Site-Based Management: A Review of the Literature Part I: Setting the Stage

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Statement of the Problem

Americans have been rethinking and redesigning the way in which public schools should be most effectively operated through the process known as restructuring or systematic reform (Fiske, 1995). One of the most frequently used approaches to school reform is site-based management (SBM) (Mohrman, 1994). The major objective behind the site-based management approach is to move decision-making control from the central office of a school system to the local school level (i.e., at each school campus) (Short & Greer, 1997). Critical to the implementation of site-based management is the participation of school stakeholders (i.e., teachers, parents, administrators, staff, and community and business members) in the decision-making process. Site-based management is intended to address the need to include those people closest to the problems, issues, and situations in decision- making at the local school level (Goodman, 1994). "Although site-based management appears in many guises, at its core is the idea of participatory decision making at the school site" (David, Dec. 1995/Jan. 1996, p. 6).

Site-based management operates under decentralization, the development of internal human resources, and the wide participation of school members in the decision-making process, which closely accompanies the tenets of critical theory. Livingston, Slate, and Gibbs (1999) suggested that administrators agree that all stakeholders must be involved in decision-making if the school is to be successful and that teachers possess expertise that is needed to make important decisions about the school. In addition, Cheng (1996) noted that site-based management assumes a multiplicity of educational goals, a complex and changing educational environment, need for educational reforms, school effectiveness, and the pursuit of quality. Our purpose in writing this article was to review the extant literature in site-based management.

Specific topics we cover in Part I of this review were examined to provide readers with a context in which to understand the need for site-based management: (1) theoretical reflections regarding educational reform; (2) systems theory and schools; (3) the nature of school reform; (4) modern school reform reflections; (5) systemic and inclusive restructuring; (6) reform through collaboration; (7) rationales and stimuli for educational change; (8) impact of erroneous beliefs on school reform; (9) initiating change; (10) implementing change; (11) maintenance of change; (12) restructuring, to what degree; (13) recent school research, restructuring themes; and, (14) restructuring success related to the change process and school organization. A substantial need will be demonstrated for the educational reform of site-based management through these topics. Next, in Part II we will examine, in depth, the literature specifically on site-based management, using the following subheadings: (1) how widespread is site-based management; (2) legislation and implementation of site-based management across the United States; (3) site-based management as educational reform; (4) definitions and assumptions of site-based management; (5) key fundamentals of site-based management; (6) conceptual variations within site-based management; (7) variations in the implementation of site-based management; (8) site-based decision-making and spheres of influence; (9)

empowerment associated with site-based management; (10) site-based management and the improvement of student performance; (11) factors of successful implementation of site-based management; (12) benefits of site-based management; (13) challenges to site-based management implementation; (14) lessons learned from site-based management; (15) monitoring and evaluation of site-based management; (16) emergent research regarding site-based management; and, (17) research concerns of site-based management. Through this two-stage description of the basis for site-based management as an educational reform initiative and of the current status of site-based management as an educational reform initiative, readers should have a deep understanding of this initiative, as well as an understanding of our belief that site-based management has promise as an educational reform initiative.

Theoretical Reflections

Many perspectives concerning the repeated failure of educational reform are articulated in the literature (Cuban, 1990; Tyack, 1991). Communal to the many stances is the field of systems theory. Systems theory has been defined by Heylighen and Joslyn (1992) in the following manner:

> … the transdisciplinary study of the abstract organization of phenomena, independent of their substance, type, or spatial or temporal scale of existence. It investigates both the principles common to all complex entities, and the (usually mathematical) models which can be used to describe them (p.1).

According to this definition, systems theory is founded upon the idea that systems are more than just a variety of components put together to make a whole organism. Heylighen and Joslyn (1992) stated that a system changes according to the communication of its components with other components in the environment of which they are encompassed, and the ensuing system as a whole. Because of the connections between the parts of a system, the system as a whole constantly evolves. According to Hall and Fagan (1956), a system is defined as "a set of interacting elements that form an integrated whole" (p.65). De Rosnay (1979) clarified the definition further to say that the elements of a system are in "dynamic interaction" and "organized for a goal" (p.49). De Rosnay also noted that systems that interrelate with their environment are open systems. There exists a steady current of interaction, constantly being modified by internal and external factors in the environment.

