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For decades, educators have explored a deluge of school reform hoping to close the achievement gap and serve the needs of students who fail to meet performance standards (Creemers, 1993; Goldstein et al., 1998; Fouts, 2003). In doing so, many educators have sought to understand the culture and structure of school change (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2001; Bennett & Harris, 1999). Over time, research findings indicate that there are some common characteristics evident in schools that consistently meet performance standards (Kannapel et al., 2005; Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction [WSDPI], 2000).

Originally, researchers sought ways to identify how schools function through the use of effective school models (Kyriakides, Campbell, & Gagatsis, 2000; Creemers, 1997). Those models, beginning with the Carroll model in 1963, attempted to provide a solution that would help schools become more effective by improving student achievement and employing measures for student progress (Carroll, 1963; Creemers, 1997). The Carroll model includes:

Aptitude—the amount of time needed to learn the task under optimal instructional conditions, ability to understand instruction, perseverance—the amount of time the learner is willing to engage actively in learning, opportunity—time allowed for learning, and quality of instruction—a measure of the degree to which instruction is presented so that it will not require additional time for mastery beyond that required in view of aptitude. (p. 729)

However, the Carroll model of school learning had limitations. For instance, it only focused on one level of education, namely the student level. In undertaking the task of creating a more comprehensive approach than the Carroll model, Creemers' model (1994) included three additional levels: the classroom, school, and context levels. Consistent with other versions in the nineties, Creemers' model was designed to produce positive results at all levels of education (Creemers, 1997). Even with all-inclusive methods to guide schools in becoming more effective, many educational institutions still failed to meet the needs of all of its pupils (Creemers, 1993; Goldstein et al., 1998; Fouts, 2003).

As a result, researchers began looking at the benefits of merging two empirical approaches. Specifically, this included those research efforts aimed an examination of school effectiveness (including school effects research) and those investigating school improvement. While research on school effectiveness basically deals with the structural aspects of educational change, research in school improvement concentrates on the cultural piece of educational reform (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2001; Bennett & Harris, 1999).

More global research designs grew out of these efforts to fuse the goal of measurable outcomes. Ultimately, merging school effectiveness and school improvement measures became the core of

school effective models. The aim is to attain benchmarks or standards for school effectiveness through school improvement (Bennett, & Harris, 1999).

Many high performing schools with comprehensive models consistently possess some common characteristics (McGee, 2003; Daggett, 2005). Synthesizing research findings on high performing schools throughout this country, this review focuses on common themes revealed in the scholarly literature. The themes that emerged were: Cooperativeness, Accountability, and Boundlessness (CAB). As such, this literature review is organized around these three themes which will be referred to as the CAB model.

Review of the Literature

Cooperativeness

Cooperativeness indicates that a school demonstrates an overall nature that allows the various constituents to be an important component of the institution in order to create a cooperative school environment. The literature reveals three subcategories: school wide guiding philosophy, collaborative relationships, and family/school/community connections.

School-wide guiding philosophy . Having a shared goal, covenant, curriculum, social cause, vision or mission within a school directs the daily work, processes or activities of the institution. This common purpose serves to create a sense of unity within a building site. In essence, this shared purpose becomes the source that keeps staff members, administration, and students within a school working together to meet the same goal. Additionally, a guiding philosophy helps staff and leadership maintain focus as well as stay aligned with agreed upon objectives (Wong et al., 1996; Lein et al., 1997; Doyle, 1997; Blair, 2000; Glickman, 2002; Kaufman, Herman, & Watters, 2002).

In a study of "Great Schools" conducted by Glickman (2002), the researcher identified the essence of a covenant of beliefs. Specifically, Glickman states: "The covenant is developed through the broad participation of stakeholders and defines a good education and expectations for student learning" (p. 43). Further, Glickman presents an example of how one of the schools used its guiding philosophy. A student in an elementary school designed a mural during a literacy unit on American families which a teacher displayed on the wall. The mural portrayed a homosexual family. When one of the parents saw the mural, she insisted that the principal force the teacher to take it down. The principal did not invoke his own beliefs rather referred to the covenant that was drafted by the school. The covenant stated that "Education in a democracy must promote understanding and respect for all people" (p. 43). This administrator told the parent that he would have to change their covenant of beliefs in order to take the mural down. In explaining that he would have to go through the same process that created the beliefs and values, the principal informed her that she could petition the school improvement team if she chose. It became clear to the parent and others how the process worked in the school. Glickman reported that the same value system is still in effect thirty years later.

A study of 26 Texas schools found that the guiding philosophy of "success for every student" (Lein et al., 1997, p. 3) proved to be a contributing factor to success. Lein et al. (1997) explain:

It should be noted that these schools did not simply have a mission. Rather, they had a mission of ensuring the academic success of every student. They did not merely have mission statements. Their sense of mission was articulated in every aspect of their planning, organization, and use of resources. Almost every decision about the selection of instructional materials or strategies; the adoption of staff development strategies; the use of fiscal resources; the scheduling of the school calendar; the assignment and use of teachers, support personnel, and volunteers; the use of classroom, playground, and building space; or the use of any other resources was guided by a focus on the mission of ensuring the academic success of every student. (p. 4)

Collaborative relationships . Where student achievement is the objective, exemplary schools understand that everyone in the building need to support the activities and processes of the institution. All students and staff are allowed a part of the school's mission. This creates a cooperative environment at the building level. Whether it is a custodian, school nurse, teacher, counselor, parent or principal, each person needs to be a part of some team that ultimately identifies and finds solutions to problems (Lein et al., 1997; Keyes & Udvari-Solner, 1999; Trimble, 2002; Picucci et al., 2002).

According to a study of five high performing schools done by Trimble (2002), team configurations come in a variety of forms. Successful team configurations involve "using a variety of types of teams. In addition to interdisciplinary teams, these other types included administrative teams, grade level teams, school improvement teams, content area teams, student support teams, and special focus teams" (Trimble, 2002, p.7).

