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The purpose of my study is to investigate what a school system did to stimulate change and discover the qualitative outcomes of shifting from a common bureaucratic school culture to that of Performance Excellence. The methodology is a case study approach of the change in the Rockwell School district (pseudonym) from 2000 to the present day. Elementary, middle, and high school teachers, central office personnel, and school board members were interviewed as part of this qualitative study.

Results of the study showed that Rockwell School's implementation of Performance Excellence impacted the district's academic ranking over the implementation period and has become institutionalized as the way the district operates. Whether an organization chooses Baldrige or some other change initiative, it is key that the steps outlined here be considered. These include planning for the change initiative by gaining shared meaning across the organization on what the change should look like. The steps are (a) developing a systems approach, (b) building a school system instead of a system of schools, (c) using data driven decision making to implement change, (d) shifting from a culture of teaching to one of learning, (e) implementing an infrastructure that helps employees gain new knowledge and skills, and (f) moving toward a continuous improvement process.

CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF CHANGE: A STUDY ABOUT
CHANGE IN ROCKWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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While my original path in life was outside the education arena, I felt the desire and necessity to change careers. In doing so, my professional and personal life have benefitted from seeing kids succeed through my efforts and growth as a professional. It is my endeavor to do all I can to challenge all students to succeed and to inspire others to help all kids learn.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A Study about Change in Rockwell Schools

Rockwell County (pseudonym) is a blend of urban, suburban, and rural areas with an abundance of agricultural resources, as well as, sophisticated technical industry. From lakeside to the countryside, the county is rich with thriving communities and sleepy little towns. As of the 2008 census, the population was estimated at over 150,000 residents with 79% of those being white non-Hispanics, 12% African-American, 6% Hispanic, and the remainder falling under Asian and American Indian. Like some of its neighboring districts, Rockwell County is finding that growth is placing demands on the local school system. With more than 20,000 students, Rockwell Schools ranks among the mid-sized school districts in the southeastern United States.

The school system encompasses high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, and alternative schools. The school system is the largest single employer in Rockwell County with over 2000 employees and has the largest budget of any public organization in the county. In 2003, out of over 100 school districts in the state, Rockwell Schools ranked over 50th in the state, when comparing academics against other counties. The school district's ranking in 2008 was within the top 10% in the state when comparing academics across school districts within the state. This improvement is attributed to significant changes in the way the school district managed itself during this time period.

It is the journey of changing a medium-performing school district (based on a state academic performance composite ranking of 50 out of 115 school districts) to that of a top ten performing school district that interests me. The academic performance composite score is based on the percent of students in a school district who have test scores at or above achievement level three in the subjects tested. Each school and district administers a summative assessment at the end of the semester for high schools and the end of the school year for elementary and middle schools. These tests are developed at the state level and are comprised of the curriculum (Standard Course of Study) that was covered during the semester or school year. Students who receive a level three or level four are considered proficient on the test. The composite score for a school and school district is simply the percentage of students showing proficiency. I want to tell the deeper story—the qualitative journey—that occurred in Rockwell Schools that resulted in the significant increase in academic performance of its students.

A Historical Perspective of Change in Rockwell Schools

Rockwell Schools began its inception through what many would call a controversial birth. The labor pains, to use an analogy, began in the late 1980's when the combined school boards of Rockwell City Schools and Rockwell County Schools began meeting in order to consolidate the school systems. In the midst of this heated battle were the questions what members of the former boards would comprise the newly formed board, which superintendent would lead the district, and more importantly, how would student attendance boundaries be constructed while maintaining racially balanced schools and not busing students across district lines (Williams, 1989)?

The board members were accosted on streets and phoned at all hours, bombarded with questions and opinions on the topic; they often grew weary of contemplating. For the 13 members of the Rockwell City and Rockwell County boards of education, school consolidation filled days and nights. (Williams, 1989)

According to Dr. Denny Ziller (pseudonym), director of facilities and former principal, Rockwell City Schools had little option but to proceed with the consolidation due to the inability to fund the city school system. The school consolidation was completed in the early 1990's. With this consolidation, the newly formed Rockwell Schools Board of Education could not come to an agreement on which superintendent would lead the district. Therefore, the newly formed school board decided to buy out both the contracts of the Rockwell City superintendent and the standing Rockwell County superintendent and to seek a new superintendent to run the newly formed school district. This pay out amounted to over \$500,000. The school district elected to take the money from their fund balance. This action created an immediate response from county commissioners who pledged to withhold the same amount from the upcoming school budget (Dr. Denny Ziller, personal communication, November 5, 2011). Spicks (pseudonym), the newly-formed school board chairperson stated, "My first job will be to mend fences between the school district and county commissioners" (as cited in Thomas, 1991, p. 1B).

Dr. Jesse Long (pseudonym) took the helm as Rockwell School System's first superintendent. In doing so, Dr. Long joined a school district that was experiencing rapid growth especially in the southern area of the county. In Dr. Long's second and third years of tenure came the issues of growth, school overcrowding, and a lack of capacity to meet

the substantial demand being placed on the school system. In addition to these issues, Dr. Long was confronted with county commissioners who prided themselves on being ultraconservative with tax dollars and had a track record of funding only the bare minimum for schools. Batesville Graded School District (pseudonym), part of Rockwell County, chose not to consolidate and was continuing to expand thus, stretching the county resources even further (Thomas, 1991).

Parents petitioned the Rockwell School system to allow intra-district transfers, and Batesville City (pseudonym) itself was looking at expansion. Dr. Long faced one of his first major battles with parents and the community by trying to establish the importance of having specific attendance boundaries for the school district and how important it was in funding and planning for the future. This battle went all the way to the Attorney General's office which ruled the expansion of Batesville City limits in no way dictated the expansion of the Batesville Graded School district's attendance boundaries (Blair, 1993).

As Dr. Long's position as superintendent continued, the culture of distrust between the school board and county commissioners appeared to escalate even further. In 1994, the commissioners developed a task force to analyze the performance of Rockwell Schools and released the report in 1995. The task force's report concluded the school system was doing a mediocre job. Its students lacked the necessary skills to be competent in the marketplace, and at best, the school system met average expectations. In addition, county commissioners were greatly concerned on how to fund the consolidated system as student growth had become a major issue (James, 1995). Dr. Ziller stated that the county

commissioners funding significantly impacted the quality of the physical facilities students attended, as well as, resources available. Both items affected not only the commitment to student learning, but public perception and support for the school system (Dr. Denny Ziller, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

Engulfed with constant battles with the county commissioners, a lack of resources, and overcrowded schools, Dr. Long left the Rockwell School system in 1996. Dr. Ziller suggests that time spent fighting funding battles took away from defining the direction the school system should have taken to address achievement gaps which allowed fragmentation to occur within the district office. Ziller stated,

The system had become a group of individual entities where each had their respective power bases, policies, and procedures. The bureaucracy of the central office created even more frustration for building level administrators to deal with. In addition to this, came tensions between departments at the central office as positional power struggles erupted. (Dr. Denny Ziller, personal communication, November 5, 2011)

The Rockwell School system struggled from its inception with financial issues surrounding the buyout of superintendent contracts, consolidating two school districts into one, high-growth, public perception, and a county commission that provided minimal financial support while scrutinizing the academic value Rockwell students were getting. This being the norm, school board officials set out in hopes of hiring a superintendent who could change this perception. The school board asked the county residents to become involved in the hiring of the next superintendent by making their wishes known on what key qualifications a leadership position should entail. Dr. Jose Saintclair (pseudonym), a native of Rockwell County was chosen from 11 applicants to fill this

position. The school board believed that being a long-time resident of Rockwell County, Dr. Saintclair could bring together the stakeholders and votes to set a positive direction and develop a culture of learning in Rockwell Schools. Dr. Saintclair hit the ground running, meeting with commissioners and key community players to help change the persona of Rockwell Schools and find a way to fund the tremendous growth (Wrinn, 1997).

Dr. Saintclair faced the same battle as the former superintendent when it came to growth. However, the state, through bonds, had allotted approximately \$20,000,000 for Rockwell Schools, and the county commissioners had agreed to match that amount in order to build much-needed schools. “The district was growing by almost 800 students per annum, an entire school,” stated Dr. Saintclair. “This will be the biggest part of my job, finding space to educate students” (as cited in Wrinn, 1997, p. 31).

It appeared Dr. Saintclair was beginning to create a positive change in Rockwell Schools in the early beginning of 1998 until a highly controversial termination of an African-American administrator inflamed the African-American community and the NAACP. Key members of the African-American community, including a NAACP spokesman, asked to speak about this matter at the upcoming school board meeting. On advice from legal counsel, the board denied this, citing this is not a place to discuss personnel matters. This action created in the minds of the African-American community a concern that there was disinterest in their voice. NAACP President Woodward (pseudonym) stated, “The superintendent would no longer return his phone calls” (as cited in Wrinn, 1998, p. 1C). In a packed school board meeting, Harris (pseudonym), a

local pastor, asked the school board to create a human relations commission to look into the treatment of African-Americans in the Rockwell School district. The school board and its attorney concurred. During the months ahead, the task force found many disparities in African-American education in Rockwell Schools; enough that the Office of Civil Rights placed the district on a watch list, which required substantial reporting on steps to improve the quality of education for all minorities (Wrinn, 1998).

Dr. Saintclair announced his retirement in 1999. Many surmised, according to Dr. Ziller, that it was the result of all the controversy with the civil rights issues and school funding. During this period in Rockwell Schools, the school board itself took a laissez-faire approach to running the district. In hindsight, this approach appeared to fuel part of the rift with county residents and the school system. The bureaucracies at the central office continued to grow as a division between departments became even more obvious to those working for the school system. Dr. Ziller surmised the constant issues with funding and highly controversial issues kept the superintendent busy with politics instead of academics (Dr. Denny Ziller, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

Mr. Heath (pseudonym) longtime school board member from 1998 to present, remembered the constant turnover of membership on the school board, the public's dissension with the school district's performance, and the concerns from county commissioners that the school board was not holding the schools and their administration accountable for producing academic results when compared to like sized school districts. It was time, according to Heath, to choose a superintendent who could put a positive face to what seemed like a huge political train wreck that plagued our school system. Heath

felt Rockwell Schools had to change the way it did business. The school district's core values, if not its entire culture, had to change (Mr. Heath, personal communication, November 8, 2011). Dr. Denny Ziller stated that during this time in history, the district was in desperate need of someone to put a positive face to some of the things that were taking place inside schools instead of the constant funding issues and poor performance perceptions the public had about the school district. We needed someone to come in and mend the fences. This came about when Dr. Campman (pseudonym) was hired in 1999 to lead the system forward (Dr. Denny Ziller, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

Dr. Ziller recalls that Dr. Campman went to work quickly establishing relationships with county commissioners, the school board, and the community. "It seemed second nature for Dr. Campman to make friends with the school staff, students, parents, and the community." The school board felt like the district had finally found the right person for the job. Not only did Dr. Campman resolve some of the construction issues with commissioners, but brought in numerous programs to help move academics forward in the district (Dr. Denny Ziller, personal communication, November 5, 2011).

Dr. Campman's fame, however, lasted a little over two years as the board sought his dismissal for financial mismanagement when it was discovered that the district was \$3.2 million in the red. Mr. Heath remembered the fallout caused by this, which set the school district back to the previous era of distrust. This discontent spread throughout the community as newspaper articles and phone calls came into school board members expressing concern over the district's leadership. The credibility was gone just when we had begun to raise community support. The one good thing about this, recalled Mr.

Heath, was the district's hiring of a chief financial officer who not only caught the shortfall but laid out the finances in intricate detail and had no issues telling the board where it stood (Mr. Heath, personal communication, November 8, 2011).

Dr. Money (pseudonym), long-term school board chair, felt this political issue would require years to overcome and would certainly shape the credentials of the next superintendent. Mr. Heath recalled the board's primary concern was finding a visionary leader with tough skin, one who could take the political hits while striving to bring Rockwell Schools from a ranking of over 50th in the state academically, to that of top-ten. The person had to have financial savvy and be able to engage the community by rebuilding support for the school system.

Dr. Easter (pseudonym) was hired in 2002 to lead this task. Mr. Heath recalled as well as Dr. Money, "Easter stood out among the final four candidates by having a well laid out plan to change an underperforming bureaucracy to a well refined school system." We knew we had the right person to engage the community, staff, and students. Dr. Easter changed the entire way of doing business and the student growth and success trumped the critics. In a 2004 report, Rockwell Schools outperformed any of the previous year's growth and closed achievement gaps significantly. The school district posted some of the best data since accountability recording began (Wrinn, 2004). In addition, the influence of Dr. Easter on both the community and employees inspired an initiative to pass the first school board bond since the 1940's for schools in Rockwell County. The bond succeeded, bringing much-needed funding for facility growth.

Dr. Easter was not afraid to stand up for what he felt was best for students and this became apparent when he took on the county commissioners in a funding dispute. Steve Ranson (pseudonym), county commissioner chair, remembered the famous quote he made to a reporter that seemed to start the battle between the two entities. “He needs to bring his dog and pony show out of the community and newspaper and into the people who can help accomplish something” (Steve Ranson, personal communication, November 1, 2011).

The “dog and pony show,” as Chairman Ranson referred to it, ended up with both the school district and county commissioners in mediation to resolve the funding dispute (as cited in Harrison, 2004, p. 7A). This, according to Dr. Money was the thick skin Dr. Easter possessed. Dr. Easter reminded me of an article I read, the Rhinoceros approach. In this article, the author simply says some people manage very similar to a rhinoceros. These individuals charge ahead often only seeing the target. If you chose to interact with the charging rhino, you had to keep pace but never dare cross in front of him. While the strong leadership of Dr. Easter accomplished many goals in the district, it did leave some casualties (Dr. Money, personal communications, November 1, 2011).

According to Dr. Ziller,

The change that allowed academics to increase in Rockwell Schools came about through the great leadership and vision Dr. Easter brought to the table. As mentioned earlier, the school district went from everyone doing things under their own rules and procedures to a uniform process for all to complete their work, including the school board. If nothing else, quality tools helped unite our efforts. (Dr. Ziller, personal communication, November 5, 2011)

What exactly do we mean by school district and or school board culture? Using Eadie's (2009) definition, it simply states culture is a reflection on beliefs, principles, and attitudes about working together in a governing enterprise. It includes, but is not limited to, shared values, how we treat others during deliberations, guidelines for interacting with each other, and how we go about accomplishing the work. The history presented above shows a school system that struggled to find its identity. Eadie (2009) describes a dysfunctional culture as one where governing processes are controversial and characterized by uncivil interactions, and these interactions take a toll overtime. Looking at the history of Rockwell Schools, we can conclude that the governing body was dysfunctional. While attitudes and people can change over time, unless the governing organization changes, the results will not. The key is to change the governing architecture (Eadie, 2009).

This culture shift in management philosophy took almost six years to complete but has increased the respect of the community, county commissioners, and business of the way Rockwell Schools operates (Dr. Money, personal communication, November 1, 2011). It continues under the leadership of a new superintendent, according to Dr. Money, because the school board realizes the tremendous gains in student achievement using Performance Excellence that the district has accomplished. This vision set in motion the topic I explored in this study. This research captures the change from a bureaucratic philosophy to that of Performance Excellence in Rockwell Schools from 2002 until the present, and the effects this had on stakeholders.

We know from research that changing the culture of an organization is no small feat and often faces stiff resistance. From the beginning of taking over as superintendent, Dr. Easter accepted the school board's vision of the school district. The vision was to become a top performing district as measured by the state academic standards. To accomplish this, he set in motion professional development based on the Baldrige quality process, known as Performance Excellence.

This study seeks to address the experiences of those individuals who were either part of the change or who knew about it. I am interested in the journey of this school system in several realms. These are, but not limited to, what drove the need for change, can the improved results be attributed to the Performance Excellence Model of Baldrige, or were there additional factors? What can future agents of change learn from what was done in Rockwell Schools? What details can be gleaned about the qualitative side of change that would support or disagree with the quantitative growth data Rockwell Schools attributed to the implementation of Performance Excellence?

Problem Statement

The American public education system is being attacked from multiple sources and more critics appear almost daily. Robert Reich, former Clinton administration Labor Secretary, is just another highly visible person jumping on the band wagon to speak his opinion on how public education is failing and should be replaced by privatization (Schmidt, 2010). Robert Reich states,

Over the long term, the only way we're going to raise wages, grow the economy, and improve American competitiveness is by investing in our people—especially their educations. You've probably seen the reports. American students rank low

on international standards of educational performance. Too many of our schools are failing. Too few young people who are qualified for college or post-secondary education have the opportunity. (as cited in Schmidt, 2010, p. 1)

However, states across the country continue to cut education budgets. Many believe the budget cutting and de-funding of public education comes from politicians who see it as throwing good money after bad. The answer according to Reich is to privatize the system (Schmidt, 2010).

In a recent Phi Delta Kappa Gallup poll conducted by William Bushaw and Shane Lopez (2011), only 17% of Americans rated their local public schools with an A or B grade. However, respondents rated the school their child attended much higher; it was “those other schools that were bad.” Moreover, the percentage of Americans in favor of charter schools had risen to an all-time high of 70%. Respondents, however, opposed the use of public funds for use by parents who chose to attend a private school by 65%. Another record high since the Gallup poll had been reporting data.

Horace Mann, often considered a leading forefather to the current public education system, would leave no reservation that the American public education system was the great equalizer as it presents an opportunity for all men to aspire to become better citizens. His career was spent trying to improve the education system and making sure the public education system remained free for all to enter. Mann is quoted as saying, “Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery” (as cited in Cremin, 1980, p. 1). It is the very concept of public education that Knopp (2008) suggests is under attack from all directions. Privatization efforts are being pushed forward by corporations

like Wal-Mart, which places \$50 million a year into the Walton Family Foundation. The foundation dispenses this money to existing and startup charter schools. John Walton states, “Parents must have a choice in schools and competition from the private sector will only cause public schools to become better” (as cited in Knopp, 2008, p. 6).

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded a 2006 report, New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce called *Tough Choices or Tough Times*. This commission included many politicians and leading business people. The report’s conclusion suggested the replacement of public schools with contract schools which would fall under the charter school requirements. Many of the current charter requirements are less stringent than public schools. In many instances, local school boards have little or no control over charters. Teaching requirements are less stringent and in many states, the highly qualified status as required in public schools is not enforced (Knopp, 2008).

Kozol (as cited in Knopp, 2008) suggests that charter schools are a bridge to creating vouchers. The advocates for vouchers are growing across the United States under the auspices that competition is needed in the K-12 education arena, and that vouchers will in no way impact public education funds. Knopp (2008) suggests not only will the funds decrease for public education but the system that helped build a world super power will be disenfranchised, leaving those who cannot afford the additional expense of charter schools not covered by vouchers. Vouchers are seen by many as ways to increase the number of charter schools across the country and further erode the public education system. Advocates for public schools see the changes in funding the public

education system as a way of chipping away at public schools by using state funds that would have gone to school districts to instead help support private schools, charter schools, and virtual schools.

A Republican Senate in North Carolina made numerous attempts to remove all charter school restrictions. Charter schools in North Carolina already have leniency in many areas they operate. Highly Qualified Teachers are not required, nor is a valid teaching license. Lunch programs that are mandated for public schools are not required, nor is busing. Many see charters as a way to further disenfranchise the public school systems. Legislation was passed to lift the charter cap, but keep North Carolina charter schools under the Department of Public Instruction guidelines (Dalesio, 2011).

Forty states and the District of Columbia have allowed charter schools since Minnesota took the lead in 1991. The majority of the country's nearly 5,000 charter schools are in Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio and Texas.

According to a North Carolina Court of Appeals ruling on February 5, 2012 regarding recent claims that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System (CMS) underfunded five charter public schools in its district and must pay the schools what it owes, have many concerned about the future funding of public schools. The three-judge panel said in its decision that, "Charter schools are entitled to an amount equal to the per pupil amount of all money contained in the local current expense fund." This is one of many cases that support the fear that charter schools will be funded through supplanting funds from public schools (North Carolina Family Policy Council, 2011).

In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker, facing a \$3 billion budget deficit, went directly after public school funding and public school employees. Walker specifically went after the union that represents public education, drawing angry crowds that formed a sit-in at the state capitol and had numerous democratic senators fleeing the state to prevent a vote that would repeal the unions and worker's rights. Walker blames the state's woes on the collective bargaining rights that have in his words "bankrupted our state." However, the criticism comes from Walker going after just the teacher's union and not other state employee unions (Dayen, 2011).

This is another instance of outright attacks on the public education system by dismantling public school workers' rights while forgoing a reduction in all unions. This same scenario is becoming common place in other states like Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, New Hampshire, New Jersey and New Mexico. These state governments are considering additional limits on public employee rights, though not to the extent of Ohio and Wisconsin (Dayen, 2011).

While many public school systems are struggling, there are success stories where performance has turned around. Some of these stories have been documented (Davenport & Anderson, 2002; Detert, Kopel, & Mauriel, 2000). These studies document the fundamental difference in that the success resulted from a philosophy change—a change from a bureaucratic management philosophy to a "quality" philosophy based on the quality principles adopted by the National Baldrige Quality Award.

Many business organizations are well acquainted with Baldrige and quality assurance programs. Edward Deming was one of the forerunners of the quality

movement; however this movement actually began in Japan and remained somewhat unnoticed until Japanese products began taking market share away from U.S. firms. It was the quality and customer orientation that caused U.S. firms to take notice of quality principles and begin using them in the United States.

This brought about the National Baldrige Quality Award and quality program established by Public Law 100-107. This is a story of how one district infused quality and continual classroom improvement measures to combat the rigid, unresponsive bureaucracy it had become, leading Rockwell Schools to become one of the southeast's top performing school districts. This study maps the journey Rockwell Schools made.

Rockwell Schools and Change

This study describes the experience of those individuals who were part of or knew about the change from a top down management system that typified a bureaucratic structure to a Performance Excellence structure. What drove the need for change, and did the improved academic results come from the change to Performance Excellence or were there additional factors? I identify the often unreported data and the benefits or costs that changing an established culture had on those it influenced. My research goal studies what was done to stimulate change, and what part of the qualitative side of change will support or disagree with the quantitative data that attributed to a change in organizational structure. In addition, this study provides lessons future agents of change can learn from this study.

Bohte (2001) discovered in his research that bureaucracy has a negative impact on a school's performance as it limits the teacher's impact in the learning process. Bohte

(2001) defines the central office driven management system as one that fails to see the day to day operations in the classroom, and that the numerous policies tend to impede instead of support learning. Bureaucratic systems tend to be laden with policies that serve to guide the work. When issues occur, more often than not, it is related to human resources or the lack thereof. Management of issues that occur is handled from the top down in a bureaucratic system (Bohte, 2001).

The Performance Excellence system of management, unlike a bureaucratic system, is a process driven culture using quality tools derived from the Baldrige management system. The management system seeks to refine processes through continuous improvement. The key difference from a bureaucratic system is the fact that poor processes are blamed for poor performance, instead of individuals. Problems in a process system are sent down or sent to the persons closest to the problem. Solutions are developed and sent up to administration at the district level, whereas, a bureaucratic system has problems go up the hierarchy, and solutions are developed and implemented at the top and sent down (Shiple, 2001).

What was done to stimulate change and what was the outcome of this change on students, staff, school board, and community members? There are many professional literature articles and books that address the effects of culture change, yet few address the aforementioned issues. This study seeks to define the phenomena of an attempt to change deep-rooted cultural beliefs and patterns and the outcome of these changes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: MODELS OF MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

This section first reviews the research and conceptual grounding for bureaucracy, the dominant organizational form present in most school districts, including the Rockwell Schools, prior to the change. Next, the grounding and practice for the Performance Excellence organizational model to which the Rockwell Schools changed will be discussed. Included in this discussion is a description of quality tools used in this model. From there, the research on change will be analyzed and includes a discussion of what we know about effective change. As part of the review of change research, I reviewed Fullan's change lessons, which play a significant role in the conceptual framework of this study. Finally, this section will review the research on what we know about changing an organization's culture and the effectiveness of the changes implemented.

Bureaucracy

Max Weber, a German sociologist, is known for the development of bureaucracy. Weber describes bureaucracy as "rule conducted from a desk or office through a dispatch of written documents which intents are to back up the bureaucrat with force" (Weber, 1964, p. 73). Bureaucracies were found as far back as ancient Egypt and are a pervasive feature of modern societies. Weber (as cited in Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2005) suggests that political office and its benefits were not separate from the person serving in that office, thus leading to abuse of power, unethical behavior, and mis-application of funds

associated with the office or agency. He referred to these as patrimonial type governments. Weber (as cited in Shafritz et al., 2005) suggested that a bureaucratic system would stop this abuse of office or power by separating the individual from the office or agency and by developing rules and procedures to prevent this abuse. The ideal behind this was if the official had any salary or benefit beyond the job, he or she would not reliably follow the rules. Weber listed several rules that govern bureaucracies. First, there is a principle of fixed and jurisdictional areas which are ordered by rules, laws, or administrative regulations. Second, the principles set up an office of hierarchy and levels of authority through a system of super and subordination where higher offices supervise lower ones. Third, the management of the modern office is based upon written documents. Finally, the management of the office or bureau is through following general rules which are more or less exhaustive, Weber (as cited in Shafritz et al., 2005).

A formal, rationally organized social structure involves clearly defined patterns of activity that are functionally related to the organization's purpose. Authority in a bureaucracy comes from acknowledgment of status of the office not the person, thus eliminating some of the prior abuses Weber felt were inherent in organizations. In addition, official actions were held to the framework of written rules and procedures, again eliminating the abuses Weber felt existed in organizations and public offices, Weber (as cited in Shafritz et al., 2005). Weber believed this was the best way to organize industry and public office (Weber, 1958). Weber defines the modern bureaucrat as a full-time professional who requires sufficient salary and job security to remain with the organization for life. Bureaucrats apply rules impersonally to both those inside and

outside the organization and operate under “rational authority” which Weber felt is the rule of law. This rule of law exists in a community in which there is moral attitude of respect for the law. Weber believed rulers were recognized and obeyed under this premise. Thus, bureaucracy works because it follows this framework. Weber considers bureaucracy synonymous with efficiency and this is why capitalistic firms adopted it, Weber (as cited in Shafritz et al., 2005). While Weber (1958) talks mainly about organizations and public office as the arena bureaucracy works best in, schools began adopting this structure as they went from the one-room school house to large schools and districts with thousands of students. This according to Weber was because bureaucracy offered a structure to handle the massive number of people involved in education with a structure.

David Strang (1987) suggests that small and informal community schools have been transformed from 1938 to the present day into large bureaucratic agencies. This consolidation and centralization came about as states sought to increase the purchasing power through economies of scale. By the sheer nature of this centralization, a more formal structure was created. This approach changed “the character of schools to that of hierarchical positions, professional credentials, specialized functions, and isolation from external political influence” (Weber, 1958, p. 34). However, in the true bureaucratic form, Weber would say each of these has its respective purpose. It is the misapplication of the true form that generates “red-tape” and slows response. From a larger district perspective, consolidation makes not only economies of scale attractive, but helps establish a formal and rigid communication structure. However, from a local community

or school perspective, the reverse holds true. Smaller and less formal structures facilitate community linkages and quicker responses to community needs (Strang, 1987).

While Weber suggests bureaucracy was the best fit for organizing institutions around 1905, Hooker and Mueller (1970), would suggest that increased state mandates and controls have enticed local school boards to align and adopt even more stringent bureaucratic policies in order to gain state funding. Thus, the state's role in education has furthered the bureaucracy of school organizations. Sher and Tompkins's (1977) research, commissioned by the American Association of School Administrators in 1958, found that small rural districts have become not only outdated, but outmoded. "They have out lived their usefulness and can no longer do the job that needs to be done" (p. 53). Strang (1987) suggests a common thread runs through the movements for local organizational change from Horace Mann to the present day. In each case, the reformer's vision is of the rationale that formal organizations are typified by European public bureaucracy and the American operation model. Historians of education rarely speak of modernization, the idea remodel, or the corporate model in education.

In contrast to Weber, Smith and Larimer (2004) found the link between bureaucracy and school performance of key importance on how bureaucracy shaped school performance. Existing literature has generally found a negative correlation between measures of bureaucracy and measures of school performance (Bothe, 2001). Smith and Larimer suggest that schools are like public agencies and are charged with producing multiple outputs. While there are inherent trade-offs in doing so, those schools

may be negatively impacted in some areas while not in others from the bureaucratic structures.

Advocates of school choice, vouchers, contracting out, and similar market-based reforms in education argue that a central reason for poor performing schools is their response to the primary task due to the bureaucratic structure of a school (Chubb & Moe, 1990). These claims draw heavily on public choice theory and its conception of public bureaucracies as monopolies that sell the services they produce to monopsonist buyers. Given this advantage, public schools can afford to ignore demands of the primary clientele who have no exit option and must consume the service provided by the monopolistic supplier. Thus, public schools have little incentive to worry about inefficiency and subpar outputs, and they are instead concentrating on maximizing inputs.

In such a scenario, bureaucracy is viewed as both an indirect and direct cause of school performance which constrains the maximum achievement of school goals. Bureaucracy indirectly constrains performance because it is externally focused on its non-democratic principles rather than internally focused on the primary clientele. The complex and heterogeneous task environment of schools generates numerous demands to institutionalize interest-based preferences. Education bureaucracy grows with each mandate and rule, struggling to deal with multiple and often contradictory objectives. The long-term result of this complex environment is a hierarchical, rule bound, and rigid organization unable to rapidly respond to demands (Smith & Larimer, 2004). Of particular concern is the distance between street-level bureaucrats, (teachers) and their administrative overseers because administrators are focused on attending to the confusing

products of the democratic process rather than the demands of classroom. This disconnect between clientele demands and the educational response is why bureaucracy hinders maximizing educational performance, focusing on maximizing inputs rather than outputs (Hanushek, 1986). Ultimately, monopoly service providers have little motivation to pay attention to clientele demands because resources are not tied to performance (Bohte, 2001).

If anything, low performance may serve bureaucratic self-interest better than high-performance: hence, falling test scores and graduation rates can help justify calls for resources (Chubb & Moe, 1988). A by-product of poor performing public schools and bureaucratic monopolistic services is an increase in vouchers, charters, and virtually all other market-based reforms of education (McCabe & Vinzant, 1993). Warren Bennis (1966) states,

The old bureaucratic solutions are no longer effective nor adequate to cope with twentieth-century management problems. There is a need for new management structures based on the concept of man that suggests complex and shifting needs that replaced the old oversimplified pushbutton idea of man. (p. 52)

The anatomy of bureaucratic organizations consists of the following:

- A division of labor based on functional specialization.
- A well-defined hierarchy of authority.
- A system of procedures and rules for dealing with all contingencies relating to work activities.
- Impersonality of interpersonal relationships.

