which the teachers' role was consistent with the six domains that Fullan (1995) claims are required if schools are to be "learning organizations".*

### Purpose

The research that is presented in this paper focuses on two Canadian high schools that are recognized provincially and nationally as outstanding schools in dealing with multiple changes. The particular focus of the study was to assess the leadership approach that contributed to the schools' success and to determine the extent to which the teachers' role was consistent with the six domains that Fullan (1995) claims are required if schools are to be "learning organizations".

### The Theoretical Framework Guiding the Research

Kozma and Schank (1998) contend that students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will need to acquire a new set of skills in order to deal effectively with the vast amounts of available information. Schools must prepare students to be "the new professionals, the highly trained symbolic analysts or knowledge workers who manage the new high-tech information economy" (Rifkin, 1995, p.174). In contrast to the current emphasis in schools on individual learning and performance once seen as appropriate for the role of the industrial worker, theorists foresee a growing need for knowledge workers who can work with partners, associates, and in small work teams, using a variety of tools and resources. Information technology is seen as an essential component in this major shift "from an economy based on material, energy, and labour to one based on information and communication" (Rifkin, 1995, p.236).

For schools to shift from their traditional individualistic orientation to one that prepares students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a major change. Unfortunately, schools have not been successful in their attempts to make such change (Brown, Button, Noseworthy-Button, & Sheppard, 1997; Cranston, 1994; Deal, 1990; Fullan, 1993; Murphy & Hallinger, 1993; Sarason, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1995; Stoll & Fink, 1996). For example, Deal (1990) states, "We have tried almost everything conceivable to improve our public schools. We have invested millions of dollars...only to watch new skills disappear amidst old routines" (p.6). Within the context of such scepticism toward efforts at educational change many researchers contend that if necessary changes are to actually happen, schools must become learning organizations (Cousins, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Fullan, 1998; Leithwood & Aitken, 1995; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997; Leithwood, Leonard & Sharratt, 1997; Louis, 1994; Mitchell, Sackney & Walker, 1996; O'Neil, 1995b; Prestine & Dole, 1995; Sheppard & Brown, 1996, 1997, 1998). Fullan (1995) contends that if schools are to engage in becoming learning organizations, "there are at least six domains of knowledge and skills that teachers must continuously seek to acquire" (p. 233). See Table 1.

Approaches to leadership that appear to support the development of schools as learning organizations emphasize the need to move away from technological, hierarchical, rational planning models, toward cultural, collaborative approaches in which teachers are viewed as partners (Barksdale, 1998; Blase, 1993; Brown, 1995; Caldwell, 1997; Handy, 1994; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Kozma & Schank, 1998; Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge, 1996; Sheppard, 1996). Leithwood and Duke (1998), for example, note that “empirical research on transformational school leadership offers modest amounts of evidence for the contributions of such leadership to student participation in school...as well as organizational-level effects such as organizational learning, and the development of productive school climate” (p. 8). Practices that have been associated with transformational leadership are consistent with the cultural, collaborative approaches noted above (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996; Leithwood, 1995). See Table 2.

### INSERT TABLE 1 AND TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

While the learning organization framework shows promise for school change, the relevance to education requires empirical study (Leithwood & Louis, in press). Currently, many educators in Canada have been influenced by the learning organization framework and have partially operationalized it through Fullan’s six domains. Additionally, they have accepted a transformational leadership framework as a means of facilitating organizational learning. They have determined that practice cannot wait until the empirical evidence confirms the applicability of these frameworks. The purpose of this study then is to address the evidence problem surrounding organizational learning in school. Specifically, we sought answers to the following questions:

- (1) To what extent is teachers’ role in two schools, recognized provincially and nationally for their success in bringing about meaningful change, consistent with the six domains that Fullan claims are required if schools are to become learning organizations?
- (2) What is the nature of the leadership approach in two successful schools and what is the relationship between that leadership and the schools’ success?

### Methodology

#### *Sample Selection*

This study focuses on two high schools from two different school districts in Newfoundland, Canada. To provide anonymity, we created fictitious names for the two schools: Vision Collegiate and Town Pride Secondary School. Vision Collegiate has 37 teachers, and 618 students; Town Pride Secondary School has 40 teachers and 710 students. The schools were selected on the basis of their reputations as innovative schools. Both are provincial and national leaders in many areas of curriculum and school management, and are particularly well known in the use of technology in education. Both are equipped with leading edge technology and are supported by corporate and community partnerships. In addition, both principals have received provincial and national recognition for outstanding leadership.

We conducted a total of 14 interviews with teachers and administrators at Town Pride Secondary School, and 20 interviews at Vision Collegiate. We reviewed documents that included staff meeting minutes, school improvement committee minutes, school improvement plans, newspaper clippings, daily school announcements, and school academic achievement reports. Also, we administered a leadership survey (Leithwood, 1995) to the entire school staff. The survey was based on Leithwood’s conceptualization of transformational leadership (Table 2).

The protocols for the interviews and document analysis were based on both Fullan's six domains of the learning organization (Table 1) and Leithwood's conceptualization of transformational leadership.

### *Data Analysis*

To analyze the data, we adopted the procedures for qualitative research developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) whereby we developed causal networks through which we condensed our field notes, transcribed interviews, school documents, and survey data down to a few dozen boxed words and arrows accompanied by a brief narrative. Together, the networks and the narratives tell "the story" of change, outline the teachers' role and the leadership approach in a manner that reveals the directional relationships among the most important variables.

To create the causal network, we first organized the raw data for each school by events and states that revealed change or impacted change. These were arranged in an event-state matrix for each school in a manner somewhat exclusive of our conceptual framework. These data were presented to the entire teaching staff of the school for feedback, correction, and verification. Following that, we developed a causal network for each school by using the event-state matrix together with our conceptual framework. While in draft form, we showed the appropriate causal network to the school principal and one teacher at each school, allowing for further correction and verification. Both causal networks are composed of a series of concrete events arranged by chronological time periods, sorted into several categories: Origins, Iteration 1, Iteration 2, and Iteration 3. In addition to the events, we have included states (conditions such as "district dissatisfaction") which cut across the time periods. While issues of leadership are evident throughout both causal networks, we also provided a more detailed analysis by focussing directly on the leadership stream of each causal network. We applied Leithwood's transformational leadership constructs to the leadership stream analysis.