When teachers collaborate around curriculum and student achievement issues, teams become especially effective (Craig et al., 2005; Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission [JLARC], 2003; Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Shields et al., 1995; Kull et al., 1994; Moscovici & Alfaro-Varela, 1993). According to the United States Department of Education [USDE] (1999), "School leaders created opportunities for teachers to work, plan, and learn together around instructional issues. Time was structured to ensure that collaboration around instructional issues became an important part of the school day and the school week" (p. ix).

Research also indicates that shared decision-making is highly beneficial. Stakeholders reported that shared decision making made them feel as if their opinions were valued (Irwin & Farr, 2004; Lein et al., 1997). Administrators elicit opinions in a variety of ways. Some leaders solicit ideas about decision-making while other administrators ensure that there is some type of governance structure in place where decision making is shared. Shared decision-making is consistently reported as a characteristic of productive schools (Jones, & Ross, 1994; Shields et al., 1995; Lein et al., 1997; Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Glickman, 2002; Craig, et al., 2005).

In fact, Lein et al. (1997) suggest that shared decision-making may be the most important component of a worker's contribution. In their research, personnel operated as a member of the team doing whatever was necessary to contribute to institutional success. Secretaries could be seen listening to students read, while special education teachers took part in team meetings with regular education teachers to solve grade-level instructional strategy issues. Librarians became advocates of initiatives for parent involvement.

In the end, shared leadership empowers staff as leaders in decision-making. They no longer have to depend on others to make decisions about issues affecting them. Staff members become fellow partakers in making decisions about school-wide issues (Jones & Ross, 1994; Shields et al., 1995; Lein et al., 1997; Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Glickman, 2002; Craig, et al., 2005). Ultimately, team members who are provided the opportunity to share in decision-making, report a feeling that their opinion matters (Irwin & Farr, 2004; Lein et al., 1997).

Family/school/community connections . The idea of connectedness is reported in a number of studies as an important factor in excellent schools. In fact, connecting to families and the community has been shown as advantageous to students as well as beneficial to school staff and other stakeholders (Thiessen & Anderson, 1999; Cotton, 2000; Henderson & Mapp 2002; Griffith, 2003; Daggett, 2005; Simons & Curtis, 2007).

In particular, three studies conducted by Griffith (2003), Hair, Kraft, & Allen (2001), and Thiessen & Anderson, (1999) report that a climate of trust and collaborative working relationships play a vital role in the effectiveness of a school. The collaborative working relationships mentioned by these researchers include interactions between students and teachers, teachers and parents, principals and teachers as well as communication among teachers. Illustrating the importance of collaboration among staff, Hair and associates (2001) report:

At G. T. Woods Elementary teachers work in grade levels to examine student work and discuss ways to modify instruction to better meet student needs. At South Street Elementary, student success was initially launched with grants written for extensive after-school workshops and classroom follow-up. And at Pioneer Elementary, the small faculty (including 3 mother-daughter teams) meets at school regularly on Sunday afternoons to plan lessons for the week and share ideas. (pp. 6-7)

Another example of a cooperative environment is found in the Griffith study (1999). Students reported that they felt safe, cared about by teachers and, thus, were able to meet academic standards more readily. The teachers and parents in the same study stated that principals were available with necessary resources and to hear concerns. Parents and teachers also indicated that principals cared about their well-being and gave them a chance to contribute to the school.

These cooperative environments are sometimes called learning communities (Thiessen & Anderson, 1999; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Meehan & Cowley, 2003; Simons & Curtis, 2007). Learning communities invite parents and other stakeholders to be a part of the cooperative environment. According to Simons and Curtis (2007), there are several ways to build learning communities: "share space, recruit volunteers, open doors, incorporate traditions for families and community members" (p. 18).

When families and community members become a part of a school, the school's activities, planning, and achievement of goals, it makes a positive impression on students (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Cotton, 2000; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Griffith, 2003; Daggett, 2005). These efforts reportedly help increase student achievement. Families and community members who are part of a school's learning community have a tendency to be more supportive of the school. Moreover, parent and community involvement give stakeholders a chance to witness what really

goes on inside the institution. Volunteers within the school building usually become more sympathetic to the jobs performed by the staff. This creates an environment of respect (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Cotton, 2000; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Marzano, 2003; Griffith, 2003; Daggett, 2005).

In examining case studies of 19 high performing, high technology schools with mostly low-income, African-American, and Latino students conducted by North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) (2004), it was reported:

Sixteen of the 19 schools mentioned their family-like atmosphere or ambience as a special quality of the school that contributed directly to student achievement. In these schools, teachers and administrators described a strong sense of community shared by students, parents, teachers, and administrators, and marked by a shared vision and a sense of belonging to something special and unique. The cohesiveness of the school seemed to be influenced by several factors: school or class size, the nature of the community and students the school serves, and the instructional purpose of the school. (p. 8)

Overall, the literature indicates that cooperativeness consists of three important elements that create a climate of cohesiveness within a school building. These components include: a guiding philosophy, collaborative relationships and family/school/community connections. Together these characteristics have been demonstrated to contribute to the ultimate goal of higher student performance (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Cotton, 2000; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Griffith, 2003; Daggett, 2005).

Accountability

Accountability refers to the procedures used to hold the school's students and staff accountable to high performance standards. The two levels of accountability include: students and staff.

Students . High expectations through accountability surfaced as a commonality among high performing and successful schools in a number of research efforts (Billig et al., 2005; Picucci et al., 2002; Scribner & Scribner, 2001; Keyes & Udvari-Solner, 1999; Shields et al., 1995). In a study of 26 Texas schools with a high percentage of impoverished students scoring high on state achievement tests, Lein et al. (1997) found that teachers in all the schools insisted on holding students accountable. Specifically, accountability took the form of having high academic expectations for all students regardless of their home life or financial situation. Likewise, Scribner and Scribner (2001) reported similar findings with nine schools with predominately Mexican-American populations and high percentages of Limited in English Proficiency (LEP) students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Teachers reportedly placed high expectations on every student by providing a rich student-centered environment in which children were scaffold into taking responsibility for their own learning.

