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**Site-Based Decision-making: The Perceptions of Parents,
Teachers, and Administrators in an Elementary School in Texas**

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Teachers, and Administrators in an Elementary School in Texas**

by

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Dissertation

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Dedication

To Michael, my biggest supporter and partner through this process, and to
Mother, my first and dearest teacher.

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Site-Based Decision-Making: The Perceptions of Parents, Teachers, and Administrators in an Elementary School in Texas

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While researchers studied site-based decision-making (SBDM) in depth in the 1990's, mostly from the perspective of its effects on student achievement (Hopkins, Munumer, 1999; Bauer & Bogotch, 1997, Bell, 1996)), a dearth of the studies were quantitative in nature, often comparing student groups' performance on a pretest and post test (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). Results indicate that SBDM does not significantly affect student achievement (Schuttloffel, (2000; Dempster, 1999; Wohlstetter, 1993; White, 1989); however, few research studies focus on stakeholders' beliefs about SBDM (Reyes, Scribner & Scribner, 1999; Hoetger, 1998; Griffin, 1995; Ovando, 1994; Wagstaff & Reyes, 1993). In this narrative case study, the researcher discerns successful, unsuccessful, and missing SBDM implementation strategies through stakeholders' stories about their experiences on an elementary school SBDM committee in a central Texas district.

The literature review includes the historical context of early reforms, a description of localized control, and anticipated SBDM outcomes. The researcher explains theoretical frames and conflicting research findings including the benefits and pitfalls. Two research questions frame the study: (1) What are the experiences of stakeholders involved with SBDM that illustrate the workable, unworkable, and needed implementation strategies? (2) What themes emerge from stakeholders' stories that can further inform policy makers and educational leaders about SBDM implementation strategies that are workable and

needed? The study represents each stake holder-group's narrative; teachers, parents, and administrators. The district was selected based on its extensive SBDM experience and recognized district performance rating. The school was selected based on its three-year improved performance and Dr. Horn's five-year tenure. The data included the review: (1) of minutes from SBDM meetings, (2) field notes from observations of SBDM meetings, (3) of transcripts from individual interviews with SBDM members and non-members, and (4) a focus group interview with the campus SBDM committee.

Through the emergent themes from their stories, the stakeholders' perceptions expand the extant knowledge about and contribute to the practice of SBDM. Policy makers and educational leaders gain information to further inform the implementation of SBDM.

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Chapter 1

The Context of the Study

INTRODUCTION

The public's perspective on the quality of education grew increasingly more questioning in the early 1980's, largely due to media hype surrounding students' achievement scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Media reports that boys and girls were performing more poorly than ever before, and that minority students were performing at rates critically lower than their White peers, prompted President Reagan and Secretary of Education William Bennett to conduct a study. The ensuing report, *A Nation at Risk* (1984), only reinforced the media hype and exacerbated the manufactured crisis that America's public schools were failing.

One of the recommendations for reforming the state of education in *A Nation at Risk* included the decentralization of decision-making by providing the states with more power to make changes based on the needs they identified. Decentralization was based on the premise that those closest to the problems could make the best decisions to solve them. As a result, Chicago schools instituted site-based management (SBM). In 1988, the Chicago School Reform Act introduced legislation to make schools subject to community control (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998).

In lockstep, SBM was soon implemented across the United States. State officials mandated top-down reforms on practitioners during the early phase of decentralization, or localized control, in the mid 1980's until the early 1990's. Localized control, also called Site-Based Management (SBM), required principals and teachers to share decision-making related to curriculum and instruction, budget, and personnel issues. Although empowerment of those closest to the problem to solve them was the intent of SBM, teachers frequently were indifferent or even hostile to SBM, and parents were left out of the decision-making process altogether (Altenbaugh, 1989).

In 1990, Site-based Decision-making (SBDM) became the centerpiece of the reform movement (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). A new form of decentralization that identified the school as the primary unit of improvement (Malen, Ogawa, and Krantz, 1990) once again redistributed the decision-making power, this time including parents, community members, and students. With the creation of site-based councils, stakeholders other than just school personnel were empowered to participate in decision-making in the areas of budget, personnel, and curriculum (Clune & White, 1988). Since the early 1990's, SBDM's purpose is the meaningful participation of stakeholders at the school site (Futrell, 1990). By 1993, many districts in 44 states nationwide practiced some form of SBDM, although only Kentucky and Texas had mandated statewide SBDM (Herman & Herman, 1993).