### **Findings**

#### *Town Pride High School Causal Network* (Figure 1)

Our analysis reveals that teachers in this school demonstrated knowledge and skills consistent with Fullan's six domains. From the beginning (origins) of the period that we attempted to study, there existed evidence of connections with the outside community. For many years prior to 1986, Town Pride High School had established a reputation (1) as a leader in the field of choral performance and in various sports (2). It enjoyed strong parental and community support (3) for these co-curricular components and was viewed by many teachers as an elite school. Teachers aspired to obtaining a teaching position there and all teachers were subject area specialists. At this stage, however, we were unable to find evidence of other domain characteristics. Academic achievement appeared to be of an average standard and was defined in terms of narrowly defined learning outcomes (provincial public examinations); most were content with the standard, and therefore academic achievement was not given any particular attention by either the community or the school. At this stage, it was the school board that provided the vision of what the school should become. On several occasions, the school board expressed concerns (4) that the school was not performing as well academically as one would expect. The school board's desire to make changes in the school was demonstrated by the appointment of a new principal from outside (5) the school district, a move that negatively impacted teacher morale. It appears that, at this point, teachers were very traditional in their teaching strategies and largely operated independently of one another and outside groups.



Groupthink and perceived public support made them believe that the school board was unreasonable and that their decision to appoint an outsider as principal was wrong.

In spite of lowered morale and a lowered sense of self worth among teachers, the new principal, Tom, with the help of an administrative council (6) composed of himself, the vice-principal, and six department heads, initiated two major initiatives: computerized scheduling (7) and a home and school association (8). As a consequence of this change in school administration, the school began to think more systemically. Teachers became more aware of the potential influence of the school board and the new principal developed more formal connections with the community.

Also, consistent with Fullan's first domain, the school began to develop its expertise in technology. The establishment of an administrative council led to more collaboration and distributed leadership. It was this collaboration and the development of technological expertise that influenced the appointment of the new principal when Tom was appointed as assistant superintendent within that school district three years later. The person (9) to replace him came from within the school. He was a department head who had worked closely with Tom on the administrative council (6) and had been heavily involved in the computerized scheduling (7). This appointment was viewed positively by the school staff and became a boost to their morale.

During the period of Iteration One, more domain characteristics became apparent. Teachers developed a broad repertoire of teaching strategies. The school initiated several major initiatives that required collaboration both inside and outside. The principal and a team of teachers began to recognize the need to develop expertise in change and sought to develop such expertise through school improvement committees. Also, the teaching staff began to develop a shared vision of what they wanted their school to become over the next three to five years and made commitments to work toward improving their school and to making a difference in students lives (19). The combined efforts of various school improvement committees challenged the status quo and resulted in a push for excellence (18) in academics as well as in co-curricular activities. The new principal (9), George, continued to focus on the computerized scheduling which led to the semesterization (10) of courses. Recognizing the need for continuous learning, in the spring of his first year as principal, George attended a conference sponsored by the provincial School Administrators' Council (11). The focus of this conference was school improvement. Building on concepts learned at the conference, he worked with department heads and school board administration (12) to initiate a school improvement process (13) at Town Pride. Through this process, several school improvement committees were formed. These committees led to increased levels of collaboration and over the course of the next few years played a major role in several improvement initiatives (14). Some of the initiatives were initiated by the committees themselves, some by the school administration, and others by sources outside the school such as the Department of Education (15), the school board (16), or Boston College (17) who introduced advanced placement courses in the province. The school became a pilot school for the implementation of two provincial initiatives: a special education program and a computer studies program. Also, it became heavily involved in the implementation of resource-based learning, a policy initiative of the Department of Education (15). District administration (12) was supportive of all these initiatives. All six of Fullan's domains were quite apparent at this point. By this time they had developed considerable expertise in bringing about change. The emphasis on resource-based learning led to a direct focus on the learning situation whereby students were placed at the centre of the learning. Resource-based learning was dependent upon the use of a broad repertoire of teaching strategies. As well, inherent in the resource-based

learning approach was a focus on learning outcomes and teacher collaboration in instructional planning and delivery. Its dependence upon availability of learning resources would also lead to a recognition of the need to develop computer skills as teachers began to recognize the potential of emerging computer technologies. The school's successful bid to become a pilot school for both computer technology and the special education initiative as well as the introduction of advanced placement courses reveal the commitment to learning and to making a difference in the lives of all students.

Successful implementation of all of the above initiatives was largely dependent upon the existence of external partnerships. At this stage partners provided funding that supported team learning and risk taking that allowed the school to explore options that did not fall within the boundaries of current norms or practices. In addition to the internal school teams, partnerships with various federal government agencies (20), that otherwise had no jurisdiction over or obligation to the k-12 school system, contributed much to the school's success. Employment Canada provided \$20,000 to support implementation of an attendance policy; \$60,000 to support program development for resource-based learning; and \$215,000 to encourage early leavers to continue their formal education. The initial computer resources that were provided by the Department of Education and the school board through the pilot in computer studies (15) were expanded by the Co-operative Agreement for Human Resource Development (20) between the provincial and federal governments. From this agreement the school received funding for three projects valued at \$68,000.

Throughout Iteration Two, all domains of teacher leadership became increasingly evident. Staff turnover (21) both influenced and were influenced by the impact of information technology. In Fall 1990, a new vice-principal (22), Ted, within six months became acting principal as George (9) took educational leave. Bringing with him strong proposal writing skills, Ted was a key player in obtaining external funding (20) for technology (23). In addition, retirements allowed the hiring of Dave (24), a technology education teacher with strong technical skills. When Ted became the principal, Dave became the vice-principal. This new strength in the area of emerging technology led to the refocusing of school improvement (25) to give particular emphasis to this area. As the focus of the instructional program committee shifted toward technology, each department within the school (26) was given increasing responsibility to develop its own improvement plans relative to programs. This move revealed a developing trust in the expertise of teachers in each department to bring about improvements that would enhance student learning. Recognition of this level of trust led to new levels of teacher confidence in their own professional expertise which was further enhanced by increased professional development opportunities resulting from the newly established partnerships. Many teachers were committed to continuous learning and were gaining expertise as systems thinkers as a consequence of collaboration with one another and with outside partners. Other federal government funds, \$400,000, allowed the school to develop and implement two co-operative education programs (27), a career exploratory program and a Family Living, subject-based program. An immediate effect of the new programs in co-operative education was improved communication (39) with outside and greater involvement of business and community leaders (some were also parents) into the school. Outside community groups were beginning to feel responsible for student learning. Building on this new relationship, a group of these business community leaders voluntarily organized an auction committee (28) to hold annual community auctions of art works, travel packages, arts and crafts, merchandise, and services to raise money for additional technology (23) resources for the school. Since 1991, these auctions had raised approximately

\$100,000 that had allowed the school to increase the number of computers in the school for instructional purposes. Two other federally funded projects, totalling approximately \$500,000, were targeted at connecting the school with the community by providing services in areas of communications, literacy, youth and senior outreach and at partnering with the local business community to ease the transition between school and work and youth employment. Additionally, since 1994, the school had partnered with two major telecommunications corporations (29) who had provided technology hardware, a school-wide computer network and internet access. One of these corporate partners also provided training for a school team of six teachers, administrators, business, and board representatives at a national institute (30) for school-business partnerships. During Iteration 2 as well, Town Pride was able to avail of services provided by Stemnet (31), an educational network supported by the federal and provincial governments. It has provided Internet access to all schools and teachers in the province and has provided related training to lead teachers in each school. These partnerships have been significant in advancing the school's capability to offer leading edge technology programs, to implement computers across the curriculum, and to enhance the use of information technology (32) in the learning process.