In summary, systems theory emphasizes a global awareness through interaction and structures within the system. Senge (1990) wrote that structural explanations "address the underlying causes of behavior at a level that patterns of behavior can be changed… structural explanations are inherently generative" (p.53). When modifications are made to the system's structures, they must be made to all groups within the system simultaneously rather than to only single entities at any given time (Van Slyke, 1998). All components of a system are affected by the actions of other components, thus all components must be interconnected and interactive to achieve system success.

Systems Theory and Schools

Public schools are complex systems regardless of whether they are viewed at the state level, district level, or the campus level. The human aspect of schools on its own makes them very complex. In addition, schools have a direct, open connection to their surroundings. The environment that surrounds a public school adds immensely to the intricacies involved with change. School restructuring enables schools and various agencies to connect in a variety of ways that numerous educationalists feel requires a systemic approach to be successful (Carr, 1996; Conley, 1992; Fullan, 1996; Thompson, 1994; Vinovskis, 1996).

The simultaneous alteration of structural and functional aspects of the system is included in the applications of the systemic approach to educational restructuring. Thompson (1994) argued for a total reconceptualization of education from the ground up that would deal with curriculum, pedagogy, school/community relationships,

assessment, governments, school ethos, and environment. He also claimed that changes must occur at all levels within the system. Conley (1992) suggested that restructuring efforts must be driven by an overarching vision that allows for a unification of efforts on a global level.

State educational institutions, districts, and schools are all affected by systems theory. Thus, those institutions engaging in efforts to improve the state of education can take advantage of a systemic approach to aid in maximizing the avoidance of the hazards found in previous unsuccessful reform efforts (Van Slyke, 1998). He also stated that proponents of the systemic approach argue that to ignore the complexity of interaction between participants, the mechanisms that create barriers to change, and the functional and structural aspects of schools will only doom any reform effort.

The Nature of School Reform

The forces outside the walls of schools, such as politics, industry, and social movements, have created a continuous flux of educational changes, quite often bringing about serious contradictions to one another and to the important long standing goals of public schooling (Sarason, 1990). Spring (1994) noted that scarcely has a time existed when educational reform was not being considered. Educationalists appear to be on the lookout for that perfect school system. Tyack (1991) stated that despite the numerous attempts to change the American public school system, no true significant change has occurred that has enabled students to improve their ability to learn. Leading educationalists noted that each reform has been much like its predecessor (Hess, 1995; Paris, 1995; Sarason, 1990).

Roemer (1991) referred to educational reforms as change without difference. Tyack (1991) looked at the issue of failed educational reform in terms of political influences supporting the fad of the day. He did not believe that reforms ever actually go away; they sit in dormant states when the policy of the day does not fit with that particular reform until it becomes fashionable to reemerge using a different name. Lasting reforms have been those changes that have typically been additions to existing structures and that have not changed anything significantly fundamental, meaning changes that caused teachers to alter classroom practices or the education process (Tyack, 1991). Reforms have had little impact on what goes on behind the closed door of a teacher's classroom.

Tyack (1991) pointed out that in his view what is visible on the surface regarding reform is not what often is the reality. For a number of years, discussion has been in favor of decentralized decision-making. However, evidence indicating such decision-making has been more formal than actual. School systems that claimed to be decentralized in the early 1980s were not truly decentralized (Ornstein, 1989). Cuban (1990) cited another example of this false reform reality when he referred to the struggle between the academic and the practical curriculum. Some educational scholars advocated for a common core curriculum as an absolute to the success of restructuring (Hirsch, 1996; Sizer, 1996). However, through the 1930s, an emphasis was placed on a varied curriculum because of the need to cater to individual interests. During the 1960s a varied curriculum was desired due to the issue of equalizing the playing field for minorities (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). With the emphasis now being on a core curriculum, the question is whether what is apparently occurring on the surface is what is actually occurring within the school walls.