- Promotion of selection based on technical competence-the pyramidal arrangement seen on most organizational charts.

Bennis (1966) suggests that bureaucracies have no solution to deal with integrating the many stakeholder needs that face organizations. Stakeholders in a bureaucracy are basically seen as passive instruments that can be disregarded. Bureaucratic organizations often discount the social influence by the implicit use of coercive power and legal rationale that simply is not effective in the complex environment of the twenty-first century. In addition, the “rule of hierarchy” to resolve conflicts between ranks and “the rule of coordination” to resolve conflicts between horizontal roots disenfranchises the use of collaboration and conflict resolution. Doing what is best for the organization maintains the bureaucratic positional power that exists in bureaucracy. Bureaucracies were designed for stable, simple, and predictable environments where the task was routine. The vastly changing and expanding twentieth-century organization must be able to respond quickly and effectively to sudden changes in its environment, something a bureaucratic organization is unable to do.

Honig (2009) conducted a qualitative comparative case study over multiple years to analyze the effects of central office bureaucracies on the implementation of new small autonomous school initiatives in two separate school districts. The two districts that Honig (2009) selected were based upon her conceptual framework that suggested central office bureaucracies more often than not hampered the effective development and implementation of new initiatives in a school district. The two districts chosen had brand-new central office personnel that, according to Honig, had less potential to hamper the

implementation as did traditional central office roles where employees were entrenched and biased about the way programs should be implemented.

The new, small autonomous school initiative is a recent educational strategy that has been undertaken in several urban districts in an attempt to remake how district central offices function as institutions. In this research, Honig (2009) draws on theories of the organizational innovation and learning to reveal how central office administrators participate in the change process, what outcomes are associated with their efforts, and conditions that help or hinder the work. These nontraditional demands on district central office bureaucracies have left central offices seeking ways to transform themselves from regulatory agencies that treat schools relatively uniformly, to dynamic and entrepreneurial organizations that seed and support systems of autonomous and differentiate schools. Much of the literature suggests that bureaucratic institutions such as district central offices were established to regulate public sector demands as well as the organizations they oversee in a Weberian hierarchical fashion and not to seek and support differentiation and economy among those organizations Downs et al. (as cited in Honig, 2009). The research that informed this study indicated that more often than not central office stifled, if not prevented, implementation of new initiatives. However, there has been little research on how central offices enabled successful implementation of programs (Honig, 2009).

The research conducted by Honig (2009) examined how central office administrators participated in the implementation of change initiatives, with what results, and what conditions seemed to mediate their participation and intended outcomes. From

this examination, two of the district approaches were used where positive results were obtained. The first of these was when a central office administrator was used to bridge participating schools. This bridging was merely an advocate who was put in place between the schools and the central office with the responsibility of implementing an effective change program. The next strategy, which was implemented, was that of buffering schools and the central office from each other to enable successful change implementation. Under the buffering approach, the liaison often worked out changing central office policies and practices where possible, and at other times worked with schools to help them operate under the existing rules.

Honig (2009) suggests that the problem of improving schools is greatly affected by the central office. Participation in implementation of change is not mainly a technical problem of developing supportive formal central office policies, but rather that the implementation of change presents an institutional challenge for central office administrators to shift how they engage in their work and their relationship with schools.

Max Weber championed the organization based on bureaucratic structure and suggests that it is not the structure but the misapplication of the structure that creates dissatisfaction. Others like Bennis, Honig, and Smith and Larimer feel that bureaucracy is unable to keep up with the current twenty-first century demands and is not a successful model when organizations need to meet massive demands in a timely fashion.

Performance Excellence/Baldrige

The Performance Excellence model is a stark contrast to bureaucracy. A key component of Performance Excellence is the continual effort to improve. Criteria under

Performance Excellence in the education field focuses on key areas of organizational performance. These criteria performance measures are: (a) student learning outcomes, (b) customer-focused outcomes, (c) budgetary, financial, and market outcomes, (d) workforce-focused outcomes, (e) process effectiveness outcomes, including key operational performance results, and (f) leadership outcomes, including governance and societal responsibility results (Walpole & Noeth, 2002).

The use of this composite of measures is intended to ensure that strategies are balanced, and that they do not inappropriately trade off among important stakeholders, objectives, or short and long-term goals. The criteria are non-prescriptive and adaptable and are made up of results-oriented requirements. However, the criteria do not prescribe how the organization should be structured; or that the organization should or should not have departments for planning, ethics, quality, or other functions; or that different units in the organization should be managed in the same way. These factors differ among organizations and they are likely to change as needs and strategies evolve (Walpole & Noeth, 2002).

The criteria are non-prescriptive for the following reasons:

1. The focus is on results, not on the procedures, tools, or organizational structure. Organizations are encouraged to develop and demonstrate creative, adaptive, and flexible approaches for meeting requirements. Non-prescriptive requirements are intended to foster incremental and major “breakthrough” improvements, as well as meaningful change through innovation.

2. The selection of tools, techniques, systems, and organizational structure usually depends on factors such as the organization type and size, organizational relationships, the organization's stage of development, and the capabilities and responsibilities of the workforce.
3. A focus on common requirements, rather than on common procedures, fosters understanding, communication, sharing, alignment, and integration, while supporting innovation and diversity in approaches (Walpole & Noeth, 2002).

The criteria integrate key education themes. The education criteria consider several important education concepts and the specific needs of education organizations.

These include:

1. The education criteria places a primary focus on teaching and learning because these are the principle goals of education organizations.
2. While the education criteria stress a focus on student learning for all education organizations, individual organizational missions, roles, and programs will vary for different types of organizations such as primary and secondary schools, trade schools, engineering schools, or teaching and research organizations.
3. Students are the key customers of education organizations, but there may be multiple stakeholders such as parents, employers, other schools, and communities.
4. The concept of excellence includes three components:
 - (a) a well-conceived and well-executed assessment strategy;

- (b) year-to-year improvement in key measures and indicators of performance, especially student learning; and
- (c) demonstrated leadership in performance and performance improvement relative to comparable organizations and to appropriate benchmarks.

The criteria support a system perspective to maintaining organization-wide goal alignment (Walpole & Noeth, 2002).

Alignment in the criteria is built around connecting and reinforcing measures derived from your organization's processes and strategy. These measures tie directly to student and stakeholder value and to overall performance. The use of measures thus channels different activities in consistent directions with less need for detailed procedures, centralized decision making, or overly complex process management. Measures thereby serve as both a communications tool and as a basis for deploying consistent overall performance requirements. Such alignment ensures consistency of purpose while also supporting agility, innovation, and decentralized decision making (Walpole & Noeth, 2002).

A systems perspective to goal alignment, particularly when strategy and goals change over time, requires dynamic linkages among criteria items. In the criteria, action-oriented cycles of improvement take place via feedback between processes and results. The improvement cycles have four, clearly defined stages: (1) planning, including design of processes, selection of measures, and deployment of requirements (*approach*) (2) executing plans (*deployment*) (3) assessing progress and capturing new knowledge, including seeking opportunities for innovation (*learning*) and (4) revising plans based on

assessment findings, harmonizing processes and work unit operations, and selecting better measures (*integration*) (Walpole & Noeth, 2002).

Quality Tools

To analyze, develop, deploy, and monitor the work being done in an organization, several common quality tools are used. One of the commonly used tools (Figure 1) in the deployment of Performance Excellence area is the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) (Deming, 1983).

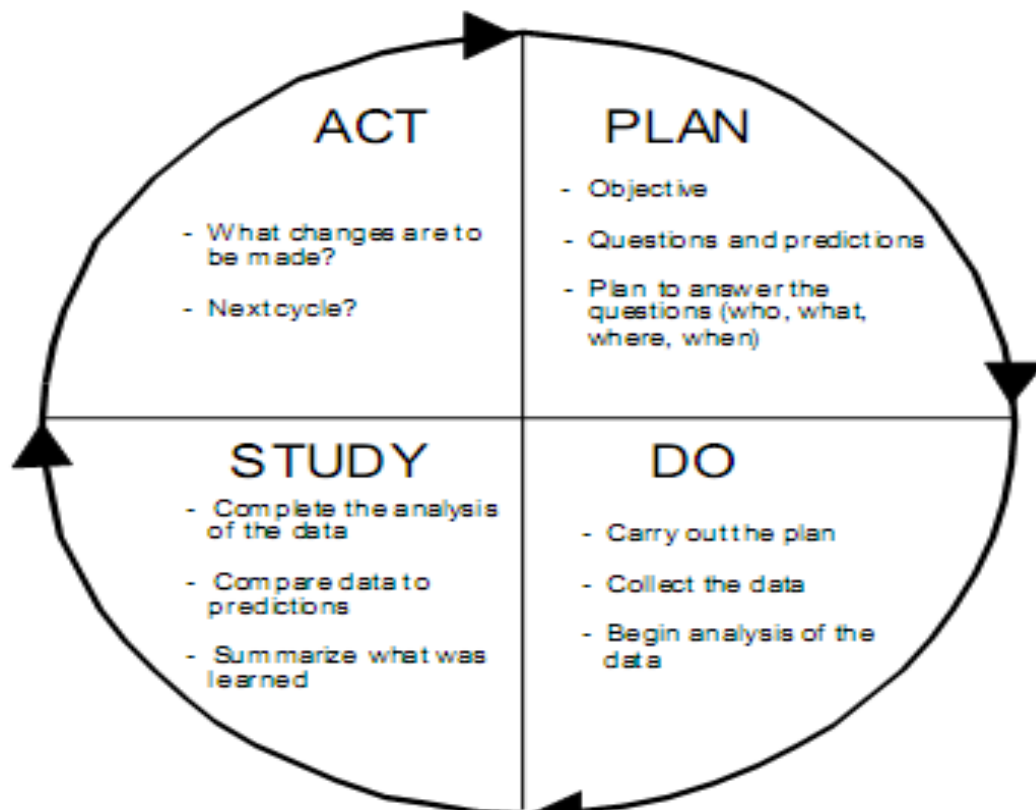


Figure 1. Shewhart Cycle

Commonly called the Shewhart Cycle, Deming states, “each team will go through the Shewhart Cycle, over and over. A team will be reconstituted for another task when

one is brought to a satisfactory conclusion, ready for action” (Deming, 1983, p. 7). Shipley (2006) notes, “the most effective and efficient way to get the required results is with a systematic and systemic improvement process of planning, doing, study, and acting” (p. 8). For example, in a classroom PDSA, the “Plan” should identify the essential knowledge and skills that students must learn to achieve the classroom learning goal. The “Do” looks at what students will do to learn the classroom material. The “Study” looks at the information from the results of the “Do.” A plus/delta chart can be used to show the items that helped students learn the objective, and the delta would be used to generate what could be improved upon (see Figure 2). It can be part of the PDSA or a standalone tool to gather quick feedback. The “Act” would be what will be done differently the following week based on the prior week’s data and study (Shipley, 2006).

What do your results tell you about your classroom learning system? Identify key strengths (+) and key opportunities for improvement (Δ).

+ Strengths of My Classroom Learning System	Δ Opportunities for Improvement

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Figure 3.

Figure 2. Classroom Plus/Delta

improve the process. If there is a need that warrants the teacher's attention quickly, it goes in the top section. An example is that the room temperature is too cold. If the issue can wait, it goes in the section below labeled "parking lot" meaning it can wait and is not an imminent issue. An example could be not enough handouts for the class. This would be feedback the teacher can use to improve room setting or presentation for the next class. This continual solicitation process helps gather information that can improve the experience.

Place items here that need attention in a timely matter!
Place items here that need attention at some point (Parking Lot)

Figure 4. Issue Bin

Another tool used frequently to gain a baseline or initial understanding of students' knowledge level is, the Consensogram (see Figure 5). Again, like many of the quality tools this tool can be used in any meeting where an initial understanding for participants is charted and then the participant's knowledge level is at the end of a presentation is assessed as well. This information in turn, helps the teacher or presenters

evaluate the delivery. The plus/delta or issue bin gives the presenter additional feedback on the content and delivery.

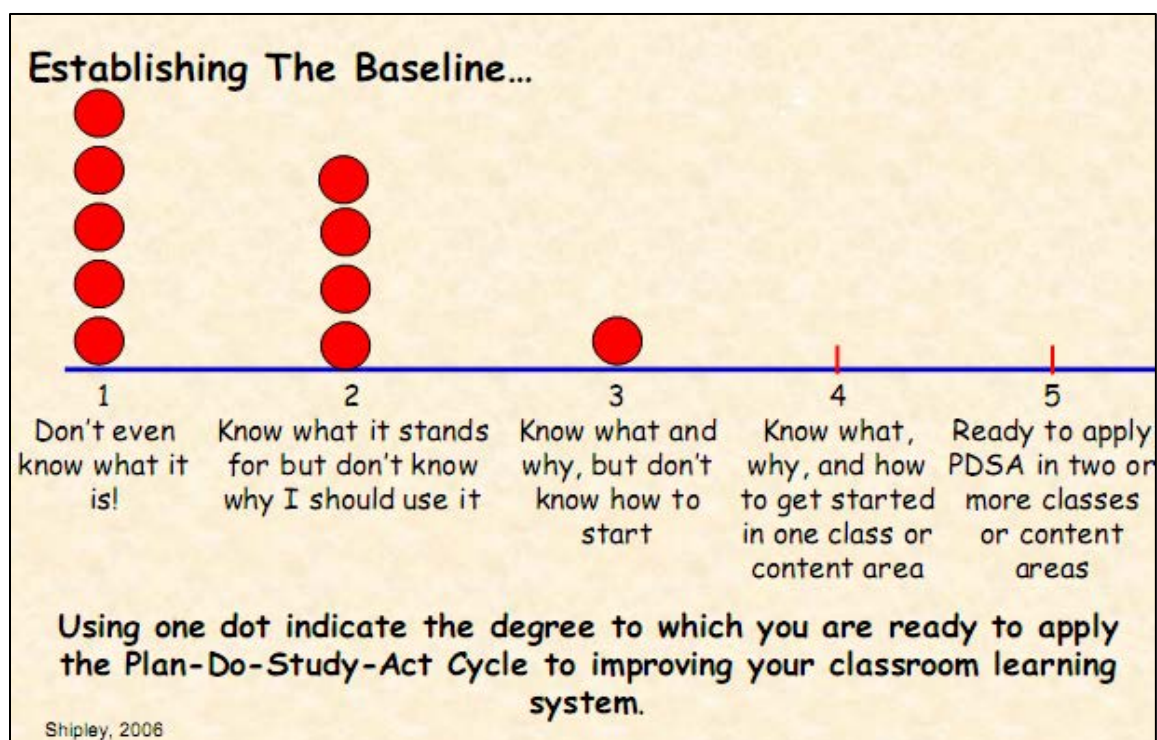


Figure 5. Consensogram

These quality tools are designed to solicit information to inform whatever process is being addressed whether this is a classroom learning object, staff meeting, bus issue, attendance issue, or any issue that warrants an improvement. The information gleaned from these tools helps improve the process that is being attempted. The improvement cycle continues until key stakeholders feel the process is producing the best results attainable. These tools become an integral part of the continual improvement process “Performance Excellence” strives to develop within an organization (Shiple, 2006).

Comparing Bureaucracy and Performance Excellence

Table 1 shows the six tenets of bureaucracy as developed by Max Weber, well-known for his work and ideas on bureaucracy. The six tenets are compared to Performance Excellence to show how these two systems have some fundamentals that parallel and some that are not. While bureaucracy is sometimes seen as inefficient and ineffective, it still has basic tenets that are an advantage. Bureaucratic philosophy was designed to set order where no order existed. As organizations grew in the United States, there was an increasing need to develop structures like bureaucracy that helped align the work in organizations. Many critics of the bureaucracy began to blame the organizational ineffectiveness on the lack of speed with which bureaucracies handled issues. As companies began to face rapidly changing technology and customer demands, many business theorists felt the bureaucratic structure hindered response times and were not designed to be efficient in rapidly changing markets (Leonard & McGuire, 2007).

Weber (1964) would say Performance Excellence and bureaucracy are more alike than not because the ills that critics of bureaucracy suggest, like rigidity and slow to respond, are due to misapplication of the system by people. It is this misapplication that Weber suggests has led to terms like “red-tape,” “resistance to change,” and other criticisms. Weber would strongly suggest that a bureaucratic organization that has employees who understand the initial raw tenets would resemble a Performance Excellence organization in many ways. Performance Excellence uses some of the same tenets of bureaucracy while adding structures to be more customer responsive.

Table 1

Tenets of Bureaucracy vs. Performance Excellence

Bureaucracy	Performance Excellence
<p>Formal hierarchal structure. Each level is controlled by the level above it. Decision making tends to be more centralized and the level above controls the level below.</p>	<p>All levels develop processes to align their work to support the organization's overall vision, not responsible to levels above or below, but to the overall mission.</p>
<p>Management by rules. Rules control decision making and decision are top- down with the expectation all levels adhere to the rules and decisions made at the top. Rules help establish consistency throughout the organization.</p>	<p>Decisions are made at all levels with rules that specify data and customer driven decisions. Problems are sent down the organizations and solutions developed at lower levels and sent up the organization hierarchy. There however, are well-defined governance systems, with clear reporting relationships like a bureaucratic organization that strives to be consistent.</p>
<p>Organizations are departmentalized by the similarity of work that occurs. Other characteristics include having specialists that are organized depending on their specialty within units or teams for example, meeting the position qualifications are what determine employment and not friendship or liking someone. Treating both employees and customers with equality is also a characteristic of bureaucracy.</p>	<p>The organization also divides itself into departments based on expertise. These key people are used as experts to help develop processes and inter-connections between specialty groups. Decision making however, always looks at what affect changing a process has on all groups. The customer needs come first and drive the work unlike a bureaucratic environment.</p>
<p>Structure is either in-focus or up-focus. The in-focus approach serves the needs of the members while the up-focus serves the investor or power brokers that influence the organization.</p>	<p>Structure is based on how to serve the needs of the customer. This structure is dynamic in the fact it changes based on customers' needs. Continuous feedback drives how the organization adapts and changes structure.</p>
<p>Purposely impersonal. The idea is to eliminate the human element and personal judgment out of any interactions with customers or employees, with the goal everyone is treated equal. Problems in a bureaucracy are seen as a result of a person mis-applying rules or policy.</p>	<p>Purposely personal. Customers are considered the reason the organization exists and meeting the customers' expectations are paramount. Employees are expected to analyze customer feedback and make decisions on process improvement as often as necessary. The belief structure hinges on problems occurring because of an ineffective process, not person.</p>

Table 1 (cont.)

Bureaucracy	Performance Excellence
<p>Employment is based on technical qualifications. Technical competence was the basis by which people were hired rather than friendship, family ties, and favoritism, which dramatically reduced work performance. The separation of the position from the position holder meant that individuals did not own or have an inherent right to the job, which promoted efficiency.</p>	<p>Employment is based on specific skill sets but the ability to work effectively in teams is of utmost importance. Workers are screened to make sure they can work within a team environment and accept continuous feedback from customers while keeping the feedback impersonal and system specific. Relationships are personal and important.</p>
<p>Advantages: Clear division of labor, clear hierarchy of authority, formal rules and procedures, impersonal.</p>	<p>Advantages: Quick to act, closeness to customer, autonomy for workers, hands on and value driven systems, team driven, and structure tends to enhance creativity. Continual improvement drives the work. Decisions tend to be data driven. Work alignment across and between departments (vertical and horizontal).</p>
<p>Disadvantages: Rules and procedures slow response time, rigid structure that is slow to change, employee apathy, resistance to change, and not designed to respond quickly to customer demands. Multiple functions often are created that overlap each other. Impersonality does not always bring the best judgment in situations. Tends to be vertical.</p>	<p>Disadvantages: Requires significant data collection systems, time, and resources not only to implement but to maintain. Senior leadership must have a long-term view. Considerable time is needed for the continuous review process. Requires commitment from all employees to maintain the continual improvement cycles that are present and ongoing. The continual process may span multiple departments, thus requiring multiple inputs before changing a process. Data driven decisions do not account always for human impact.</p>

Source: Leonard & McGuire, 2007; Weber, 1964

Some consider Baldrige Performance Excellence Standards to reflect a bureaucratic persona. While Performance Excellence has somewhat of a distinct structure, there are many differences in how the two differ. The first is that bureaucracy

thrives on rules, regulations, and procedure to the extent customer service suffers in spite of the bureaucracy's attempt to develop rules that make it more efficient. A Performance Excellence organization has rules and policies but does not allow these to conflict with measurable outcomes. In addition, process improvement is a key to reacting to the environment, not rules or policies. Process improvement collects continual feedback from all identified stakeholders and uses this feedback to continually improve the process that is in question, whether it is classroom objectives being taught or responding to late bus issues. If rules or policies are being violated to serve the customer, then they are re-evaluated on their purpose and changed. Often the rules and policies hinder performance and a significant amount of time and money are spent complying and reporting requirements that have little to do with customers' needs. Time in the Performance Excellence organization is spent on continual improvement and producing measurable results (Walpole & Noeth, 2002).

Kohn (1993) would suggest Performance Excellence spends an inordinate amount of time refining data driven decisions across the organization. Kohn suggests this may focus the organization's goals on only visible and measurable items. The typical outcomes that education measures include, but are not limited to are: achievement scores, graduation rate, absenteeism, discipline issues, crime and violence, number of books read, achievement gaps, and number of students going to college after graduation. The fear from critics is that schools may impede creativity and the love of learning by an over-reliance on test scores.

Steel (2007) suggests that moving away from the bureaucratic organization to Performance Excellence is the only way schools will survive in the twenty-first century. Steel points out that the Systems Approach has safeguards that allow multiple stakeholder inputs that serve to not only rectify ineffective processes, but improve them as well. If the organization uses the total Performance Excellence systems approach, not only are measurable items addressed but those that are not always easily quantified. Steel would refute the suggestion by Kohn that creativity could be stifled by saying students are a key part of the system and continually gathering information from them helps guide the process. The same thought process holds for teacher, parents, and the community. While Performance Excellence does strive for data-driven decisions, not all processes can lend themselves to a quantifiable number, but the members can set improvement goals and measure success towards these. Again, the PDSA is used to plan, study and improve the process.

Horine, Frazier, and Edmister (1998) conducted a study of 30 districts that wanted to shift from what they felt was an unresponsive bureaucracy that was impeding student learning. The study was conducted over four years with mixed results. The implementation of Performance Excellence was a top-down approach in each district and required tremendous re-training and re-thinking about how each district conducted business. At the end of the study, Horine et al. (1998) felt there had been a significant positive change but that in many cases, it was not completely quantifiable. The key concern was the process did not reach into the classroom across all districts or schools, and this key component is necessary to affect change. Horine et al. (1998) did find that

the change from the old bureaucratic hierarchy took significant time to change, and evidence that the change was heading in the right direction came from district surveys collected from stakeholders. In an earlier study, Abernethy and Serfass (1992) found that it was not only essential to effectively train key process changers in quality tools and processes, but a necessity for implementing Performance Excellence.

While educational problems are not unsolvable, those supporting Performance Excellence offer two key reasons on why it is a beneficial management philosophy: (a) it is a holistic, systematic, and systemic course of action based upon the principles of accountability and data-driven decision making, and (b) as an information-based model that focuses on numerous educational processes, Performance Excellence is compatible with many of the assessments that are in place (Glasser, 1998).

What Do We Know about Change?

Fullan (1993), in his book, *Change Forces*, discusses the issues revolving around public education and the need for effective educational change. In doing so, he not only discusses the problems that have and are apparent in education, but also offers a conceptual framework to help in initiating productive change to overcome these issues. The research of Fullan is considered one of the best sources and establishes the way to analyze and affect positive change in the field of public education.

The first implementation studies, conducted by Goodlad and Klein (1970), and Sarason (1971) helped substantiate the fact that all the money and good intentions did little to impact the state of public education in the United States. There was mounting evidence that the yield from mass economic intervention had minuscule results. Goodlad,

Klein and et al. *Behind the Classroom Door* (1970), Sarason's *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (1971), and Gross, Giacquinta, and Berstein's *Implementing Organizational Innovations* (1971); all attest to the absence of change where change matters, the classroom (as cited in Fullan, 2007).

The effective schools' movement during the 1970s did, however, show some evidence and a growing ideology that schools can make a difference even under trying conditions. Conversely, these isolated incidents seemed to be too little, too late as problems overall worsened across the United States public education system. By the 1980's, society had had enough, according to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and the commission released, *A Nation at Risk*. This report released what many Americans already knew, that the state of public education in the United States was in need of change. The solution, according to *A Nation at Risk*, was to require large-scale government intervention into the public education arena. From that report, we have watched the federal mandates begin to pressure the education system into a direction the federal government felt best. While mandating No Child Left Behind as a primer to what education in the United States would become, states had little choice but to comply as the threat of losing federal dollars necessitated adopting the law.

Fullan (1993) maintains the education system has been fighting a fruitless uphill battle for many years.

We have been fighting an uphill battle for the past 30 years. We have been trying to up the ante in getting the latest innovations of policies in place. The pouring of large scads of money into large-scale national curriculum efforts, open-plan schools, individualized instruction, and more, have left us never really recovering

from such a profound disappointing experience, as our expectations turned out to be so far removed from the reality of implementation. (Fullan, 1993, p. 1)

The solution, according to Fullan, is not how to climb the hill of getting more innovations or reforms into the system, but an entire different formulation of the education system to get at the heart of the problem. Fullan (1993) suggests that the new problem of change in education has to center around changing an existing teaching system to that of a learning organization. “Reform is not just putting into place the latest policy; It means changing the culture of the classroom, district, universities and the entire educational system” (Fullan, 2007, p. 7).

Senge in his book, *The Fifth Discipline* (1990), also suggests that education must experience a fundamental shift of mind. Without such a shift of mind, the insurmountable basic problem is the juxtaposition of a continuous change thing within a continuous conservative system. Thus, the force of status quo prevents sustainable changes. Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers, in their book, *Presence* (2004), continues the thought process with the introduction of the factor “U.” Senge et al. suggest that in order for the education system to realize significant gains, the system must look inwardly and reflect in order to come to a new point of learning and from that midpoint in the “U” begin the journey to change the way it exists as it climbs up the “U” in order to become a system that can fulfill its potential.

Learning organizations are at the heart of the educational system. The basis for a learning organization is premised upon moral purpose. Moral purpose helps produce citizens who can live more productively in an increasingly dynamic and complex society.

To break through the current teaching environment impasse, educators must see themselves as experts of change and become skilled agents of change. And while moral purpose is one antidote, educators need the ability to survive the many planned and unplanned changes that continual improvement demands. Without such flexibility and understanding of their moral purpose, the probability of change in a positive direction seems unattainable (Goodlad, 1992).

Fullan (1993) defines change agency “as being self-conscious about the nature of change and the change process” (p. 12). Change requires four core capacities: personal vision building, inquiry, mastery, and collaboration. Block (1987) defined personal vision for educators as challenging our disappointment about current conditions in desire of a preferred future. This purposeful vision building requires educators to come out of the closet with their doubts, and expose those areas they have kept quiet about in an attempt to seek a better outcome.

Inquiry means internalizing norms, habits, and techniques for continuous learning (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). To do this, educators must seek habits of questioning, experimentation, variety, and reflect on these to inform their practice. Learning and reflection are not only necessary for beginning teachers, but all who seek to change the status quo. Pascale (1990) suggests that the quest for a changed education structure is not the paradigm, but the ability to be continually open to the next paradigm and the next and the next.

Mastery is the third capacity that is necessary for change. “People must behave their way into new ideas and skills, not just think their way into them” (Fullan, 1993, p.

15). Mastery in this sense means changing one's entire mindset about change, embracing it as a good thing and a necessary part of improvement. This requires a complete mindset to what people tend to gravitate toward in their careers. Senge (1990) suggests mastery embodies personal discipline which has to include our vision and purpose in life. In addition, he suggests we must continually learn to create a clear picture of our reality. People with a high level of personal mastery live in a continual learning mode.

The last capacity is collaboration. Without collaboration, teachers are mere pockets of knowledge hidden behind their classroom doors. It is the ability to combine these independent experts into a force of collective power and knowledge. The education field must develop a collaborative model in order to seek best practices in educating students.

The research of Fullan (1993), Goodlad (1992), Senge (1990), and Pascale (1990) leave little doubt that their belief in the future of the education system revolves around the ability to change and maintain a process of continual improvement through the reflection and continuation of change. Fullan suggested four capacities necessary to begin this journey of change: (a) personal vision building, (b) inquiry, (c) mastery, and (d) collaboration. He suggests that the current system failed to see that change is nonlinear and thus, the need for capacities that ready educators for a more dynamic process of change—one that sees interrelationships, not linearity.

In his book, *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, Fullan (2007) suggests it is of paramount importance that we understand the phenomenology of change—that is, how people actually experience change based on its actual versus predicted outcomes (p.

8). Failure to recognize that change has embedded in it certain natural phenomena. These, according to a study conducted by Marris, are loss, anxiety, and struggle (as cited in Fullan, 2007, p. 21). Failing to embrace these phenomena will result in unsuccessful change. Schon found similar results in his study on change which suggests change involves passing through zones of uncertainty and confronting more information than one can handle (as cited in Fullan, 2007, p. 22).

Real change, whether it is desired by all organization participants, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty. If change produces desired results, then it results in a sense of mastery, accomplishment, and professional growth. All too often change fails because educational entities restructure instead of re-culturing. Fullan (2007) would define re-culturing as how teachers come to question and change their beliefs and habits. Fullan suggests this is a key component in classroom change. Six recent studies show that going deeper into re-culturing is proving far more difficult than previously realized, but is an area those seeking change need to understand as it can help impede plans of changing an organization's culture (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Cohen & Hill, 2001; Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, 2005; Oakes et al., 1999; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999; Timperley & Parr, 2005, as cited in Fullan, 2007).

Change will always fail until organizations find a way to develop infrastructures and processes that engage teachers in developing new knowledge, skills, and understanding. In addition, the meaning of change must go deeper than ritual compliance or minimal understanding. It must include deeper understandings of new approaches to

teaching and learning. Re-culturing includes moving understanding in this direction (Fullan, 2007). The difficulty with educational change revolves around the fact change is not a single entity, but many. Educational change often involves: (a) the possible use of new or revised instructional materials such as curriculum, technology, or processes; (b) the possible use of new teaching approaches such as new delivery strategies and activities; (c) the possible shift or alteration of pedagogical assumptions and theories entwined in new policies or programs (Fullan, 2007).