Iteration Three began in the context of provincial restructuring (33). Provincial restructuring brought with it a new emphasis on accountability and testing in respect to student learning (34), and the required formation of a school council (35), composed of teachers, parents, and community representatives. Within this context of restructuring, the increased level of external funding (20), and a growing number of business partners (28), the school administrators began to recognize the need to be more directly accountable to their various stakeholders. Even though they had received external recognition (40), locally, provincially, and nationally, for their successes, for the most part, they did not have data (36), beyond general impressions, to demonstrate the impact of their various initiatives on student learning. While results from standardized tests and attendance records were quite positive, they were aware that many things that they and their stakeholders valued were not assessed. If they were to be accountable, they needed to improve the assessment of their improvement efforts. During Fall 1996, they initiated a school-university partnership to help them refocus (37) their school improvement efforts in order to increase both their accountability and growth through action research and a learning organization framework (38). District office (41) personnel have recognized the progress that the school has made and has recognized the value of the school-university partnership. Recently, Ted has moved to a senior administrative role with the district and Dave has assumed the principalship (42). Since Ted's move, the district has entered into a similar partnership (43) with the university with the expressed intent of enhancing organizational learning in all its schools using Town Pride as a model.

### *Vision Collegiate Causal Network* (Figure 2)

Similar to Town Pride, Vision Collegiate has a history of community and parental support (1). Over the 40 year period of its existence, teachers and students have been proud to be associated with the school. The school has been viewed as one of the elite school's (2) in the province and only teachers that are recognized as specialists are hired. Before the personal computer was introduced to other schools in the province, the principal at this school had developed a computerized administration program to develop student and teacher schedules. In fact, many schools throughout the province adopted Vision's program between 1985 and 1990. Also, in Fall 1990, the school engaged in a major Department of Education (3) pilot project in computer studies.



Because of their perceived success, however, there was little recognition of the need for change or improvement. In a stable climate where parents, the community, students, and the school board (4) were satisfied with the status quo, teachers continued to function within the school largely as if it were a closed system. There existed no perceived need to develop or enhance their connections with the outside, and teachers, though collegial, operated independently of one another. Developing partnerships, engaging in school improvement efforts, or developing expertise in the change process were not considerations.

During Iteration One, a new vision was created. A new principal (5) was appointed in September 1991, when the former principal became an assistant superintendent (6) with the school district (4). The new principal recognized the strength of the teaching staff at the school and the strong collegial relationships that existed among them. He also admired the accomplishments of his predecessor, the newly appointed assistant superintendent, in building such a strong school culture and therefore, maintained a strong relationship with him until he retired in 1996. He was, however, discontented with the way, generally, schools were operating, and was interested in making links with the business community (7) as a means of making education more integrated into the community. He initiated a meeting with a major telecommunications corporation in October 1992. This resulted in a formal partnership that extended the school's commitment to technology and acted as a catalyst for change within the school. As a result of this partnership, the school was invited to send a team to a week-long national institute (8) where school, school board personnel, and business sector representatives from across Canada met. The theme was "Excellence in Education", with workshops, keynote speakers, opportunities to form and maintain networks among participants, and vision planning. The six representatives from the school were: the local CEO of the telecommunications corporation, the principal, a district assistant superintendent, the school board chair, the district science co-ordinator, and the school's technology teacher/network administrator. Other partnerships have followed, including one with the local telephone service provider.

In Fall 1993 (the beginning of Iteration Two), a vision statement, Vision 2000 (9) was formalized, with a focus on creating an electronic school. Indirectly, the provincial Department of Education (3) was influencing the change: Many teachers in the school were committed to the Department's policy of resource-based learning (10); the school was committed to excellence in providing to students the provincial curriculum (11); and the school was working directly with Stemnet (12). As well, a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)(13), composed of teachers, departments heads, school administrators and parents, was created to facilitate the implementation of Vision 2000. Based on Vision 2000, the PAC wrote two funding proposals: one to the Communications Technology Co-operative Education Youth Internship Program, and another to Human Resources Development Canada (HRD). In Spring 1994, the school was informed that they had HRD approval for Phase 1 of their proposal (14), with a budget estimate of \$250,000. Phase One of Vision 2000 was the start of implementing the information technology plan (16), in which the school's library was turned into a Learning Resources Centre with a Local Area Network (LAN) with capabilities for data, voice, and video. In addition, each classroom was provided with at least three nodes on the network. In Fall 1994, the Communications Technology Co-operative Education Youth Internship Program (15) began.

Teachers cite the tremendous gains afforded by the technology present in the school. One teacher commented that, "paperless courses, improved research efforts, higher quality work, and the teacher moving from sage to learner and facilitator are the sorts of sweeping changes that have altered this learning environment." Resource-based learning (10) is a philosophy that this

staff seems to have embraced. This was true prior to their current access to information technology, but brought frustration in a time when budgets and professional development opportunities were severely reduced. One teacher said, "Resource-based teaching is the Department's [provincial department of education] way of saying we don't have money to resource this properly so teachers, you do this for us." Another teacher commented that, "currently, it appears that resource-based learning is flourishing." This seems largely due to the current extent of resources (especially its LAN and Internet access) and the speed and ease of access. Web-based resources, in-house websites, and email communication with parents and colleagues were noted as direct changes in teaching and learning at Vision Collegiate.

The innovations at the school were being noticed and recognized (17) beyond the local community. In 1994, the principal won the prestigious inaugural Fortis Award for Leadership in Education. In 1995, four teachers on the staff won provincial and national awards. In the same year, Vision Collegiate became a pilot school for the establishment of a School Council (18) reaffirming the school's commitment to partnerships and the recognition of the need to connect other than teachers to student learning.

Technological improvements continued with the support of the business partners (7) and additional school board (4) funding. Also, new proposals were written and funded, allowing the extension of the Communications Technology Project and the implementation of phases 2 and 3 of Vision 2000, which included a multimedia lab. The PAC (13) raised \$50,000 for equipment purchase for the multimedia lab. To support the implementation, new teachers (19) were carefully chosen to add to the strength of the school. Particularly significant was an addition of a second teacher-librarian in the newly designed Learning Resource Centre. This person was chosen because of his expertise in teacher-librarianship, networks, and information technology. The two teacher-librarians, working with the school's technology teacher, and several other teachers with expertise in this area, were able to provide considerable in-house professional development (20) for information technology--evidence that teachers were committed to continuous learning and to helping each other in that respect.