Modern School Reform Reflections

According to Hess (1995), the 1983 publication of "A Nation at Risk" (National Commission of Excellence in Education) marked the beginning of contemporary school reform. Higher graduation standards and higher certification standards were noted as essential to assuring excellence in education. For the most part, educational changes consisted of simple add-ons in the beginning (Ellis & Fouts, 1994). These educational changes failed to improve teaching or curriculum in the content areas. In addition, teachers were not involved in the process at all. In contrast, systemic reform emphasizes the need for all stakeholders in the educational system to be involved in educational change. Although systemic reform began in the mid 1980s, it did not influence school reform to any

significant degree until the late 1980s and early 1990s (Van Slyke, 1998).

Effective schools literature has been created by the research of Edmunds (1979), Brookover and Lezotte (1977), and Purkey and Smith (1983). These scholars identified certain characteristics that were common to schools that regularly produced the best results for students. Some of the most recognized characteristics named by Hess (1995) were a common school-wide vision, specific student expectations, high standards for students, maximized time spent learning, aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment, consistent student behavioral management, and strong instructional leadership. More recently, site-based management, which includes teacher empowerment and stakeholder involvement has become more of a focus in effective schools research (Hess, 1995).

Site-based management has become a crucial component of systemic reform. Although the implementation of SBM varies greatly from campus to campus, its emphasis on collaborative school governance is seen as essential to elemental school restructuring (Hess, 1995; Ornstein, 1989). Hess stated that empowering all school community members to affect decisions that directly impact the school's operation and its success could be the most effectual component of fundamental change. Though much debate exists among scholars regarding what site-based management should look like when implemented, very little doubt exists that SBM plays an important role in current reform efforts.

Systemic and Inclusive Restructuring

In the past, a number of reformers have failed to address the multifaceted nature of education (Paris, 1995; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Sarason (1990) declared that a principal action in pinpointing the factors that lead to the lack of educational progress, even during times of genuine effort, is to acquire a better appreciation for the intricate framework of the educational system. Appreciation for the intricacies of the educational system can aid in crucial examination from a systemic viewpoint (Van Slyke, 1998). By looking through a systems perspective, grasping the intricate nature of the existing connections in an educational organization that influence the success or failure of attempted change is possible (Sarason, 1990). Sarason also pointed out that the lack of awareness of the systemic initiative in the past and its application to educational reform has contributed to the inability to address problems that have inundated American education.

Systemic educational initiatives enable systemic reform. Systemic reform includes the enlightening use of history to guide its direction. New optimism has been added to the future of educational restructuring due to the views of schools and the construct of change advocated by systemic reform. Sarason (1990) stated that systemic reform contains the necessary components that are needed to initiate positive change. In addition, it incorporates the awareness of limitations, barriers, and restrictions that may hinder reform efforts.

Sarason (1990) maintained that one of the most significant reasons for past failure to improve education was due to previous reformers' desire to conserve the status quo. Reform efforts of the past have failed to make system-wide changes, thus isolated changes that have been made have not been permanent ones (Caine & Caine, 1997). Senge (1990) offered that a strategic systems approach allows for the contemplation of the intricate connections that exist in a school system and presents the possibility for more significant foresight. Without consideration of the barriers to change, lasting reform efforts are not probable.

Essential to systemic educational reform are three classes of understanding (Sarason, 1990). Immediate situations and surrounding circumstances are considerations of the first class of understanding. The second class of understanding goes further than the first to encompass past history. Previous occurrence of the circumstances, procedures for handling the past situations, and consideration of the situations being cyclical in nature fall under the realm of the second understanding. Linking the educational problem to the overall society to detect tensions that exist between the social organizations of schools and the influence of American society are encountered under the third

understanding. Sarason (1990) alluded to the fact that the last two understandings of educational reform were seldom used to plan and implement change. Expected most often was that schools will adjust by implementing behaviors that require very little or no modifications. Sarason (1990) suggested by these points that the absence of the systemic viewpoint has contributed to the demise of prior reform efforts.

When informed proponents of educational reform envision change, they see the defining characteristic of fundamental school reform in a modern sense (Caine & Caine, 1997; Lieberman, 1997). Important to keep in mind though, simply because proponents of educational change possess a systemic view does not insure that its use in the implementation of change will repair all faults in the educational system (Sarason, 1990). However, lasting and effective change is still more possible when the systemic perspective is prevalent as opposed to when it is nonexistent.