This chapter states the problem and purpose of the study and further defines the specific problem area. I state the research questions that framed the

study, as well as the limitations and delimitations. Terms and abbreviations relative to the study are defined, as well as the assumptions that provided the basis for the study. The significance of the study is presented, and the chapter concludes with a summary and an organization of the research.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The effect of Site-Based Decision-making (SBDM) on student achievement is inconclusive. A large body of research over the past ten years has produced conflicting findings. Proponents cite studies supporting the premise that SBDM positively affects student achievement, while opponents cite studies that SBDM shows no affect on student achievement, or in some cases, that it negatively affects student achievement. As Oswald (1995) noted, the conflicting findings of empirical evidence may be attributed to SBDM's premature evaluation as a reform initiative.

To ensure SBDM success, stakeholders need to understand what SBDM is and how it is implemented. Each participant must understand his or her new roles, responsibilities, and accountability. School and district leaders must be supportive of SBDM and ensure that communication channels will be kept open. Most of all, SBDM must be given time to succeed: researchers recommend anywhere from three to fifteen years' minimum commitment to SBDM (Oswald, 1995).

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of parents, teachers, and administrators from an elementary school in Texas about site-based decision-making (SBDM) based on their experiences as stakeholders on their site council. From their stories, I identified implementation strategies that worked,

that did not work, and that were absent in the implementation but necessary to the success of SBDM.

SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREA

Although many studies have been conducted on the effects of SBDM on student achievement (Hopkins, Munumer, 1999; Bauer & Bogotch, 1997; Bell, 1996), no definitive conclusions can be drawn about its success or failure as a school reform effort. Meanwhile, stakeholders on SBDM councils continue diligently working at SBDM, so that, in time and with effort, their school will attain the high levels of achievement other schools have attained. Although previous studies have shown that SBDM does not increase student achievement (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998), the question of whether stakeholders have the skills necessary to make the decisions that will propel their students to a high level of achievement remains to be determined (Taylor & Levine, 1991).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions guided the research: (1) What are the experiences of stakeholders involved with SBDM that illustrate the workable, unworkable, and needed implementation strategies? (2) What themes emerge from stakeholders' stories that can further inform policy makers and educational leaders about SBDM implementation strategies that are workable and needed?

LIMITATIONS

Single case studies such as this hamper the generalizability of the findings for the purpose of determining causality. Geographical location limits the sample selection. Purposeful selection criteria limit the case.

THE DELIMITATIONS

This study describes administrators', teachers', and parents' personal experiences developed through considerable time spent implementing district SBDM policy and serving on the campus SBDM council at Paul Revere Elementary School in Poppyfield Independent School District in central Texas.

The study did not attempt to evaluate the effects of SBDM on student achievement. The study did not examine SBDM from a policy perspective.

THE DEFINITION OF TERMS

Local Education Agency. The Local Education Agency refers to a general term for the district in which Texas schools were located.

Site-Based Decision-Making. Site-Based Decision-Making was defined as the act of a selected group of stakeholders representative of the school serving to inform and guide decision-making about budget, curriculum, instruction, and personnel issues on an SBDM council.

Stakeholders. Stakeholders were the representative group of administrators, teachers, and parents who served on the SBDM council at Paul Revere Elementary School in central Texas, in addition to representative teacher and parent non-members of the site-based decision-making council.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAAC. Campus Academic Advisory Council was the name given to the Site-Based Decision-Making committee at Paul Revere Elementary in Poppyfield Independent School District.

DAC. District Advisory Council was the name given to the district Site-Based Decision-Making committee in Poppyfield Independent School District.

LEA. LEA was the abbreviation used for the Local Education Agency.

SBDM. SBDM was the abbreviation used for Site-Based Decision-Making.

ASSUMPTIONS

The first assumption was that stakeholders' stories about their experiences in SBDM enfolded the information, which could be critical to the further implementation of SBDM.

The second assumption was that whether SBDM had a positive effect on student achievement might be determined by its mode of implementation at the Local Educational Agency (LEA).