By 1996 (Iteration Three), tension had begun to exist between the school board and the school. Because the school was successful in obtaining funding, resources, and services from its business and community partners, the board saw an increasing gap (21) between the facilities and programs available at that School and at other schools within its jurisdiction. Teachers at Vision Collegiate perceived that to reduce this gap, the Board did not give them equal treatment. By 1997, further uncertainty was created when through restructuring (22) of the provincial educational system, the old school board was replaced by a much larger board, (more than double the size), serving 85 schools and 35,000 students. Board personnel had been streamlined such that even though their responsibilities were greater, the number of board personnel was greatly reduced. Additionally, because most of members of the senior management were new, the staff and partners at Vision Collegiate were uncertain of the amount of support they could expect from them. In fact, there were restrictions on the number of days available to teachers for professional development (20). In spite of this, they were quite confident that they had developed a collective expertise that would allow them to move forward without school board assistance. Despite the pressures, teacher morale remained extremely high (23). A member of the school's action research team (24) commented that "because of the directions that the school has taken, the school is in a much stronger position to react to whatever changes are introduced."

The level of staff expertise (25) in their subject areas was demonstrated through the large number of Vision Collegiate teachers who served on provincial curriculum committees, creating new provincial curriculum frameworks (11), and a new core curriculum for the Atlantic

Provinces (APEF) (26). Their commitment to making a difference to students' lives was reflected in the pride that they had in their academic program. They boasted that their program is a superior one (27); they offered local and advanced placement courses, and piloting of new courses was constant. The arts hold a prominent position in the curriculum (an Art Gallery is now online). The following comment is representative of the pride that teachers have in their programs: "The number and variety of courses we offer is as good as any school in the province and better than most." As well, teachers are quick to point out that school success as measured through the standard measures of scholarships and other performance indicators is clearly documented.

January 1997, Vision Collegiate included challenging needs students (28) as part of their student population. While this new group of students represented a significant programming shift and a challenge for teachers, it quickly became a matter of course as they had already accepted the integration of special needs students into the regular classroom several years prior to that. As a result, of the many external partnerships, courses like entrepreneurship, co-operative education, and law have provided students with work experience and many speaking and job opportunities—an example of relevance. The active participation of 151 external partners (29) in school programs is a clear indication that outside groups have taken responsibility for student learning.

In spring 1997, the Department of Education cancelled the provincial public examinations (30) for senior high school courses. This change in student assessment procedures caused some concern for teachers. For Vision Collegiate, a school that consistently attempted to exceed provincial averages, there was now no intra-provincial measure. Many teachers were uneasy about students having to rely on school-based assessments. It is apparent that teachers at Vision Collegiate, while professionally mature relative to most of Fullan's six domains, were somewhat limited in their level of confidence in assessment that focuses on learning outcomes other than those traditionally measured.

The staff seemed to be well informed in respect to available programs and strategies to support teaching; however, they were not nearly as clear in matters relating to the impact of these programs or strategies. There were definite statements about the nature of the impact on student learning, student discipline, and levels of motivation, but little reference to specific data. For example, when questioned as to specific evidence of improved student learning, improved discipline, or improved levels of motivation, no one was able to point to data to support the claim that improvements had been realized. In fact, in the current context of accountability, where various stakeholder groups demand evidence of performance, this school (at least the leadership team) recognized the importance of assessing the impact of their efforts on areas of student learning that they deemed to be important. It appears that they have accepted the reality articulated by Stoll and Fink (1996), that "what gets measured, or assessed, get valued" (p. 166). They realized that if they did not assess the learning that they believe to be important (though some may be difficult to assess), other agencies will measure either what they value, or what is easy to measure. As a consequence, they have begun to explore the potential of action research (24).

By the end of our study, Vision 2000 was viewed as completed, and the school was in the process of refocusing (31). During iteration 3, significant staff changes (32) had occurred: The school principal took study leave, several key teachers had retired, and three teacher members of the PAC were promoted to other positions outside the school. The vice-principal was acting principal and a teacher on staff had replaced him as vice-principal. While the school continued to thrive, the process of change appeared to have slowed.

At a whole-school professional development session held in 1998, during a discussion of where they have been and where they were headed, they focussed on student outcomes (33). Teachers were aware that they were being held accountable in a manner unprecedented in their lifetime, and that they needed to link what they do, with student success. During that session, they concluded that an organizational learning framework (34) would facilitate their future growth. Where Vision Collegiate was to go from that point was not yet determined, but the commitment to partnerships and to information technology suggests that these innovations were institutionalized into the culture of the school.

### *Leadership Approach*

Our analysis reveals that the formal leaders, particularly the school principals, were key players throughout the change process; however, their role was one of initiation and facilitation. Principals in both schools initiated the school improvement process, kept the staff informed of major new initiatives that were being sponsored by outside agencies, and set up teams that would guide the implementation of any new initiative. They were key players in proposal writing for external funding, active members of all the leadership teams, and instigators of the hiring of teachers with expertise in technology. As well, they served as liaisons to outside groups. The casual network leadership streams for both schools clearly reveal the importance of the school principals in the change process.

The causal network leadership stream for Vision Collegiate (Figure 3) reveals a new principal (5) who is unwilling to accept the status quo in spite of the parental support for the school (1) and culture of excellence (2) surrounding the school. He initiated school change through personally establishing business partnerships (7) and involving them along with staff and parents (13) in the creation and implementation of the new school plan, Vision 2000 (9), that aimed at developing a state-of-the art school using modern technology (16). Although he set up teams that would guide the implementation of the new programs (15), he was a key player in proposal writing for external funding (14). He was an active member of all the leadership teams, and instigator of the hiring of teachers (19) with expertise in technology. These new teachers provided critical professional development for other teachers that positively impacted on the Vision 2000 project and enhanced the level of teacher morale (23). As well, he served as liaison with community groups, businesses, and other outside agencies (27), and played a significant role in developing the level of external recognition (17) of the school and its programs. In addition, the principal encouraged a partnership with university researchers and the creation of action research (24), a variable that contributed to the direction of the refocusing (31) and to the staffs' acceptance of the organizational learning framework (34).