Successful schools share a common theme of focusing on the success of every student. This means that all aspects of planning, organization and the use of resources were centered on the success of every student (Edmonds, 1979; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; USDE, 1999; Hair, Kraft, & Allen, 2001; Reeves, 2005). For instance, four high schools that almost totally closed

the achievement gap at their schools, demonstrated a steady commitment to high expectations for all students by eliminating all remedial classes (Billig et al., 2005). With remedial classes eliminated, all students were expected to take more rigorous classes such as honors, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. In another instance, a successful school made a firm commitment in their school plan that "no students are placed in low-level classes with watered-down curricula or remedial skilled-based activities" (Shields et al., 1995, p. 50).

Along with demanding classes, high expectations must be the same for all children and accompanied by a multitude of support services (Ellis et al., 2004; JLARC, 2003; Billig et al, 2005). High performing schools go to extraordinary lengths to assist student success (Hair, Kraft, & Allen, 2001; Keyes & Udvari-Solner, 1999; Carter, 1999; Lein et al., 1997). This may mean calling a student's home to wake him up in the morning because a parent is at work or allowing a family to take extra food home so they can have food for dinner (Lein et al., 1997). Other support services that help children meet the high expectations include: tutoring, assistance with study skills, programs in place to provide students with the opportunity to become proficient in reading and math, and one-on-one assistance from teachers (Billig et al.; Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2000; JLARC, 2003).

The key to holding students accountable by maintaining high expectations is having teachers who believe that all children can learn (Shields et al. 1995; TEA, 2000). This component of accountability is demonstrated in a study of nine high poverty, high performing schools in Kentucky which used a standardized school audit measurement developed by the state Department of Education to research practices (Kannapel et al., 2005). In this instance, trained audit teams were sent into schools to collect data. One of the auditors commented on the successful schools:

I strongly believe everyone there believes all can learn, and I have never found that in another school. You will have some isolated examples in other schools of teachers who accept responsibility for student learning, but I find for the most part there is still a desire in most [low-performing] schools to say it is these kids; it is their parents.

In some lower-performing schools we have audited in the past, there has been an attitude that some students can't learn regardless of what the staff does. We have heard just the opposite in these successful schools. They all have the attitude that they must find a way to teach these students, and that they can do it! (p. 15)

According to Shields et al. (1995), some students need more help than others, but teachers need to accept that extra support can help any student meet high expectations. A change in paradigm ultimately affects policy and practice as Shields and associates (1995) found in an intensive examination of thirty-two schools throughout the country. A change in practice was noted by one of the teachers who talked about how her attitudes altered within a six-year period.

There's more sense now of making education more fun for kids. Teachers are more likely to feel that it is okay to be noisy in the classroom…also, there has been a change in the content…I place

less emphasis on memorization, more on thinking. I am also changing how I think about tests; I am constantly saying, "Do they really need to know this?" (Shields et al., 1995, p. 50)

A key component to realizing student success is constant assessment of students and experimentation with different instructional strategies (Lein et al., 1997; Shields et al., 1995; Daggett, 2005; Craig et al., 2005). One such endeavor is called Outcome-Based Education (OBE). This reform is based upon the notion that any child who is taught properly and given ample time to master skills will achieve mastery. The OBE process consists of teaching, reteaching, testing and retesting (Shields et al.; Cotton, 2000). Successful schools that have utilized this approach are consistently assessing and reassessing students to ensure every child's success (Shields et al.; TEA, 2000; Reeves, 2005; Daggett, 2005). With an attitude that failure is a learning experience, many teachers judiciously experiment with different strategies as a means to improve student achievement. Children in these schools are taught that failure is just a step that comes before success while teachers use unwanted results as a means to learn and make modifications that ultimately lead to improved results (Lein et al., 1997; Reeves, 2005).

In an age of increasing emphasis on accountability, high expectations for all students must be linked to local, state and national content standards (Lockwood, 1996; WSDPI, 2000; Craig et al., 2005; Billig et al, 2005; Daggett, 2005). According to Kendall and Marzano (1994), it is important to make a distinction between content standards and curriculum:

Content standards describe what a student should know and be able to do. Curriculum standards (sometimes referred to as program standards) are best described as descriptions of what should take place in the classroom as they address instructional techniques, recommended activities and various modes of presentation. The difference between a content and curriculum standard is illustrated by the following two statements from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 1989) framework. Within that document both statements are presented as standards:

a) recognize when an estimate is appropriate

b) describe, model, draw and classify shapes

Standard *a,* (recognize when an estimate is appropriate) describes a skill or ability a person might use solving a "day-to-day" or academic problem. For example, in day-to-day life, a person might use the skill of estimation to anticipate how much a proposed project might cost. Or in mathematics class, a student might use his estimation skills to determine that a problem can be solved without additional, unnecessary steps. In short, estimation is a skill that is commonly used or applied to solve commonly used or applied to solve common day-to-day problems or accomplish goals in academic settings. Standard *b*, "describe, model, draw and classify shapes" does not share this characteristic. That is, it is difficult to imagine many situations that would demand the skill of being able to model, draw or classify shapes, whether to solve an academic or day-to-day problem.

Rather, this kind of activity seems appropriate as an instructional device to help students understand shapes or to provide a way for them to demonstrate their understanding of shapes.

Standards like *a* above are referred to as content standards because they describe information or skill that is essential to the practice or application of a content domain. Standards like *b* are referred to as curriculum standards because they identify the instructional or curricular activities that might be used to help students develop skill and ability within a content domain. It might be said that curriculum standards describe the methods designed to help students achieve content standards. (pp. 10-11)

Many educators align their curriculum with state and district content standards and assessments. The prevailing thought is that these standards are consistent with what students need to know in the content areas at each grade level. This means every student is expected to meet state content standards regardless of race or socio-economic background (USDE, 1999; Hair, Kraft, & Allen, 2001; Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Billig et al., 2005).