While a change in teaching approach or style requires teachers to learn new materials and delivery methods, it is a change in a belief that is the most difficult. A change in beliefs requires a change in core values held by teachers as individuals. “Core values are often not explicit, discussed or understood, but rather buried at a level of unstated assumptions” (Fullan, 2007, p. 36). While change occurs at an individual level, organizational change may be necessary to provide support or stimulation that fosters change. Some other key insights discovered by Reeves (2006) are (a) behavior and emotions change before beliefs—acting in a new way gives insights and feelings related to the new belief; (b) it is not the plan or guiding document that generates change, but the quality of actions taken to generate the change; and (c) shared visions and ownership are more of the quality of the change process than a precondition for success.

Kotter (as cited in Fullan, 2007) believes that the core issue of instituting change involves changing the behavior of those involved rather than instituting a new strategy or structure. People change their beliefs when they experience new things that affect them emotionally. Behavior change happens when we speak to people’s feelings, and in highly

successful change efforts, people find ways to help others see the problems or solutions in a way that influences emotion not just thought. In general, Fullan (2007) would say, the solution to motivating people to pursue change lies in how effective an organization blends and how loose or tight it manages the interactive cultures within the organization. Assume when things are not moving forward that a lack of capacity may be to blame. People may actually not know how to improve or change the current state of things. The emphasis at the early stage of change should be based on the idea people need new experiences that lead them to different beliefs. Bate, Bevan, and Robert (as cited in Fullan, 2007) conducted social research that found radical change often involves collective, interrelation, and emergent process of learning and making sense. Simply stated, people need to see and experience how to change in order to alter their belief systems. Capacity building first, and judgment last in a study conducted by Pfeffer and Sutton (as cited in Fullan, 2007) was found to greatly affect the closing of the “knowing–doing gap” (p. 59). Fullan (2007) would say that capacity-building strategies work because they give people concrete experiences that improvement is possible.

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) observe that change through sustainable leadership spreads throughout an organization, promoting institutionalization of the change as people experience increased capacity for change. Fullan (2007) would say once this increase in capacity for change has occurred in an educational setting it follows two basic reform approaches. The first one of these approaches is called innovation-focused approach, and the second is called capacity-building focus. The innovation-focused approach examines and traces specific innovations as they are implemented into the

educational arena to determine factors that are associated with the innovations' successes and failures. Capacity-building approach examines both the organization's change and its readiness to engage in a continuous improvement process. These approaches are not mutually exclusive of each other. The total time from initiation of a change process to institutionalization, is lengthy. Moderately complex changes can take from two to four years and larger scale efforts can take from five to ten years, with sustaining improvements still problematic. Change must be considered a process, not an event (Fullan, 2007).

Huberman and Miles (1984), LaRocque and Coleman (1989), Elmore and Burney (1999), and Supovitz (2006) conducted case studies about change in school districts and the catalyst that initiated the change process (as cited in Fullan, 2007). All the studies found that substantial change in a school district occurs when key district personnel lead it. These personnel can be school boards, superintendents, community leaders, business leaders, and any central office staff that are in key positions of authority. Just as these main change agents are important, so are principals, as they are often the "gatekeepers of change." Often forgotten are the people who change affects most and where change efforts are often targeted, teachers and their classrooms. According to Fullan (2007), teachers have less opportunity to be in contact with new ideas and have not been seen as a key source of change. The implementation of professional learning communities is beginning to change this. Rosenholtz (as cited in Fullan, 2007) conducted a case study in 78 schools to analyze the effects of professional learning communities on change. The

results showed that schools with highly functioning professional learning communities were more apt to be a catalyst for change within the school.

The main leadership dilemma at the beginning of any change is whether to seek out a majority agreement from those involved before proceeding or asserting change. The issue with asserting change comes from gaining enough energy to overcome the established social system in place. While top-down mandated change often fails, so do bottom up change initiatives (Fullan, 2007). Datnow and Stringfield (as cited in Fullan, 2007) conducted numerous case studies on change initiatives and found all too often change leaders failed to understand how the change would suit the school's or district's goals, culture, teachers, students, and community. The studies found that change was effective in schools and districts where (a) the change turned out to be best practice and fit the needs of the school or district as perceived by a majority of its stakeholders, and (b) when the initiative was combined with empowerment and choices as the change unfolded. Fullan (2007) found the following factors influenced change initiatives: (a) the need or perceived need to change current practice; (b) clarity about goals and how we intend to accomplish them; (c) complexity of the change and the degree of difficulty it poses on those implementing it; and (d) quality and practicality of the change program, and the resources made available to implement the program. "People do not learn or accomplish complex changes just by being told or shown to do so. Deeper meaning and solid change must be born over time-change is hard work" (Fullan, 2007, p. 92).

Fullan's (2007) research would suggest that change requires multiple people throughout the organization that can be mobilized to implement the change. The teacher

and the classroom are often the area in which change agents wish change to occur in order to improve student success. Lortie's case study, *The School Teacher* (as cited in Fullan, 2007) found through 95 interviews the following existed: (a) teacher training did little to equip teachers for the classroom; (b) the cellular organization of schools isolated teachers from each other; (c) teachers failed to develop a common technical culture due to isolation; (d) help is typically from other teachers when needed, but infrequent; (e) ineffective evaluation systems based more on subjective data are used; and (f) a lack of innovation or professional development exist. Goodlad (as cited in Fullan, 2007) followed this study with one that looked at the modal patterns of classroom life. The findings showed a similar disconnect between teacher practices and student learning. Rosenholtz's (as cited in Fullan, 2007) study of 78 schools in Tennessee suggests the schools in the study were "learning impoverished" (p. 136), as no structure existed to help teachers collaborate for improvement. The study found that a few schools, however, appeared to be learning-enriched. Rosenholtz found that in these schools, teachers, principals, and support staff set goals and collaborated to achieve their goals.

Almost a decade after Rosenholtz's work, Fullan and Hargreaves (as cited in Fullan, 2007) found that professional learning communities had begun to help schools restructure the cellular layout in order to allow more teacher collaboration. Several key findings suggest teachers can be key change agents, and professional learning communities appear to be a vehicle that enables this process to occur. Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1995) and Newmann and Wehlage (1995) (as cited in Fullan, 2007) suggest from their research in multiple schools that were regarded as effective, the following existed.

Teachers had a vehicle to express and guide a clear purpose for student learning.

Teachers engaged in a structured collaborative community and accepted responsibility for student learning. Participating in the teacher learning community directly impacted classroom pedagogy and the teacher learning community enhanced the level of social support for student learning. Mclaughlin and Talber (as cited in Fullan, 2007) conducted studies in multiple schools using a professional learning community and found that these communities helped build and manage the level of knowledge and change by creating shared language and standards for learning.

Another key component in the change process in schools is the principal, and today, no serious change effort would fail to emphasize the importance of this role. The principalship itself has become overloaded in a way that makes it impossible to fill the promise of widespread, sustained reform (Fullan, 2007). In his book, *What's Worth Fighting for in the Principalship?* (Fullan, 1997), studied 137 principals and vice principals to find their work load over the past decade had increased in some instances 90%. When asked about their perception of effectiveness in their jobs during the study, 61% reported an overall decrease in their effectiveness as a leader due to the many demands placed upon them. Until recently, the principal has been left out of key strategies for reform. Research on the impact of the principal role has shown the importance of involving principals in the process of supporting change. Sammons (as cited in Fullan, 2007) did a five year study across multiple successful school change initiatives and found that schools that improved and lead change had principals who lead the improvement.

Bryk et al. (as cited in Fullan, 2007) followed the change in Chicago schools in a 10-year study. The study focused on 473 schools that improved over this time frame and found the principals were the key catalyst in the change. First, the effective principals reached out to the community and parents to strengthen the ties between school and the community, and second, expanded the professional capacities of their staff members through resources that enhanced the quality of instruction. The specific resources found to enhance the quality of instruction were directed professional development and implementing best practices with follow-up and guidance. These successful principals had (a) an inclusive view on how schools function as part of society and communities, (b) a focus on student learning and achievement, (c) effective leadership practices that focused on-key components of change, and (d) pressure to change but economic and political support to do so. Bryk and Schneider (as cited in Fullan, 2007) did another study in 2002 that looked at trust and the principal as the leader in Chicago schools. This study found that sustaining relational trust helped establish conditions for successful change in the 473 schools they previously studied. “It is without exception, that the principals are a key component of effective change” (Fullan, 2007, p. 161).

Much like the principal, Elmore (2006, as cited in Fullan, 2007) suggests that district administrators affect change either positively or negatively by their ability to create, nurture, and propel conditions necessary to support sustained individual and collective engagement in improvement at all levels of the organization. In the same way that an effective principal impacts the work of teachers, so does the work of effective district leaders. “Short-term heavy handedness can extract surface gains, however, these

gains come at a high cost and often fail in the long-term” (Block, as cited in Fullan, 2007). The role of district leaders such as the superintendent is to lead the way to change (Fullan, 2007).

Supovitz, in his book *The Case for District-Based Reform* (as cited in Fullan, 2007), conducted a 6-year study that concluded the following about successful change: (a) develop a specific vision of what high-quality instruction looks like; (b) build employee commitment and understanding through capacity building and support for change; (c) develop a data mechanism for all facets of the system that informs practice and helps monitor direction and implementation of the vision; and (d) develop a continual process that helps continually build this vision and deepen its implementation. Fullan (2007) would say turnover in key positions at the central office and the superintendency hampers continuity of change initiatives somewhat. In the United States, the average superintendent stays in the position for only three years, and school board members change every two to four years. The time to institutionalize change in a district could take up to 10 years (Fullan, 2007).

In their book, *The Heart of Change*, John Kotter and Dan Cohen (2007) suggest the single most important message “people change what they do less because they are given analysis that shifts their thinking than because they are shown the truth that influences their feelings” (p. 1). Kotter and Cohen’s research from 400 interviews across 130 organizations found that highly successful organizations know how to overcome antibodies that reject anything new. Change happens in eight stages: (a) push urgency, (b) develop a guiding team, (c) create visions and strategies, (d) effectively communicate the

visions and strategies, (e) remove barriers to action, (f) accomplish and celebrate short-term success, (g) push change in waves, and (h) make sure a new culture emerges that supports the change.

In step one, Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest that organizations successful at change begin the process by creating a sense of urgency among key players. A sense of urgency developed creatively can mobilize people for change. The key is to look for opportunities and problems that energize people to initiate the urgency to change. There are four sets of behaviors that impede the launch of needed change: (a) complacency that is driven by false pride and arrogance (not having data that supports a belief), (b) immobilization caused by self-protection or preservation, which is often driven by the fear of changing, (c) deviations created by anger over changing status-quo, and (d) pessimism that challenges anything new or different.

In step two, Kotter and Cohen (2007) note that a guiding team should be established that will lead the change. This team needs to consist of successful change agents who have credibility, skills, connections, reputations, and formal authority. The team must have trust both within and outside itself and the emotional commitment to weather the storms of change. "Large-scale-change does not happen well or at all without a strong guiding force" (Kotter & Cohen, 2007, p. 41). Highly successful change occurs when: (a) a single individual who feels an intense urgency for change pulls or convinces others to join the cause, (b) when the team makeup is not working and having the team push people off, (c) forming additional support teams to help drive change at lower levels of the organization, and (d) trust is a mandatory component of any effective guiding

team. The authors also note that organizations that create successful change steer away from complex structural overlays because they create bureaucracy and slow decision response times (Kotter & Cohen, 2007).

In step three, Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest the guiding team creates sensible, clear, simple visions, and sets strategies to accomplish these. Key to change teams are these questions: (a) what change is needed, (b) what is the new vision, (c) what should not be changed, (d) what is the best way to make the change a reality, and (e) what strategies are unacceptable and why. Without a clear direction or vision that can be articulated, the employees and the organization will waste precious time and threaten stability (Kotter & Cohen, 2007).

In step four, Kotter and Cohen (2007) state the goal is to effectively communicate the vision and strategies. The goal is to make sure all stakeholders understand and have buy-in. Without a critical mass of people buying-in, the process of change will have innumerable obstacles to overcome. More often than not, this stage of the change process fails due to poor or ineffectively getting the message out and clarifying what it is the organization is envisioning to all stakeholders, internal and external. “Nothing undermines the communication of a change vision more than behavior on the part of key players who seem inconsistent with the vision” (Kotter & Cohen, 2007, p. 97). Leaders must speak to anxiety, confusion, anger, and distrust that often arises when change initiatives begin. The more effectively this is done; the least resistance and barriers the guiding team will face (Kotter & Cohen, 2007).

In step five, Kotter and Cohen (2007) believe the change agents on the guiding team must have support by helping them remove obstacles to the change process. The key here is not to give the team enormous empowerment, but to help the team identify obstacles and develop strategies to get around these or remove them. Often, employees who have been entrenched become an obstacle. While firing or moving them can temporarily remove the barrier, re-tooling them to fit the new organization has huge significance as many of these entrenched leaders have great influence within the organization (Kotter & Cohen, 2007).

In step six, Kotter and Cohen (2007) believe the leader should empower the guiding team to have numerous short-term successes as changing an entire organizational culture can take 4-6 years. The short-term wins help sustain motivation for the team and its work. The win also shows the credibility behind the change. A victory nourishes the faith in the change process, emotionally rewards those leading the change, keeps critics at bay, and builds momentum. “Without a well-managed process, careful selection of initial projects, and fast enough successes, the cynics and skeptics can sink any effort” (Kotter & Cohen, 2007, p. 5).

In step seven, Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest that change leaders be encouraged to continue with urgency as momentum is needed to affect change. Short-term wins help build momentum to continue the direction and change effort. In successful change initiatives, change agents use momentum to make the vision a reality by keeping the urgency up, and a feeling of false pride down; by eliminating unnecessary, exhausting, and demoralizing work. It is easy to back off the change effort when short-term

performance starts to rise. Push back from cynics and those unwilling to change can also stifle the momentum if the guiding team lets frustration develop (Kotter & Cohen, 2007).

In step eight, Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest change leaders throughout the organization make the change stick by nurturing the new culture. Institutionalization happens in this step as the organization develops new group norms of behavior and shared values. Although new behavior happens at this phase, change agents must be vigilant against those who would take the organization back to the old traditions (Kotter & Cohen, 2007).

What Do We Know about Changing an Organization's Culture?

Before initiating change in any organization Fullan (1993) a leading expert in organizational change would tell us that knowing the culture of the organization is paramount in understanding how to embark upon changing its existing structure. To define how culture is shaped, we must first define what culture means. Defining culture broadly, one can say it is the unwritten principles an organization uses to get the work done. To further dissect the meaning of culture, it is the beliefs, attitudes, and norms of behavior that affect the way members of an organization interact when getting the work done (Eadie, 2009). According to Eadie (2009), school board culture affects every aspect of how a school district's culture is shaped or changed.

The leadership of the board and their interactions shape how the entire educational organization works and is perceived by its stakeholders. Fullan (1993) would say it is the "Change Agency" that comprises those in authority to put change into motion and this key group of individuals needs to possess personal vision building,

inquiry mastery, and the art of collaboration before attempting to change an organization's culture. Key points in Fullan's (1993) research found that attitudes, commitments, and people can change, but until the governing principles a board operates under changes, members will revert to what feels comfortable. Senge, another leader in organizational change, would stress that shifts in culture come about through building shared visions and systems thinking (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994). Both Fullan and Senge would say understanding the organization's culture, and the key forces in the organization are necessary to start a change process.

Dawson and Quinn (2004) suggest that a prime responsibility of any school board is to safeguard the public's trust, and this safeguard is developed through a positive, functional culture. The public places trust in board members to ensure the leadership of the school system is evaluated and held accountable not only to the community, but to each other. The public expects, if not demands, that board members find ways to work together to meet the educational needs of all students. While these expectations are reasonable, they are not always the norm. There was an alarming trend found in the research conducted that showed fellow-board members had a tendency to tolerate unethical behavior from fellow-board members. "It is amazing how much power a single-board member can wield over the entire board" (Dawson & Quinn, 2004, p. 29). Boards that allow mavericks to trump the boards will, in lieu of their agenda, become dysfunctional, and the entire school district suffers. This dysfunctional atmosphere erodes the public's confidence and trust in the board. Since it is the school board members who are held to lead the school district's themselves, it is imperative they collaborate, and

seek shared vision-building in order for change to occur (Fullan, 1993). Without this Senge (1990) suggests the organization cannot change productively.

To embark upon change involves many individuals throughout a school district. The school board members, while often serving only four-year terms, must have a systematic process in place to help members understand the key elements like vision building, collaboration, inquiry, and mastery—components necessary, according to Fullan (1993), to have successful change. The age of accountability has made the functionality of local boards even more critical in shaping student achievement. Therefore, the culture of the school district is directly impacted by the “school board’s role in setting not only policy but academic achievement goals for the district” (Pascopella, 2005, p. 37). In addition, the board must set accountability systems, align financial resources with district goals, and ensure that high-quality assessment and academic programs are implemented. The importance of local school boards in setting and influencing the culture of a school district in some states is so important school board members are required to take training in policies and law, a trend that appears to be growing.

Pascopella (2005) found there is a culture shift occurring in school districts, as many are finding that an active school board is the key in affecting change in student achievement. Boards must develop a strong leadership continuum district-wide in order to accomplish academic gains. “There is great importance in the school board’s role not only setting policy, but also setting academic achievement goals for the district, and ensuring their high-quality assessments and academic programs” (p. 37). School board

members must have a can-do attitude that all students learn. They must establish clarity on district-wide needs, and they must set high expectations and define clear indicators of success. It is imperative that boards influence decisions that affect student learning. The old “unwritten rule of years past” (p. 38), that staff only gave board members minimal information they needed because they assume members did not know how to use data is no longer valid or acceptable as school board members must be able to disaggregate data to understand the implications on student learning.

Pritchard, Morrow, and Marshall (2004) would add to the field of school culture by suggesting that school boards, administrators, teachers, students, and the community all effect, and are affected by the culture of the school district. Pritchard et al. (2004) support the definition of culture Eadie (2009) had, but adds some further depth by suggesting that culture may not always be explicit or visible to those affected by it. In addition, there are multiple cultures inside school districts and during times of turbulence and change; the culture tends to become more explicit and internally consistent.

The purpose of the Pritchard et al.’s (2004) study was threefold: to build a rich description of school culture based on student voices; to determine the relationship, if any, of school culture as described by students and overall district culture; and to determine the relationship between culture and student achievement. The researchers made visits to over 1,500 sites and collected over 400 hours of interviews from trainers, teachers, principals, central office administrators, in order to develop an essay that would capture culture. The essay was given to over 2,000 students from ages nine through

sixteen in randomly selected classrooms. The districts were chosen using a 10-point district cultural scale developed by Pritchard et al. (2004).

The study found that students seemed not to understand the whys behind the rules and values and felt coerced into compliance. This study indicates that students in all districts, but especially those in positive cultural districts that have meaning and other things working right for students, showed voluntary conformity in terms of academic and social behaviors. In negative school environments, these efforts can backfire, as when students create their own symbols of unity that are distinct from the school's symbols. Espousing high standards in terms of social and behavioral codes, as well as setting high academic expectations, seemed to be an effective way for schools to announce their purpose to the public, even if the position is in word only, not in spirit. The study found that students who are educated in a positive school culture are more likely to voluntarily comply with school rules and adult values because the methods are effective and learning is engaging enough that students take it seriously. The study also found that teachers, rather than administrators, are the primary bearers of school culture assuming a minimally competent principal is in the leadership role.

The study validates the use of student voice as a vehicle for assessing school and district culture. The study found that students are key components and stakeholders in affecting change in a school culture or school district culture. Although schools certainly create their own individual cultures, the study suggests that school cultures are bound by district cultures. The positive and negative features of the district as a whole are felt by individuals in the district. The study further supports the fact that school district culture

affects student learning. However, it also suggests that student voice is important in establishing a positive school culture and positive school cultures in return affect a positive district culture.

Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004) not only suggest that the culture within a district can change, but present 10 critical components for effective district reform that create positive culture and promote student learning. A study conducted in multiple school districts and schools across Canada, United States, and England found that district change that creates a positive improvement comes about through 10 key components. When leaders implement these components rigorously and with fidelity, they can build school capacity and improve student learning.

- The first component is a compelling conceptualization or meaning. Leaders must understand that their work must be deep and thorough. To implement vision, district leaders must build a coalition of leaders who pursue the vision and practice. This requires external support, as well as internally driven leadership.
- The second component is a collective moral purpose, meaning every employee must be concerned about raising the bar and closing the gap for all students. While internal competition has often been thought of as productive, it can lead to issues when trying to build a collective culture in the district by turning friends into enemies. Internal competition undermines interdependence, trust, and loyalty.

- The third component is having the right people in the right positions in the organization, to lead it forward.
- The fourth component is capacity building. A good leader or leadership team builds good leaders within the organization that can help carry out the work. Even in the absence of top leadership the work continues. Capacity building should permeate throughout every facet in the organization.
- The fifth component is lateral capacity building which means building capacity by connecting schools within the district. The connections these schools build enhance each other by ongoing collaboration.
- The sixth component is ongoing learning. Districts develop and articulate a compelling vision. However, these leaders recognize the vision cannot be accomplished without continual professional development, monitoring, data analysis, and implementing improvements in a timely manner.
- The seventh component is productive conflict. Because reform and cultural initiatives are complex and involve all levels of people, they tend to produce questions and disagreements. Successful change grows by handling these conflicts as they arise professionally and not wavering in the commitment to the vision. Successful organizations also value differences and do not panic when things go wrong. Working in a high trust, yet demanding culture, participants consider disagreement as a normal part of doing business.
- The eighth component is a demanding culture. The culture of the organization must be one where every principal is concerned about the success of the

district not just their own school, and there must be a high-level of trust among participants combined with respect, personal regard, integrity, and competence, for an organization to succeed.

- The ninth strategy is developing external partners. A school district's change in culture comes from the relationship it nurtures with active external partners such as business groups, foundations, community-based organizations, and universities that help build the district's professional capacity. Well placed pressure from external partners, combined with internal energy can be important for tackling something that might not otherwise be addressed, and district leaders can use these partners to stir the pot in purposeful directions.
- The tenth and final strategy is that of focused financial investments. For an organization to change its culture and improve the services it offers its students, it must ruthlessly redeploy existing resources to impact teaching and learning. While this might not always be popular in the end, it can be one of the best strategies used (Fullan et al., 2004).

We can conclude from the research presented here that school board cultures matter. The district culture can be influenced by many variables, which include, but are not limited to, students, teachers, community, board members, and even county commissioners. Quinn and Dawson (2004) found that a dysfunctional board culture can greatly erode the public's trust and affect student learning negatively. We can conclude from their research that school boards and their culture influence the culture within the schools themselves. To discourage dysfunctional behavior, the research aforementioned

gave several tips on how boards can self-correct themselves in order to prevent this. The research also shows that just being elected to the school board is only the beginning of the work a school board member engages in. The board itself must continually undergo reevaluation as it monitors its own behavior in order to provide a positive culture for student learning.

Conceptual Framework

Based on his review of change literature, Fullan (1993) lays out a guiding framework he suggests is necessary for the change journey. Fullan suggests change is a non-linear process, full of surprises and unable to be mapped out without changes occurring on the way. His framework is divided into eight basic lessons on change.

Lesson one: you cannot mandate what matters. The more complex the change the less you can force it. While mandates are important and necessary for policy makers to establish standards, they do not work when skills, creative thinking, and commitment are needed. Mandates tend to narrow the focus of educators, whereas creativity seeks to expand it beyond the simple or obvious. Mandates alter some things, but they do not affect what matters. When a complex change is involved, teachers cannot change just by being told to do so. What will work is creating conditions that enable and press people to consider their personal and shared visions and providing skill development and practice over time to achieve these visions.

Lesson two: change is a journey, not a blueprint. Change is nonlinear and often full of uncertainty. More often than not, you cannot mandate what matters because you really don't know what matters until you are well into the journey. If a change involved

implementing only one single and well developed innovation, then it could be blueprinted. However, school districts and schools are usually in the business of implementing an array of innovations in policies simultaneously. Stacey (1992) suggests that the route and destination to new lands must be discovered through the journey itself. In the face of unpredictable change, the key to success lies in creating new maps under the conditions of uncertainty, learning, anxiety, difficulties, and fear of the unknown. All are intrinsic to the change process. More so at the beginning of a change process where often things get better before an implementation dip occurs. One can see more of a risk-taking mentality when change first occurs. The climate during this time is critical and unstable thus, unable to be blueprinted. In addition, the frequent changes in the landscape often experienced in the education arena prevent a predefined map. New roads in education are being founded every day.

Lesson three: problems are our friends. Problems are endemic in any serious change effort; both from within the effort itself and from external forces interjecting unplanned intrusions. Problems are a necessary part of the learning process. However, individuals must have the capacity of inquiry to learn the right lessons from those problems. Too often we seek to avoid problems instead of embracing them. Educators need to understand a problem's effect on the process and how it may play a critical role in moving forward in the change process. Successful change requires individuals to develop problem finding techniques and see problems as an opportunity to move forward. Louis and Miles (1990) found that the least successful schools often engaged in shallow coping when resistance arose, basically doing nothing, procrastinating or easing off to

prevent dealing with the problems. While the most successful schools do not have fewer problems, they work together with a shared commitment to cope with these problems and to move forward. Conflict is also part of an affective change process.

Lesson four: vision and strategic planning come later. Many leaders in education set vision at the beginning of a process. However, visions come later for two reasons. First, under conditions of dynamic complexity, one needs a good deal of reflective experience before they can decide on a plausible vision. Second, shared vision, which is essential for success, must evolve through the dynamic interaction of team members and leaders over time and negates setting a vision at the beginning of a process or task. Vision emerges from, more than precedes action. However, just because visions come later does not mean that they are not worked on. Senge (1990) suggests that vision comes later because the process of merging personal and shared visions takes time. As teams work together, they must learn to merge their personal beliefs into a shared vision, this process takes time.

Lesson five: individualism and collectivism must have equal power. Productive educational change must include overcoming the mindset that educators are individual contractors. Synergism-the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts-comes to mind when looking at the difference between what one person can contribute versus a productive group of people. Fullan (1993) would quantify the aforementioned by drawing a distinction between convergent versus divergent issues. Convergent issues have distinct and quantifiable logic to their resolution where divergent problems are not quantifiable or verifiable and thus do not lend themselves to a single solution. One person can easily

solve a convergent issue. However, a divergent issue cannot be permanently eliminated, nor easily dealt with, numerous issues facing education fall into this category.

Lesson six: neither centralization nor decentralization works. Both top-down and bottom up strategies are necessary to accomplish the mission of an organization. Centralization errs on the side of over control and stifles creativity, whereas decentralization often lacks structure and therefore, errs towards chaos. Top-down management is limited as stated earlier because you cannot mandate what matters. Leaders fall into this trap as they see no alternative. Typically, centralization is seen as a quick way to decide what action to take to seek immediate results. Decentralization left to itself often flounders due to the lack of direction as groups become preoccupied with governance instead of working on issues (Fullan, 1993). Control from the top is an illusion. No one can control a complex corporation from the top (Senge, 1990). The question according to Senge is how to control without controlling. Traditional organizations use management systems that control people's behavior, while learning organizations invest in improving the quality of thinking, the capacity for reflection and team learning, and the ability to develop shared visions and understanding of complex issues (Senge, 1990).

Lesson seven: connection with the wider environment is critical. The best organizations learn internally as well as externally. Many organizations work hard on their internal development while failing to do so with the external environment. This can be a fatal flaw because an organization needs to reflect on itself as a social entity. Smith (as cited in Fullan, 2003) suggests an organization should be a social entity that promotes

paradox and fosters disequilibrium in order to be successful. By doing so, the organization has a reasonable likelihood of being aware of the context it operates within. Schools that are the most successful operate within a set of working conditions that foster effective learning for all students. Thus, an organization must be actively plugged into the environment in order to respond and contribute to issues of the day.

Lesson eight: every person is a change agent. Since no one person can understand the complexity of change in the dynamic environment, it follows everyone must be part of the process. Every teacher must assume the responsibility to help create an organization capable of individual and collective inquiry and renewal. However, leaders are still being created under the old paradigm leaving them without the necessary skills to bring about radical changes with a new mindset. The educational system is killing itself because of its design to remain status quo and inability to address the changes in society and learning (Fullan, 1993).

Fullan's change lessons, integrated with the previously discussed work of Peter Senge, *provide the conceptual framework for this study.* Table 2 shows the relationship between Fullan and Senge.

Table 2

Comparing Fullan's Lessons to Senge's Fifth Discipline and Linking the Conceptual Model

Fullan's Lessons	Senge's Thoughts	Conceptual Model
Lesson one: You cannot mandate change.	Change comes from building a shared vision.	What factors initiated the change process in Rockwell.
Lesson two: Change is a non-linear journey.	System thinking is a discipline seeing wholes, not linear snapshots.	How did change in Rockwell occur and what factors influenced the change model?
Lesson three: Problems and conflicts are part of change.	Mental models help deal with problems by understanding we must remove barriers and identify root cause.	What factors created issues and how were and are they being addressed?
Lesson four: Vision and strategic planning come later.	Personal mastery comes first, and then people create visions, not organizations.	What factors were and are present that influenced vision and strategic planning?
Lesson five: individualism and collectivism must have equal power.	Personal visions are precepts to organizational vision and shared visions. Both personal and shared visions are necessary for change.	How did individualism and collectivism influence the change process in Rockwell?
Lesson six: neither centralization nor decentralization works.	System thinking, building shared vision, and team learning are necessary for creating effective change.	How did Rockwell handle organizational structure issues during and after the change?
Lesson seven: The best organizations learn internally as well as externally.	System thinking framework is about seeing the interrelationships.	What factors influenced Rockwell initially, during, and after the change?
Lesson eight; every person is a change agent.	Personal mastery is about developing people in the organization, as people create visions, not organizations.	How did Rockwell use people in its development to change the organization in the pre/during/post organizations?

(Fullan, 1993; Senge, 1990)

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the following chapter, I discuss the significance of this study to the current body of educational knowledge, and how it can benefit public education and the communities where these schools reside. This research study discovers the experience of those individuals who were part of or knew about the change to a Performance Excellence management philosophy in Rockwell Schools during 2000–present. Because the study looks closely at the experiences of those affected by change, it resembles some attributes of a phenomenological study in the following way:

- Describes the participants' experiences of a phenomenon;
- Gains insight into participants' life worlds (or lebenswelt), typically through in-depth interviewing;
- Brackets or suspends the participants' preconceptions; and
- Searches for the invariant structures or essences of participants' experiences.