The leadership stream of the Town Pride causal network (Figure 4) reveals that the role of principal was key in the change process at Town Pride as well. While the individual who filled that role changed several times, the influence of the person in that role was significant. During the origin stage, a new principal (5) introduced computer technology (7) into the school, increased the level of teacher engagement in school leadership (6), and increased the level of active parental involvement (8). A second principal (9) initiated a school improvement process (13) that was dependent upon staff collaboration and team learning. As a result of this initiative, the school adopted and successfully implemented a number of new programs and initiatives (14, 20, 27). The school improvement efforts were directed at a push for excellence (18) resulting in a particular focus on computer technology (23). In support of this focus, when staff turnover (21) allowed the flexibility, the principal promoted the hiring of a new teacher who had particular expertise in computer technology (24). A third principal (22) continued to work with the school



improvement teams, but accelerated the connection with outside partners (28, 29, 31) to seek support and sources of funding. He was largely responsible for the appointment of the new technology teacher as vice-principal. As a result, the school improvement team began to realize the emphasis placed on technology and refocused (25) their efforts to promote the use of information technology across the curriculum. As well, he initiated a partnership with university researchers (43) and introduced to the staff the concepts of action research and organizational learning (36). The fourth principal (42) continued to build on the collaborative culture of learning that had been established. The constant school growth that continued over the term of four school principals and five vice-principals suggests that the growth was not dependent upon these individuals; however, their leadership role as initiators and facilitators was critical.

The prominence of the formal leadership role in both schools was revealed through the leadership survey. When asked to indicate the extent to which various individuals or groups provided leadership for school improvement, the largest percentage of teachers in both schools placed the principal as the primary source (93% at Town Pride and 100% at Vision Collegiate). This was followed by the vice-principal with 81% at Town Pride and 90% at Vision Collegiate. See Table 3 and Table 4. The level of support for other sources, however, reveals that the leadership approach in both schools was collaborative and that teachers were viewed as partners. Of three sources of leadership that we identified as collaborative (administrative/teacher committees, teacher committees, and whole staff), the number of teachers recognizing them as providing leadership ranged from 53%-77% at Vision Collegiate (Table 4) and from 35%-58% at Town Pride (Table 3). At Town Pride, outside sources such as school board, district office personnel, parents, and other community members were perceived to provide leadership by 26% of the staff. At Vision Collegiate, the same pattern is apparent, as these outside sources were perceived to provide leadership by 27% of the staff. These results suggest that the approach to leadership at each school has moved beyond traditional hierarchical models of management. They are actively engaged in leadership for improvement; they have involved teams of teachers in this process; and they have recruited various business and community groups to partner with them toward the same end of improved learning opportunities for students.

INSERT TABLE 3 and TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

A second component of the leadership survey specifically addressed the issue of leadership approach as teachers were asked to identify words that best described leadership in the school. At Town Pride (Table 3), 93% - 95% of the staff characterized the leadership in the school as visionary, change-oriented, visible, supportive, goal-oriented, and as holding high expectations. Other highly rated characteristics were collaborative (86%), intellectually stimulating (88%), democratic (77%), and participatory (76%). Inconsistent with these percentages was the extent to which teachers perceived the leadership to be decentralized (51%) and inclusive (60%). These latter results, though, are consistent with percentages regarding sources of leadership, noted above, which clearly indicate the significance of the central leadership (principal and vice-principal). Ratings of teachers at Vision Collegiate (Table 4) are similar, with the exception that 93% of them view leadership to be inclusive.

A third component of the survey assessed the level of agreement among teachers in respect to the existence of leadership practices that were consistent with the constructs of transformational leadership (Table 2). Results of this survey component reveal that teachers in both schools perceived transformational leadership practices to exist. In fact, there was more than 70% agreement on all survey constructs that leaders in both schools exhibited behaviours



consistent with transformational leadership. See Table 5.

While the survey data clearly indicate that teachers saw most leadership as coming from the formal school administrators, there is also considerable evidence that leadership was shared. The interview data validated these findings revealing clearly that the committee structure of both schools had significant impact on the changes that occurred. While Vision Collegiate had no formal school improvement committee as existed at Town Pride Secondary School, the role of the department heads, the parent advisory committee, and the empowerment felt by teachers appeared to foster innovation among staff even more than the formal committees at Town Pride. All teachers that were interviewed at Vision Collegiate clearly articulated the existence of a collaborative work environment within the context of a trusting relationship. While most credited the principal for initiating their major change initiative, it was obvious that they had taken ownership of implementation themselves. The extent of empowerment and trust that this staff feels it has is expressed in the following representative comments:

[1] A lot of trust between staff and administration – and no one checking you; [2] Freedom to test ideas a little bit without worrying too much about ‘you should have cleared this with me’ --hinges upon the attitude of the administrators; [3] The overwhelming sense of confidence that this staff exudes, magnificently parlays into individuals examining much more of their school’s direction than might otherwise be the case. Providing this flexibility has allowed them to explore personal interests in teaching. Exploring in such a rich environment, together with bountiful expertise and a collegial attitude, has ignited a hunger for learning and improvement that seems to wash over everything this staff does; [4] Growth has been organic and not very formal – it was initially top-down but it was top-down saying, ‘What do you think...and the people said ‘Yeah!’; [5] This school is an exercise in democracy; [6] The hierarchy has flattened out – it’s democratic.

Leadership at Town Pride, while collaborative, appears to be more hierarchical and appears to be directly involved in directing some of the major initiatives. At Town Pride several teachers made a clear distinction between administration and teachers. They indicated that the principal and vice-principal were respected for making executive decisions, and moving forward as the active leaders in the school. Interesting was a comment made about the ‘consultative’ nature of the administration. This reveals a line of distinction that repeatedly surfaced in reading the interviews. That is, there was a clear separation between communication among staff, and communication between staff and administration. There was no sense that this was in any way adversarial, but clearly the staff felt a strong adherence to traditional protocol. There was also a strong sense that responsibility for direction lay solely with administration. This appears to have limited the range of influence of some staff to enact change, as the power to do it appeared from their perspective to be vested elsewhere.

Even though the nature and style of leadership appears to be somewhat different in both schools, both were functional and brought successes to their schools. In both schools, the administrators and teachers hold a mutual respect for one another. Teachers at both schools attribute their success to the willingness of teachers to work together and to the supportiveness of the administration.

### Summary and Conclusion

The change process charted in this study clearly reveals the dynamic, complex nature of change; but more importantly, it reveals that such complexity does not prevent change, but often presents new opportunities. The leadership role of the school principal is quite evident in both schools. All principals were overtly engaged in the change process, but also initiated structures that provided for distributed collaborative leadership. Practices that have been associated with transformational leadership were perceived to exist and the link between these practices and the success of the change process was apparent in both schools. As well, Fullan's six domains of knowledge and skills required of teachers (including principals and vice-principals) were evident in the key factors in the change process at these schools:

They established partnerships with outside groups that resulted in significant additional funding and new program initiatives that were viewed by the multiple partners as relevant in the current global context.

They took ownership of the change process; and they formalized their collaborative efforts (Vision 2000 and school improvement teams) in order to change the norms and practices of the school.

They focused directly on the learning situation through the introduction of resource-based learning and computer technology and focused on the need to identify and assess the learning outcomes that they value.