Staff . It is not enough to require that students be held accountable, staff must also take responsibility for student learning by using any and all means available to help children learn and meet state requirements (Lockwood, 1996; Picucci et al., 2002; Fouts, 2003; Billig et al., 2005). For instance, Billig and associates (2005) argue:

Teachers pay attention to both state- and classroom-level test scores and adjust their instruction to address areas of student weakness or to refer students to tutoring or other support as needed. Many of the schools assess students' knowledge and skills often, either using standardized tests or teacher-created assessments. (pp. 11-12)

Sometimes, a change in attitude is needed before staff members can own the responsibility for student learning required in accountability (Connell, 1996). This change in paradigm emerged in one study that focused on six elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools in New York City (Connell, 1996). These schools had been removed from the state's low-performing schools list called Schools Under Registration Review (SURR). Schools are placed on the SURR list when they continuously rank below the norm in state standardized tests. The schools in Connell's study served a huge percentage of low socioeconomic students and a large proportion were from newly immigrated families. All of these schools shared a common belief that the attitudes prevalent in their institutions had to change from what the students should do to help themselves to what the staff should do to scaffold the students toward greater academic success. This common attitude change theme surfaced as the first priority in their school-wide agenda to solve their respective low achievement dilemma (Connell, 1996).

The ultimate challenge for an educator is to be able to teach students in a way that they can learn in an environment that does not hinder learning. All staff members must have the skills and ability to achieve this task on a daily basis (Huang, Waxman, & Wang, 1995; USDE, 1999; JLARC, 2003; McGee, 2003; NCREL, 2004). In a study on 19 high performing technology schools with predominately low-income, Latino and African American populations, teachers readily attributed student learning to professionalism (NCREL, 2004). To these teachers professionalism involved personal competence, caring about students, experience, and dedication to student learning and their ability to reach students more effectively.

Research has consistently demonstrated that leadership is also a significant factor among high performing schools (Bosker & Witziers, 1995; Carter, 1999; Blair, 2000; JLARC, 2003; McGee, 2003). It is the leader who must ensure that an effective accountability system is established and maintained (Lockwood, 1996; Blair, 2000; Bogotch, 2001; Daggett, 2005). With an effective accountability system in place, better student achievement is gained and programs are forced to conform to established expectations. An effective accountability system also allows staff to have some means of monitoring their professional development. It is the responsibility of the leader to be an instructional facilitator and provide practical staff development to staff (Lockwood, 1996; Blair, 2000; Cotton, 2000; Hair, Kraft, & Allen, 2001; McGee, 2003; JLARC, 2003; Daggett, 2005).

Hair and associates (2001) examined 12 Louisiana schools that had at least 80% of its students receiving free or reduced lunch and had been ranked by the state for at least two years as above average. The investigators interviewed principals and conducted focus groups with teachers. Illustrative are the efforts of one the schools in their study:

At Ruston Elementary, the school's principal took groups of faculty to visit both high performing and low performing schools in the area so they could see for themselves the factors that made a difference. He then drove them around the community so they would better understand the challenging situations that faced the children daily. And he led a study group using Ruby Payne's book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. At Raymond C. Carter Junior High, the principal and faculty investigated several 'proven' programs and worked diligently together to implement them in their school. At J. S. Slocum, a year-long faculty study involved rotating through the classrooms of one grade level per month to learn and share strategies for successful student learning. The resulting collaboration was outstanding! (p.7)

The literature clearly identifies the characteristics of accountability. The expectations for students and staff must be high in order for schools to perform at a high level. Everyone in the institution must be held accountable to high standards. Schools need to be an atmosphere which caters to student learning and achievement. Though separate, each entity (students, staff, and leadership), must do its part to ensure that student learning is maximized while working as one unit (Huang, Waxman, & Wang, 1995; USDE, 1999; JLARC, 2003; McGee, 2003; NCREL, 2004).

Boundlessness

Boundlessness signifies a school's willingness to be in a continuous mode of learning and growing. The effort to operate in this mode is characterized by using data as a means of evaluation.

Data-driven school-wide evaluation . The nature and importance of boundlessness is found in a study on 26 Texas schools conducted by Lein and associates (1997). These schools consistently scored high on state achievement tests even though over 60% of their student populations receiving free or reduced lunch. The researchers relate:

In these schools, there is a continuous seeking after new horizons, new opportunities, and new ways of operating. The process of such discovery and learning on the part of all participants is considered the central business of the school. Planning for improvement is perpetual. At the schools we visited, there is an unyielding belief that improvement is possible. The pressure to improve was almost totally self-imposed. Yet, these schools were more focused on improving their performance than some schools with dramatically less success. We describe this phenomenon as a passion for growing and learning. (pp. 12-13)

Being in a mode of continuous learning and growing requires a commitment that decisions be based on data analysis. Hair, Kraft, & Allen (2001 identified this attribute in a study involving teachers at an elementary school. These educational professionals collaborated extensively over a summer to analyze disaggregate test data in order to find areas of weakness for students across grade levels. The researchers also found similar practices in a junior high school. There teachers followed similar protocols as the teachers in the elementary school. The results led to every child enrolled in the school placed on an individual achievement plan similar to an IEP. Moreover, Reeves (2005) found schools in the 90/90/90 study did not stop at just utilizing data to inform decisions or choose instructional strategies. Rather, these schools displayed data in the form of graphs, tables, and charts in public places such school offices and throughout the halls. This type of data-driven collaboration conducted on a regular basis puts teachers in the same perpetual mode of learning and growing as experienced by their students (Taylor, 1990; USDE, 1999; Glickman, 2002; Picucci et al., 2002; Ellis et al., 2004).

Further evidence of the utility of using data to create boundlessness (especially as a means to inform staff development decisions and establish a linkage to student learning) is provided by Corallo and McDonald, (2001); Hair, Kraft, & Allen (2001) and Daggett (2005). The conclusions drawn from the Hair, Kraft, & Allen (2001) study on 12 Louisiana schools with a poverty index of at least 80% is relevant:

Staff development was definitely results-driven. On the surveys and in the focus groups, the principal and teachers in every school indicated that they felt that their school's professional development was definitely linked to improved student learning. The focus of all learning for the faculty was on the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. Analyzing student data was the first step and driving force in the process. (p. 9)

Another example of enhancing boundlessness through the honest evaluation of data is noted by the United States Department of Education (1999):

When assessment data, principal observations, or analyses of student work suggested that students were not learning an important concept or skill, the principal or school planning teams made sure that resources were allocated to help teachers learn better strategies for teaching the skill. (p.17)

Boundlessness, in essence, is when a school chooses to operate in a mode of learning and growing by continuously gathering and analyzing data. The practice provides a means of evaluating and improving the school's programs, strategies and staff (Taylor, 1990; USDE, 1999; Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Hair, Kraft, & Allen, 2001; Glickman, 2002; Picucci et al.,

2002; Ellis et al., 2004; Daggett, 2005). Further, boundlessness incorporates the need for staff to be trained in how to use relevant data to improve student achievement and inform staff development (Picucci et al., 2002; Lein et al., 1997).