Analyzing the data gleaned from these interviews will help researchers understand the impetus that drove the need for change, and whether the improvements in academic results solely attributable to this change or were there additional factors present.

This study utilizes some key factors generally seen in a case study as defined by Creswell (2007) such as:

- Refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves;
- Illustrative case studies serve primarily to make the unfamiliar familiar and to give readers a common language to discuss the topic in question;
- Case studies may be descriptive or explanatory.

Therefore, this study will use a hybrid of both a phenomenological and case study approach to gather and analyze data that reflects the change in the Rockwell School district from 2000 to present day.

Building the Case for Further Study

The intent of this study is to provide school leaders insight that will help guide them in making significant changes in the way their school or school districts manage and create a culture of continual improvement by adopting quality tools and techniques.

With the ever diverse and changing climate of public education, the time for effective systems and quality tools to help improve student learning is apparent. This study focuses on how one school district, with mediocre performance in academics as compared to other public school districts in the region, changed its governance from an atypical bureaucracy to the Performance Excellence Model using quality tools to align its operating process and infused continual improvement into not only operations, but the classrooms as well.

Research Questions

1. What is the story of the introduction, planning, and implementation of the Baldrige Performance Excellence change initiative in the Rockwell Schools?
 - a. What was done to create the change that occurred?
 - b. What were the problems encountered along the way and how were they addressed?
2. What were the outcomes of the change initiative?
 - a. What was the direct impact of the model?
 - b. What were indirect impacts (e.g., more professional development, etc.)?
 - c. Has the quality model become institutionalized? If so, what has become institutionalized? How did institutionalization occur?
 - d. Has the focus of the Performance Excellence Model changed (e.g., from what was initially a public relations initiative to more of an instructional focus)?
 - e. Has the Performance Excellence Model impacted the classroom level? If so, does it continue to impact the classroom level?
3. What lessons about the change process can be learned from the case of this change initiative?
 - a. What can be learned about school district change from the experience of the change that occurred in Rockwell Schools?

Description of Key Variables

The study contains several key variables:

Performance Excellence is an overall or system approach that is designed to (a) improve on a continual basis, the organization's goods or services; (b) improve overall organizational effectiveness by using quality tools; and (c) enhance the organization's capacity to use continuous quality improvement in all areas of the organization (http://www.baldrige.nist.gov/PDFfiles/2003_Education_Criteria.pdf). In aforementioned Figure 1, there are seven core competencies: leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, measurement and analysis of data, workforce focus, process management, and results that fall into Performance Excellence.

Quality Tools are the keys to defining what items need to be addressed and how we go about setting up a process to address them. The tool box includes the main tool called PDSA-Plan, Do, Study, Act, which is used to define processes in the Baldrige system which was aforementioned in Chapter I (see Figure 4). The plus/delta in Figure 6 of Chapter I is another quality tool used to collect input, and the consensogram in Figure 7 of Chapter I is used to assess current knowledge or state of where our audience is in the process we are about to explain.

Continual Improvement is an ongoing effort to improve products, services, or processes. These efforts can seek "incremental" improvement over time or "breakthrough" improvement all at once. Customer valued processes are constantly evaluated and improved in light of their efficiency, effectiveness, and flexibility.

Deming (1983) saw it as part of the ‘system,’ whereby feedback from the process and customer were evaluated against organizational goals. The fact that it can be called a management process does not mean that it needs to be executed by ‘management,’ merely that it makes decisions about the implementation of the delivery process and the design of the delivery process itself (<http://www.asq.org/learn-about-quality/continuous-improvement/overview/overview.html>).

Bureaucratic Management—the bureaucratic form of management has six major principles:

1. *A formal hierarchical structure*—Each level controls the level below and is controlled by the level above. A formal hierarchy is the basis of central planning and centralized decision making.

2. *Management by rules*—Controlling by rules allows decisions made at high levels to be executed consistently by all lower levels.

3. *Organization by functional specialty*—Work is to be done by specialists, and people are organized into units based on the type of work they do or skills they have.

4. *An “up-focused” or “in-focused” mission*—If the mission is described as “up-focused,” then the organization’s purpose is to serve the stockholders, the board, or whatever agency empowered it. If the mission is to serve the organization itself and those within it (e.g., to produce high profits, to gain market share, or to produce a cash stream), then the mission is described as “in-focused.”

5. *Purposely impersonal*—The idea is to treat all employees equally and customers equally, and not be influenced by individual differences.

6. *Employment based on technical qualifications*—Since employment is based on technical competence, bureaucracy in its pure form is designed to protect a person from arbitrary dismissal.

Conceptual Framework

The study discovers the qualitative aspects of change and how people experienced this change. I used Fullan's (1993) change lessons to analyze change as it occurred in Rockwell Schools. This analysis examines the district in three areas, before, during, and after the change to the Performance Excellence model that took place.

The conceptual framework depicts some of the key issues that surfaced during the Rockwell Schools change from a bureaucracy to Performance Excellence. Fullan's (1993) *Change Forces* is used as a conceptual lens to examine change in this study.

- Lens one: you cannot mandate what matters. Fullan commented that “effective change agents neither embrace nor ignore mandates. They use them as catalysts to reexamine what they are doing” (p. 24). How did change agents follow this concept or vary from it in the change process that occurred in Rockwell Schools?
- Lens two: change is a journey not a blueprint. How did key change agents follow or violate this caveat of change?
- Lens three: problems are our friends. How did Rockwell Schools embrace or ignore conflict before, during, and after the Performance Excellence initiative?

- Lens four: vision and strategic planning come later. How did change agents in Rockwell Schools follow or ignore this concept in their quest for change?
- Lens five: individualism and collectivism must have equal power. Was there a process in the change to Performance Excellence to preserve the equilibrium of individual versus collective input?
- Lens six: neither centralization nor decentralization works. Under this premise how was the change in Rockwell Schools implemented?
- Lens seven: connection with the wider environment is critical for success. What part of change in Rockwell Schools personified or discounted this lens?
- Lens eight: every person is a change agent. How was this lens applied in the change process and what processes assured that the voice of everyone was heard?

I analyzed the change in Rockwell Schools through the eight lenses. This analysis examines how effectively the lenses were applied and offers suggestions on cases where change appeared ineffective. This analysis also determines the change agent's intent and whether the change could have been improved or was determined by environmental factors beyond the control of those seeking to change the system.

Research Setting

Located in Rockwell County, southeastern United States, the Rockwell School system includes Batesville as its county seat. The county spans a large geographical area and includes not only rural but urban areas, including an inner city and suburban area.

The county is 80.7% Caucasian, 11.9% African American, 6.8% Hispanic, 1.8% Asian,

0.3% American Indian, and the remainder persons with two or more races. Some 83.6% of the population report obtaining a high school diploma or equivalent and 20.3% possess at least a bachelor's degree. The per-capita earnings per household are \$25,018 (U.S. Census, 2010).

The school system includes over 25 schools with an array of rural, urban, and suburban settings with over 20,000 students enrolled and over 2,000 employees. Student ethnicity breaks down to 76% Caucasian, 14.3% African American, 8% Hispanic, and 0.4% American Indian. The percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch varies greatly depending upon the school's location in the county. Free or reduced lunch percentages range from 0% to 90%. The northern part of the county tends to be rural with farmland and the southern tip urban with numerous businesses and industry. The inner city schools have some of the highest percentages of free or reduced lunch students, while the more affluent southern tip of the county has the least.

Interviews occurred at the participants' home locations, when possible, in hopes of providing a natural setting for the respondent. The locations of the interviews were solely left up to the participant, and many occurred either in the interviewees' classrooms or their office when possible.

Research Participants

I interviewed three school board members, two retired central office personnel, three elementary teachers from different schools, and two instruction facilitators who were currently reassigned to either new schools or positions. In addition, I interviewed three middle school teachers and three high school teachers with two of the high school

retiring teachers recently. The individuals interviewed all had knowledge of the district's transition to Performance Excellence from being employed by the district before, during, and after the transition. I interviewed a random sample of community people who represented the same ethnic makeup as the community and possessed knowledge of the school district.

Data Collection

I reviewed archival records, including newspaper articles, school board minutes, school improvement plans, district website, teacher turnover rates, administrative turnover rates, and student academic performance from 2001 to present day. Newspaper articles are available through the *Charlotte Observer* archives since it covers the southeastern United States. School improvement plans are available either at the specific school or through the district's central office. Teacher and administrative turnover rates are available from the state's Department of Public Instruction's website as is the district's academic performance data. For those documents that are not public information, aggregate information without student identifying information can be obtained at a local school level.

Interviews were conducted in a place where possible outside of the school day. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to 1½ hours in length. Building rapport between the interview participants and myself led to a deeper understanding of the events and why the interviewees were chosen to participate in the research. I was able to engage the interviewees in conversations about many subjects of common interest in hopes to make interviewees feel comfortable with the interview process. As the interview progressed,

the person being interviewed appeared to become more engaged in telling his or her story. Prior to conducting the interview, I explained why I was conducting the study, what the study entailed, and why I had selected the interviewee as a participant. At that time, I obtained a consent form from the person being interviewed.

Prior to commencing the interview the date, place, time, and name of the interviewee and location of the interview were recorded. Data collection was done using a guided interview approach. This approach develops a set of questions that “guide” the interview, but the interviewer is free to digress to follow the natural flow of the conversation about the interview topic. In addition, the questions are thought out ahead of time to solicit information that will help foster information for the study the interviewer is working towards.

While interviewing, I took notes on items such as sights, impressions, and extra remarks before and after the interview. These descriptive field notes helped me capture non-verbal aspects that occurred during the interview and helped connect emotion or silence to certain questions. I looked for appearance, mannerisms, gestures, and accents of each interviewee. In addition, I recorded the physical setting, any particular events, and my own responses to the interviewee’s replies or any particular event that seemed to evoke my own feelings.

The interviews were scheduled separately so that only one participant was interviewed at a time and there was no overlap between participants. Participants in the study were given pseudonyms, and any personally identifiable information was either deleted or changed to protect the participant’s anonymity. No specific schools or agencies

are mentioned by their real name. Audiotapes were erased at the end of the transcription process. Written transcripts of interviews and other data that were collected will be shredded at the end of the study. Data and consent forms are stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office. I maintain the only set of keys for this storage location.

Interview Protocol

In my interview protocol, I used the guided interview approach to target specific areas of interest to the research. However, interviewees were able to digress or add to what they felt was pertinent information about the research study. Each question was stated in appropriate language for each of the groups I interviewed: school board, elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, and central office individuals. Some questions applied more towards specific groups than others, and appropriate adjustments were made to align the question to the audience.

Interview Questions

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

Question 2: How long have you worked in the Rockwell school system?

Question 3: Tell me about your experiences in the Rockwell school system.

Question 4: Rockwell began transitioning from a bureaucratic management philosophy, to that of a process management philosophy using the Baldrige Quality model in 2002.

What do you know about that transition?

Question 5: Describe what the Rockwell School district was like prior to the change in management philosophy.

Question 6: Describe what the Rockwell district was like during the change in management philosophy.

Question 7: Describe what the Rockwell district was like after the change in management philosophy.

Question 8: Why do you think the change was made?

Question 9: Do you think the change was justified?

Question 10: How did you experience this change?

Question 11: What have been the positive aspects of change for the district? For you?

Question 12: What have been the negative aspects of change for the district? For you?

Question 13: What outcomes have resulted from the change?

Question 14: Have there been unexpected side effects—positive or negative—from the change?

Question 15: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Additional data came from printed sources like the local, regional, and state newspapers. In addition, data came from websites or organizations that covered the change in Rockwell Schools, i.e., American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC), American Society of Quality (ASQ).

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were organized using computer hard drive storage with CD-rom backups. Data from all sources was analyzed to find common experiences across the data to be coded into meaningful segments or themes. As I analyzed the data, I reflected and wrote questions across my notes that later helped me describe and analyze

relationships among categories. In addition, I wrote analytic memos that noted where data intersected, outliers to the data as well as commonalities and any other data that seemed to spur further investigation. When I found any ideas or key concepts such as connections, false dichotomies, disruptions, and contradictions, including relationships among data and silences, I noted them.

Field notes were also a part of this review in order to look at any information that might influence the transcribed work. I reflected on notes and across questions in order to add some analysis of what the interviewees thought during this process. I took my descriptive field notes and completed a reflective analysis that included: (a) speculation about themes or patterns that were present, connections between pieces of data, additional ideas or thoughts that come about, (b) analyzing the rapport I had or did not have with the subject and any particular issues with the subject or unusual responses, (c) how the interview impacted my beliefs or values, (d) how my assumptions of where I saw the study, how data were gathered, my preconceptions on how they aligned or contradicted each other, entered my reflections on how I dealt with these biases, (e) clarified any errors that I realized after the interview by adding corrective notes, and (f) biases that affected my conclusions were added (bracketing). During this process, I added my interpretation and looked at perspectives in literature that coincided or expounded upon the research data.

The research study looked at change based on Michael Fullan's eight lessons on change. There were no themes or outliers from the data that did not fit into these categories.

My Subjectivity

Prior to entering the field of education I had a long-term career in manufacturing. The manufacturing industry that I worked in began a transition in the early 1980's from a departmentalized goal based approach to that of TQM or Total Quality Management. TQM was based on Edward Deming's quality principles which today closely parallel Baldrige criteria for quality. With immense competition for pricing and quality both locally and internationally, the industry I worked in saw a great need to change the departmentalized and disjointed approach from what was best for the department, to what was best for the company and ultimately the customer.

The early 1990's brought ISO or International Standards of quality and reliability. Many companies would not buy or sell with those not having this certification. Both TQM and ISO simply addressed a systems approach to manufacturing based on continual improvement and customer feedback. I saw in just a few short years the positive impact a shift to quality based principles had on the industry. Those that survived increased foreign and local competition did so by changing the way they operated. Simply they adopted a holistic approach in lieu of departmentalization and placed emphasis on a systems approach using goal alignment and flexibility to cross departmental lines when it was what was best for customers. These same organizations adopted quality tools similar to the PDSA and other feedback systems to help address concerns that hampered quality or productivity.

Being part of this transformation has left me with a predisposition for quality models and their impact when properly deployed. This is why I choose Rockwell Schools

to study. I was interested in seeing if a typical industry quality model could be effectively adopted in an education setting. Walpole and Noeth (2002) found numerous districts that had implemented Baldrige quality principles but felt none of the schools had quality principles institutionalized. Their research showed that the quality principles while apparent at the upper and middle layers of the schools they studied never reached a majority of the classrooms. Teachers failed to buy-in at this level.

The change effort in Rockwell Schools intrigued me for several reasons. The data that was being shared locally and at the state level showed in just two-short years significant improvement in academic scores and the leader (superintendent) had implemented Baldrige principles in another district somewhat successfully. How did Rockwell succeed where others had failed? Before beginning my study I based my opinion on the quantitative data coming out of the district. Basing change just on this data, showed and solidified my belief that Rockwell Schools had made a sound choice in going to a quality based model.

As I began to interview, I made sure my position as an administrator did not make participants feel uncomfortable or guarded in their answers. As I analyzed the data collected, I made sure that I maintained the essence of each participant's response since I had a bias towards quality models. If I began to take offense or overly agree with the data, I made a note to review it at another time with a fresh lens.

I handled subjectivity by using a reflective journal and field notes. These were presented throughout the process to help understand biases and the researcher's point of view and how it can influence the data. I addressed the data as objectivity as possible and

spoke about the data by looking at codes and themes and reflecting on their meaning and how it relates to conclusions drawn from the research. Where possible I used quotations to lend richer meaning to the data.

In addition to reflexive journaling I used a form of *Snowball Sampling* to make sure alternate opinions were presented in the research that were as bias free as possible. I asked participants to give me names of other individuals who may have experienced the opposite of what they did during the change process. By using this method, I hoped to balance the number of positive and negative interviews about the change, thus providing an unbiased account of the change.

As I interviewed, I noted areas that elicited emotion or lack thereof and in the analysis of each interview, I reflected on my biases, opinions, thoughts, and how these may have influenced the way I looked at the data. As Peshkin (1988) suggests, I continually explored my own subjectivity in each facet of the research and put the “I” synopsis where conclusions were drawn or ignored.

Trustworthiness

The data collected spanned multiple participants who offered insights into how they experienced the phenomena and their understanding of what stimulated the need for change. I used news reports and quantitative data to support or refute the qualitative data included in this study. Included in the interviews were several key people who helped stimulate the change. Data sources, where possible, were triangulated to provide trustworthiness.

In addition to the steps above, the interviewees were asked to review transcribed information and analysis and lend their opinions on the accuracy of what is reflected (member checking). Attempts were made to present the change unbiased by asking the interviewee for someone who experienced the opposite effect as they had for potential interview. These were balanced as much as possible to provide an account of the change that is as unbiased as possible. Additionally, peers who had knowledge of the change and its effect were asked to review the transcripts for accuracy.

Benefits and Risks of Study

The participants of the study had an opportunity to voice their experiences with the change in management philosophy and explain its effects on them. The research lent a voice to the qualitative effects of change and explained how those who were affected by a change felt, and in some cases, survived the change process. This study illustrates the significance to qualitative aspects and how they are often overlooked in the change process. While quantitative data may reflect great results, does this mean the change process or change went well? Lending a voice to the qualitative side of change allowed the participants in this study to finally explore their feelings and have a chance to share their stories.

The benefits of the study revolved around the need for change in the current educational system. The shift in Rockwell Schools took a mediocre system ranked over 50th out of more than 100 districts academically and moved it to within top ten districts within the state. In the current political environment, the pressure to produce good achievement scores that helps schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) has become

paramount. Not only are political pressures placing demands on schools to perform, but communities as well. Developers locate and build many new housing developments based on school performance data and use this as another marketing tool to sell homes by advertising the successful schools in the sales region. With all the media hype, schools have been forced to streamline their efforts to improve scores. Performance scores on the End-of-Grade tests and End-of-Course tests greatly impact how teachers, principals, and superintendents perform their roles in the educational process. The transformation of Rockwell School District came about through a shift in management philosophy. The numbers show a great improvement over the six years that the change was implemented. However, the qualitative data has never been looked at to see the hidden cost of change.

While quantitative data seems to be the driving force behind change in the educational arena, it is also important to address the qualitative aspects of change. If the changes are to be sustained and institutionalized, then an examination of how these changes impact the individuals involved must be done and the results acknowledged. The qualitative data in this research adds voice to the silence of the change process and serves to inform others of pitfalls and how to avoid certain strategies of change and embrace others. The true success of this change will be is inherent in the qualitative aspects as these bring voice to emotions and reaction to the phenomena that instituted change.

Significance of the Study

The change in Rockwell Schools from the typical bureaucratic system to that of process management governed by Performance Excellence principles has brought a system ranked in 2002, over 50th in the state academically to one within the top ten

percent. If the change in management philosophy accounts for the district's improvements in closing the achievement gap and increasing its state ranking to top ten in the state while having one of the lowest funded systems in the state, the significance of the study is extremely important. While the pressure continues to mount from political, community, and global markets to produce students with 21st-century skills, school systems need to find effective ways to accomplish this. If the process management system led Rockwell Schools to these results, can it be duplicated? Will the quantitative data alone tell the entire story?

Public education is under what appears to be an all-out attack. While No Child Left Behind legislation sought to establish accountability, many have used the data of poor-performing schools as a way to usher in vouchers and charter schools. Organizations like Wal-Mart and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are not only funding the privatization of schools but are enlisting politicians and other industry leaders to help in this endeavor. While America does have failing public schools, the data on many charter schools initiatives are not promising either. Many see the push to privatize as a way to bust teacher unions and to limit the government funding of public education. We are at a crossroad in education where the years of centralizing smaller districts into large conglomerates that have become slow-moving bureaucracies must change. Performance Excellence offers hope, if properly implemented, to change an existing bureaucracy to a less rigid and more responsive organization that uses continual improvement to meet customer demands.

This researcher feels the data collected shows the change was the catalyst to student improvement. The study limitations rest on the experience of those in the process. Those chosen are a diverse group so as to obtain varied data from sources that were affected differently dependent on their job at the time the change occurred. Hence, the data is only as good as those being interviewed and cannot be looked at as the only determinant for anyone wanting to change to process management. This researcher suggests that both the quantitative and qualitative be used to determine if a district wishes to embark on the journey of change.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents and analyzes data collected in my study of a public school district, Rockwell Schools, and its change from a bureaucratic management philosophy to that of Performance Excellence. The organization of the chapter is based on findings of data collected during interviews with district employees across elementary, middle, high school, and central office personnel. I use Fullan's (1993) eight lessons of change as a conceptual framework to analyze the data.

The Journey to Performance Excellence Begins

It was November 25, 2008 when the e-mail went out across the Rockwell School District alerting all staff that the school district had just been awarded a prestigious quality award. This had been, to many, what seemed like a never-ending sprint. One could almost hear a sigh of relief that day. Dr. Money, a school board employee, recalled an article he read that seemed to personify the leadership style and journey on which Dr. Easter had taken one of the southeastern United States school districts on. The title of the article was "The Rhinoceros Effect." The article, according to Money, saw the Easter-type leader as one who was focused on the end results only. The only way to keep up was to run beside the rhino, as you dared not get in front for fear of being trampled in the race to the goal. By the same token, you certainly did not want to get behind, as all you could see was the trail of dust the rhino's journey left.

Introduction to the Change Initiative

Dr. Money remembered the year the Rockwell School board selected Dr. Easter to change the path of a school district that had experienced its share of disappointments. Since its inception when Rockwell County Schools and Rockwell City Schools merged in the early 1990's, the district had been beleaguered by numerous superintendents who all were embroiled in some form of controversy.

Mr. Shelly recalled,

I was elected to the board because the community wanted a change for the positive. Not only did the community express concerns but business and the broader community were concerned at the lack of industry relocating to our district. I recall a meeting with a large biotech company looking at the county because of its access to interstates. The board and community heard two main components that attracted industry at this meeting, one being the quality of health care in the county and the second being the quality of K-12 education. We saw students opting out of our system to go to charter schools; simply, we were in trouble and needed a significant change in direction. The board unanimously committed to seeking academic excellence and to offer a variety of programs to meet the needs of the community. We had to find a leader that could implement the vision we had.

Mr. Heath, another school board, recalled the scandal the superintendent, Dr. Campman, had left and the rift his mismanagement of funds left in the community. "Surely we had lost not only the public's confidence but the county commissioners, a void we had to close." We hired Dr. Easter because he had a very distinct plan and could show how he intended to get the district there. Dr. Easter had implemented the Performance Excellence Model in the last school district where he was superintendent, Atlantic County (pseudonym). The school board set an ambitious goal to achieve top ten ranking in academics in the state and the board members, according to Mr. Heath, saw

the need to find someone to restore the trust and confidence in Rockwell County Schools.

Mr. Heath recalled,

It seemed like the board had made poor choices in selecting superintendents for some time. These choices had caused the community and county commissioners to lose faith in the system while bragging about the flagship Batesville Graded School district, the second school system in Rockwell County.

The school board had over 30 applicants apply for the open superintendent position upon Dr. Campman's termination. Mr. Heath continued,

Out of eight interviews the board arranged to select Dr. Campman's replacement, no one presented a way to rebuild the community support or trust, take the system to top-ten academic status, nor had a plan to do so except Dr. Easter. His confidence and the data he brought about Performance Excellence and change energized a board with low morale, as the board had just come out of the process of removing Dr. Campman. The board itself seemed to be in crisis mode, and fearing another poor choice in hiring, the board solicited input from the community on what type of superintendent the community and system needed and used this data to find its Dr. Easter.

The journey to this top ten ranking began in 2002 when Dr. Easter was hired by Rockwell Schools. The initial rollout of Performance Excellence Model began in Title I elementary schools according to Mr. Sillis, (pseudonym) a central office staff member. Dr. Easter felt this would be the easiest place to start and give the school district the greatest impact in the area of academics. Five Title I elementary schools were chosen to deploy the Performance Excellence Model. The change initiative began the summer of 2002 and began to be deployed in additional schools in the latter part of 2004.

The Performance Excellence model was rolled out in phases. The initial phase developed a guiding coalition. John Kotter in his books, *Leading Change*, and *The Heart of Change*, suggests that change cannot be done in isolation but requires a team with the same vision coupled with a set of strategies. This team according to Kotter must include:

1. Position power: Are there enough key players on board to move the change forward and address obstacles?
2. Expertise: Do we have the knowledge necessary to foresee the issues that may arise and have a plan to analyze and solve them?
3. Credibility: Does the coalition have the trust and support of numerous people in the organization?
4. Leadership: Are there enough competent and knowledgeable people available to make the change?

Kotter (1996) would tell us the team needs to have the same vision about change and understand the process of change. This team must trust the change and each other as change is a difficult process and takes shared meaning on each coalition person's behalf.

While the initial rollout of Baldrige began rather slowly, the momentum and deployment, much like the rhinoceros effect, gained speed and strength as Dr. Easter set structures and processes in place to align the school district with the tenets of this new management system. According to Mr. Heath, until this point, the school district was seen as a system of individual schools, instead of a school system with one vision and

direction. The academic achievement began to improve as the model was deployed. The graph shows in blue the ranking academically of Rockwell Schools when compared across the state's school districts. The red bars show how Rockwell Schools ranked in funding when compared to the state's other districts. Simply, in 2004-2005, Rockwell Schools ranked 30th academically and near the bottom in funding. While, the district was near the bottom in funding yet, it ranked 30th among the top school districts academically.

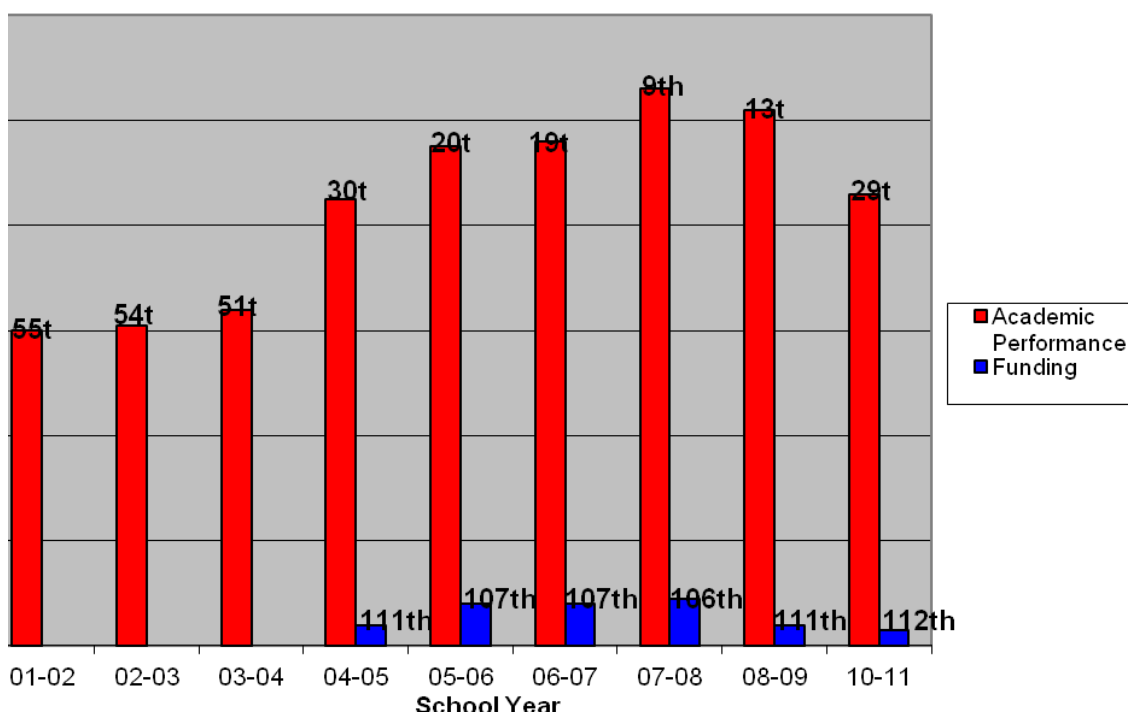


Figure 6. Academic Performance Rankings

Planning for Change and Implementation of Performance Excellence

Mr. Shelley remembers that after hiring Dr. Easter, the board and the superintendent set down to plan how Rockwell Schools would implement the change process. The goal was to look at the areas where change would have the least resistance

and the greatest impact on the district's academic performance. The district had long been viewed by the community and county commissioners as under-performing when compared to other districts its size, and its sister district, Batesville Graded. So according to Shelley, the board was unified in its support to change this perception. Realizing the change in culture of a school district with over 2000 employees would take time and resources, the board committed its support in both areas. The initial steps in the change process were to develop understanding with top leadership and the board. Dr. Easter brought in Linda Shark, (pseudonym) a key member of Jim Shipley and Associates. Jim Shipley is a company that provides Performance Excellence training and to date has helped 155 school districts implement the integrated continual improvement model based on Baldrige principles.

Linda Shark, along with Dr. Easter, began immediately training the board and central office staff in the main concepts of Performance Excellence and the continual improvement process it used. The goal, according to Mr. Shelley, was to educate top leaders on understanding how the system worked to align the work of all employees into a systems approach. Central office personnel would have to learn Performance Excellence in order to build capacity and help support the schools when the rollout began in the summer of 2002. In addition to this training, a structure was proposed to help ensure "fidelity" in the deployment of the model. Dr. Easter introduced the concept of instructional facilitators. These individuals would be hired from within the district to help make sure the implementation of Baldrige was done with fidelity. These individuals were top-performing teachers who understood the value of best practice.

The initial advertisement went out to hire five instructional facilitators and, once hired, these individuals attended weekly training on how the model worked and how they would help train school staffs in its deployment. The five schools chosen to be in the initial deployment were asked to return to work two weeks prior to school beginning in the 2002-2003 school year. The staff members in these schools received training from Linda Shark, instructional facilitators, Dr. Easter, and central office personnel on the model. The initial exercise involved how aligning resources can make things easier to do. This concept allowed participants to understand how working together as a team that had a common goal outperformed a team that had no plan or cohesion. The concept of having highly effective professional learning communities and how collaboration often had better results than the old teaching model where teachers closed the door and taught. This is where Performance Excellence helped bring independent pockets of success in the district and share these successes with all schools. The key component that Performance Excellence introduced to analyze a practice was the Plan, Do, Study, Act model.