They recognized the need to be continuous learners and took responsibility for their own professional development particularly in developing expertise in information technology.

They adopted programs that were targeted at addressing the needs of all students ranging from the gifted to the mentally challenged. A moral commitment to preparing all students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century appeared to exist.

The evidence clearly suggests that organizationally, these schools were in a constant state of learning. While individuals continued to learn, there was a collective learning that went beyond individuals or groups. Collectively, there existed a constant searching for improvements through new programs, new sources of funding, new practices, and new theories. Organizationally, both schools presented themselves in a manner consistent with Handy's (1994) learning organizations: "organizations that are continually renewing themselves, reinventing themselves, reinvigorating themselves...the ones with the learning habit" (p. 45). These schools appeared to have the learning habit. As a consequence they have been able to "dream the dream" of changing their learning culture to one required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and they have gone a long way toward successfully accomplishing that "dream".

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**Table 1**  
**Fullan's Six Domains of Knowledge and Skills**

i.	Teachers must focus directly on the learning situation, whereby they are subject area specialists drawing on a repertoire of teaching strategies to meet the wide range of student needs. They must know assessment techniques for identifying a range of learning outcomes and they must develop skills in the world of technology and telecommunications.
ii.	Teachers must be committed to, skilled at, and engaged in collaboration both inside and outside the school. They must assume direct responsibility for changing the norms and practices of their profession and the entire school.
iii.	Teachers must take into account and create partnerships with parents, communities, business, and social agencies within the global context in order to ensure relevant teaching and to connect other partners to learning.
iv.	Teacher must be continuous learners.
v.	Teachers must become experts in the change process.
vi.	Teachers must make a moral commitment to making a difference in the lives of all children.

**Table 2**  
**Transformational Leadership Practices of School Principals**

i.	Develops Shared Vision
ii.	Builds Consensus on School Goals
iii.	Holds High Expectations
iv.	Models Behaviour
v.	Strengthens School Culture
vi.	Provides Individualized Support
vii.	Builds Collaborative Structures
viii.	Provides Intellectual Stimulation

**Table 3**  
**Leadership: Town Pride Secondary School**

Source of Leadership	%	Leadership Approach	%
<i>Internal</i>			
a. Principal	93%	Democratic	77%
b. Vice-principal	81%	Participating	76%
c. Department Head	63%	Decentralized	51%
d. Individual teachers(Formal)	65%	Inclusive	60%
e. Administrative team	74%	Visionary	93%
f. Admin/teacher committee	58%	Change-oriented	95%
g. Teacher committee	51%	High expectations	93%
h. Individual teachers (Informal)	47%	Visible leadership	93%
I. Whole school staff	35%	Supportive	93%
j. Students	16%	Intellectually stimulating	88%
<i>External</i>		Collaborative	86%
k. School board members	23%	Goal-oriented	93%
l. Superintendent	23%		
m. Assistant Superintendent	23%		
n. Program coordinators	26%		
o. District-wide committee	12%		
p. Parents/Community	14%		
q. Dept. Of Education	14%		
<i>Team Leadership Ratings</i>			
f. Admin/teacher committee	58%		
g. Teacher committee	51%		
I. Whole school staff	35%		

**Table 4**  
**Leadership: Vision Collegiate**

<b>Source of Leadership</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Leadership Approach</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Internal</i>			
a. Principal	100%	Democratic	97%
b. Vice-principal	90%	Participating	100%
c. Department Head	73%	Decentralized	70%
d. Individual teachers(Formal)	87%	Inclusive	93%
e. Administrative team	90%	Visionary	100%
f. Admin/teacher committee	77%	Change-oriented	100%
g. Teacher committee	67%	High expectations	100%
h. Individual teachers (Informal)	70%	Visible leadership	93%
I. Whole school staff	53%	Supportive	100%
j. Students	20%	Intellectually stimulating	96%
<i>External</i>		Collaborative	100%
k. School board members	7%	Goal-oriented	100%
l. Superintendent	17%		
m. Assistant Superintendent	13%		
n. Program coordinators	20%		
o. District-wide committee	13%		
p. Parents/Community	27%		
q. Dept. Of Education	3%		
<i>Team Leadership Ratings</i>			
f. Admin/teacher committee	77%		
g. Teacher committee	67%		
I. Whole school staff	53%		

**Table 5**  
**Perceived Existence of Transformational Leadership Practices by School**

<b>Leadership Practice</b>	<b>Vision Collegiate</b>	<b>Town Pride</b>
Develops a widely shared vision for the school	80%	77%
Builds consensus about school goals and priorities	83%	86%
Holds high performance expectations	97%	93%
Models behaviour	87%	82%
Strengthens school culture	77%	80%
Provides individualized support	90%	72%
Builds collaborative structures	83%	77%
Provides intellectual stimulation	87%	80%