Reform Through Collaboration

Problems that surface in schools are never simply problems for the school to solve alone. Sarason (1990) stated that school problems are mirrored in the community and society. Thus, solutions to these problems are not sufficient to only come from within the educational system, nor can solutions come from only those outside the schools. School problems should be of interest to both those persons within the educational system and to those persons who are not, because schools and society do affect each other (Van Slyke, 1998).

Interest from both parties needs to be voluntary and willful as opposed to coerced. Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall (1987) declared that participatory action and collaboration of all persons involved in the implementation of a reform initiative is essential to its success. According to Senge (1990), underlying assumptions, beliefs, and behaviors must be changed before proposed alterations to a school system will receive the needed support of those stakeholders who will be able to bring about lasting change. Once a common vision has been attained, Fullan (1991) stated that ownership of the problem and commitment to the change will follow. Caine and Caine (1997) noted that personal transformation is needed to bring about educator change. The commitment that emerges from changes in perceptions and assumptions about current practice is what enables personal transformation. This enlightenment is more likely to happen in a collaborative environment where the interest is shared as opposed to isolated (Van Slyke, 1998). Thus elemental to school reform is both shared governance and shared responsibility.

Because students spend a large portion of their time outside the school environment, Sergiovanni (1994) noted the importance of educators working side by side with persons outside the school setting who are regularly involved in students' lives. Unfortunately, the past history of our country indicates that teachers have been held almost completely accountable for educating our nation's youth (Sarason, 1990). Due to the impracticality of such an expectation, many people have a lessened sense of faith in the American educational system due to perceived teacher failure in meeting this expectation. What is needed for success today is a new definition of the role educators play in the lives of students in addition to the roles to be played by other interested constituents outside the walls of the educational system.

Rationales and Stimuli for Educational Change

Incongruity regarding the rationales and goals of education is a communal explanation for prior reform collapses (Hirsch, 1996; Paris, 1995). Total agreement over rationales and goals of education will likely never come to fruition. To amend the educational system, some degree of rudimentary agreement is necessary. Ellis and Fouts (1994, 1997) and Schmoker (1996) concurred that educational rationales must be achieved through a determination of goals and objectives. Educational reform needs to be goal driven (Schmoker, 1996). Aims based on well-meaning theory but lacking substance will not sustain a significant reform effort.

For educational rationales to be of worth as a persuasive strength for change between existing and favored realities, these rationales must be more assiduously defined (Hirsch, 1996). However, state and federal standards that are too narrowly characterized may leave schools and teachers incapable of changing curriculum and pedagogy to meet the needs of students (Ravitch, 1995). According to Hirsch (1996), the nonexistence of plainly defined goals at the state and federal levels is the basis for many failed education reform attempts. Proponents of local school autonomy are in discord with Hirsch's stance. Hess (1995) combined both viewpoints and stated that systemic reform must consider both beliefs and land at somewhere that respects each position without denigrating the chief concerns of either.

Stakeholders must agree on the educational goals, so that the appropriate climate for advancement is set. Because teachers are the ones who will ultimately decide if the established goals are suitable and favorable for student achievement, teachers should be engaged in the development of the goals. Such collaboration is an aspect of the participatory nature of fundamental reform (Ellis & Fouts, 1997).

Educational rationales and goals are directly connected to the intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli of reform. Ideology, philosophy, theory, social dynamics, politics, and economics are all discussed as stimuli for educational change by Fuhrman and O'Day (1996). According to these researchers, the aforementioned stimuli force influence through diverse origins at the commencement of reform efforts. An example of a political stimulus to educational reform would be legislative directives materializing from the state level. In contrast, theoretical inspirations are more likely to begin change from within the educational milieu as opposed to outside the educational setting (Van Slyke, 1998). Systemic change must take into consideration both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators so that support for reform will come from a variety of sources (Fuhrman & O'Day, 1996). Obstructions that could encumber the implementation of change are going to be less plausible if support from within and outside the educational setting is acquired.

Impact of Erroneous Beliefs on School Reform

Erroneous beliefs about the present state of education have been the cause of school reform failure (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Bracey (1996, 1997) asserted that incorrect information and emotionally charged rhetoric in the media regarding the status of public education has lessened the necessary support for effective school restructuring. How to suggest that schools are in need of change while still espousing that they are engaged in high-quality education is a difficult task (Bracey, 1997).