The third assumption was that implementation benefits and shortfalls of SBDM may emerge as themes through the narratives of the administrators, teachers, and parents from an elementary school in Texas.

The fourth assumption was that through the analysis of stakeholders' perceptions, policy makers and educational leaders would gain information that would further inform the implementation of SBDM in Texas and the United States.

The fifth assumption was that through the sharing of these perceptions, the process and implementation of SBDM would be improved.

The sixth assumption was that as a result of the improved implementation of SBDM, student achievement would increase for all schools.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

While most of the studies about SBDM have been quantitative in nature, often comparing student groups' performance on a pretest and posttest (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998), few studies have focused on what stakeholders believe about SBDM (Hoetger, 1998; Griffin, 1995; Ovando, 1994; Wagstaff & Reyes, 1993).

This study expanded the knowledge about SBDM and contributed to its practice by describing the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents at Paul Revere Elementary School in Poppyfield Independent School District in central Texas. These representative stakeholders experienced implementing district SBDM policy and served on the SBDM council at their respective LEA.

Through the analysis of their perceptions, policy makers and educational leaders can gain information that will further inform the implementation of SBDM, resulting in increased student achievement for all students.

SUMMARY

This case study described and explained the beliefs, skills, and practices about SBDM of a selected group of stakeholders from Paul Revere Elementary School in Poppyfield Independent School District, an academically "Recognized" district in central Texas.

Site-based decision-making defined the act of a selected group of stakeholders at Paul Revere Elementary School serving to inform and guide decision-making about budget, curriculum, instruction, and personnel issues that affected student achievement. Stakeholders were the representative group of administrators, teachers, and parents who served on Paul Revere's SBDM council, as well as representative parents and teachers who were non-members of the council. The Local Education Agency was the Poppyfield Independent School District in central Texas where Paul Revere Elementary was located. SBDM was the abbreviation used for site-based decision-making. LEA was the abbreviation used for the Local Education Agency.

This study was based on my overall assumption that stakeholders' stories about their SBDM experiences enfolded information, which was critical to the further implementation of SBDM. Through the careful analysis of stakeholders' perceptions in this case study, policy makers and educational leaders can gain information that further informs the implementation of SBDM in Texas and the United States, resulting in increased student achievement for all schools.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter introduced the study, provided a rationale, and described the purpose for research.

Chapter 2 provides a background for the study through a review of the literature on SBDM.

Chapter 3 describes my role as the researcher and the role of the participants in the study, the methodology to be utilized, and the form of the final report of the study.

Chapter 4 describes the site and the findings of the study.

Chapter 5 includes a summary of the findings, the conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

Today, twelve years of studies conducted since 1990 have produced a conflicting body of evidence on the effects of Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) on student achievement. As a result of these studies, proponents say SBDM positively impacts student achievement, while opponents argue it produces a negative effect or no effect at all. AS the argument rages, schools continue to implement SBDM, believing the premise that if those closest to the problems in schools make decisions about the solutions, all students' achievement will improve.

One of the reasons the evidence of impact is indefinite could be that a large proportion of the studies conducted about the effects of SBDM on student achievement has been quantitative in nature, often comparing student groups' performance on a pre test and post test. As evidenced by the comparatively small number of qualitative studies on SBDM, few stakeholders' have had an opportunity to tell their stories about SBDM. This is important because their stories may unfold information, which could critically impact the further implementation of SBDM and, more importantly, student achievement.

This chapter stresses the importance for stakeholders to gain a better understanding of SBDM by highlighting areas of relevant research. Although my

main purpose is to focus more in depth on aspects of SBDM in Texas since 1990, I include a brief historical context of the early reforms of SBDM in the United States, a description of localized control also called shared governance, Site-Based Management (SBM) and Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) in Texas, and the anticipated outcomes of school reform. I discuss theoretical frames that create a basis for studying SBDM, in addition to the forms of SBDM, and conflicting research findings from previous and current studies. I explain the benefits and pitfalls of SBDM, and clarify the appropriateness of qualitative research methods for the study of SBDM. Finally, I conclude with my judgments about the current state of the debate on SBDM and implications for further studies.