Mr. Huey recalled,

Being a teacher with only two years' experience when I became part of the initial Performance Excellence rollout helped me learn a model that wasn't about theory as I learned in school, but actually showed me how to use quality tools like the PDSA to improve my teaching. I recalled the initial barbell training (Figure 7) and the exercise the group of teachers at my school did the first day of training. The exercise helped me visualize how much better barbells could be built when the teams had an opportunity to communicate and set a goal. The second time we did the exercise we had dramatic improvements because we all shared our experiences and adapted to make the barbell factory work. For those of us who could equate this to the classroom, it was an eye opener as it showed what the value of sharing and communication could have on improving an outcome. In school, we were taught the teacher is the master of the class, sort of a "Sage on Stage" personification. The PDSA and quality tools like the plus/delta helped me

understand the importance of student input. I learned quickly that students' feedback was significant in developing better instructional delivery. While the training that occurred weekly during professional learning community time was in-depth, the instructional facilitator and principal would also visit classrooms and help teachers understand how to deploy the PDSA with fidelity. The instructional facilitator also worked once a week with beginning teachers in a class called continuous improvement. In this continual improvement setting, beginning teachers brought examples of PDSAs and plus/deltas and discussed and shared as a group what worked and what did not. Although the model worked well for some, the older staff that had taught for years seemed to struggle with the model. The model seemed to almost agitate them, invoke anxiety and sometimes anger. From a personal perspective, the model was a huge help to me and I saw a direct impact in my classroom. I shared out the rising performance as did my other colleagues weekly. It was this shift to a collegial process that helped us see that two-heads were better than one. The student feedback daily and after each assessment, became paramount in driving the differentiation in the classroom and the improvement in academic results my classes attained. Within weeks, a small group of believers were seeing a positive change in their data, which captured the curiosity of others. However, I never really saw the buy-in from those who seemed to ritually comply and never really adopted the model. I was asked to become part of the instructional facilitator pool when the model began to be deployed in additional schools in the 2003-2004 school years.

The middle schools and the remaining elementary schools were part of phase two deployment with high schools being pulled into the process last. Mrs. Ross, (pseudonym) elementary teacher at one of the higher performing schools recalled,

I was extremely surprised when our principal came back from a district meeting and called an emergency staff meeting to let us know we would become part of the roll-out of Baldrige. Many staff members wanted to know why we were being included. In the beginning, we were told it was optional for high-performing schools, like we were, yet we were being what many said was "bushwhacked" by the change process.

It was this change in strategic leadership direction without a reason that generated confusion and discontent with staffs at schools that were performing well academically when compared across the district and state. I remember the


discontent escalated to the point that the community was hearing complaints from teachers that they were being made to accept “Dr. Easter’s program” (Mrs. Ross).

The rollout continued for two years until all middle and elementary schools were either on board or on their way. It was the summer of 2005 when the South Rockwell High School (pseudonym) staff received their first training at one of the local churches. The staff did the barbell exercise where eight people were given the task to build five barbells in 3 minutes. At the end of the first group, only one barbell had been completed successfully because no specific planning occurred or collaboration on what, how, who, and when, the assembly would occur. Simply, the staff was told they did not have a system to build the barbell. The staff had individuals all with ideas on how they saw a completed barbell, but without a refined system, the team failed to meet the quota (see Figure 7).

This exercise was the key training component used to capture why moving from the teaching system where many identified teachers as private contractors or pieces of the barbell team to a more synergistic model of a learning environment where teachers, staff, administrators, and students worked together to align resources in the system toward a common goal was a better way. The barbell exercise showed what can occur when employees work as a system with a similar vision of the outcome. A well-defined system helps workers understand their part and how it impacts the entire team’s output. Having clearly defined processes helps alleviate issues with quality and efficiency (see Figure 8).

Baldrige Basics

The Barbell Factory



8 Willing Workers
Add or delete one part OR pass the whole thing on when it comes to you.

1 Boss
“Make barbells. Faster. Make more barbells.”

1 Inspector General
“Rework” or “meets specifications.”

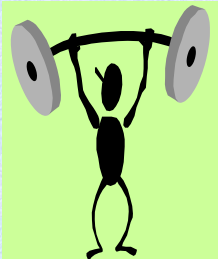
Quota: 5 barbells in 3 minutes.

Jim Shipley & Assoc., 2003

Figure 7. The Barbell Factory 1

Baldrige Basics

The Barbell Factory



What is the effect of trying to fix one “chair” when we really need to fix the system?

What’s the long-term effect of the system on the workforce?

What role does leadership play in improving systems?

What is the impact of poorly communicated stakeholder specifications?

Figure 8. The Barbell Factory 2

While the PDSA and other quality tools were used to improve classroom and district processes, it was the use of the quality tools that helped uncover the many

learning gaps or root causes of poor performance in certain schools and classrooms. The systems approach Baldrige suggested created synergism, a great force in closing learning gaps. The model was rigidly deployed at its onset, and the rationale behind this was to have uniformity. Administration did paired school building classroom walkthroughs to make sure we all were seeing things the same way, “inter-rater reliability.” The model today has some flexibility in the way PDSA is posted, but the core tenets are still expected to be deployed. We still use the core tenets of the model; however, the cookie-cutter approach had been in Baldrige terms “purposefully abandoned.”

Mr. Randall (pseudonym), a high school teacher, remembers the introduction of Performance Excellence at his school and some of the initial resistance. Randall recalled,

Being a retired principal from Texas, I had experienced a quality approach model and liked it. I saw what progress was made in Texas and understood the tenets. I actually helped quell some of the anxiety in my school by being a supporter and explaining how it could help. However, as the model was rolled out, I saw it becoming what I will refer to as Dr. Easter’s “dog and pony show.” It seemed to be more about publicity and data and less about what seemed best for kids. As others, I complied and used what worked and ritualistically dealt with the rest.

As a teacher in Rockwell Schools, Mr. Randall recalled the model helping improve his scores as the students gave input each week on how they would learn the objective. Predictive assessments were introduced as a way to see what objectives were taught well and those that were not. This was a check and balance system that helped teachers change direction in mid-stream instead of an end-of-course score that was a summative reflection. The district began creating and using formative assessments. As educators grew in their understanding of the purposes of professional learning

communities, these groups began creating common formative assessments. All this data helped inform instruction and encouraged the teacher to differentiate instruction and to re-teach areas that were below the school or district scores in that objective. “If the model did nothing else, it helped teachers analyze data and implement corrective action if needed” (Mr. Randall).

Dr. Easter solidified the foundation for change by having the district, staff, community, and businesses give input on what they felt the district’s vision should be (see Figure 9).

<p>Our Mission Rockwell Schools will rigorously challenge all students to achieve their academic potential and to lead productive and rewarding lives. We will achieve this vision with the support of parents, staff, and the community.</p> <p>Our Vision A school system committed to improving student learning by igniting a passion for learning.</p> <p>Our Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student and learning focused • Motivated faculty and staff • Partnerships and teamwork • Continuous improvement focus • Management by fact • Results focused
--

Figure 9. Rockwell Schools Vision/Mission/Core Values

The district created the mission, vision, and core values by including collective input from all stakeholders. Surveys and meetings were used to collect input to make sure the majority of people were on board in moving the district forward. Shortly after taking the position as superintendent, Dr. Easter held community forums once each month

across the district. These were called area advisory meetings and were held at each high school. The purpose was to talk about what the district was doing and to collect feedback through plus/deltas and issue bin items to inform the decision-making process at the district level. These meetings continue today as part of the model.

While Dr. Easter is no longer superintendent in Rockwell Schools, the Performance Excellence Model he set in place continues to be the core value system from which Rockwell Schools operates. However, the district chose to allow teachers, schools, instructional facilitators, and principals some creativity to what seemed like a very rigid and cookie-cutter approach of doing the PDSA and some small latitude on other quality tools. This creative approach continues to be a key part of a systemic management philosophy using continuous improvement based upon Performance Excellence.

What Was Done to Create the Change

Dr. Easter was hired to lead the system and change the way things had always been done. He walked in with a plan to establish the system as one of the state's top performers and had the structure to do so. The program was Baldrige and the tenets of Performance Excellence that used quality control to align resources. He showed the board the following slide and explained the power of synergism and systems thinking a key part of the model (see Figure 10).

The model addressed what we as a board saw in Rockwell Schools, a system of schools all seemingly doing their own thing with little or no alignment. The school district had pockets of success and pockets of failure. While the district saw numerous comprehensive school improvement models come and go, as a district none seemed to have a lasting impact. The school board saw the Baldrige Model as a well-developed and comprehensive way to affect positive change. Shortly after

hiring Dr. Easter the board and key district leadership began training on the model. This training continues today. (Mr. Shelley)

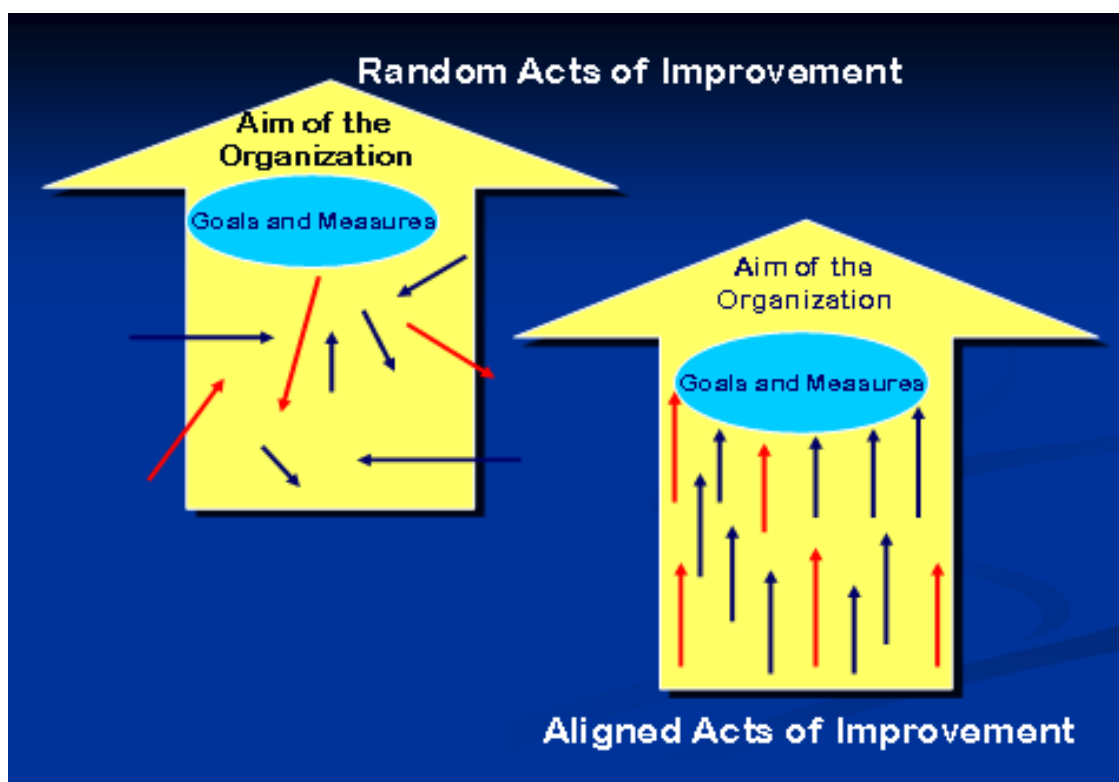


Figure 10. Random Acts of Improvement

Dr. Easter instituted this process as part of the plan to establish transparency, trust, and credibility between the district and the community. In addition, he had several internal central office people sent to numerous trainings including National Examiners School. The National Examiners School was a program that trained the examiners who conducted the two-week site visits that the Baldrige committee requires for consideration of the award. The intent here was to build capacity and expertise in the model. These same individuals went to organizations that were practicing the Baldrige concepts to understand the process. Dr. Easter made sure the board and key central office personnel

understood and bought into the change; those that did not, soon retired or left (Dr. Money).

To fill the leadership gap, Dr. Easter convinced the board to allow the creation of an infrastructure to help drive the change. This model was named the instructional facilitator Model or IF for short. The idea presented to the board was to use these individuals to help deploy Performance Excellence. They would be part of a train-the-trainer model that would get current and ongoing training to take back to the schools and deploy with professional learning communities. The Instructional Facilitators were part of the school leadership team and part of the central office leadership network to help deploy change. As the deployment grew, Dr. Easter's (pseudonym) wife became a key leader in the process. Mrs. Easter was hired to lead the IF process. As the model was placed in additional schools, Mrs. Easter hired an additional secondary trainer and remained the elementary lead for the IF structure. Linda Shark, a key Jim Shipley consultant, helped establish the framework for change and intermittently conducted training as the model expanded. Linda Shark was hired in 2004 and given a position of Chief Quality Officer for Rockwell Schools. In addition, the district hired Marty Shore (pseudonym) as director of its leadership academy in 2006. Dr. Easter had devised and implemented a very concise structure that helped lead the change in Rockwell Schools. This structure included what Kotter and Cohen (2007) called these four key components: positional power (the board and key members of leadership), expertise (the IF model, central office training, and outside experts brought in), credibility (started with a small group, including the board to educate and build trust to deploy the model), and leadership

(trained key people and set up infrastructure to train staff). In addition, the district developed with stakeholder input what it uses as its core tenet of operation “The Triangles.” The Rockwell Triangles include the district’s structure for learning and improving operations (see Figure 11 and Figure 12). The raising achievement and closing the gap model drives the district’s learning model while the effective and efficient operation’s model drives the operational system of the district.

Ms. Young recalled the battle she endured as an instructional facilitator and some of the pitfalls and successes she witnessed.

The first year I trained teachers on using the PDSA and how to collect data to share out at weekly meetings. In addition, the district had us teaching Marzano’s high yield instructional strategies. About the third year, the district developed the Raising Achievement and Closing the Gap Model (Figure 11). This model helped me as a facilitator put everything the district did into a precise model that linked directly to the classroom and learning environment. Every question went back to the core five questions: First, what do students need to know? Second, how do will they learned it? Third, how will we know they have learned it? Fourth, what will we do if they did not learn it? Last, what will we do if they already know it? These questions along with professional learning communities and assessments still hold the core values of what Rockwell Schools does as a district to close the achievement gap. The battle I faced was getting teachers who had been independent contractors for so long to form a learning community. It took almost two years to actually see the team’s work develop and begin to form a productive and collaborative group. The buy-in began as teachers who were willing to take chances began to deploy PDSAs and Marzano. More often than not, these were the younger teachers, and as they began to show improved results others bought in. I began encouraging model classrooms that would showcase their PDSA and data. This helped those initially unwilling to participate to see there was something good about quality tools and Baldrige. We were changing a teaching environment to a learning one.

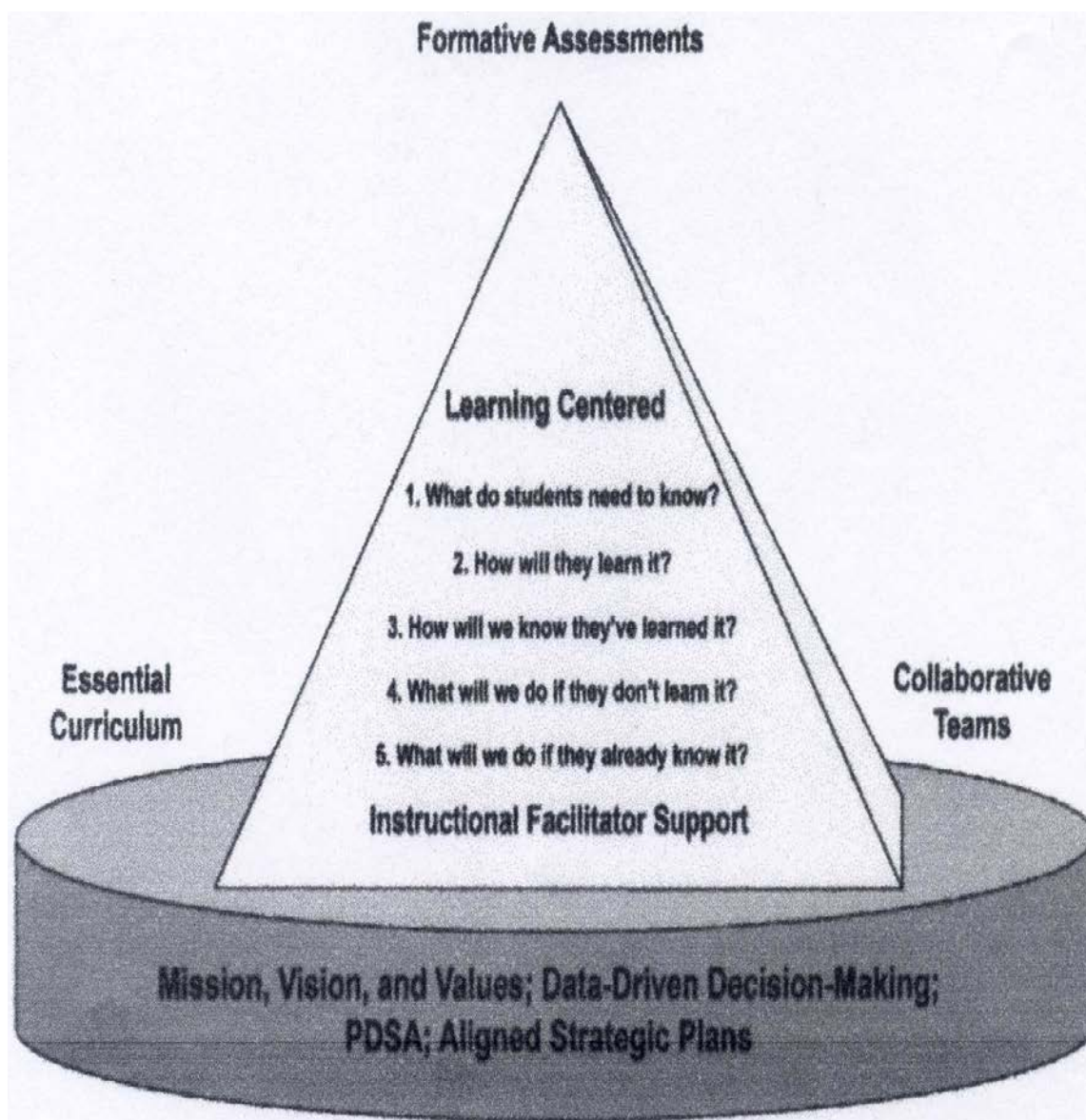


Figure 11. Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps Triangle

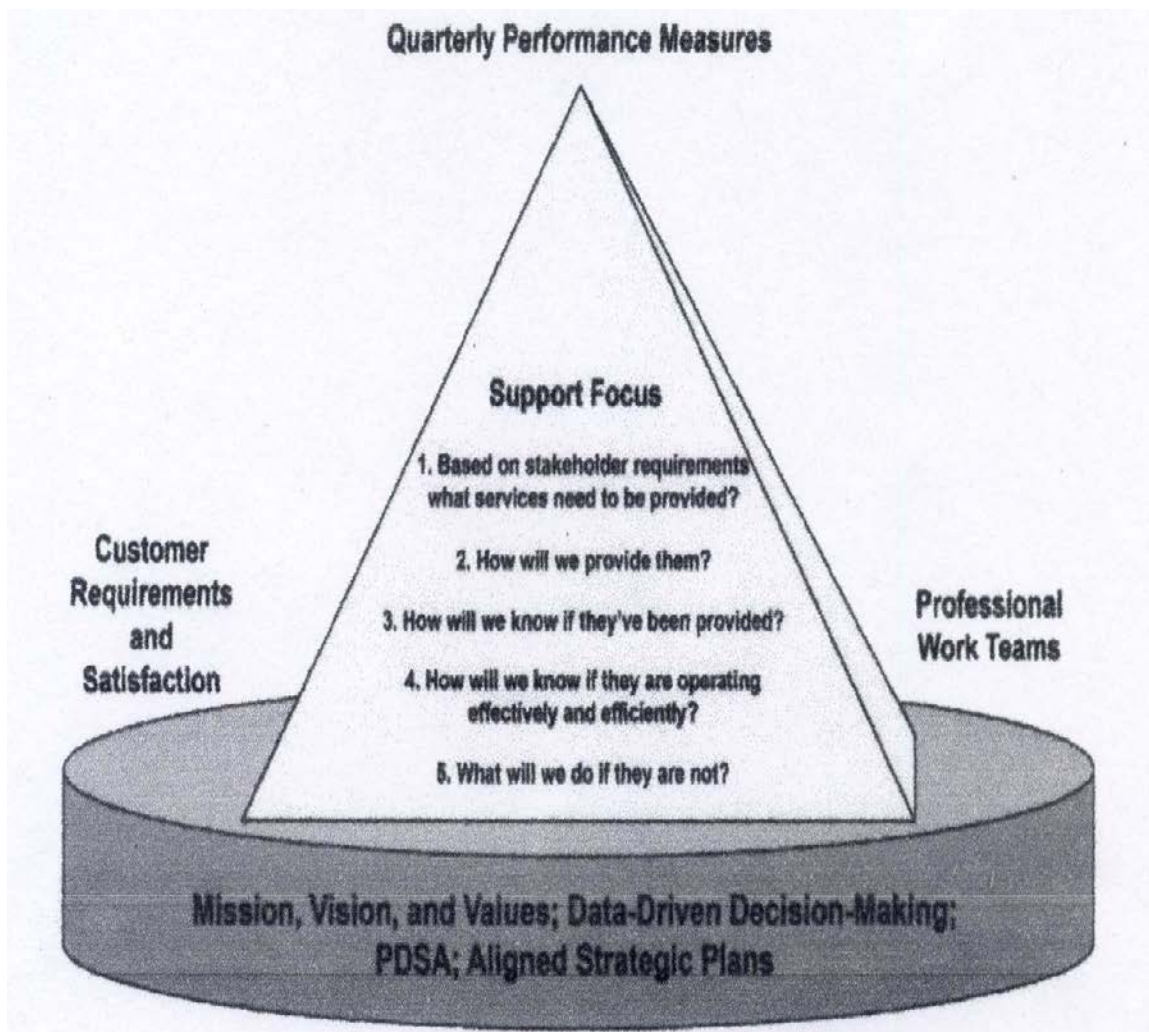


Figure 12. Aligned, Effective, and Efficient Operations Triangle

Problems Encountered with the Change and How They Were Addressed

Schon (1971) found that all real change involves “passing through the zones of uncertainty . . . the situation of being at sea, of being lost, of confronting more information than one can handle” (p. 12). Change is a social phenomenon that affects all people who are members of the social system. Rockwell Schools faced many problems as

the leadership implemented a significant change in the way it had done business. Based on my analysis of the data, the following themes became apparent:

- Going from a system of schools to a school system
- Developing a data driven decision process
- Overcoming the attitude of TTSP (This Too Shall Pass)
- Culture of teaching not learning (shared meaning of educating students)
- Lack of a defined collaboration model
- No defined infrastructure to help employees acquire new knowledge, skills, and understanding
- No common vision or core values, or a system to develop this
- Lack of celebrating short term wins across the district
- Mandating change from the top

Going from a System of Schools to a School System

Rockwell Schools was atypical of many districts in that it had rural, urban, and suburban schools within its operational area. In addition, there were high performing, average, and low-performing schools across the district of over 25 schools.

The district had followed many comprehensive school improvement models over the years that had brought about mixed results. There were pockets of success across the district, but a unified effort to duplicate this success had failed to transpire. The district did bring together cross curricular teams long before the buzz word PLC existed. We talked about best practice and attempted to cultivate best practice. (Mrs. Horton)

The district attempted numerous times to develop a structure to support shared learning across the district, but had failed to develop a sustainable model (Mr. Bleu). Fullan (2007) suggests reform is more than adopting or putting into practice a new policy or program. It is a change in the culture in the classroom, district, and the entire system. Rockwell Schools lacked a unified system approach to learning. The structure to create this was not evident and thus, the school system remained a system of schools.

Part of the Performance Excellence deployment included adding IFs in order to develop an infrastructure for sharing best practices. The original five schools conducted site visits for the other Title 1 schools to showcase what was working well and to begin the practice of sharing. The use of continual classroom improvement also generated classroom best practices that teachers were coached to share in their buildings and at board meetings. The model of sharing created a formal district PLC with the instructional facilitators. From this improvement process, the district developed a principal and assistant principal PLC to share best practices.

The best practice of sharing helped bridge the gap that existed between schools as monthly the IFs, assistant principals, and principals were part of a PLC sharing process. No longer did schools exist in isolation, as sharing took precedence over other issues as the district moved toward academic improvement. A key part of effectively deploying the continual improvement model depended on having a system and infrastructure that embodied sound learning processes, a way to help support lower performing schools, and to share best practices from higher performing ones. Conquering an isolated system was a

key component of deploying a Performance Excellence infrastructure. Mrs. Young recalled,

The hardest part of being an IF was the constant pushback from teachers each week at PLC meetings and trainings. It seemed the teaching model, where the teacher closed the door and conducted class as an independent contractor, was deeply rooted through-out the system. I remember many days leaving school in tears and saying I wouldn't go back the next day. If I had wavered in my convictions about how important it was to change the teaching model to a learning one, I would have never entered the school house doors again. I knew what we were doing was what was best for kids and once teachers began to see what I had, change would come. It took almost a year and a lot of district coaching and support to keep the IF model alive. Many first year IFs went back to the classroom shortly after taking the job. They simply did not have a tough enough skin to endure and persevere the time and effort it took to create change.

Rockwell, in its third year of deployment, began a year-end and mid-year review.

This process was implemented to share the district's strategic goals. Every leadership member was placed on one of the five priority teams and the teams held a meeting before the main meeting to go over data and prepare the presentation to the group on where their respective strategic goal was in terms of successes and gaps. We celebrated goals that were reached and listed OFIs or "opportunities for improvement." These meetings lasted eight hours and when you left, you were aware of the district gaps and "next steps." This helped bring together the district leadership, which included the school principal, assistant principal, and instructional facilitator (Mrs. Young).

Developing a Data-driven Decision Process

"In God, we trust; all others bring data" was a phrase frequently used by Linda Shark and Dr. Easter. This mantra actually helped ignite the change that took place in

Rockwell Schools. It began when the board decided it wanted to be a “Top Ten” school district when compared academically to other districts.

The district had some academic data systems in place as early as 1992, but these were all based on EOG and EOC data that were summative. It was too late to correct course when the students were gone to the next grade level. Teachers looked at the data and objectives to see in what areas their instruction was weak, but since PLCs were not a structural part of Rockwell Schools until Performance Excellence, much of the data went into the file cabinet to collect dust (Mr. Bleu).

As Baldrige training rolled out, the district discovered this gap in data collection. In the second year of Baldrige, the district began curriculum review week (CRW). Curriculum review week invited one teacher from each school in the core subject areas to meet with other teachers. Teachers were grouped into grade level spans of elementary, middle, and high school categories. The groups worked on unpacking the standard course of study and selecting the essentials that needed to be taught in each subject and at each grade level. Once the essentials were done, the groups developed predictive assessments (PAs). These predictive assessments were designed to provide feedback on where the students were in comparison to their peers in the district at nine-week intervals. In addition, a data system called Cetra-data (pseudonym) was employed to house this data and to help develop reports for teachers. While this process took three to four years to build and tweak, it is a key part of the data-management system still in place.

After each assessment (four were given initially), the data were collected in Cetra-data. A teacher could look at class, subgroup, and individual student data. Teachers

analyzed data to determine what objectives of the standard course of study their students did poorly on and where they succeeded. Teachers made a plan to re-teach gaps and note the strategies that gave positive results (see Figure 13). The red or darkened data denotes objectives where the student dropped in knowledge from the first predictive assessment to the second one.

Teachers gained a key learning from assessments. They began to understand that you could not teach an objective once and never embed it in the instruction for the remainder of the year. Students often forgot earlier objectives, so the teacher had to find ways to re-introduce these as the school year progressed. The district began with four predictive assessments at the onset, but as teachers and administrators became more comfortable with data analysis and the cost to give four predictive tests increased, the district cut the program to three.

Mrs. Cutz (pseudonym), an elementary teacher, recalled that before the district began a comprehensive data program, classroom teachers relied on curriculum-based measurements that came from the text or were teacher created:

The development and implementation of the predictive assessments tied directly to the model the district used to raise achievement. I was initially one of the teachers who resented being told how to improve student learning. My scores were among some of the best in the district. However, as the model to raise achievement was implemented (Figure 11), I realized that I was not covering all the bases when teaching. I began each year reviewing last year's curriculum, sometimes for weeks. When we began implementing baseline testing, the data collected helped me start where the kids were, not spend time on material they knew. The model questions, "what do we do if they already know it," helped me spend time on new material instead of re-teaching what students knew. The "how do we know they have learned it" was answered with baseline and predictive tests, in addition to the weekly PDSA that focused on "what do they need to learn," and "how will they learn it."

	System	School	Quarter 2	Quarter 1	Quarter 0	Q1 to Q2	Analysis
Reading	% Correct	% Correct	% Correct	% Correct	% Correct	+/-	
Objective 1.02	89.28	87.87	79.21	89.66	86.56	-3.10	
Objective 2.01	70.06	78.17	87.76	82.76	75.86	6.90	
Objective 2.02	65.41	74.40	88.71	--	--	--	
Objective 2.06	--	--	--	--	79.31	--	
Objective 3.01	91.45	93.60	100.00	--	--	--	
Objective 3.03	76.14	78.20	82.88	--	89.10	--	
Objective 4.01	49.70	82.80	87.88	70.69	100.00	-2.31	
Objective 4.02	78.78	85.18	95.43	91.38	--	6.05	
Objective 4.03	61.53	74.40	88.71	--	--	--	
Objective 5.01	62.05	76.30	83.27	80.15	88.17	7.02	
Objective 5.02	--	--	--	84.48	--	--	
Objective 6.01	78.54	83.60	84.54	--	--	--	
Objective 8.01	--	--	--	--	82.76	--	
Prior Grade 2.01	--	--	--	--	88.52	--	
Prior Grade 2.05	--	--	--	--	80.34	--	
Prior Grade 2.06	--	--	--	--	72.41	--	
Prior Grade 3.01	--	--	--	--	68.67	--	
Prior Grade 3.03	--	--	--	--	95.55	--	

Note. Red = a student gap

Figure 13. Predictive Assessment Data

The raising achievement model, PDSA, and data collection were great tools to help inform classroom teachers and PLCs.

These certainly helped me as a teacher see a more complete picture of where my teaching strategies worked and where I needed additional help. The predictive data helped address “how do we know they have learned it” versus the prior system of summative data based on the year-end test. Predictive test data based on the objective taught, helped focus on what went well and what needed to be re-taught. (Mrs. Cutz)

Overcoming an Attitude of TTSP (This Too Shall Pass)

Change will always fail until organizations find a way to develop infrastructures and processes that engage teachers in developing new knowledge, skills, and understanding. The meaning of real change goes deeper than ritual compliance or

minimal understanding (Fullan, 2007). Kotter (1996) suggests the selection of the coalition force to implement change is the key to overcoming complacency. In addition, Kotter suggests that short-term wins are necessary to sustain the energy that large scale change requires. Mrs. Horton recalled,

Dr. Easter began the transition to change by attempting to gain an understanding of shared meaning among central office staff. I recalled the second week Dr. Easter arrived; we began training central office staff on the process to change. Simply, Dr. Easter was training and assessing who would be part of the coalition to move the district forward. I became part of the coalition; however, those entrenched in the way things were always done, retired or left. We lost several central office people the first six months. However, these resignations seemed to do little to affect the deployment urgency or implementation.