Bracey (1997) launched denunciations, based on research, to widely accepted damaging perceptions about student achievement, financial resources related to student outcomes, and rising numbers of dropouts. Bracey stated that SAT scores have not declined when one takes into account the higher numbers of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds taking the examination. In fact, he claimed that students know just as much today as they did in the past. Regarding funding of education, Bracey proclaimed that the amount of money spent on basic education today has only slightly increased over previous decades. In addition, dropout rates are decreasing rather than increasing. These misconceptions harm efforts to initiate and implement change in schools, because such false impressions weaken the support necessary for effective and lasting change.

Initiating Change

The process associated with implementing change is a crucial factor in the success or failure of a reform (Hord et al., 1987). The initiation of this process involves the complexity associated with the reasons for the change and the source of such change (Fullan, 1991). Fullan also stated that a balance must be present between the forces of top management and the network of stakeholders so that a common vision can be achieved. Because people behave in unpredictable ways, this process can be easily disrupted until a firm foundation has been established. Hord and

colleagues (1987) avowed that change, such as what comes with school reform, must be taken personally if the reform is to settle in the hearts and minds of all stakeholders involved.

Change is a matter of personal choice (Peters, 1994). Thus, for reform to make a difference to teaching and student performance in the classroom, teachers must make a personal choice to adopt and take ownership of the reform (Van Slyke, 1998). Mandates alone that come from top educational administration will not cause a teacher to take ownership of such reform. According to Senge (1990), teachers must believe in and commit to the philosophy and ideology that drives a reform initiative for effective and permanent change to occur. Van Slyke (1998) stated that everyone involved in reform must experience letting go of the known to understand the new. He also noted that acceptance of the new takes place at varying rates for each individual concerned.

Implementing Change

For school change to occur, support is needed from central office administration and the superintendent of the school district (Rosenblum & Louis, 1979). Constant focus on school improvement indicates readiness for school change (Rosenholtz, 1989). Rosenblum and Louis (1979) also discerned that agreement by faculty and staff members regarding the needs of the school affected the success of change implementation. Changes that involve considerable modifications by teachers have been more successful than those changes that appear relatively insignificant (Crandall & Associates, 1982). Also found by Crandall and Associates was that greater, more significant changes occurred when interventions of a grander magnitude were attempted. However, Huberman and Miles (1984) stated that adjustments that are too challenging for stakeholders involved could severely hinder successful implementation of change.

Louis and Miles (1990) conducted research that uncovered five major themes regarding the implementation process of site-based management that other educational scholars generally concurred with in literature concerning organizational change (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Senge, 1990). The first theme, vision-building, encompasses sharing a common mental picture of what is desired by people involved in the organization (Senge, 1990). Vision-building is built upon mutually shared beliefs about the optimum means for attaining the vision. After achieving a common vision, the next step is planning. Evolutionary planning, the second theme, suggests creating a course of action for change that is dynamic in nature (Senge, 1990). As implementation advances, strategies involved in that implementation must change to continue to be effective. Carr and Kemmis (1986) recommended monitoring and feedback by those persons involved in the change process to bring about an ascendant spiral in the implementation process.

Empowerment, the third theme, is referenced throughout literature regarding restructuring and reform. Empowerment (Short & Rinehart, 1992) is a process that includes participatory decision-making, teacher impact, professional autonomy, professional development opportunities, and a sense of self-efficacy. In addition, empowerment enables participants to assume responsibility for their own growth and for decisions about their work and practice. Bredeson (1994) defined empowerment as autonomy that others perceive to be a process, a sense of identity, an opportunity for autonomous professional behavior, and as a professional work environment. Van Slyke (1998) suggested that empowerment does not imply a loss of control by administrators, but a gain in control through persuasion aimed at achieving a shared vision. Little (1982) found that in situations where teachers and administrators joined forces in the task of school improvement through mentoring each other, the implementation of change occurred readily and had lasting effects.

Empowerment leads naturally to the fourth theme, staff development. On-going growth and learning of school faculty and staff through collaborative efforts is another essential component of successful reform (Senge, 1990).