Methodology

This study examines the CAB model of high performing schools by developing case studies of two Portland, Oregon area schools. In pursuing this purpose, this study answers the following three research questions:

1) To what extent is the common correlate cooperativeness demonstrated or absent in each school? 2) To what extent is the common correlate accountability demonstrated or absent in each school? 3) To what extent is the common correlate boundlessness demonstrated or absent in each school?

Sampling

The researcher chose a sample of two schools using purposive sampling. The use of purposive sampling is quite common and advantageous with case study designs (Bailey, 2007; Yin, 2003). In this case, the researcher opted for this sampling technique in order that the study would include schools with specific characteristics. Among these features included: targeting the Portland, Oregon area as an important parameter, focusing on high performing schools, and choosing alternative school environments.

Research Design

The researcher employed a case study design in order to build profiles of the two schools. The data sources for these case studies include site documents, a questionnaire, and personal interviews. According to Yin (2003), certain conditions are necessary in order to determine which research strategy should be used. The two conditions which separate a case study approach from other designs is the character of the research question and whether the focus is on a contemporary issue. Research questions which require the construction of highly detailed descriptions using a number of data sources are typically appropriate for case study approaches. Additionally, case studies can take either a historical or contemporary ethnographic approach. Case studies using a variety of data sources are more appropriate for contemporary ethnographic designs. This is the nature of this investigation.

There are three general types of case studies (Yin, 2003). The first type is referred to as an intrinsic case study. An intrinsic case study is conducted simply because the researcher has an interest in the topic. A second type of case study is the collective case study. This type of case study is used to test existing, established theory. The third type of case study is instrumental case study. An instrumental case study is used to explore theoretical questions and develop new

theoretical frameworks. The case study done for this research has characteristics of all three types of case studies. However, the essence of this study makes this research an instrumental case study. The researcher built a conceptual framework (CAB) as a means of examining the nature of high performing schools.

Instrumentation/Materials

The protocols for this case study called for using data from three sources: site document, interviews, and a questionnaire.

Site documents. The researcher gathered the appropriate site documents that revealed and assisted in documenting characteristics of the CAB model. Examples of relevant site documents included information provided on each school's website, school plans, school reports, school brochures, newspaper articles, vision statements, mission statements and any other pertinent school documents. Information gathered from the site documents were reviewed and organized in terms of the three correlates of the CAB model.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to teachers from the two schools.

The questionnaire includes 46 items

Staff Questionnaire

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF.

1) What is the name of the school you work at?

_____

2) How many years have you worked at this school?

_____

3) What is your job/professional title?

_____

4) If you are a principal or founder, how many years have you been a principal or founder?

_____

5) Which subject(s) do you teach now?

_____

6) Which subject(s) have you taught in the past?

_____

7) What grade(s) do you teach now?

_____

8) What grade(s) have you taught in the past?

_____

9) How many years have you taught school?

_____

10) Please circle your sex:

    A. Female
    B. Male

C. 11) Please circle your ethnic background:

(A) White

(B) Black (African-American)

(C) Asian / Pacific Islander

(D) Native American

(E) Hispanic (Latino)

(F) Other_____

12) There is some type of program(s) in place for community involvement.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

13) Parents are given opportunities to volunteer at your school.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

14) Students do not like teachers.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

15) Parents are given opportunities to be a part of the school community.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

16) There is shared decision-making at the building level which involves parents, teachers, and administrators.

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

17) There are reminders of the school-wide guiding philosophy (shared vision) throughout the school building

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

18) There is a school-wide guiding philosophy (shared vision) that is adhered to on a daily basis.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

19) Teachers are given opportunities to collaborate with one another

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

20) Teachers have a cooperative relationship with parents.

 A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

21) Building administrators have a cooperative relationship with teachers.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

22) Building administrators have a cooperative relationship with parents.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

23) Students engage in cooperative learning.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

24) Students turn in class work on time.

A. There is something in place to ensure this happens

B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

25) Students turn in homework assignments on time.

A. There is something in place to ensure this happens

B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

26) Students come to classes on time.

A. There is something in place to ensure this happens

B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

27) Students come to school on time.

A. There is something in place to ensure this happens

B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

28) Students attend classes daily unless they are ill.

A. There is something in place to ensure this happens
B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

29) Teachers do not like students.

A. There is something in place to ensure this happens

B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

30) Students follow school rules.

A. There is something in place to ensure this happens

B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

31) Students follow classroom rules.

A. There is something in place to ensure this happens

B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

32) Students turn in quality work.

 A. There is something in place to ensure this happens

B. Privileges are taken away for non-compliance

C. We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s)

D. There is no follow-up

33) Teachers are expected to teach in a way that all students meet performance standards.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

34) Interventions are in place to serve students who do not meet performance standards.

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

35) Interventions are in place to assist teachers whose students do not meet performance

standards.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

36) Decision making at my school is data driven at every level.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

37) Professional development at my school is connected to student achievement.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disag

38) Professional development entails teachers learning how to use aggregate and disaggregate data to inform decision making.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

39) Professional development includes giving teachers an opportunity to perfect their craft.

 A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

40) Teachers do not like the administrators.

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

41) Choice of instructional strategies is data driven.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

42) There is a self-evaluation component in place for the school.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

43) There is a self-evaluation component in place for the teachers.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

44) There is a self-evaluation component in place for the students.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

45) Continuous assessment of students is a part of every classroom.

A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

46) Continuous feedback from teachers to help students achieve goals is a part every classroom.

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree

C. Disagree

D. Strongly disagree

Additionally, the questionnaire is organized into two general components. The first 11 items involve background questions about the participant. A number of these items are open ended questions. The second component of the questionnaire (items 12 through 46) involves questions designed to gather information on the participant's perception of the three correlates in the CAB model of high performing schools. Thus, the second part is organized into three subsections for each of the three correlates of the CAB model. The questions of the second component include two Likert scales on the survey.