Additional pushback began as the model was implemented in the high-performing schools. This pushback began to be against both the program and the superintendent. We were at the third year of implementation, and the community called the board members upset that teachers and principals were being asked to do what community felt was a program Dr. Easter wanted and supported, not the teachers or principals. "I recall having Dr. Easter come in on several occasions to discuss slowing the implementation down, as the model was being pushed too fast" (Dr. Money). However, the data began to show a significant trend toward the positive. Using this data, Dr. Easter engaged the community in area advisory meetings and spoke at community events on how the implementation of the model was beginning to show results. The business community never wavered from their support as most operated on some form of quality model. Had results and business community support not have come along, the board would have significantly curtailed the implementation speed (Dr. Money).

Culture of Teaching, Not Learning (Shared Meaning of Educating Students)

Fullan (2007) notes, “Restructuring (which can be done by fiat) occurs time and time again, whereas reculturing (how teachers come to question and change their beliefs and habits) is what is needed” (p. 25). Educational change is not a single simple entity, but a multidimensional one that requires learning new teaching approaches and sometimes altering one’s beliefs (pedagogical assumptions).

Mr. Huey recalled being a young elementary teacher in an at-risk school was certainly a challenge.

While college prepared me to teach using theory and historical perspectives of teaching, it really did not prepare me for the classroom. I felt lost many days as I consulted with other young teachers and my wife who taught in a different county. When we began the Baldrige training, and the idea that we needed to move from the old teaching model where the teacher often lectured to kids, to a more open model where the teacher facilitated learning, I was excited. However, as the training unfolded, I noticed the teachers who had been in education for some time seemed overwhelmed, almost frustrated. Since I was young and new to teaching, I felt I was open to new ideas and ways to engage kids in learning and had really not developed or associated my teaching with a specific pedagogy. Simply, I was flexible enough to have my beliefs altered. I am not sure these are the specific reason teachers who had taught for some time were struggling, but some of my colleagues voiced disdain over seeing kids as customers and making them a part of the teaching process. However, as my class scores began to improve, my colleagues became more interested in what was improving the scores. My class became a model for other teachers and schools to see how the PDSA and quality tools like plus/delta and issue bins could help improve how instruction was delivered. As I moved into the instructional facilitator position, this same scenario seemed to dominate our weekly meetings. It seemed the biggest resistance the district was experiencing was from tenured teachers, and more so from those who had high-performing classrooms. We spent time each week talking about how we could use those with success to help influence the acceptance of others. I remember the instructional facilitator position had tremendous turnover the first few years. Many instructional facilitators who were not prepared for resistance that arose and the unprofessionalism that teachers back at their buildings demonstrated. Not only did some of the facilitators return to the

classroom, but several principals left as a result of the stress and pushback from staff.

Mrs. Horton, a central office administrator, suggested that while the district had participated in many programs in the past, few reached into the classroom. This area of the education model in Rockwell Schools survived without a significant shift in pedagogy in the classroom. Mrs. Horton recalled,

The model implementation success revolved around changing the way instruction was delivered, seeing the student as the customer. This was something that many teachers had never experienced since quality models typified industry, not schools. Many rejected the model as not suited for education. I heard from teachers and other administrators “we are not a business and cannot be run like one.” While I myself helped spearhead, many change models while employed in the education field, I had reservations, not about the model, but more how the district was going to deploy it. I believed in the idea of creating a learning environment, but was concerned about how we would convince our tenured staff to buy-in to the change. As the model deployed, we did lose some teachers but not as many as was rumored throughout communities that voiced discontent.

Teacher turnover in Rockwell Schools is represented in Figure 14. The graph shows the district had turnover percentages below the state in each year. The only year turnover went above state averages was 2007-2008.

While Fullan (2007) suggests changes in teaching style or materials are conducted daily across the education field, changes in pedagogical beliefs take time to evolve. Rosenholtz (1989) conducted a study of 78 schools that were experiencing change. The findings showed that in schools where teachers shared consensus about the vision, mission, and goals of the organization, change happened with more effective results and

fewer problems. The classrooms in these schools benefited from the collaboration of colleagues and student learning improved.

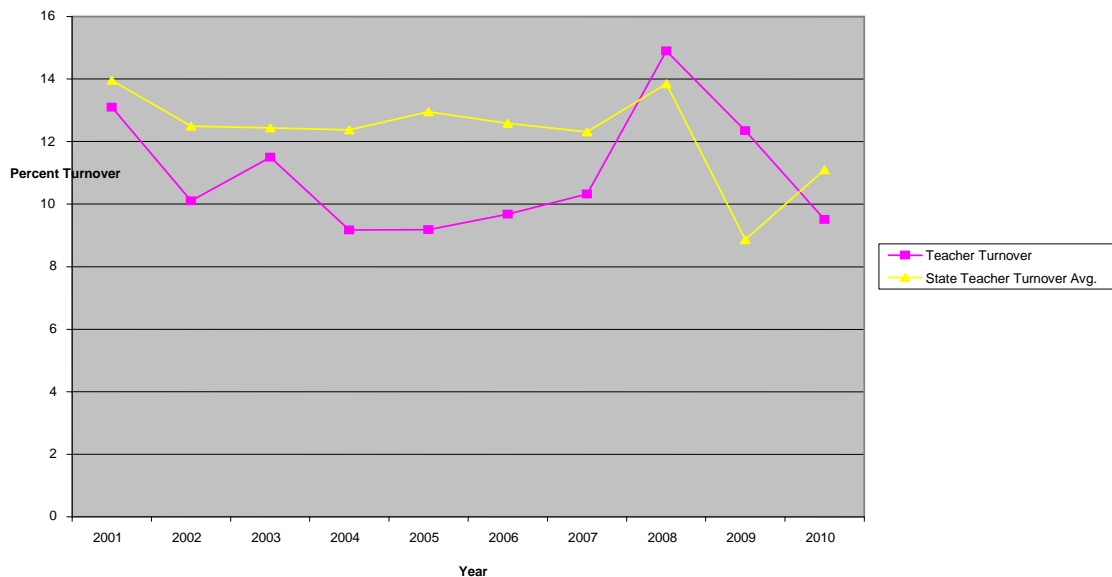


Figure 14. Teacher Turnover in Rockwell Schools

The instructional facilitator model was designed as the key infrastructure to bring about change in Rockwell Schools. The model sought to develop a learning environment and to do so would involve different levels of support at each school. Professional development and professional learning communities helped drive this process, but this change was not without issues.

Mrs. Cutz, elementary teacher, Mrs. Young, instructional facilitator, and Mr. Stark, high school teacher, recalled the PLC being nothing more than a “‘bitch’ session for teachers.” While the IFs did professional development of best practices like Marzano’s high-yield strategies, the remaining time was talking about behavior issues and other non-instructional items. Mrs. Young, instructional facilitator, recalled,

It seemed PLCs were going nowhere, while as an IF, we received training each week. We were not experts in every area. I recalled getting a new principal who had been an IF and assistant in several schools. We were determined to develop our PLCs into true collaborative communities. We did this by going to key workshops, reading the latest research, and making a plan. While it took almost a year, we saw our PLCs beginning to understand the power of working collaboratively. In addition, the PDSA and quality tools were intertwined into making classrooms learning centered. We saw the at-risk middle school we were assigned to go from last academically, to first in many areas even though we were 60% free and reduced lunch. It was pockets of success like this which helped win over the resistance.

Fullan (2007) suggests that we must act in a new way to gain insights and feelings about the new beliefs. Shared vision and ownership are often an outcome of the quality of the change process. Deutschman (2005) argues that change is accomplished by helping people see and experience a better way to do things. Rockwell Schools used an extensive framework to bring about a change in beliefs by modeling (showing) best-practice examples, sharing successes, and celebrating what works.

Lack of a Defined Collaboration Model

Fullan (1993) mentions four core capacities for change; personal vision building, inquiry, mastery, and collaboration. Fullan further suggests there must be an organizational infrastructure to engage teachers in developing new skills, knowledge and understanding. Rosenholtz's (1989) study of 78 schools showed that where a highly functioning professional learning community existed, schools were more apt to be a catalyst for change in the school and district.

Mrs. Horton recalled,

While Rockwell Schools did not have a defined structure for professional learning communities prior to the Baldrige initiative, schools did meet by level

(elementary, middle, high) on teacher workdays throughout the year to discuss issues. Typically, these were more geared towards operations, but curriculum did come up. Furthermore, if specific schools were piloting special programs, arrangements were made to showcase the results. Many people thought Baldrige brought PLCs to the forefront in Rockwell but these communities had existed prior to Dr. Easter, but not in a well-defined structure or process. I would, however, say, the infrastructure of the IF model and the sharing of best practice was more developed and deployed with better fidelity after Baldrige structures and processes were put in place. The IF model was the infrastructure Rockwell Schools used to deploy PLCs. To ensure uniformity, the district developed a matrix that was sent out to all employees. The matrix (Figure 15) was simply a calendar of events and expectations that drove the professional development and learning (a shortened example is displayed). Marzano's high yield instructional strategies were one of the first "best practice" trainings that came out. The district chose to deploy three per year until complete. To determine fidelity, a classroom walkthrough or CWT was developed to look for instructional strategies in the classroom. This process involved everyone in the district that touched a classroom. Administrators performed "paired walkthroughs" to check inter-rater reliability. Once we were above 80%, we began collecting data and sharing out each month with PLCs and district meetings. This continues today and is part of the principal's artifacts for evaluation.

Professional learning communities began being introduced into the district around 2004. The concept, however, was embedded in the weekly professional development. The instructional facilitators carried out and participated in sharing out best practices each week and at staff meetings. The goal of continual improvement was to develop teams, instead of the old teacher model where teachers were seen as a private contractor. Simply, the teacher closed the door and taught however, they chose (Mr. Bleu).

Considerations for schools to differentiate your Matrix:

- Plug in PDSA cycle for the frequency school leadership expects
- Plug in common assessment windows based on school leadership team expectations (district expectation=at least 1 common assessment per quarter)
- School process and expectation for sharing of team data with leadership team, SIT, goal teams, etc. (Who needs to see the data & analysis at your school?)
- Additional dates to include (based on Rtl, Reading 3D, IB requirements, Leader In Me, SSP/DEP, etc.)

Dates	Collaborative Team's Work
AUGUST	
Aug. 18-Sept. 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish Collaborative Teams & meeting schedules <input type="checkbox"/> Establish Roles & Responsibilities for Collaborative Team members <input type="checkbox"/> Establish Collaborative Team norms, mission, & goals <input type="checkbox"/> Review updated curriculum guide/essentials for implications for teaching & learning
Aug. 25-Sept. 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Administer Baseline/Pretest <input type="checkbox"/> Establish classroom ground rules, mission, & strategic goals with students
SEPTEMBER	
Sept. 6-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze & display Baseline/Pretest data (<i>collaborative team & classroom</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Share results with Leadership Team & SIT <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize 1 st semester essentials based on data (<i>K-2 Math – Sequence standards for 1st quarter</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Determine upcoming Common Core/Essential Standards that need to be embedded to prevent gaps in 2012-13 <input type="checkbox"/> Review clear learning targets & develop criteria for success with students (consult new curriculum guide) <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate 1 st semester learning targets and criteria for success to students and parents in student-friendly language <input type="checkbox"/> Visibly display 1 st semester learning targets, missions, strategic goals and norms in classroom

Figure 15. Rockwell Schools Matrix

Mr. Huey recalled that at his school, forming collaborative teams seemed to be the hardest hurdle to accomplish. Teachers, who had never shared or collaborated, were now being required to. Even with the improvement in scores at the at-risk elementary where I worked, those who dug in were determined not to change. Some were able to survive until the state mandated collaborative planning, then it became an evaluation

issue if teachers were not collaborating. Both Mr. Huey and Mr. Stark conveyed the following:

For most teachers, the PLC was seen as a positive idea to work as a team to solve educational issues. However, the higher performing teachers seemed to take this as a way to have them relinquish how they had been or were successful and ahead of their peers. It simply was a culture shock for those who had never shared or attempted to hide how they were getting great scores. Since we shared out as teachers, all teachers had to produce a strategy on how they taught a lesson. It seemed that these same teachers were the major critics of the PDSA, and in more cases than not, these high performers were, in fact, doing a PDSA weekly but had never been required to document it in the PDSA format. Some chose to join the district's plan and others chose to leave Rockwell Schools.

State legislation helped solidify what the district had been trying to accomplish by enacting general statutes requiring all teachers collaboratively plan at minimum one hour per week. While this legislative mandate helped build collaboration, not all PLCs or schools have the same effective PLCs as others. The increase in professional development due to the numerous best practices the district was initiating generated a loud and clear response through the district issue bin that teachers were overwhelmed. As a result of this feedback, the school board approved six early release days in the school calendar where teachers would attend professional development and share out at their schools. This process began in 2008, and continues today as a direct result of listening to feedback and adopting the process to allow for best practice.

Not having a defined collaborative approach in the district prior to Baldrige created resistance when this best practice was introduced. The implementation of quality tools continued to peel the layers of the Rockwell onion back, exposing more areas that

needed identified processes added to ensure best practices were implemented and institutionalized.

No Defined Infrastructure to Help Employees Acquire New Knowledge, Skills, and Understanding

The district, along with no formal collaboration model, also lacked an infrastructure to bring about the professional development to instill new ideas about learning and processes to acquire new skills to implement this learning. In his book *The School Teacher*, Lortie (as cited in Fullan, 2007) interviewed 95 beginning teachers and developed a case study that found: (a) teacher training had little impact on equipping teachers for the reality of the classroom, (b) school infrastructures were designed to isolate teachers, (c) teachers failed to gain skills due to the isolation and lack of coordinated professional development, and (d) a lack of effective professional development existed.

Similar to Lortie's research, Rockwell Schools possessed the same issues. The instructional facilitator model was designed to help address many of the points that Lortie found in his research. The beginning teachers (teachers in their first to third years) were required to attend continual improvement sessions once per week. Mr. Huey recalled,

As a beginning teacher in Rockwell Schools, I realized I was prepared to write lesson plans and had knowledge of the curriculum, but that was the extent of my comfort zone. How to effectively deliver content and engage students was never really taught in college. While I was assigned a mentor, he basically covered the operational issues and offered some classroom behavior support. The weekly meeting with the IF focused on how to engage kids by using effective classroom strategies. I believe the first strategy that we worked on for approximately three months was identifying similarities and differences. The IF would help the three of us beginning teachers plan a lesson using this strategy each week and the following week we would discuss how it worked or did not. I felt this form of

support was one of the best tools I had as a new teacher. It helped me feel part of a team and built a strong bond between my colleagues and myself.

In addition, the weekly meeting for beginning teachers targeted how to use the quality tools associated with Baldrige. Teachers were shown how to use consensograms to assess the knowledge level of where kids were before a lesson and how the knowledge had changed after the lesson. The plus/delta training from the IFs focused on having teachers solicit daily input on how the lesson went from their students. The beginning teachers brought this feedback to the weekly meeting and shared and reflected on what went well, and what needed to be changed. While the continual improvement meetings were designed to provide added support to beginning teachers, the tenured teachers received their support during weekly PLCs. The IF provided training one planning period per week on Baldrige quality tools and high-yield strategies. No defined infrastructure existed until this model was developed.

Professional development in the district was controlled by each building principal, and little or no structure was in place for sharing. The duplication of effort was visible across the district. In order to better define the process of professional development, the district felt it necessary to develop its own professional development academy and to send high-performing teachers to become trainers. The academy follows a national best-practice model as presented (see Figure 16).

The district uses a computer program to help manage its professional development and continuing education credits for staff. Numerous district personnel attended national trainings to become trainers for the district. A teacher may, with

principal approval, sign up for district trainings that are offered at no cost. The specific professional development offered is based on district needs as collected from evaluations and surveys. This process does not prevent the building-level principal from sending staff to more specific training using school dollars.

	Knowledge	Skill Acquisition	Classroom Application	Student Effect Sizes*
Present Information	40-80%	10%	5%	0.01
Present + Model	80-85%	10-40%	5-10%	0.03
Present + Model + Practice + Feedback	80-85%	80%	10-15%	0.39
Present + Model + Practice + Feedback + Coaching	90%	90%	80-90%	1.68

National Staff Development Council, 1995; Fullan, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 1984; Joyce & Showers, 1988; Mehring, 1999.

Figure 16. Effectiveness of Staff Development

Prior to the development of the Leadership Academy, principal meetings were mostly operations based. Once the academy structure was fully implemented, the monthly principal meetings began to focus on helping support the IFs in their endeavor to bring best practice to teachers. Principals began to get an overview of what the IFs would be training in the next month and had input on how it might be improved. As the academy and the initial Baldrige processes were implemented at the remaining schools, principals were asked to attend an IF/principal meeting once a month in addition to the monthly principal meeting. This initial model was used until the past year. Principals now

attend IF/principal meetings only when the academy directors feel additional support is needed to help train the teaching staff. Any new initiative, like the Common Core, requires both the IF/principals to attend and help facilitate the professional development back at the building level.

For leadership, all building leaders are required to attend Leadership Academy Week (LAW). This week has continual professional development for leaders and offers the selection of some tailored professional development for each building based on the schools need. All of these structures were put in place to help build new knowledge, skills, and understanding for teachers, school administrators, and central office personnel.

No Common Vision, Core Values, or a System to Develop These

Mr. Heath, school board member, captured the essence of the district in his quote, “we were a system of schools, not a school system.” Mr. Heath further suggested,

The system had pockets of success and pockets of failure. There were no distinct vision, mission, or core values the district as a whole aspired to. If a principal had a well performing school, that was simply all they were concerned with. We did not have a team approach and certainly did not have a learning environment. The board was aware of this as it looked for and found a leader that could bring a system of schools together to be a school system. One of our first tasks was to define the direction the system would go in changing Rockwell Schools to a high-performing school system.

Senge (1990) suggests that education must face a fundamental shift of mind. The task of changing a district from a teaching model to a learning one was considered a huge shift in educational thinking. Goodlad (1992) would say the basis for a learning organization is premised on moral purpose and seeks to engage students to maximize their experiences in becoming productive citizens. To break out of the teaching model,

teachers must see themselves as agents of change and embrace the need for continual improvement. Fullan (2007) would suggest an important capacity for change must include collaboration. Neither teachers, nor schools can improve in isolation. The effects of synergy in a productive model far outweigh the individualism of a group of experts. The research (Fullan, 1993; Goodlad, 1992; Pascale, 1990; Senge, 1990) suggests that the future of the education system rests upon continual improvement.

The Baldrige model's core tenet is to instill the continual improvement process using quality tools. Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest a large-scale change cannot come about without a strong guiding team that creates sensible and clear visions and strategies to accomplish them. In addition, these visions and strategies must be communicated effectively by making sure stakeholders have buy-in. Fullan (2007) would add that shared visions and ownership are a prerequisite for the success of change.

The Rockwell School district set out within days after Dr. Easter was hired to establish what the mission, vision, and core values needed to be. Surveys were conducted and used to develop and re-write these concepts several times until the community, students, teachers, and district leadership felt enough people had provided input. The Rockwell School Compact (see Figure 17) is a culmination of how the district has operated since the implementation of Baldrige and continues to do so.

The district re-visits these core components every three years to see what changes are needed. In addition, the IFs and principals visited these with staffs to collect feedback and understanding on what these core components mean and how the Leadership Academy aligns training based on these core tenets. Principals in the district helped staff

understand how they would plan to move from an isolation model to a collaborative one. Again, the implementation of weekly PLCs and weekly IF training helped bring this change along with principal support.

What does the [REDACTED] Model Mean?

For years we've talked about the [REDACTED] Model, but what does it really mean? The [REDACTED] Model for Continuous Improvement isn't about gaining prestige, it is about *children*. It is the way we should all do our work to ensure our students are the most successful they can be. It is about asking the right questions, taking the right steps, making the right adjustments, and finding the right solutions— *for children*. It is the difference between teaching and learning, the difference between saying and doing, and for our students, it is the difference between succeeding and failing. It is the way we do business, and it is what our parents and students (our customers) can expect from all of us.

Our Mission

[REDACTED] Schools will rigorously challenge all students to achieve their academic potential and to lead productive and rewarding lives. We will achieve this mission with the support of parents, staff, and the community.

Our Vision

A school system committed to improving student learning by igniting a passion for learning.

Our Values


- Student and learning focus
- Motivated faculty and staff
- Partnerships and teamwork
- Continuous improvement focus
- Management by fact
- Results focus

Our Strategic Plan

"Failing to plan is planning to fail." In [REDACTED] we are very thoughtful about the way we do business. We know it is important for all of us to be on the same page (our work aligned). Without alignment, we fail ourselves, we fail our community and most importantly, we fail our children. That's why it's important that our work must all begin and end at the same point— with children. Check out the diagram to the right to see what it looks like.

We Believe...

ALL children can learn
 ALL children deserve rich classroom instruction
 ALL children deserve a safe, caring environment
 ALL children deserve a motivated and highly qualified staff
 ALL children deserve the support of parents and community



Customer Requirements

↓

State/Federal Mandates

↓

State Strategic Plan

↓

[REDACTED]

Mission/Vision/Values

↓

[REDACTED] Strategic Plan


↓

Board of Education, Department, School Improvement Plans

↓


The Work I Do

↓



Student Achievement

[REDACTED] *A Passion for Learning*

 Become a Fan


 Follow Us

Figure 17. Rockwell Schools Team Compact

The Leadership Academy, principal meetings, weekly executive cabinet meetings, and weekly IF training all focused on creating a student-centered learning model. The quality tools that Baldrige used: consensograms, plus/deltas, issue bins, PLCs, and PDSA all were aimed at improving the process of learning. It was this structured process that brought about change in the district by changing the belief system from an isolated teaching model to a collaborative student learning model.

Lack of Celebrating Short Term Wins across the District

Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest, “Running a transformation effort without serious attention to short term wins is extremely risky” (p. 119). Short-term wins solidify the change or transformation effort. First, they provide reinforcement to the change by showing the change is working. Second, a short-term win provides a breath of rest to those facilitating the change as the success helps instill confidence to continue. Third, it helps the guiding coalition test its vision against reality. Fourth, quick performance’s improvements help undermine the cynics and major resisters. Fifth, it helps retain essential support from key people needed to make the change. Sixth, it helps build momentum and future successes feed off of this momentum (Kotter & Cohen, 2007).

Dr. Easter combated this issue with several approaches. He began the area advisory meetings which were designed to communicate what the district was doing and to show the initial data to support short-term wins. He implemented a student advisory panel that visited all high schools once a month to talk with students about what they wanted in their education system. These student advisory groups added credibility to the fact that students were educational customers. Dr. Easter became active in several

organizations and spoke as a guest speaker in many venues across the county. The platform always involved where the district was academically and where it needed to go and the plan to get the district moving in that direction was shared. At each meeting, the audience gave input that helped inform the change process. Involving the community in the process deepened buy-in from these stakeholders.

From the feedback, staff members were asked to always begin each meeting sharing celebrations. The infrastructure to share short-term successes continued with the hiring of a public relations officer. The responsibility of this individual was to communicate with schools, community, and organizations to make sure the district kept key information about the change on the district webpage and that the district kept the local newspaper involved with sharing the success stories. Simply, the district launched a public relations campaign to help the public see that the data was showing change in Rockwell Schools. Schools where the initial roll out began sent weekly newsletters home celebrating the success stories that week. Dr. Money recalled that as the rollout began at other schools, the short-term win celebrations helped silence some of the cynics or what the district called “submarine commanders.”

The celebration structure set in place is still a key part of Rockwell Schools. The school district continuously host districts from around the state and outside the state that wish to see our processes and hear our success. The short-term success is still used as a way show a process is working.

Mandating Change from the Top

Fullan (2007) suggests educational change is not easy as it is not a single entity or a linear approach. Educational change involves very complex issues that often encompass relationships that are not always defined or seen. A change in beliefs is the hardest area to address in educational change as this involves the core values teachers have developed. Core values are not explicit and are often buried at a level of unstated assumptions.

While change occurs at the individual level, the way organizations approach change affects how well the change happens or not. Actions and behaviors change before beliefs, and a guiding document does little to enhance the change process. The quality of actions taken to generate change influences the successfulness of the change. Often, the assumption is made when change is not moving forward, that the organization lacks the capacity to foster change. However, people may not understand or know how to change. Successful change requires people to see and experience change (Bate, Bevan, & Robert, as cited in Fullan, 2007).

The main dilemma at the beginning of a change initiative is to determine how many people need to be onboard before the change begins. Simply, how big should the guiding team be? There are no percentages or process to determine this, as it is different based on the organization (Fullan, 2007). Datnow and Stringfield's research (as cited in Fullan, 2007) suggest most change leaders fail because of a lack of understanding of how the change fits the district's goals, culture, teachers, students, and community. While Fullan (2007) suggests that most top-down and mandated changes fail, bottom up changes do also. Fullan suggests that there must be a culmination of both strategies.

Mrs. Bugle, a recently retired middle school teacher after thirty-one years in the Rockwell School system, recalls the shift and change to Baldrige.

I spent twenty-nine years as a middle school teacher in the Rockwell School system. Over those years, I had witnessed and had an active role in numerous change models. I am often reminded of the pendulum analogy of education change, where it seems to swing from one extreme to the other. I would say Baldrige was a significant swing to one of those extremes. While I had endured many changes over the years, none directly questioned the way curriculum was delivered or the classroom environment to the extent Baldrige was being deployed. As many teachers, I was old school, in the sense, the classroom was my domain and when I shut the door, it was me who ran the show. When Baldrige began, I struggled with allowing kids to help in deciding how would be the best way to set rules, discuss lesson plan strategies, determine how I would differentiate, and take more control of their learning. This was a complete culture shock and while I wasn't completely on board, it was because I lacked the understanding of how this would help with learning. The concept of going from a teaching environment to a learning one was not a logical step in my mind. I think many older teachers felt this way, as the district was asking us to change the way we had taught many years. We were not asked about our thoughts nor did we give input, we were told what the district would expect and the IF and principal would see it was done.

Not only did teachers struggle with the change that was mandated, central office support personnel struggled. This was a new concept and required a huge shift to a model of quality, a concept not seen in education. The initial deployment to the five Title 1 schools went well because these schools were looking for and wanting change. The district provided intense support through professional development and modeling. The short-term gains came quick, and this helped foster the acceptance of the model. The district did a great job creating an environment where there was both individual and collective engagement between the school staff and district. The deployment at these schools took approximately two years from the beginning until the school staff and

instructional facilitator were using the processes and quality tools regularly in the classroom (Mrs. Horton).

The guiding team in the initial deployment started with only a few schools, and schools seeking change. This was fertile ground awaiting new ideas. While the credibility, skills, connections, and reputations of this guiding force had not completely meshed, it was made up of key district people who included the superintendent, curriculum team, and school leadership teams. Dr. Easter spent long hours training the team in the Baldrige concept and practices. When necessary, Linda Shark from Jim Shipley would spend several days to a week on specific ways to deploy the quality concepts like the PDSA. Not only did she understand the concepts, she could model it for any scenario, making the professional development experience useable.

According to Dr. Money and Mr. Heath, Dr. Easter often reminded the board that it was his responsibility to the day to day operations of the district. While they agreed, they let him know on several occasions it was the board's responsibility to oversee education in Rockwell County. He believed so much in the power of the Baldrige processes that he often lost sight of the human side of change. This is where the board had to remind him there was a cost to change. The board wanted to see a slowdown in the pace of the change being implemented and more professional development provided to help teachers see the benefits. This is when Dr. Easter brought in additional outside support for his guiding team.

As a board, we often wondered if the district could not have accomplished the same results without alienating so many people. The board did see many principals and central office people leave or retire. While as a board, they knew

some of this may not have been bad, they also realized Rockwell Schools lost some talented people. The scenario of reining Dr. Easter in continued until the day he left. While the board and community had seen a significant improvement in the way Rockwell Schools did business, it would have been nice to have done so with less alienation. (Dr. Money)

The turnover data presented in (see Figure 18) represents the administration turnover in Rockwell Schools from the time the Department of Public Instruction began recording it. Mr. Heath remembered a time when the administrative turnover was less than 10% from year to year. The board became concerned when this number escalated. While the board knew there would be some who chose to leave instead of supporting the change, concern came over the number and the quality of people who were leaving. Dr. Easter was able to convince the board this was normal and would subside.

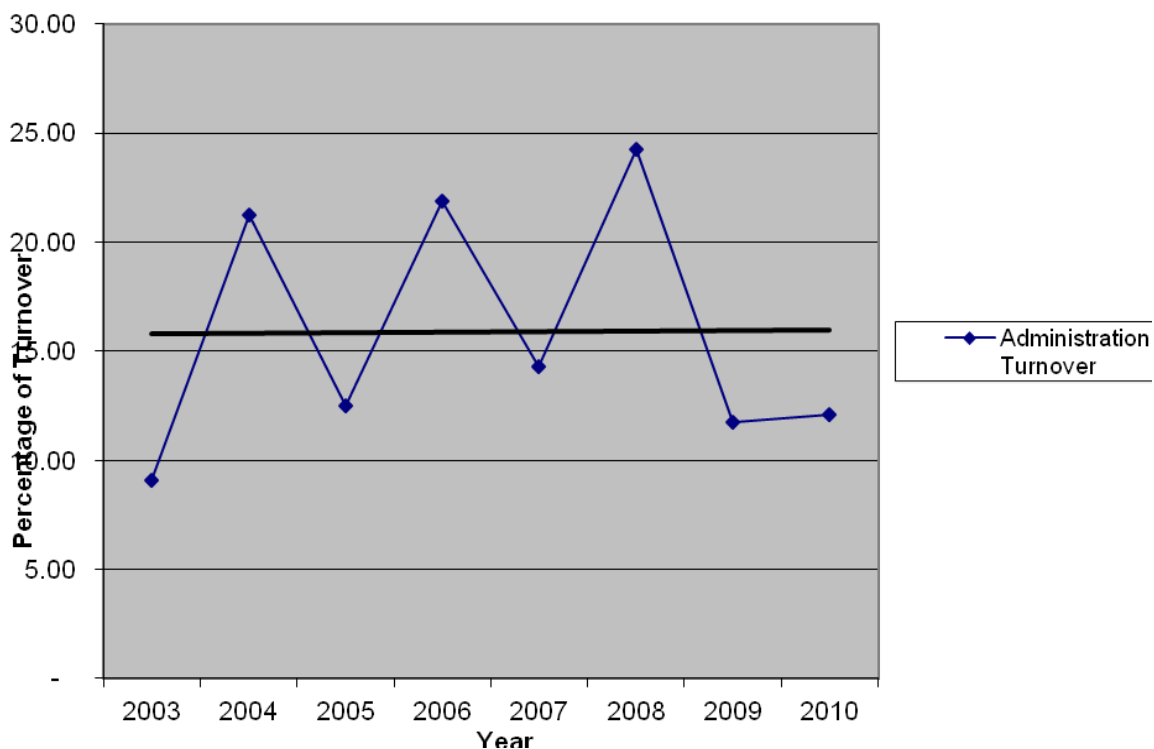


Figure 18. Administrative Turnover in Rockwell Schools

Mr. Randall, high school teacher and retired Texas administrator, recalled the high school teachers resisting the change.