One–shot workshops and specific skills trainings do not allow for the necessary collaborative interaction needed for continued support of change (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Staff development includes sessions on communication, group development skills, problem solving, decision-making, and teacher leadership (Blasé & Blasé, 1997). The fifth theme encompasses problem solving and monitoring during the implementation of change. Critical to the feedback loop necessary for evolutionary planning is monitoring the process of change (Schmoker, 1996; Senge, 1990). Strategies for handling problems identified through the monitoring process must include resources for additional assistance and collaborative problem solving (Van Slyke, 1998). Louis and Miles (1990) stated that those persons involved in the monitoring of change must view accountability as constructive and indispensable to the goals of the reform.

Maintenance of Change

For change to make a positive impact on an educational organization, there must be a continuous maintenance of the change process. Change is of little value to the organization if shortly after its implementation maintenance of the change process is not addressed (Fullan, 1991). Sustained interest, financial support, and structural support are needed to continue a positive level of change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977). According to Berman and McLaughlin, if funding for the educational organization's change is coming from an outside source, the chances that the change process will continue after the funding has ceased is less likely. They also discovered that the principal of a school campus is paramount to the continuation of interest in change, and that staffing instability adversely affects the ability to carry out change.

When stakeholders are part of the change process and directly involved in the implementation of change, they are more likely to develop connections to the connotations associated with the change process than when stakeholders are left on the periphery of school reform (Fullan, 1991). A change in original membership of an organization during the implementation of change can lead to a certain degree of disruption, because the internalization of change is a cultural function (Cummings & Huse, 1989). A constant process of regeneration is what Fullan (1991) affirmed will recompense for this predisposition.

Restructuring: To What Degree?

According to Van Slyke (1998), degree of restructuring refers to "the amount of restructuring that has been accomplished in a school or district" (p.85). Still, many definitions of restructuring exist. Scholars claimed that certain characteristics surround restructuring (Goodlad, 1994). Decision-making, shared vision, community involvement, parental involvement, collaborative relationships, and unambiguous standards for students are included in the literature. When schools restructure, they generally make changes in the areas of student experiences, school governance, stakeholder collaborative efforts, and professional development (Reavis & Griffith, 1992).

School size plays an important part in the implementation of school restructuring (Sizer, 1996). Hirsch (1996) maintained that core curriculum also influences reform. Further still, Glickman (1993) argued that the democracy in the school affects the degree of change possible. Discovered through research, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement identified 12 topics associated with educational restructuring (Anson, 1994). These topics include educational professionalism, early childhood education, at-risk students, school-to-work transition, technology, stakeholder involvement, time management, curriculum, assessment methods, student differences, school-based management, and systemic reform.

Defining degree of restructuring is somewhat difficult to pin down. Numerous researchers have conducted studies that have operationalized the degree of restructuring based on two features: the quantity of reform initiatives employed in a school and the correlation of implemented reforms to specified favored structural features (Van Slyke, 1998). Very few researchers have examined the degree of reform implementation. What research has been conducted

has been limited almost extensively to case studies and/or other qualitative methods. According to several educational scholars, elemental restructuring is infrequent in American schools (Berends & King, 1994; Brown, 1993).

Recent School Research: Restructuring Themes

Prior to the late 1980s, very little empirical research regarding relationships between structural changes in schools and what transpired in classrooms existed (Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthey, 1996). The studies that were available were entirely qualitative in nature. Since the late 1980s, numerous studies have been published, however, in an exhaustive review of the literature, no quantitative studies in which these structural changes were examined were found. Thus, the available literature is extremely limited in terms of generalizable conclusions.

A report authored by Newmann and Wehlage (1995) and supported by the U.S. Department of Education amalgamated five years of research about restructuring that incorporated data from over 1,500 schools. Information from 18 studies between the years 1990 and 1995 was encapsulated. The researchers concluded that authentic pedagogy, professional development, and parental/community associations were needed for legitimate reform to take place in a school. In addition, collective governance, autonomous work structures, decentralization, and parental involvement were found to be crucial to fundamental school reform (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Again, these findings should be viewed cautiously due to the qualitative methodology used.