Responses to the questionnaire items on the second section were coded and analyzed. For this reason, the researcher analyzed data according to their frequency distribution. The values for the Likert scales items (questions #12 through #23 and #36 through #46) are: A) Strongly agree = 4 B) Agree = 3 C) Disagree = 2 D) Strongly disagree = 1

The coded values for the questions #24 through #32 include: A) There is something in place to ensure this happens = 4 B) Privileges are taken away for non-compliance = 2

C) We discuss non-compliance with student and/or parent(s) = 3 D. There is no follow-up = 1

Two important notes regarding the questionnaire survey are necessary. First, originally questionnaire items #33, #34, and #35 were included on the survey instrument as part of the accountability scales. However, these items were dissimilar in their content from the accountability items #24 through #28 and #30 through #32. Further, the questionnaire items #33, #34, and #35 included the typical Likert scale responses "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" (the other accountability items did not). As such, it was decided not to include items (#33, #34, and #35) in the analysis on accountability as the lack of consistency may confuse the results. Additionally, each section had an inert question: #14, #29, and #40.

The researcher summed the scores for each questionnaire item and divided the total by the number of participants. This yielded a composite score for each question. Additionally, the investigator added the composite scores together and divided the total by the number of questionnaire items. This is how the mean composite score was determined for each correlate in the CAB model.

Personal interviews. The employment of in-depth, personal interviews was the third data gathering technique. These interviews were conducted with key leaders from each of the schools and were designed to gain deeper insight and details on the nature of each school. The guide questions for the personal interviews were constructed so that the researcher could explore issues related to the concepts in the CAB model: cooperation, accountability, and boundlessness.

Personal Interview Guide Questions

1) What is the school's guiding philosophy?

2) How is the school's guiding philosophy used in your school?

3) Paint a picture for me of how cooperativeness is practiced in your institution with students, parents, staff and the community.

4) What are some details of your community involvement programs?

5) What does your parent involvement program consist of?

6) What efforts have you made as founder of this institution to ensure that this school has an atmosphere of cooperativeness?

7) How would staff members respond if I asked them how you incorporate shared decision making at the school level?

8) What would you hope to accomplish with a shared decision making agenda?

9) What is the most important thing that has contributed to the cooperative nature of your school?

10) How have you guided your staff in creating a cooperative environment?

11) What programs or measures are in place to ensure that students are held accountable?

12) How are staff members held accountable for student achievement?

13) What is in place to hold administration accountable for student achievement and practical staff development?

14) What interventions do your school have that assist staff, students or administration who do not meet accountability standards?

15) What are the accountability standards at this school for staff and students?

16) How do you use data to drive your decisions?

17) How do you connect professional development to student achievement?

18) Is there a program in place to train teachers how to use aggregate and disaggregate data?

19) What are the highlights of your staff development program?

20) How is data used on a daily basis by staff?

21) Explain how your school employs self-evaluation.

22) How does your staff self evaluate?

23) Tell me about any program that may be in place that teaches student to self-evaluate on a regular basis.

24) Name the programs or activities that make your school an institution of continuous growth and learning.

Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The guide questions include 24 questions. Further, the guide questions are organized into three components. Each of the sections represents a correlate within the CAB model. Other questions beyond the established guide questions were also asked during the personal interviews. Personal interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. The recordings and transcriptions were the basis for the data analysis. The researcher worked from these materials in oder to identify themes and patterns in the perceptions and views of the respondents.

Data Analysis /Procedures

In order to analyze the data derived from the various data sources, the researcher constructed coding procedures for each of the three types of information. According to Berg (2007), a researcher must choose some type of organized and systematic manner in which information is coded. The researcher used the traditional coding procedures of working through the process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. This particular method is often used in qualitative research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In applying open coding, the identified characteristics from various data sources were first listed. As part of open coding, important patterns in responses were observed. Next, in the axial coding stage, the researcher categorized the data into tentative typologies. Typologies help researchers collapse categories based upon common themes or characteristics (Bailey, 2007). Similar topics were sorted into the same category while redundant characteristics were eliminated. The result of this further collapsing of categories was fewer (and more manageable) typologies. Finally, selective coding was employed to finalize the typologies and the particular divisions within the categories.

In addition to the above procedures to treat and analyze the qualitative data, the researcher gathered quantitative data from the questionnaires administered to the teachers of the schools. The researcher analyzed these data using descriptive statistics such as frequencies distributions. Also, the investigator utilized a mathematical procedure to compare the way the staff at the two school evaluated the three CAB correlates at their institution.

Results and Conclusions

The results and conclusions segment reviews the findings of research conducted on two schools. The author will consider each school against the dimensions of the CAB model. Note that the names of the schools have been changed to protect the anonymity of participants.

Results and Conclusions: Democratic Community School (DCS)

Cooperativeness.

Analysis of relevant DCS site documents shows evidence that this school practices their school-wide guiding philosophy as well as utilizes the school-wide guiding philosophy to guide their daily work, processes or activities.

According to the DCS 2008-2009 Family Handbook, the school lists the following philosophy as its mission statement: "The mission of the *Democratic* Community School is to provide an educational setting which meets the needs and goals of the students while fostering a vibrant and caring community composed of teachers, students, and their families" (p. 11).

At DCS, students are given an opportunity to create their own curriculum based upon individual preferences that must include essential skills and certain content areas. Students are given curriculum manuals to assist them in developing their curriculum. Teachers, who serve as advisors, work with students and parents to help students as well. The building of curriculum to

meet students' needs and goals is stated on the school website and confirmed in the DCS Family Handbook.