In my opinion, the teachers felt this was being shoved down their throat, whether they liked it or not. There was no shared understanding of what moving to a learning environment looked like at the high school level. Many high school teachers viewed themselves as college professors and their job was to “profess their knowledge of the curriculum and the students to figure it out whatever way they could.” The idea that students were customers and needed to be part of the learning environment was a shock to many of my colleagues; they simply refused to comply.

Mr. Randall commented,

High school teachers who had not bought into the process learned quickly how to ritualistically comply. Simply, putting a PDSA on the wall worked for a while until administration became trained well enough to determine what was simply “wallpaper” and what was not. Administrators began asking students what the objective was and how they were going to learn it, thus exposing “wallpaper” versus a student driven PDSA. When test scores rose in the high school classrooms across the district that were truly applying Baldrige principles, many of the resistors took note. Since the district shared best practices, this helped eventually generate buy-in and more of an understanding of shared meaning of a learning environment versus a teaching one.

In the fall of 2008, the administrator turnover hit an all-time high. Dr. Easter was still getting pushback and even hate mail attacking him and his family. At our back to school rally with administration, Dr. Easter asked that everyone but the principals and he leave the room. Dr. Easter spoke from the heart in a moving speech to the group. Dr. Easter stated that he was tough enough to endure the criticism of Baldrige, himself, and his family to do what he knew would impact the children of Rockwell County for years to come. He said that we were changing the face of a failed system. The district had begun

to see what a true learning community and classrooms could accomplish. It had been worth it all to see kids succeed as they never had in this district and while Dr. Easter persevered through the public attacks; he often said he could not have done this without each principal on his team. Administrators across the district had complained to the board that employee morale was low and the workload was not getting any lighter. He said he needed to know that he still had the principals' support and needed to understand what it was that was getting in the way of moving the success we had witnessed forward.

Administrators that day decided Baldrige would move forward. However, the suggestions were to use a more humane approach by using a coaching model that took input and used it to differentiate the deployment at each school. The cookie-cutter top-down approach had simply alienated enough people that the guiding coalition had hit the wall (Dr. Money)

Conclusion

The model remains the heart of how Rockwell Schools conducts business. After the departure of Dr. Easter, the board had one of its hardest decisions to make: go outside the district to find another superintendent that could continue the Performance Excellence Model or pick someone from inside (Mr. Heath). The board chose to stay within the district when replacing Dr. Easter. The board felt the model and its structures were a key reason the district had come so far in the academic arena. The board chose to promote the current Associate Superintendent of Operations, Bradley Rohanson, (pseudonym) as he was aware of how to continue the model and its concepts. Mr. Sillis remembers the first meeting with the board after Mr. Rohanson took the helm; board members wanted top

leadership in the district to understand the model would continue, but also interjected that the human element of leadership needed to be nurtured going forward. Dr. Money said, “The board felt the six-year initiative had been a fast-paced implementation that often ignored the human side of change.”

The Performance Excellence Model is how the district continues to deploy best practice and align resources to promote a learning centered district. The PDSA serves today as it did in 2002 to continually seek processes that are optimal.

CHAPTER V

OUTCOMES OF THE CHANGE INITIATIVE

Fullan (2007) suggests that successful educational change initiatives have something in common. These initiatives (a) have an operational definition to what the change will look like, (b) work on numerous issues at once, (c) ensure the best people are driving the change, (d) recognize that change comes by doing, (e) assume capacity is the initial hurdle to overcome, (f) stay on course by maintaining leadership continuity, (g) mesh internal and external accountability, (h) establish conditions for positive pressure, and (i) build the community's confidence.

The outcomes from the implementation of Performance Excellence in Rockwell Schools include the following key components: (a) a model of closing the educational achievement gap amongst subgroups was developed and remains the core of the educational initiatives, (b) a learning environment replaced a teaching environment, (c) professional learning communities were established with fidelity, (d) improved academic performance as measured by state testing, (e) quality tools and a continual improvement process guide the district work, and (f) data-driven decision making was implemented.

A Model of Closing the Educational Achievement Gap

The Raising Achievement and Closing the Gap Model summarizes the core of how Rockwell Schools delivers the instructional model (Figure 11). The model focuses on the core elements of the five instructional questions aforementioned. The support for

making sure the classroom teachers have the tools necessary to determine achievement gaps and use research based methods to close the gaps comes from the instructional facilitator, collaborative teams, formative assessment process, essential curriculum and the PDSA process. The district's mission, vision, values, data collection and disaggregation system, all support the model.

A Learning Environment that Replaced a Teaching One

One of the biggest impacts the shift to Performance Excellence brought about was a learning environment in lieu of a teaching one. A teaching environment is one where the teacher is considered the key element in the learning process and simply delivers the curriculum content to students. On the other hand, the learning environment considers the student as an important part of the learning process. Student feedback and input become an important part of how lesson plans are developed and implemented. The key difference is the amount of student engagement in the learning process. In a learning environment, an observer would expect to see the teacher as more of a facilitator than lecturer.

Fullan (1993) notes that the current issue of change in the education arena is that of shifting from the existing teaching system to that of a learning organization.

Classrooms have long been isolated as well as the teachers in them. The lack of shared problem-solving and communication among teachers belongs to the old paradigm, one that cannot survive in the current environment of change. For educators to be effective in meeting the new demands of the education arena, they must be able to survive many planned and unplanned changes that a continuous improvement process demands. Mrs.

Horton recalled the struggle to move from a teaching environment to a learning one as the critical point of success in Rockwell Schools. The shift involved numerous aspects. The first was developing a common meaning to what raising achievement in Rockwell Schools would look like. The triangle (Figure 11) helped establish how the district would address learning gaps and create a learning classroom atmosphere. The old way of waiting for end of year test results to come back and deciphering what they meant had little impact on informing the teacher's instruction.

The triangle helped develop the infrastructure for change. The district established baseline tests for each grade level through collaboration each summer with the curriculum review week. The predictive assessments were given three times per year and reported out by grade level and school. This data allowed the teacher to see where their respective students were at academically versus their peers. The teachers could pull data on individual students by objectives taught to determine what they taught well and what needed to be re-taught. A huge shift was in the constant re-teaching that took place each year when using the old system. Now teachers knew where the gaps were and were able to start at various points depending on the class data. This eliminated the ritual re-teaching and often waste of time each year, as now the class started where the data suggested.

Professional Learning Communities Done with Fidelity

The Raising Achievement and Closing the Gap Model has as one of its supporting sides professional learning communities. The district understood the importance of implementing this support structure with fidelity. Ms. Young stated, "These were nothing

more than a place to get together and complain when they first were implemented in Rockwell Schools.”

The district realized to move forward, Rockwell Schools would have to use the instructional facilitators to train what effective PLCs would look like (Marty Shore). This is where Marzano’s high yield instructional strategies were implemented over a period of three years. The fidelity of this implementation was part of the classroom walkthrough instrument; in that questions about the use of the strategies were reported through this data collection system.

Fullan (1993) suggests personal mastery is a key part of effective change. People simply behave their way into new ideas and skills, not just think their way into them—more simply put “learning by doing.” As the district built capacity, the culture changed from a teaching perspective to a learning one. It was this change that led the district into a true school system, working together collaboratively to enhance student learning through effective PLC’s, made a difference (Mr. Heath).

Improved Academic Performance as Measured by State Testing

The Performance Excellence Model continues to be at the core of the way Rockwell Schools operates. The model has been instrumental in transforming one of the state’s largest districts from over 50th in the state academically to top ten and currently in the top 30%. The success continues even in lieu of major funding cuts placing the district near the bottom in funding out of over 100 districts. Dr. Money stated,

I am positive we would not be where we are today with the implementation and continued quality focus the model has brought our district. While the road to change was not an easy one and the board at times considered putting the brakes on, we are a much better educational environment than we were before the change. Simply, the model has transformed the learning in Rockwell Schools.

Quality Tools and a Continual Improvement Process Guides the Work

There was a lack of infrastructure in place to create district-wide change. Dr. Money recalled being a system of schools with pockets of success and failure. While many programs had been implemented over-time, none had been systemic. The model did what none of these previous programs had done; it developed a collaborative continuous improvement culture. “We established students and parents as customers, and they became an important part of the district improvement as they gave feedback to help improve the learning environment.”

The district’s ranking compared to others in the state is displayed below (Figure 6). As the model began to take effect, the ranking of the district improved. It was this improvement that helped the board to decide to continue its unanimous support to move forward. The board had begun to see a “system of schools become a school system.” All schools were seeing academic scores rise, and a fragmented district began to speak the same language. The model and the professional development the continuous improvement process brought about helped the district develop collaborative learning communities. This collaboration helped the district become a unified learning environment (Dr. Money).

Fullan (1993) suggests most change initiatives fail because organizations lack understanding in how to develop effective infrastructures and processes that engage

teachers in new knowledge, skills, and understanding. The infrastructure of the model lays out specific criteria to establish a continuous improvement process. It is the development of processes that lead to an aligned system working toward similar goals that help align resources and improve learning.

While the district is not currently a top ten performing district, the reasons may well have to do with massive economic cuts and a conservative county commission that funds Rockwell at the bottom out of the state's school districts. Substantial personnel cuts have, in the board's opinion, greatly impacted the district's ability to sustain top-ten performance. (Mr. Shelley)

Implement a Data-driven Decision-making Process

Part of the core components of the district's Raising Achievement and Closing the Gap Model is data-driven decision making. Data is used in every decision possible and is collected through the many quality tools the district uses. Data systems have become an important part of the classroom. The transformation from a data system that reported the effects of the classroom at the end of the year to one that informed instruction on a regular basis was paramount in creating a learning classroom. Formative assessments became important in the classroom transformation as they helped teachers answer the five key questions of the raising achievement triangle (Figure 11). This data helped teachers see what objectives were taught well and those that needed additional coverage. The use of formative assessments helped teachers begin collaboration and development of common formative assessments. The common formative assessments are crucial in the collaborative community and have impacted the classroom by having uniform assessments and the ability to look at data collected across many subgroups.

Teachers now have the ability to differentiate for different classrooms and even different students. The old model of one size fits all has been eliminated. In addition, data analysis allows the teacher to reflect on curriculum they do well in delivering, and on curriculum areas where they need additional training or support with. The curriculum review week includes a day or so analyzing these and critiquing them to provide beneficial assessments of materials that are taught.

When the model was initially implemented, the PDSA and quality data tools were introduced across all departments, the amount of areas that emerged as needing improvement was overwhelming. Early on, the district monitored some 34 processes. Each process had a district person assigned that was responsible for reporting out at cabinet meetings that were held each week with district leaders and select principals. As a result, additional training and professional development were needed to address the gaps. Today the district monitors the five strategic priorities and if an issue requiring a PDSA is needed, an owner is assigned to lead the process (Mr. Bleu).

What is the Status of the Model?

The Performance Excellence Model is currently the way all processes in Rockwell Schools are conducted. When Dr. Easter announced his resignation in 2008, the school board launched a national search for his replacement. After narrowing the field and conducting interviews, the board realized for the model to continue, selecting an internal candidate was necessary. This candidate was the acting Associate Superintendent of Operations, Bradley Rohson. The school board made sure the model was to remain at the core of how Rockwell Schools conducted business (Dr. Money).

The model took almost six years to reach the point of institutionalization. Today it remains the driving force behind how the district continues to operate. The institutionalization of the model included the PDSA, plus/delta, continual classroom improvement, issue bin, consensogram, raising achievement and closing the gap triangle, and operations triangle. These are the core tenets of how the district addresses issues and continuous improvement. The PDSA is the main quality tool used to address any process that is seen as not-optimal. The plus/delta tool is used when feedback is desired. Many teachers use this as a daily feedback tool for students to express how the lesson or class went that day. It is also used in all meetings to collect feedback on what went well and what needs improvement. Continual classroom improvement is a process used with all new teachers. This process involves the IF working with new teachers approximately one hour each week, coaching them on PDSA processes and strategies to use in the classroom. The IF visits these classrooms and collects data to help tailor the support to close gaps in curriculum delivery. The issue bin is used in classrooms and all meeting platforms to address any issues that can be dealt with immediately or more difficult issues that will take additional resources.

The consensogram is a tool used to determine where the audience's current level of understanding is on a subject. The person conducting the training looks at where the audience is currently and after training where the knowledge level has evolved to. This tool helps the presenter gauge the quality of delivery to the audience.

The Raising Achievement and Closing the Gap triangle is the core of all instruction. The five questions help determine what student needs are and the direction

the lesson and differentiation need to take. The essential curriculum helps target what must be taught; collaborative teams help drive the learning through sharing action research (PDSA). The instructional facilitator helps deliver the training in all these areas.

The instructional facilitator infrastructure was the key delivery component of the model. Institutionalization of the model came about through the continuous training and support the IFs deployed at each school. The instructional facilitators themselves received training each week from Jim Shipley Associates, an organization specializing in continuous improvement training and Baldrige. Teachscape Services, an organization specializing in professional development for building and maintaining professional learning communities, is another resource the district accesses when needed. The district also avails themselves of additional specialized training from Marzano, Daggett, and other key educational gurus as the need arises. The district employs a train the trainer model—where key people attend specific trainings and return to share out the learning. To ensure the Performance Excellence Model was deployed with fidelity, district and building administrators adopted the classroom walkthrough instrument (Figure 19). The initial walkthrough training involved paired school-level administration and district personnel to conduct classroom walkthroughs together. The purpose was to have all administration collecting data and assess inter-rater reliability. Periodically, the district implements this again to make sure data is consistent across schools. This tool allowed data to be collected and analyzed to determine the level of institutionalization of the model. It is still a key tool for analyzing and improving classroom systems. It was

through this continuous process that all areas of the organization learned the model and how to use it.

The PDSA has become an integrated part of every classroom. In addition, it is used across the district in areas where employees or administrators feel there is a need for improvement. The PDSA is embedded and institutionalized throughout Rockwell Schools thus allowing students the opportunity engage themselves and be responsible for their learning. This creates students who are ready to think critically and problem-solve in real world situations.

What Lessons Can Be Learned from this Change Initiative?

Fullan (1993) suggests that the change process is laden with complex issues and while policy makers have some obligation to set policy, establish standards, and monitor performance of public school districts, they, in fact, cannot mandate what really matters in educational reform. While federal mandates like No Child Left Behind attempt to do just that, no mandate can affect complex change. Complex change requires individuals to possess skills, think creatively, work often in teams where dynamics themselves can be unclear, and produce a product by being committed to some form of action to bring about change.

Leaders can, however, mandate change when it requires little thought or skill and the change can be easily monitored on a continual basis. Developing curriculum, closing achievement gaps, producing effective professional learning communities, cooperative learning teams, and effective school-based teams are just a few complex situations that cannot be simply mandated. These complex situations require numerous skills, thinking

capacity, commitment, motivation, belief and insights, and discretionary judgment from those involved in making the change. Leaders cannot force people to change or think differently. Pascale (1990) states, “ideas acquired by ease often are discarded with ease” (p. 20). For new ideas of merit to be effective, individuals involved with the change must have an in-depth understanding and require development of skills and commitment.

The true test of an effective change initiative is evident when individuals and groups develop new understandings in relation to new solutions. Mandates, or top-down change, lack the ability to bring about effective change in complex situations because for a change to occur in a specific area, substantial individual commitment and a shift in thinking are required. While mandates can alter the current situation in the short-term, the change accomplished will fade as time passes due to the lack of individual and group commitment. A complex change that becomes institutionalized cannot be mandated. Effective change agents understand this and use mandates to serve as a catalyst for change (Fullan, 1993).

What can be learned from the change initiative that occurred in Rockwell Schools? Using Fullan’s eight lessons of change, I have analyzed how the change to a Baldrige Model supports each set of lens or violates it.

In recapping the journey of change in Rockwell Schools, it is easy to see that change is a complex issue that is hard to pre-plan. The journey presents many obstacles and detours the change coalition may have never foreseen. Fullan (1993) suggests eight lessons of change. He did not intend for these to be a checklist or to cover every facet an organization seeking change may encounter. Fullan suggested that these eight lessons

could help those seeking complex change some guidance in what is typically present in an effective change initiative. In the sections that follow, I use each lesson as a lens through which to view the change in the Rockwell County Schools.

Lens One

In Lens One, Fullan suggests that changes like educational ones are so complex they cannot be mandated. Educational change is complex because it requires new skills, behavior and beliefs or understanding. Since people cannot be forced to think differently or change, mandates will not work. Effective change agents use mandates as catalysts to reexamine what they are doing and develop new skills to compensate, which leads to new behaviors and the development of new beliefs. Fullan (1993) suggests change in a large school district can take between six and ten years. While Rockwell Schools began the implementation of Performance Excellence under the auspice of a mandated change, the continuous improvement process helped bring to light knowledge that the district was in need of new skills and beliefs. The resistance to the model revolved around the lack of understanding that the current teaching environment was not effective. The implementation of skills and behavior to change this took over four years. Today, the model is systemic.

The emphasis that was placed on capacity building at the early stages of implementation coincided with what is known about effective change. “To secure new beliefs and higher expectations critical to improvement, people need new experiences that leads them to new beliefs” (Bate, Bevin, & Robert, 2005, p. 24). Hargreaves and Fink (2006) suggest that for change to be successful, leaders must build capacity by sharing

beliefs and helping them gain understanding of the new concepts being introduced.

Building capacity for change builds sustainability for the change process. Fullan's Lens

One suggests that effective change only comes through building new beliefs.

Lens Two

In Lens Two, Fullan (1993) suggests that change is not a blueprint. Simply taking an existing program or model and putting it in place will not work, as every organization has its unique issues. In addition, this step supports step one, as you cannot mandate what matters until you are traveling the journey. Change invokes powerful human emotion, and the journey to change has to deal with these. The cookie-cutter approach of simply taking the Baldrige Model and dropping it in place in Rockwell Schools was seen by many as demeaning.

Teachers felt if they were being asked to differentiate for their students, why could they not take Baldrige and do the same. While many had seen the education pendulum swing, it had never brought change directly into the classroom. Teachers were being asked to change the way they delivered curriculum and even asked to allow student input. Many felt a sacred-cow had been sacrificed and were digging in to fight. (Mr. Randall)

While Performance Excellence was implemented as a blueprint, it contained one item that helped it succeed; the feedback from quality tools. These tools collected tremendous data on the change process. The feedback system existed from the school board to the classroom. As board members, district administrators, principals, and teachers collected and analyzed feedback initiatives were slowed, changed, and sometimes "purposely abandoned." It was the continual feedback that set the model apart from the old bureaucratic system the district operated under prior to 2002 (Mr. Bleu). In

this aspect, the model morphed and adjusted somewhat as the journey continued. A model of the classroom walkthrough that was used to collect feedback is displayed in Figure 19.

2012-13 CWT Standard Tool		
Date:	Time:	
Observer Name:	Title:	
School:	Subject:	Grade:
1. FOCUS ON CURRICULUM AND LEARNING		
1a. Strategic direction is evident.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic data displayed and current <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic learning goal displayed and current <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom mission statement displayed <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom rules/norms displayed		
1b. Current learning targets and criteria for success are visible by all in age appropriate language.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
1c. Students can articulate current goals/learning targets and criteria for success.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
1d. Identify key math instructional phases. (<i>Math classes only</i>)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete presentation of material <input type="checkbox"/> Representational presentation of material <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract presentation of material		
1e. Identify literacy components of College & Career Ready Anchor Standards.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Informational Text <input type="checkbox"/> Word Study <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Foundational Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking and Listening <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Literature <input type="checkbox"/> Language		
2. FOCUS ON INSTRUCTION		
2a. PDSA cycle(s) is current and authentically used to drive instruction.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
2b. Identify instructional practices.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher directed Q & A <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Testing <input type="checkbox"/> Informal formative assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Providing directions/instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Providing opportunity for practice <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Centers <input type="checkbox"/> None Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Hands on		
2c. Identify Grouping Format.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Grouping format matches task at hand <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Group <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Focused Group <input type="checkbox"/> Pairs <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Centers/Stations		
2d. Identify research-based instructional strategies.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Setting Objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Non-linguistic Representation <input type="checkbox"/> Providing Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizing <input type="checkbox"/> Notetaking <input type="checkbox"/> Similarities/Differences <input type="checkbox"/> Cues, Questions, Advance Organizers <input type="checkbox"/> Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition <input type="checkbox"/> Generating and testing hypotheses		
2e. There is evidence that the teacher is responding to the different learning needs in the classroom (differentiation).		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to determine		
2f. Technology is utilized by:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> No one		
3. FOCUS ON THE LEARNER		
3a. Identify student actions.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Listening <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion/Dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Hands On Materials <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Skilled Performance/Demonstration <input type="checkbox"/> Solving Math Problems <input type="checkbox"/> Skill Practice <input type="checkbox"/> Test/assessment		
3b. Identify instructional materials.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Video/Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Real world objects <input type="checkbox"/> Student Created Materials <input type="checkbox"/> Oral <input type="checkbox"/> Test/assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Worksheet <input type="checkbox"/> Published print materials <input type="checkbox"/> Textbooks <input type="checkbox"/> Content specific manipulatives <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead/board/flip chart <input type="checkbox"/> Lab/activity sheet		
3c. Determine levels of class engagement.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Engaged – Most students are authentically engaged in learning <input type="checkbox"/> Well Managed – Students are willingly compliant, ritually engaged in learning <input type="checkbox"/> Dysfunctional – Many students actively reject the assigned task or substitute another activity		
4. FOCUS ON CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT		
4a. Corrections are made by refocusing the student on learning (mission, norms, strategic goal. . .).		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> No opportunity for correction		
4b. Models/examples of quality student work with meaningful feedback are purposefully displayed/utilized.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
4c. Classroom environment supports learning.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Student focused <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful interactions <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher is engaged with students <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom is organized and prepared for learning		

Figure 19. Classroom Walkthrough

Lens Three

In Lens Three, Fullan (1993) suggests that inquiry is necessary for change and problems generate the need for inquiry. Problems are our friends as it is through problems that individuals and teams can create innovative solutions. Problems become a change agent's friend because it is only through immersing oneself in problems that one can come up with creative solutions. Problems must not be seen as resistance, but as a

way to uncover issues that need to be dealt with. Louis and Miles's (as cited in Fullan, 1993) research of least effective schools showed that "shallow coping," doing nothing, procrastinating, or simply doing it the way it has always been done was a key similarity.

While the more effective schools did not have fewer problems, they did have a process to address issues that arose and make changes in the way things were done based on the problem analysis. Avoidance of real problems is the enemy of productive change because it is often these specific problems that must be confronted and dealt with for breakthroughs to occur (Senge, 1990). The key is not to see problems as our enemies and assume they are resistance from the field, but to see them as ways to improve the system.

The initial deployment of Performance Excellence was without issues as the Title 1 schools saw the deployment of Performance Excellence Model as an effective program. The pushback that began when the district began deploying at middle schools and high schools that helped coin the phrase "submarine commanders." This term was given to anyone or school that was perceived as not on board with the deployment. In addition, the instructional facilitators were seen as spies and not to be trusted. This lack of trust began to slow the model's implementation as the board's concern over morale grew (Dr. Money). This could have been avoided had the district saw problems as their friend and developed problem-finding techniques to correct the issue. Ironically, this is what the model was developed to do. Mr. Bleu suggested the district simply did not practice the tenets of the model at higher levels of the administration. Had it done so, submarine commanders would have ceased to exist sooner rather than later.

Lens Four

In Lens Four, Fullan (1993) suggests under complex change, one needs a great deal of reflective experience before forming a plausible vision. In addition, a shared vision is essential for success. Just because visions crystallize later, does not mean leaders do not mold them throughout the change process. They emerge later as the process of merging personal and shared visions takes time. Eisenstat and Spector (as cited in Fullan, 1993) suggest change efforts that begin with a vision often fail because they do little to change how people think. The Rockwell School Board set a vision to be top-ten in academics when compared to the other school districts in the state in the beginning of the change process. This violated lens four.

The district realized this as the model was implemented and used feedback to lend voice to those impacted by the vision. Many of the public meetings stressed this as a goal the district wanted to attain, not only for community and district recognition, but because the students deserved a better education than the system was providing. Fullan (1993) suggests it is appropriate to work on a goal or visions, but to set a vision and expect it to be accomplished is not the best way to develop a true direction. Only when one is in the journey and experienced the surroundings can a vision that has shared value be developed.

Lens Five

In Lens Five, Fullan (1993) suggests individualism and collectivism have equal voice. Productive educational change is a process of overcoming isolation while not falling victim to groupthink, a scenario where members agree just to follow the group's

flow. Isolation is a huge problem as teachers who isolate themselves limit or curtail inquiry and learning as solutions to problems are limited to their skill set only. The lack of a district process for collaboration sustained the isolated classrooms across Rockwell Schools. Stacy (1992) suggests that both sharing and non-sharing cultures are defective because they both set boundaries that are too loose or too tight. Stacey suggests organizations honor both individualism and collegiality. There is no specific formula to accomplish this as it is a continual process of balancing both.

This became apparent early on and the instructional facilitator infrastructure was developed to combat the independent contractor or isolationist system. Not only did the IF facilitate the professional learning communities, but they also brought in current research and best practice for teachers to use. Groupthink was combated somewhat by the anonymous issue bin and plus/delta process. People could express how things went or did not and the owner of the process would respond and take suggestions for improvement. The model is designed to engage all parties and provide a way to suggest changes without embarrassing or creating group think.

Lens Six

In Lens Six, Fullan (1993) suggests centralization errs on the side of over control while de-centralization on the side of chaos. Change tends to succeed when there is leading of the coalition above and pressure from below. Senge (1990) states, “traditional organizations require management systems that control people’s behavior. Learning organizations invest in improving the quality of thinking, the capacity for reflection and team learning, and the ability to develop shared visions and meanings” (p. 68).

While the change in Rockwell Schools started as a centralized approach, the change leaders realized the need for an infrastructure to build capacity at the top and pressure at the bottom. The IF and the leadership academy were designed to help build shared understanding and capacity at the district's lower levels. One key caveat the district learned, control at the top is simply an illusion. No one person or group can control an organization from the top (Fullan, 1993).

Fullan (2007) would suggest that what is needed is a two-way relationship of pressure, support, and continuous negotiations on what is best practice. The Baldrige Model is designed to collect feedback and to act on that feedback to improve a process. The process is no better or worse than the persons involved in being the gatekeepers of what is acted upon and what is not.

Lens Seven

In Lens Seven, Fullan (1993) suggests the best organizations learn both internally and externally. The dynamic complexity of education means there is constant interaction with the environment. For successful change to occur, the organization must be plugged into its environment, both responding to and contributing to the issue of the day.

Smith (as cited in Fullan, 2007) suggests that for a social entity to reflect upon itself, it must possess a system representing both itself and the context in which it is embedded. An organization that encourages variation and embraces contrary points of view has a greater chance of knowing itself. A byproduct of continually reexamining its assumptions and juggling internal tensions is how the organization becomes aware of its context.

Rockwell Schools deployment of Baldrige personified lens seven as the external and internal environments were scanned frequently for feedback to help guide the change initiative. Area advisory meetings and student focus groups helped the district gain perspective on the change progress as well as the internal plus/delta and issue bin data collection systems. Fullan (1993) suggests that successful organizations keep multiple antennae up to tap into a changing environment. The key to this process is to use the data collected to inform how the organizations responds to external input.

Lens Eight

In Lens Eight, Fullan (1993) suggests that change is so important every individual must be a change agent. Fullan (2007) suggests there are several reasons that every person is a change agent. The first reason simply suggests that change is such a complex issue; no one person can possibly have all the answers. Second, change cannot be established by formal leaders working by themselves. It takes each and every teacher to create an organization where individuals are collectively inquiring and learning how to move the organization forward. The idea that it takes a group of formal leaders to initiate change is from the old paradigm. Radical change cannot occur without every person seeing their job as an agent of change. It is only when individuals take actions to alter their own environment can real change come about. The education system is killing itself because it is designed to remain status quo while being confronted with ever changing societal demands.

In numerous case studies conducted by Datnow and Springfield (as cited in Fullan, 2007), two key issue were found where change was successful: a) the change

turned out to be best practice and fit the needs of the majority of stakeholders, and (b) employees were empowered as change agents. The change in Rockwell Schools did not follow this in its original deployment, but followed the old paradigm where those at the top knew best. As resistance to the change began to mount, so did the way the change was deployed to some degree.

The school board learned that top-down mandates come with a cost. In the district this cost came through disgruntled employees and the escalation of turnover both in teachers and administrators. Understanding every person is a change agent came approximately three to four years into the change effort. When board members and central office personnel began to build capacity at the school level and use employees as change agents, the deployment began to go smoother and complaints began to subside. Simply, build and use the capacity of all employees.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

There is a need for further research in the area of quality models and school governance systems. While attitudes and people can change over time, unless the governing organization changes, the results of these systems will not. The key is to change the governing architecture (Eadie, 2009). Fullan (1993) maintains the education system has been fighting a fruitless uphill battle for many years. The solution, according to Fullan, is not how to climb the hill of acquiring more innovations or reforms into the system, but an entire different formulation of the education system to get at the heart of the problem. Fullan (1993) suggests that the new problem of change in education has to center around changing an existing teaching system to that of a learning organization. “Reform is not just putting into place the latest policy; it means changing the culture of the classroom, district, universities and the entire educational system” (Fullan, 2007, p. 7).