Illustrated by Newmann and Wehlage (1995) was a systemic approach to restructuring that unites several supportive structures which comprise the fundamental characteristics of what they coined authentic pedagogy. Authentic pedagogy is that which "requires students to think, to develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, realistic problems" (p.3). The circles of support described by these researchers position student learning at the nucleus and authentic pedagogy, school organization, and external support in concentric rings around this point of focus. Authentic achievement was discussed in subsequent literature based on the School Restructuring Study (Newmann & Associates, 1996). Newmann and Associates described the learning that resulted from authentic pedagogy. These researchers intended to convey the message that authentic achievement is the result of and intention of school reform/restructuring.

The School Restructuring Survey (SRS) discussed by Newmann and Associates (1996) included a sample of 24 public schools to document alternative practices in the domains of student experiences, professionalism of teachers, leadership, and organization of community resources. Contained in the SRS was a wide-ranging combination of data- observational, survey, interview, teachers' assessment task samples and student work samples. Effective changes noted in these schools were closer relationships between teachers and students fostered by longer contact hours, such as staying with the same teacher for more than one year. In addition, interdisciplinary teaming, elimination of tracking, increased autonomy, and standards for learning were also influenced by change. Site-based management, shared decision-making, staff teaming, common planning times, multi-year instruction, and core curriculum were cited by Newmann and Accociates (1995) as needed components of comprehensive reform. The extent to which these components are related to student achievement is unknown, due to the nature of data collection and analysis.

Perceptions of school personnel related to restructuring were studied by Baron (1996). Baron found that learner outcomes, curriculum, instruction, and assessment were the most often occurring changes. Carter (1993) and Martin (1996) concluded that in addition to the previously mentioned findings, shared governance and staff development were also common themes within restructuring. In a qualitative study of 55 school employees, Blinkiewicz (1994) found that a common vision, values and agreed upon purposes for reform were important to systemic change initiatives. As with the previously discussed studies, readers should be cautious in the extent to which they generalize these findings. Though a valid method of investigation, qualitative methods do not lend themselves to generalizability.

Restructuring Success Related to the Change Process and School Organization

Six case studies were commissioned by the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. These case studies are described in a report edited by Lieberman (1995). Elementary and middle schools were specifically targeted for an in-depth look at their processes of systemic reform. Authentic participation of teachers in the beginning stages of change was found to be a key to successful restructuring. Researchers indicated that state and district level support were also very helpful to any reform efforts (Bondy, 1995; Ross & Webb, 1995). Whitford and Gaus (1995) noted that data supported the need for teacher collaboration to increase the probability of restructuring success.

Support from within schools was a factor of success for Chicago school reform. Hess (1995) described copious reports that surfaced from activities that occurred in the Chicago Public Schools following the Chicago Reform Act of 1988. A frequent finding of both qualitative and quantitative research was that a positive relationship between democratic organization of schools and classroom initiated improvements in teaching and learning affected the extent of change within a school (Bryk, Deabster, Easton, Lupescu, & Thum, 1994). Hess (1992) stated that reports from the Chicago restructuring effort have indicated that the Chicago model of change was viable. Hess noted that local school councils were established under the Chicago reform to govern schools autonomously, thus shifting authority from top administration to teachers and parents as well. Research conducted within some of the Chicago schools that had local school councils were experiencing positive effects regarding overall school improvement (Bryk, Easton, Kerbow, Rollow, & Sebring, 1993). On the other hand, Walberg and Niemiec (1994) determined that within the three areas of reform legislation in Chicago, no improvements were observed. Autonomous governance appeared to enhance the foundation of reform, but it did not have much of a measurable effect on student outcomes. These findings are, again, limited in the extent to which they can be generalized.

Discussion

In this review of the literature, readers have been provided with an extensive review of the literature to provide a context for the use of site-based management as an educational reform initiative. Systems theory and the nature of school reform, particularly reform efforts through collaboration, were examined as well components involved in implementing and maintaining changes such as would be required in site-based management. Site-based management has been in the educational background for a number of years across districts and schools in the United States; however, only since the early 1990s did site-based management become of significance to administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders. Built upon what is known about effective schools, site-based management makes use of historical contexts in creating provisions to avoid mistakes made during past reforms that have failed. Site-based management focuses on changing systemic thinking and emphasizes the need for the decentralization of decision-making from the upper echelon of the school district to the local campus level. With sufficient autonomy, flexibility, and ownership of school functions, site-based management can provide the needed conditions for achieving multiple goals and maximizing school effectiveness over an extended period of time.

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