Table 2. DCS Sample 11th Grade Student Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00					
9:00	Pre-Calculus	Anthropology	Pre-Calculus	Anthropology	Pre-Calculus
10:00	Drawing	School Meeting	Drawing	Cultural Criticism	Drawing
11:00	Herpetology	Mediation Committee/ Medical Ethics	Herpetology	Medical Ethics	Herpetology
12:00	Cultural Criticism	Personal Finance	Community Lunch	Personal Finance	Cultural Criticism
1:00	Advanced Spanish	Logic	Advanced Spanish	Logic	Advanced Spanish
2:00	Drama II	Study Hall	Drama II	Study Hall	Drama II

According to the data from the interview with school's co-director, it appears that the school-wide guiding philosophy was practiced by the school. However, there was no indication from the personal interview that the school-wide philosophy guided the daily work, processes, or activities of the school. The co-director said: "Well, our mission statement is too broad to really be very useful."

Site documents and the personal interview indicate that students and staff are allowed to identify and solve problems in a variety of collaborations to support the school's mission creating a cooperative environment. The co-director gave examples of how DCS collaborates:

The whole point of that is to have kids more invested in their learning because they have a voice, so every Tuesday at 10 0' clock, we have school meeting. Every student and teacher sits upon stage in the theatre, and we discuss whatever it is we need to discuss . . . Students run the meeting. There are more students than there are teachers. There is one person one vote and unless it's a core curriculum, health, safety or personnel issue, it's out my hands . . . Teachers need to cooperate with each another. The way that we have led this organization is to not lead staff meetings ever. I never lead staff meetings. I will lead in-services. I will lead the discussions, but…I will make no decision without the support of my staff. No policy decision comes out of here, comes out of this office unilaterally. Staff takes charge, and I am a part of the staff. Whatever then the staff meeting decides upon or the in-service, the project that we're working on, we decide upon it. It's my job to implement it. I do not decree anything.

Both the site documents and the personal interview with the co-director indicate that DCS successfully connects families and communities to the school in a way that is beneficial to all stakeholders. DCS website and family handbook discuss the following ways parents are connected to the school: being a part of their students' curriculum planning, giving feedback on their student's portfolio, and sitting in on school meetings. The school's website reports that DCS connects to the community by mandating that students do community service every quarter as part of their curriculum.

The data from the DCS staff survey pertaining to the nature of cooperativeness at this institution is particularly revealing. The composite mean average on the cooperativeness items of the staff survey was 33.09 (out of a possible 36). This would indicate a 91% positive evaluation of the cooperativeness character of the institution among staff members who completed the questionnaire. It must be concluded that the staff recognizes the general cooperativeness of Democratic Community School.

Table 5: DCS Cooperativeness Composite Scores

Questionnaire Item	Composite Scores
Q12	36
Q13	34
Q15	36
Q16	33
Q17	27
Q18	32
Q19	34
Q20	33
Q21	33
Q22	33
Q23	33
Total N	11
Mean	33.09
Minimum	27
Maximum	36

Overall, all the data sources, provide consistent evidence that Democratic Community School is highly effective at developing and maintaining cooperativeness.

Accountability. Analysis of the data taken from site documents and the personal interview demonstrate that students are held to high standards of accountability and appropriate measures are in place to ensure their accountability. The level of accountability is indicated by the following standards: students develop own schedule, kids create, organize, and maintain portfolios; pupils undergo weekly check-ups from advisors, and students must attain 80% achievement rate to pass classes. However, the data are mixed in regard to DCS staff. According to the information from DCS site documents and the personal interview, the institution held staff accountable in many ways. The staff takes responsibility for student learning by using any and all means available to help children learn including teaching courses students want to learn, preparing students for college, teaching traditional and non-traditional classes, providing rigorous work for quality portfolio content, preparing for suggested courses in one quarter, and providing clear guidelines to schedule creation. Yet, there was no indication that the staff take measures to ensure that students meet state requirements. The Co-director indicated that because their students consistently meet state requirements, they do not focus on this element.

The DCS staff survey support an average level of accountability at this institution. The mean average composition score on the accountability items was 26.50 out of a possible 36 representing an overall positive evaluation of 73% (compared to 91% for cooperativeness). The data indicates that the perception among the DCS staff is that their institution achieves an average level of accountability.

Table 8. DCS Accountability Composite Scores

Questionnaire Item	Composite Scores
Q24	27
Q25	24
Q26	26
Q27	27
Q28	28
Q30	28
Q31	28
Q32	24
Mean	**26.50**
Total N	**8**
Minimum	**24**
Maximum	**28**

All data sources converge in forming a profile of an institution functioning with an effective level of accountability. Therefore, DCS practiced accountability at an overall average rate.

Boundlessness. DCS site documents and the personal interview with the school's co-director provide mixed evidence. On the one hand, the institution operates in a mode of learning and growing by continuously gathering and analyzing data to evaluate and improve the school's programs, strategies and staff. The curriculum system at DCS is set up in a way that the suggestions from students and staff for potential courses are reviewed every quarter. The decision to offer new courses is driven by the data suggested by students and staff. New courses give students the opportunity to continually learn and grow through a variety of offerings. Furthermore, instructors that ultimately teach the courses must be in a mode of continuous growth and learning as they prepare for and teach the new courses.

The bi-weekly review of attendance data helps students to continually grow by bringing the violation to their attention, counseling them, and then holding them responsible if they do not improve their attendance behavior. However, in the personal interview with the co-director, she emphasized that the school does not train staff in how to use relevant data to improve student achievement and inform staff development. Furthermore, the site documents support this articulation.

According to the site documents and the personal interview, DCS did possess a portion of boundlessness. This is also mirrored in the data from the staff survey. Staff members evaluated their school lower on this dimension of the CAB model than the other two components. The composite mean average score for the boundlessness items was 24 (out of 36) for an overall positive evaluation of only 66% (compared to 91% for cooperativeness and 73% for accountability). Overall, the researcher concludes that Democratic Community School performed at a very moderate level on achieving boundlessness.