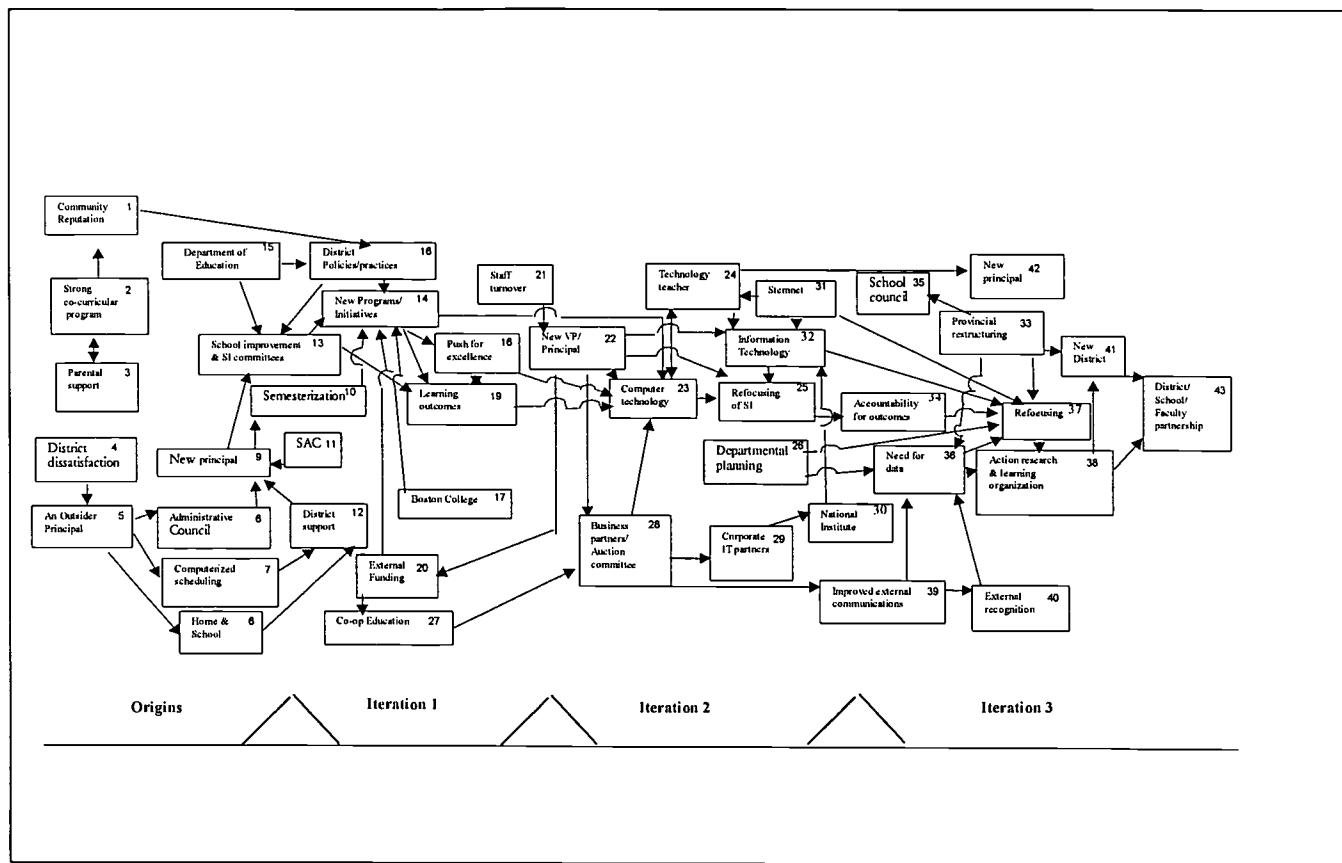


Figure 1: Causal Network for Town Pride High School

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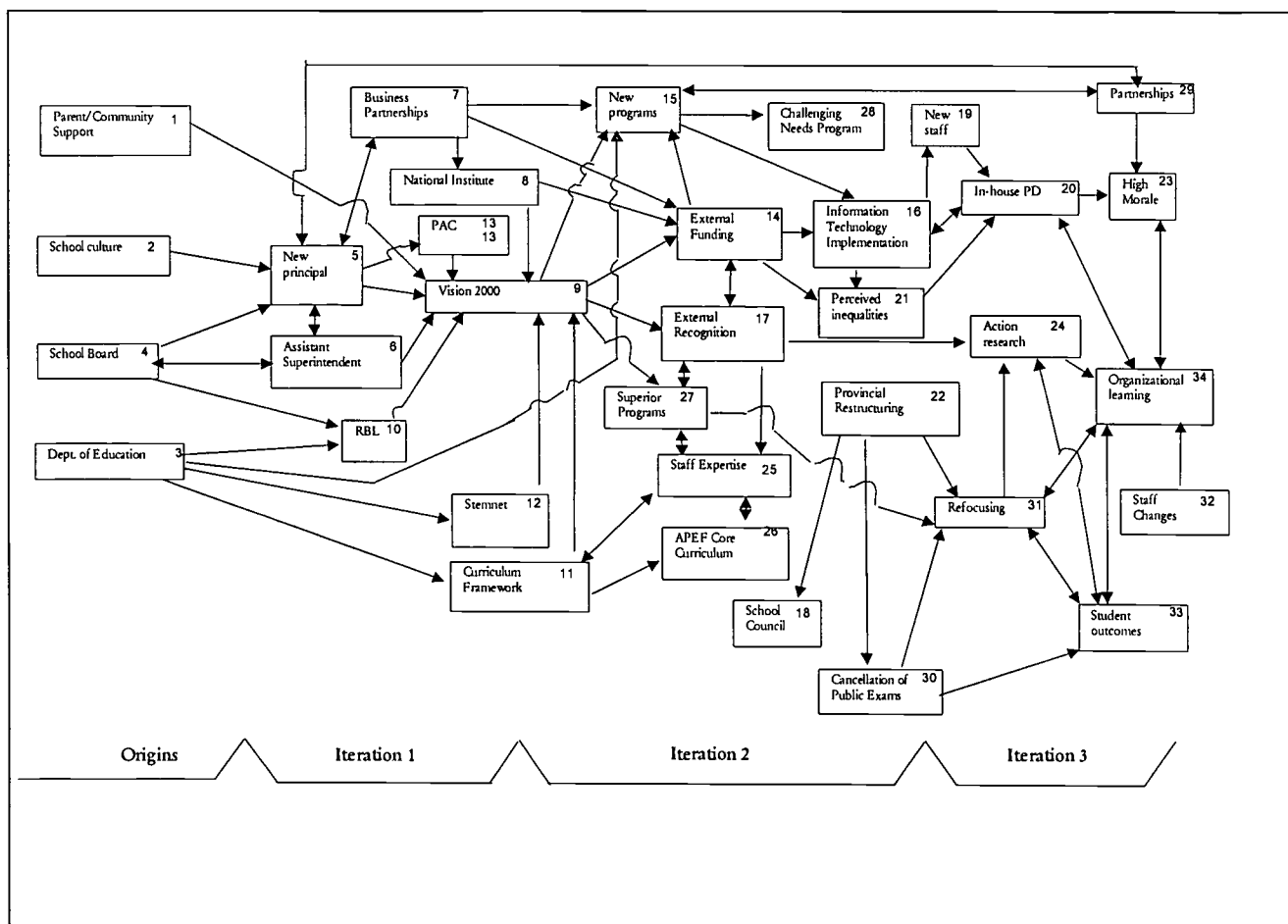