Eadie (2009) suggests a change in governance while Fullan (1993) suggests a change in culture. Are there alternate models to the Performance Excellence Model that would accomplish the change seen in Rockwell Schools? How would the results of implementing these models impact academic achievement, aligned resources, and continual improvement? My research found little has been done in the area of applying

quality based systems to public school districts; therefore, the knowledge in this arena could be greatly expanded by additional studies.

From my research study, I have developed key recommendations that would help any school system seeking change to a quality based continuous improvement process using the tenets of Performance Excellence. These are: (a) develop a data-based decision-making process, (b) use continuous improvement tools to improve processes, (c) provide an internal/external scan process, (d) create a model that defines the vision and mission, (e) implement a model that addresses the gaps in achievement, (f) ensure the best people are working on the problem, (g) change by doing instead of change by planning, (h) assume lack of capacity is the issue, (i) communicate for buy-in, (j) empower action, (k) apply positive pressure, (l) build public support and confidence, and (m) effective leadership and leaders are key.

Develop a Data-based Decision-making Process

“In God We Trust, All Others Bring Data” is a comment that denotes several meanings. Linda Shark always reminded fellow colleagues of this. The data-driven decision process attempts to eliminate the often emotional attachment people hold to the work they do. Moving to a data-driven decision process takes time and must be done with compassion. Transforming a district to a data-driven district requires several things. The first item a district must address is the type, frequency, and system that will be used to collect data. While Rockwell Schools uses an outside agency for data collection and manipulation of the data, there are many available to help collect, manipulate, and dispense data in various formats. How often will data be collected and what type?

Rockwell School board members decided that a “system of schools” would never be a school system until a common language and data structure were implemented. The district worked hard to develop predictive assessments. These assessments were developed by teachers each year at curriculum review week. Each school gave the predictive assessments during a specific window of time normally nine weeks into the year and every nine weeks with the last predictive assessment being the End of Course or End of Grade test. In addition to the predictive assessment, the district requested schools give formative assessments every four weeks.

The second decision is what to do with the data derived from these assessments. The predictive assessment data is currently put into the data system and can be manipulated in multiple ways to help the teacher see what objectives students did well on and objectives they did not. Teachers can compare archived data to see trends and subgroups. The data is used to inform instruction, by allowing teachers to answer the raising achievement and closing the gap models’ question, “what will we do when they have not learned it.” Analyzing formative data is key to changing the classroom to a learning system. This feedback is used to differentiate instruction and close gaps by addressing gaps as they occur versus a summative system where the students are gone by the time the teacher has any data, too late to impact the gaps for those students.

Data is used to compare schools, not to humiliate schools or teachers, but to address gaps. Data are used to coach teachers in areas where gaps are greater than the district or state area, and to share our best practices of teachers who have data that show they are performing better than district or state averages. Fullan (1993) suggests

education must change to a proactive learning environment to succeed in developing students who are prepared for the future. Data are a key part to developing this system.

The third and most important area of data is teacher effectiveness. Rockwell Schools began looking at teacher growth data as early as 2004, well ahead of the current teacher evaluation changes that include a growth component. Teacher growth can be analyzed from the data collected and compared across the school and district. This data helps administrators focus on what professional development is needed to improve teachers who have gaps in achieving growth in overall composite or in particular sub-groups.

Last, the data system needs to be subject to a continuous improvement process. The initial data collection and the current data process in place in Rockwell Schools are significantly more robust than when data analysis first began. This change came about through the use of the PDSA and quality tools. Both of which solicit feedback on a continuous basis. The goal of improvement was to provide timely, accurate and useful data to help drive classroom learning. Through teacher, student, and administrator feedback the current data system provides numerous ways to analyze student data.

Use Continuous Improvement Tools to Improve Processes

A continuous improvement process helps stakeholders evaluate the quality of the system and improve its processes, or maintain those that are performing optimally. The use of quality tools like the PDSA was the key to changing a district from average to high performing. The key to the PDSA process is that it requires stakeholders to examine results of decisions and determine if they are acceptable or can be improved. This

continuous improvement process helps improve outcomes. It was the use of the PDSA that helped Rockwell Schools develop the raising achievement and closing the gap triangle and created the instructional facilitator infrastructure that guides the learning environment. The use of high yield instructional strategies, common formative assessments, predictive assessments and curriculum review week all came about from the data collected from quality tools.

These tools are still at the heart of decisions in Rockwell Schools. The transformation from a teaching environment where teachers closed their doors and taught in isolation to that of a district with collaboration in all academic areas has occurred in direct response to feedback from quality tools. The PDSA in the classroom is simply part of a great lesson plan; it helps in developing the teaching strategy that the teacher will use to help students learn a particular objective. Data collected from a formative assessment helps the class, and teachers know if the strategy worked and then decide to record it as a best practice or re-teach the objective using another strategy. The PDSA helps the teacher and classroom benefit from developing strategies that help students learn. Students' input is critical in this process as they are the customer and often know how effective the strategy was or was not in helping learn the material. The PDSA is central to the Performance Excellence Model, and time must be spent to help staff, teachers, students, and parents understand it is not extra work for the teacher but necessary work in developing lesson plans that sustain results. The more work put into understanding this quality tool initially, the better all stakeholders will buy-in to the use of these and other quality tools.

The plus/delta is a quick way to gain insight into the lesson taught each class period or just a simple meeting. This tool is another quality tool that allows stakeholder input into the process. In the classroom, students can help develop the learning environment by giving the teacher feedback on what they like and what went well versus what did not. Simply, quality tools are used to solicit feedback both quantitative and qualitative in hopes to improve the system.

Provide an Internal/External Scan Process

Since public schools are public entities and do not operate in isolated environments, school districts need to ensure there is a feedback system that collects data from both internal and external sources. Public education does not occur in isolation but has become so through regulation even more scrutinized by the public eye. Rockwell Schools realized the need for external input on how the business community, county commissioners, and parents saw the performance of the district. Realtors realized how much the quality of the public education system impacted schools as they collected data from perspective buyers and shared with the board of education. Home sales where the higher performing schools were located far exceeded other areas of the county. In addition, at presentations to industry looking to relocate in the county, county commissioners were often asked about the quality of the schools. Dr. Money recalled the two key components both county commissioners and businesses questioned were the quality of the schools and the quality of the health care.

Dr. Easter solicited business feedback on the quality model, and more often than not, this feedback was positive as the business community had long lived by quality

models of some type (Mr. Heath). Having external support is the key when trying such a massive change as undertaken by Rockwell Schools. In order to gain parent support, the area advisory meetings were conducted and still are on a quarterly basis. The idea behind this is to share what the district is doing and why. It also allows the community to give input and in some instances see issues the district leaders may have not thought of. This two-way communication did a great deal in overcoming the TTSP or “this too shall pass” attitude of many staff and teachers who failed to buy-in.

Submarine commanders (those attempting to undermine the change) often congregated together as there was power in numbers. More often than not, these individuals sought power bases in the community to help deliver a message of resistance to the board members. Had Dr. Easter not used the quality feedback of area advisory meetings, the submarine commanders would have been even more empowered and possibly sunk the change effort. External support cannot be stressed enough; it takes great momentum to overcome the resistance to change.

In addition the schools had their internal accountability linked to external feedback. The district developed and deploys a yearly climate survey comprised of 95 questions. This survey solicits feedback on all areas of the school, staff, teachers, and administration. The data is collected and compared across schools. Any areas that are below the district average become part of the school’s improvement plan. Elmore (as cited in Fullan, 2007) suggests that a successful organization links internal accountability to individual expectations and the collective expectations of the organization. Stiggins (as cited in Fullan, 2007) suggests that external accountability and internal accountability

must be linked. This link helps people clarify goals and where they are in relation to achieving these goals. Fullan (2007) suggests that assessments that are used to inform instruction are a good example of linking external and internal accountability.

Create a Model that Defines the Vision and Mission

Fullan (1993) suggests that visions come later. Premature visions will fail because they lack the buy-in and shared meaning of those they intend to help change. A premature vision lacks the power and knowledge gained for reflective experience. This does not mean organizations cannot have a goal or vision and set the direction of change to move towards it. Simply, the vision cannot be a predetermined course that fails to develop and grow as the change unfolds and new knowledge is used to enhance the vision or change it. The vision must be dynamic in that it has the ability to change. For change to work there must be a merging of personal and shared visions. This takes time. Visions that are predetermined and superimposed often fail because they lack the merging of shared beliefs.

The important factor in developing any vision is to remember it is not the vision that is important as the fact it can be shaped and reshaped given the complexity of the change. Visions that are mere paper products often die rapidly. Developing a vision requires the input from both internal and external stakeholders. Thus, having a vision is not entirely wrong, but it is the inflexibility to adapt that vision to the shared organizational culture and external influences that school districts operate in.

Kotter and Cohen (2007) would say visions must be understood by stakeholders and be influenced by their buy-in; communicating the vision and adapting it to input is

the key to gain the needed momentum for change to occur successfully. In addition, the leaders of change must anticipate and plan for anxiety, confusion, anger and distrust. The better the plan to overcome these issues the faster the change towards the vision will occur.

The board members in Rockwell Schools in response to community feedback and discontent made what was seen as a progressive move to challenge the status-quo by setting a vision and then looking for a superintendent who could lead the change to move the district there. Pascopella (2005) found that school districts with actively engaged board members were successful more often than not in changing the district's culture. The change came not from merely setting policy, but being involved in setting academic goals, assuring the district has quality teachers, and instruction. The school boards in this research also established district-wide needs, high expectations for staff and students, and defined clear indicators of success. Boards can no longer operate under the old paradigm of hands-off; they must be engaged in all facets of the learning environment. The Rockwell School board followed this approach until Dr. Easter had proven that the processes were in place to assure the vision of becoming a top-ten district.

While the vision of being top ten district appears to violate what Fullan (1993, 2007) called the premise of predetermination, it did lead to successful change only because the continuous feedback process generated feedback that was used to adapt the work that was needed to get to top ten. The amount of work initially thought to attain this goal expanded as new learning uncovered gaps that needed to be addressed. The key was transforming the district to a learning-centered district instead of a teaching one.

Professional learning communities were uncovered as a gap as well as, the lack of formative data to inform instruction. The raising achievement and closing the gap model was developed as a means to accomplish the vision as staff learned what was working and what was not. This dynamic process continues today.

Implement a Model that Addresses the Gaps in Achievement

In public education the spotlight is on academic performance, not only from the international, federal, and state perspective, but local communities as well. What seemed like a never-ending story of failures in Rockwell Schools, turned into a national success story in six years from the beginning of the change process in 2002 from the old bureaucratic management system to Performance Excellence. The success came from realizing there was a gap between knowing how to change and actually undergoing the change process to improve learning.

Rockwell Schools lacked a model to define and address the learning gaps. The learning triangle (Figure 11) was developed as a way to close the gaps between academic performers and non-performers. The model lays out the processes and structures involved that directly impacted the classroom learning system. Decisions, both operational and curricular, always looked at the impact on the learning environment and triangle components. The academic success can be linked to this model as the core components of the learning system are addressed by it. This model came into existence early on as the district needed to define what the core learning components would be. Professional learning communities, instructional facilitator structure, essential curriculum, vision,

mission, data-driven decisions, and PDSA all were the components used to bring academic performance from average to high-performing.

Fullan (2007) suggests that one of the keys to a successful change include a clear understanding of what closing the gap looks like. Whether it is an extensive model as Rockwell Schools or a more simplistic model or management philosophy, the need still exists to define where an organization is at and where it needs to go. The difference is the gap. The work is defining how the school district will change its current state to what it feels is a desired one. With this comes developing stakeholder buy-in and support as complex change takes time.

Ensure the Best People Are Working on the Problem

A key to successful change is putting the right people on the problem or in more K-12 terms, having the right people on the bus and in the right seat. Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest that a large scale change does not happen well without a powerful guiding force. A fragmented management team cannot succeed, even if individual members are strong people. Even a significantly competent board and visionary superintendent do not have enough hours in the day to accomplish all the work of creating change.

A powerful guiding coalition is comprised of several characteristics. The first is people, the right people. The right people are individuals who have the skills, leadership capacity, organizational credibility and connections to make change happen. These same individuals must be able to work as a team and understand the need to have their individual and collective talents used to move change forward (Kotter & Cohen, 2007).

No significant change process can survive without key people to support the change. The school board and superintendent are key players, and their combined support for change is a necessary prerequisite. They alone cannot move change through a large organization without numerous other players being on board and supportive of the change. When superintendents are hired and given board directives to change the school system, the key players needed are not always known. It takes time to collect feedback on where the system is currently at and what the majority of staff feels the problems are. Launching change without understanding the playing field is a prescription for disaster. Not all the players needed for change are obvious; many staff members throughout an organization wield informal power and influence of their peers.

Without these key people on board, the challenge of change becomes more difficult. Fullan (1993) said it best when he suggests, “change flourishes in a sandwich” when there is consensus above and pressure below, things happen (p. 37). Ignoring those not at the top will surely add to the time it takes change to become institutionalized. In addition, research conducted separately by Mintrop (2004) and Kanter (2004) showed that when things get tough or go wrong, unless there is significant support from central office or other stakeholders, the best teachers, principals, and staff are apt to leave the scene.

These are the best employees and most often the ones that have the skills to help move change forward. Therefore, great caution must be exercised to continually collect feedback and support those at the bottom of the “sandwich.” If change is to be successful

it, in fact, must have the right people, skills, and support to apply pressure at the bottom and consensus at the top.

In addition to having the right guiding team, there must be continuity in the team's membership. If there is significant turnover in the members, the team will struggle to build a shared and collaborative vision or goal to work towards. Since research shows that the school board's involvement is paramount to deploying change and sustaining it, the board must maintain some continuity in its members. However, most school districts set term limits, and all too often school board members are voted on or off based on community agendas. In addition to this, the national average for a superintendent to serve in a district is 3.8 years (Quinn & Dawson, 2004). As it currently stands, few school districts have the continuity in place to handle the turnover in superintendents and board members as Fullan (1993) suggests, significant change can take six to ten years.

Change by Doing Instead of Change by Planning

Fullan (2007) suggests that all successful strategies for change are socially based. Kanter (2004) would suggest motivation, and failure hampers the social aspects of change in the educational arena. To change this sense of failure educators need a structure of communication, the ability to give and receive constructive feedback. Secondly, a way to carry out the work jointly, not in isolation as most educators have grown accustomed to. Third, the ability to have a structure where mutual respect can flourish and one that is inclusive (everyone belongs).

A core component to successful change comes through shared learning and commitment. All successful change initiatives develop collaboration where none existed.

Relationships among members improve resulting in more trust, social capital, and social cohesion (Fullan, 2007).

Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges (2004) found that students' learning achievement varied greatly from class-to-class and school-to-school. These variations occur naturally unless the schools or district takes action to address them. In schools where the variation was the least, professional learning communities existed that were effective. Teachers observed and critiqued each other's work and school leadership had a continuous improvement process in place. The greater consistency and social interaction impacted those schools using this process substantially. When compared to a similar school not engaged in social constructs these schools saw tremendous gains.

Elmore (2004) suggests that professional learning communities are not enough; it takes deep engagement with colleagues exploring, refining and improving the practice. In addition, the environment has to encourage best practices and reward members and teams for work that brings positive change. "Cultures do not by mandate change; they change by the specific displacement of existing norms, structures, and processes by others; the process of culture change depends fundamentally on modeling new values and behavior that you expect to displace the existing one" (p. 11).

Reeves (2006) suggests that socially based strategies succeed by doing them and that all the best plans meant nothing unless the work was put into action. Reeves's research of 280,000 students found that there was actually an inverse relationship between the prettiness of a plan and its results; the work is done by simply doing it. Reducing the distance between the planning and the work actually increased performance

in the study. Rockwell Schools set out to change a district by replacing the existing structure in 2002 with that of a quality based structure. Similar to the study conducted by Nye et al. (2004), Rockwell had similar schools with significant difference in performance. This school-to-school variance was what board members referred to as a system of schools not a school system. There was no effective and well defined process to generate a shared learning structure, shared communication, nor professional relationships. The existing structure did everything to sustain isolation not abolish it. As the system implemented the model, the lack of professional best practices became apparent. Professional learning communities were established for teachers, assistant principals, principals, and central office personnel. These teams used the raising achievement and closing the gap and the effective and efficient operations triangle as their guiding premise. All issues went back to improving student learning and closing the gaps between sub-groups.

It was the work that was accomplished and shared by high-performing professional learning communities that led to buy-in of those sitting on the fringes. It was hard to ignore the increase in students' academic performance even in schools that had experienced little or no performance growth for years. As data began to be collected and shared, the gaps became evident. Caution and coaching were used to make sure the data system did not become a tool for discharge but one to help develop master teachers. As schools that had seen little success began to perform the idea that "those kids can't learn" began to be dispelled. The old system slowly, but methodically, began to be replaced by

the idea that a continuous improvement process could bring about positive change in a system complacent with where it was in 2002 (average, at best).

Assume a Lack of Capacity is the Issue

Capacity building is necessary to accomplish wide-scale change. Simply, capacity building is a strategy, policy, or action taken to increase the efficacy of a group to improve student learning through new knowledge, enhanced resources, and greater engagement on the part of people working together or individually (Fullan, 2007).

The key to effective change is to understand that change invokes numerous feelings that must be understood and dealt with as part of the process, not resistance to it. Just like effective teaching uses modeling for students and guided practice so does substantial change. At early stages of change, capacity building is the key to secure new beliefs and higher expectations needed for critical improvement, people need new experiences that lead them to different beliefs. This is a key to why action is more important than elaborate planning.

A key thought is to build capacity first and judgment second. Simply never assume people are not buying in because they fail at deploying change successfully. The term often used in Rockwell Schools was “submarine commanders.” These were individuals who appeared to resist the change model. More often than not, these individuals appeared to be the critiques of anything the district wanted to change. They were seen as the silent killers across the district. Hiding and launching saboteur attacks when possible and remaining hidden from view. In hindsight, I often think these individuals did not understand or have the capacity to see the significance in the model.

As the amount of time the model was deployed increased, some of these same individuals became experts at deploying the model.

Bate et al. (2005) found that radical change often involves collective, interrelation, and emergent processes of learning and making sense. The early stages of employee participation in change showed workers did not have a high propensity to participate until after they had experienced at least one successful experience. The concrete experience of participating in change is crucial, meanings, and values form after the experience, not before it.

So the lesson to be learned before people become tagged as non-compliant is to make sure a dialogue is in place to ensure they have the capacity to change. Kanter (2004) suggests that pep talks and pats on the back will never work to inspire change; however, winning experiences will certainly inspire people to change.

Communicate for Buy-in

Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest that under communicating the change process is a precursor to its failure. In successful change efforts, the guiding coalition is only one of many people who know about the change, why it is deemed as needed, how it will occur, who it will impact, and a timeline of events. In addition, persons connected to the change process need to know what resources will be needed and supplied for the change to occur. These are just a few key points for successful change.

Just as a lack of capacity can be misinterpreted as resistance so can poor communication. The goal of effective communication in a change process is to make sure as many people as possible know and understand the change. While Rockwell board

members and top management were well versed in what the change would entail, many below this level were clueless. The vision of top-ten initially failed to encompass the majority of employees. The lack of clarity on what, when, how, and where the vision would materialize was not effectively communicated to all employees. In addition, the change was complex and came with its own vocabulary. Just like students in a classroom need to have the material modeled, and then attempt to do the work themselves and receive feedback and guidance to correct, so did Rockwell employees on the change the model brought.

In addition, the change rolled out so rapidly, those at the central office did not have time to learn the key concepts well themselves. This put key guiding team members in a precarious position when trying to answer the many questions that came about. While Dr. Easter's knowledge was superior in the model and its deployment, he could not be everywhere at once. Time should have been devoted to training the guiding coalition in-depth in the model. These individuals would have then increased their capacity of knowledge and have been able to answer all the questions that came up originally. Kotter and Cohen (2007) found people in successful change organizations do a great job at eliminating what they call a destructive gap between words and deeds. Conversely, walking the talk is the key to communicating effectively and gaining buy-in. Keeping communication simple and heartfelt, knowing what you are communicating; speaking to anxieties, confusion, anger, and distrust are some basic needs for developing buy-in.

Empower Action

Kotter and Cohen (2007) state that in highly successful change efforts, as people begin to understand and implement the vision, the barriers that would impede success must be removed. This can be moving the right people onto a team or removing those holding the team back. It can be removing departmental structure or adding resources that are needed. Empowerment is more than giving individuals new authority or responsibility; it is all about removing barriers to success. In highly successful change initiatives, people confront the issues. Dialogue is established with those who fail to understand or who block the change. False pride and the comfortable feeling of thinking all is well can be blown away by change efforts. For people affected by this, tremendous support is needed to prevent the fear of change from immobilizing the individual.

In addition to these barriers, the biggest is often the current “system” that hinders change. Layers of hierarchy, rules, and procedures hamper responsiveness in today’s fast-paced world of change. These must be addressed and replaced with a continuous improvement process. In the system, realm is often evaluation and reward systems that disempower change agents when they conflict with the current organizational state versus the desired state. To remedy these issues a process of rewarding and empowering actions that support the change initiative must be tied to the change.

Prior years of failed change can also impact the organization’s ability to change. The education field is known for the “flavor of the month” as every new fad is grasped as a way to instantly improve. Years of failed initiatives leave people void of hope change

will work. This is why short-term wins are critical. Letting people see that success can be achieved is paramount to instilling the self-confidence that change is possible

Informational barriers are another way organizations disempower change. The need for timely data cannot be more evident than in the technological world we live in today. Data is important for making the right decisions and thus, the need for a data collection system that is dynamic in the sense it adapts to the changing need for various forms of data.

Apply Positive Pressure

Fullan (2007) suggests that positive pressure is pressure that motivates, and is seen as fair and reasonable. Positive pressure comes from collaboration and shared meaning. Thus, it is hard to implement packaged programs that suggest or imply specific sequences or times and maintain positive pressure. If deployment stalls or fails to keep pace more often than not more pressure is placed on individuals to remain on a timeline. This is one of the reasons Fullan (1993) suggests that change is a journey not a blueprint. Too often change comes from the top-down with timed expectations, when these are not met additional pressure, often not positive, is placed on key individuals to “make it happen.” In Rockwell Schools the words “stressed, shoved down our throats, and overwhelmed” all echoed the fact that change was pre-determined when it was deployed.

Positive pressure means taking the time to listen to excuses and removing them from the table by illustrating how the change will deal with them. It means listening to the workers who see the problem on a daily basis and responding with additional resources, new capacities, and examples of where change is working and why. Bringing

in teams that have succeeded to show others how by modeling and getting engaged in the process. Positive pressure means eliminating processes that do not work, eliminating power bases that are detrimental to moving change forward.

The idea of positive pressure change is to evolve a system that is successful at building both confidence with the organization, customers and external stakeholders. Kanter (2004) suggests that schools need the external confidence as the public provides the means of support for the school. Positive pressure means sharing out and gaining public buy-in by making them part of the change process.

Short-term success in a large-scale change effort helps build confidence and positive support for change. These wins help the change effort gain momentum and direction toward the organization's vision. In Rockwell this came by starting with a small deployment Performance Excellence and included support, coaching, and professional development. Also it was introduced into a population looking for a winning atmosphere as the initial five schools were all Title 1 schools struggling to meet minimum academic performance benchmarks. As these schools began to see turn around in classrooms, the news was shared with the school board, other school principals, and community in hopes to gain momentum for the model.

The key was to maintain the short-term success and continue the climate of winning and urgency. Kotter and Cohen (2007) suggest that many change efforts fail because the positive change and short-term wins are not replicated. Once a win is accomplished human nature is to relax and celebrate. This becomes detrimental to change efforts. Urgency and positive pressure to continue the wins must be sustained, and the

next win must always be over the horizon. These short-term celebrations and the urgency often drop after a win and victory is declared often too soon. It also becomes easy to allow the euphoria of the win to displace positive pressure.

The deployment of Performance Excellence included the urgency and short-term wins. Often it seemed the significance of improving the educational environment helped people deal with the pressure to move forward. However, for many it did not. The turnover in management began to escalate. Dr. Money recalled these conversations occurred at several board meetings as the board felt they were losing knowledgeable people. The data, however, was always used to show that the change was what was best for kids. In hindsight Dr. Money felt the board may have been able to accomplish the same results but with fewer casualties.

Build Public Support and Confidence

Fullan (2007) suggests a change effort is successful when public confidence soars. The reason the school board set the original vision in Rockwell Schools was due to the lack of public confidence in the school system. It was public confidence or the lack thereof that motivated the school board to seek substantial change. The district had tried and failed numerous times to find a leader that could change this public perception until Dr. Easter. Confidence is not granted by asking for it in advance of performance. The public needed and demanded that Rockwell Schools change.

If the change process did two things, it was to improve academic performance and public confidence in the public schools. This within itself helped to build a more collaborative and positive school system. While the change left casualties, those that

remained can say the rigor, academic performance, and the additional magnet programs the Performance Excellence Model helped evolve is what is best for students. Public confidence continues today. If anything the model helped the public and business organization understand their role in helping the public school system achieve. The district has record partnerships with the business community and these continue to grow.

Effective Leadership and Leaders are Key

While I have placed leadership at the end, this does not imply it is at all the least of the implications. On the contrary, it is one of the most important, as effective change cannot occur without effective leadership. None of the processes in Rockwell Schools would have occurred without a vision or leader beyond what the school district had encountered prior to Dr. Easter. The board sought after in their words, “someone with thick skin as we knew the road to change would require this” (Dr. Money).

Katz and Kahn’s (1978) book *The Social Psychology of Organization*, talks about the impact the role of the leader has on how the organization performs. The leader has a significant impact on the social structure within an organization, and since change is socially based, it is the leadership ability of the key change agent that is paramount when facing or undertaking change. Yukl (1998) suggests that the change process is fundamental to the role of leader and further states that charismatic leadership is necessary to radically change an organization. The vision of a charismatic leader often transcends the current organizational structure for a structure he/she chooses to put in place instead of the current structure. Most charismatic leaders are seen as visionary entrepreneurs.

The Rockwell School system had three superintendents prior to Dr. Easter. These individuals had little impact on the learning organization as all three were caught up in day-to-day operations and issues. The board, according to (Heath), hired Dr. Easter because he had a plan to radically change what the board saw as an under-performing district to one that was performing within top ten. So Dr. Easter brought leadership traits that were able to accomplish what his predecessors did not.

In his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, Bennis (2009) lists several attributes of effective leaders. Having a vision and mission and getting others to share that vision is one. Kotter (1996) would compare this to communicating for buy in, Dr. Easter was able to change both the governance structure and culture of a fairly large school district in just over six years by developing a vision and mission that stakeholders bought into and putting together a guiding coalition to help make plans become reality. Dr. Easter personified change by doing instead of change by planning.

The second attribute Bennis (2009) would suggest an effective leader possess is a distinctive voice, and self-confidence, yet able to talk with anyone, on any level. Dr. Easter used this gift to build support not only internally for change, but externally. Dr. Easter made sure that he was visible both inside and outside the school system. Dr. Money recalled, “He had an innate ability to engage people, when he spoke, people listened. This helped the board continue their support even when things got tough, the business community and many internal administrators felt the district was doing what was best for kids?” The third attribute Bennis (2009) would suggest is integrity and one component of integrity that is most important is strong moral compass. Strong moral

compass suggests individuals see things outside one's self. Dr. Easter always asked on any endeavor "is this best for kids." Dr. Easter used this to ensure that obstacles to change that impeded student learning or well-being were removed by empowering individuals at all levels to be change agents. Positive pressure comes from a leader that uses integrity.

The fourth attribute Bennis (2009) suggests is having adaptive capacity. Having the ability to constantly face an ever changing environment is paramount to being a successful leader. Developing data systems that are as proactive as possible so decisions are based on real-time data is important as the horizon changes quickly. An effective leader uses all the aforementioned categories to affect positive change. Bennis would further suggest it is the ability to rally people to a cause that sets apart a manager versus a leader. Effective managers can maintain while leaders can adapt and move an organization forward. Looking at the superintendents before Dr. Easter and reflecting on the "Rhino" analogy, Dr. Easter brought leadership where others seemed to have failed.

Effective leadership involves individuals who can envision the processes to create organizations in the first place or adapt existing ones to ever changing circumstances. Effective leaders define what the future should look like and align people, with this vision to make it happen despite the obstacles that arise (Kotter, 1996). The superintendents prior to Dr. Easter simply got engulfed in the politics and daily issues and failed to maintain a vision of change or set in motion a process for change to occur. Thus, these superintendents basically ended their tenure leaving the system no better off than they received it.

Conclusion

Fullan (2007) said it best when he suggested that complex change is no easy feat for an organization to accomplish. In addition, Fullan suggests the current educational system and structure is killing itself with “status-quo” while facing societal demands for major reform. Senge (1990) suggests that the public education system must rethink and look for a fundamental shift in the way it operates. Strang (1987) suggests the ills of public education reside within its attempt to take small rural and community schools and make them bureaucratic and thus non-responsive to stakeholders. Hooker and Mueller (1970) suggest that Weber saw the rules, procedures, and hierarchy of bureaucracy as what is best for running organizations like public education, and the mis-application of the structure creates issues, not the structure itself. Smith and Larimer (2004) found in their research, a direct link between lack of school performance and bureaucracy. Bennis (1966) found in his research that bureaucratic organizations have no solution to integrating the stakeholder needs within an organization.

Honig (2009) found in her research that central office bureaucracies are preventing schools from handling the more complex environment in which they operate in. Walpole and Noeth (2002) found that Performance Excellence offered through continuous improvement was a way to change the old paradigm of bureaucratic management to that of a quality process based on continuous improvement. Kotter and Cohen (2007) further suggest that the changing global environment is placing increased demands on the public education system to respond more rapidly to what is going on in the external environment. In addition, change is not an option to succeed it is a

requirement. The eight steps they suggest in their book *The Heart of Change* are not a checklist to change but a prescription. These eight steps are similar to Fullan's (1993) eight lenses. I have discussed both in this research. For those wanting to change status-quo these eight lenses and eight steps are a sound, research-based guiding plan to use.

Whether an organization chooses Baldrige or some other change initiative, it is imperative that the steps outlined in this study are considered. Another key to success is having a continuous improvement process that invites and uses feedback to adapt. This author will not argue the tenets of bureaucracy further as more authors suggest it is the enemy of education than those who do not. To argue whether it is misapplied is to waste additional time the educational system cannot afford. It is evident by the recent news and events in the United States that more people are giving up on the public education system in favor of privatization. Thus, it is time to change, to challenge the status-quo. Baldrige presents a well-developed structure that Rockwell Schools chose as its change model. It has made a tremendous difference in the way the district operates. This model may not be for all systems, but the status-quo may not suffice either.

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