Table 11. DCS Boundlessness Composite Scores

Questionnaire Items	Composite Scores
Q36	17
Q37	24
Q38	12
Q39	27
Q41	16
Q42	25
Q43	26
Q44	28
Q45	31
Q46	34
Total N	10
Mean	24
Minimum	12
Maximum	34

Results and Conclusions Point Lookout Community School (PLCS)

Cooperativeness. PLCS site documents and personal interview with its executive director both revealed that this school practiced their school-wide guiding philosophy in directing their daily work, processes or activities. The executive director sums up this point during his interview:

Point Lookout Community School is a non-profit educational organization that's been in existence for approximately twelve years. And, it is one of the contracted community-based programs, so we get to pull from schools serving those kids that for whatever reason have become disconnected from the traditional school system. So we operate very differently, I would say, than most traditional high school, middle school programs, yet we do follow the same state standards as the traditional schools. We definitely make a concerted effort to provide the best education possible with the resources that we have. We are diploma-based, and we are kind of built around a mission statement that I will read to you. But, also there are six core objectives that kind of guide our daily principles, what we look to with each activity or program that we implement.

Moreover, these data sources also indicate that the school's students and staff are allowed to identify and solve problems in a variety of collaborations to support the school's mission creating a cooperative environment. Among staff, some of these collaborations include shared decision-making, team conferences, and check-ins. Students cooperate with staff by taking part in check-ins, doing student surveys, and participating in focus groups for school improvement.

The data taken from the site documents and personal interview reveals that the institution attempts to connect families and communities to the school in ways that are beneficial to stakeholders. Point Lookout Community School makes connections with parents by giving parents the opportunity to complete surveys, participating in team conferences, and linking parents to social services through an in-house licensed clinical social worker. Likewise, PLCS connects to the community by allowing members of to serve as tutors, volunteer at the school, be guest speakers, and offer service learning projects.

The PLCS staff survey found a mean average composite score of 13.09 (out of a possible 20) on the cooperative questionnaire items. The results produce a positive evaluation of only 65% on the cooperativeness items. This is obviously far below the 91% positive evaluation on the cooperativeness survey found among the Democratic Community School staff. Clearly these data indicate that the PLCS staff perceives that their institution achieves a moderate level of cooperativeness. The personal interview and site documents indicate a high level of achieving cooperativeness. Merging the three sources yields an average level of cooperativeness at PLCS.

Table 14. PLCS Cooperativeness Composite Scores

Questionnaire Items	Composite Scores
Q12	12
Q13	10
Q15	13
Q16	12
Q17	14
Q18	15
Q19	17
Q20	17
Q21	10
Q22	10
Q23	14
Total N	**11**
Mean	**13.09**
Minimum	**10**
Maximum	**17**
Range	**7**

Accountability. According to the information from Point Lookout site documents and the executive director interview, the institution held students and staff accountable. Additionally, staff took responsibility for student learning by using all means available to help children learn and meet state requirements.

The PLCS survey found that staff does regard their institution as particularly moderate on accountability. The average composite score of the accountability items is 13.75 out of a possible 20. This constitutes a 68% positive evaluation rate. While this evaluation rate is higher than that for cooperativeness (which is 65%), it is still a little below the 73% positive evaluation on accountability found among the DSC staff.

Table 16. PLCS Accountability Composite Scores

Questionnaire Item	Composite Scores
Q24	15
Q25	8
Q26	15
Q27	14
Q28	15
Q30	15
Q31	13
Q32	15
Total N	8
Mean	13.75
Minimum	8
Maximum	15
Range	7

The site documents and personal interview offer some evidence (much of it rather strong) that measures to ensure accountability among students and staff are in place and operate relatively well. This includes students being on a point system, having a probation period, having a dress policy, and having to check-in. Staff accountability incorporates teachers serving as advisors, doing check-ins, providing differentiated instruction, teaching in inclusive environment, and being on a one-year contract. However, the data taken from the staff survey suggests that the staff perceives their institution's level of accountability at a moderate rate. This moderate rate along with the high emphasis on accountability articulated in the personal interview and the site documents demonstrates accountability at PLCS at an overall high average level.

Boundlessness. There is some evidence in the PLCS site documents and the personal interview with the executive director that the institution does operate in a mode of learning and growing by continuously gathering and analyzing data to evaluate and improve the school's programs, strategies and staff. This is indicated by PLCS quarterly review of suggestion of courses, biweekly reviews of attendance data, weekly reporting of students' progress, yearly review of program issues, and portfolio reviews in 8th, 11th and 12th grades. However, it is important to note an important absence in the data. There was no indication from the site documents or the personal interview that the school trains staff how to use relevant data to improve student achievement and inform staff development.

Analysis of the data taken from the PLCS staff survey found a composite mean average score on the boundlessness items of 12.2 out of a possible 20 . This translates into a positive evaluation of 61% on boundlessness among the PLCS staff. This staff survey evaluation is consistent with the other generally moderate staff survey evaluations on cooperativeness and accountability. Furthermore, it is a little lower that the overall positive evaluation of boundlessness perceived among the Democratic Community School staff (66%).

Table 18. PLCS Boundlessness Composite Scores

Questionnaire Item	Composite Scores
Q36	18
Q37	10
Q38	8
Q39	13
Q41	9
Q42	14
Q43	14
Q44	11
Q45	17
Q46	18
Total N	10
Mean	12.20
Minimum	8
Maximum	18
Range	10

Boundlessness is the lowest area of the CAB model for both schools. Analysis of the information derived from the various data sources suggests that both schools only achieved moderate levels of efficiency in boundlessness.

CAB Model Conclusions

Given the information on all three correlates in each institution, DCS practices the CAB model at an average level. Likewise, PLCS demonstrates the CAB model at an average level. These findings generally support the research literature on high performing schools. However, there is no way to determine if these specific results are purely coincidental or indicative of high performing schools in general. This research is a qualitative study. Qualitative studies are not adequate for theory testing. The strength of this study is what it does to develop the theory related to the CAB model. Specifically, the research literature suggests that the CAB model is especially applicable for high performing schools. This research effort extended the CAB model to the two alternative schools focused on in this study.

The researcher suggests that this investigation be repeated at different schools in differing regions of the country. Specifically, researchers need to explore the various correlates of the CAB model under different educational settings to determine to what extent the CAB model is demonstrated in these schools.

What contribution might the study provide?

Generally, this research can be used as a conceptual framework for scholars and educational professionals who want to better understand the characteristics of high performing schools. The correlates of high performing schools were developed through an intensive review of the literature. Thus, this research provided both practical and theoretical benefits. It added to the scholarly literature and offered insights to those who are interested in achieving greater success for their schools.

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