Figure 2: Causal Network for Vision Collegiate

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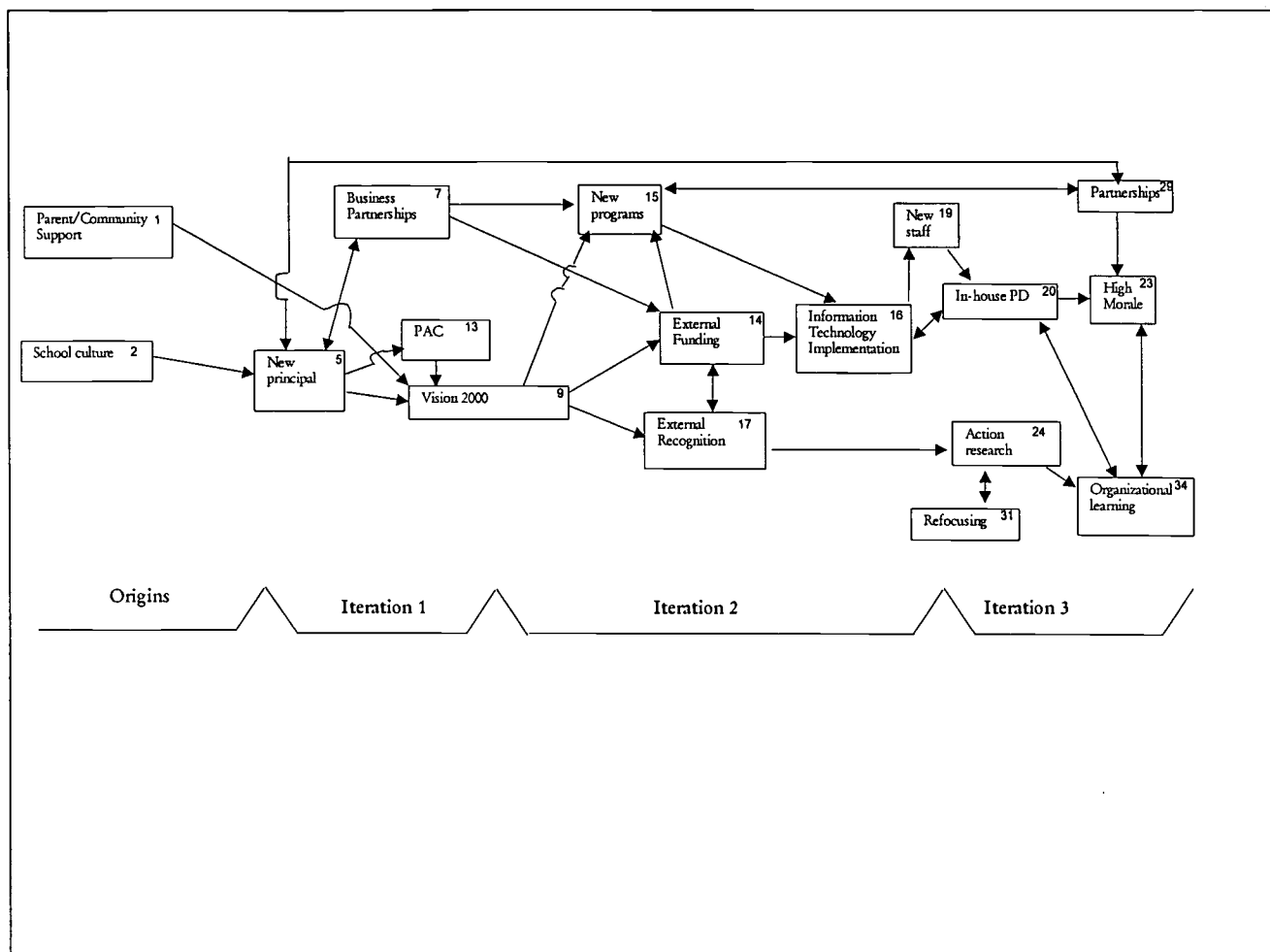


Figure 3: Leadership Stream for Vision Collegiate

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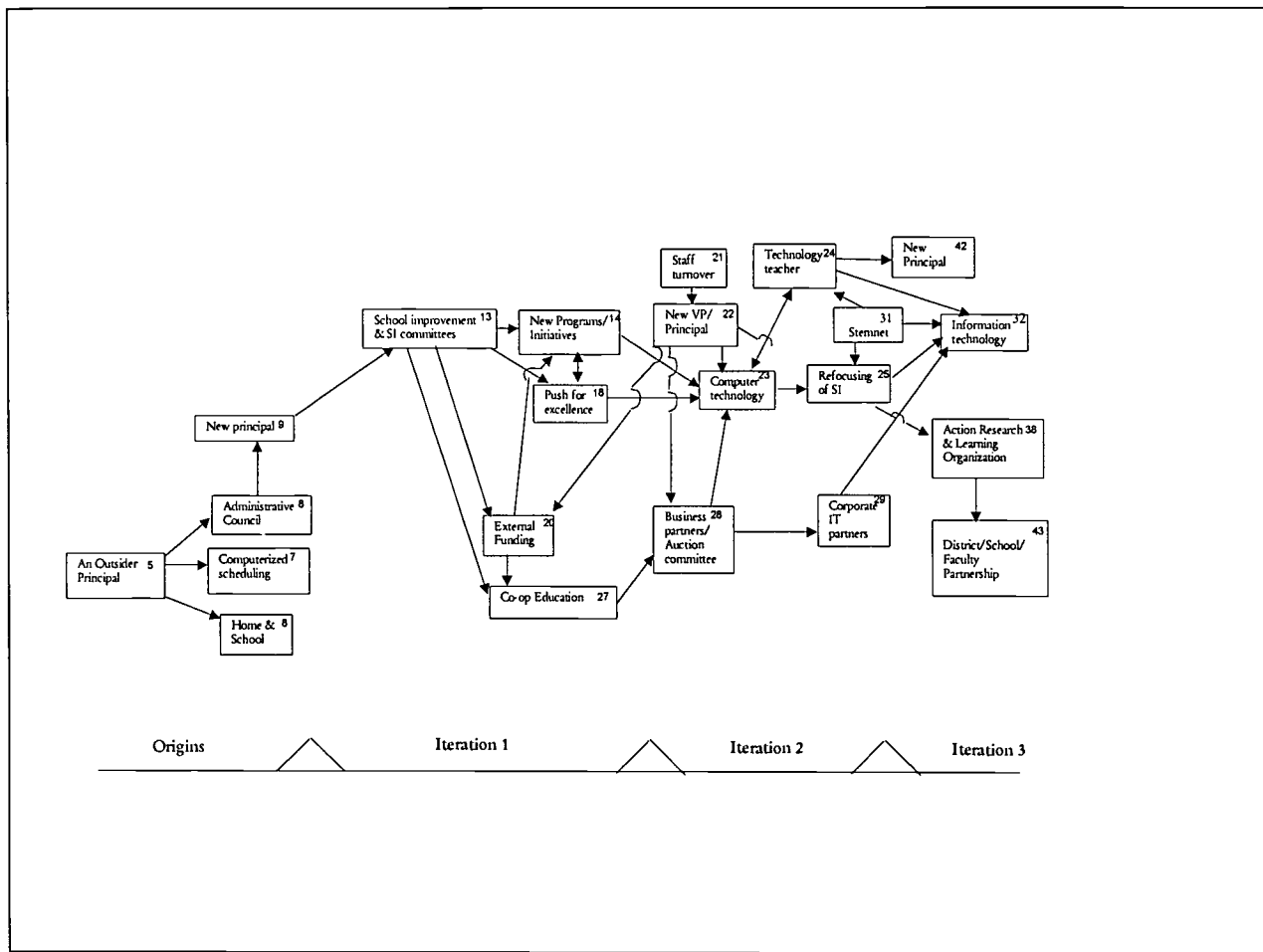


Figure 4: Leadership Stream for Town Pride High School

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