EARLY SCHOOL GOVERNANCE REFORMS

During the early 1970's, some forms of SBM began to emerge, due to the movement to desegregate schools and an attempt by schools to meet the needs of their multicultural communities (Taylor and Levine, 1991). Since then, in one or more ways, school and schooling has been in transition. In the early 1980's, the public's perception of education grew increasingly more questioning about the quality of public school education, largely due to media hype surrounding students' achievement scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Media reported that boys and girls in America were performing more poorly than ever before, largely due to the failure of its public schools. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1984, under the supervision of President

Reagan and then Secretary of Education William Bennett, only reinforced the public's perception of the poor state of public school education in America.

One of the recommendations for addressing the crisis manufactured by *A Nation at Risk* (1984) included more localized control (also known as shared governance) of schools so that persons closest to the problems in public schools were empowered to make the decisions necessary to improve. This meant that school district officials in central office handed down the control of decision-making regarding budget, personnel, and curriculum and instruction to principals and teachers in local schools.

As a result of the recommendations, state officials mandated and imposed top-down changes on educational practitioners. Chicago was one of the first U.S. school districts to mandate SBM. In 1988, the Chicago School Reform Act introduced legislation to make schools subject to community control (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998). In this early phase of localized control or decentralization, site-based management (SBM) provided principals and teachers the opportunity to share decision-making related to curriculum, instruction, budget, and personnel issues. But, in spite of their new decision-making power, teachers frequently were indifferent or even hostile to the reform initiative. Although the community was included in the mandate to influence decision-making, the parents were left out of the decision-making loop on reforms altogether (Altenbaugh, 1989).

LOCALIZED CONTROL

The localized control of the 1980's, also known as shared governance and decentralization, in which principals and teachers of local schools were handed

the control of decision-making regarding budget, personnel, and curriculum by district central administration, soon came to be called site-based decision-making. In 1990, site-based decision-making (SBDM) became the centerpiece of the school reform movement (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998). A new phase of decentralization was born, “a form... that identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision-making” (Malen, Ogawa, and Krantz, 1990, p. 290) including the “creation of school-based site councils or committees that, through legislative or board actions, are empowered to make decisions...usually in the three areas: budget, personnel and staffing, and curriculum and programs” (Clune and White, 1988). Since the early 1990’s, SBDM’s purpose is the meaningful participation of stakeholders at the school site (Futrell, 1990). By 1993, at least some districts in the 44 states practiced some form of SBDM, although only Kentucky and Texas had mandated statewide SBM (Herman and Herman, 1993).

THEORETICAL FRAMES FOR EXAMINING SBDM

Disconnection Theory

Researchers apply multiple theoretical frames in studying SBDM. One of these theories, the disconnection theory (Tyack and Hansot, 1982), posits that there is a disconnection between schools and communities, and SBDM either ameliorates or exacerbates that disconnection. The disconnection theme runs through SBDM studies, but theorists hold opposing views on the reasons for this disconnection. In some studies, the institutionalized disconnection between schools and communities is recognized; theorists posit how they can be

reconnected. According to Tyack (67a, 67b, 72b, 93, 95), fracturing of the economic, religious, and political connections must be addressed before any reform can work (Tyack and Hansot, 1982).

Theorists view diversity as one reason for the disconnection between schools and communities. Saranson (1971) and Fass (1989) see the diversity of the stakeholders in the school community as a source of disconnection. School communities are more diverse than they once were, due to increased mobility. Common values and beliefs of what school communities hold dear and want for their children's education, consequently, are less common. Conflicts in public schools stem from its stakeholders' diversity in race, religion, and ethnicity.

A struggle for power is another view theorists hold for the disconnection. Bender (1989) sees the struggle for power as the disconnection between schools and communities. Lederhouse (2001) believes that decision-making power should remain solely in the hands of the teachers. She cites that "public education has more to lose than its most capable contributors. Instructional methods and ways of developing curriculum will change more slowly without the active involvement of teachers" (p.2).

The Theory of Professionalism Versus Public Participation

The theory of professionalism versus public participation runs wide and deep in the literature on SBDM (Cohn; Crowson; Little; Louis; Lutz and Merz, 1992). Traditionally, principals bore the overall responsibility for the student achievement of their school. SBM called for principals' shared decision-making with teachers, and then, SBDM mandated educators share decision-making with

the public. Clune and White (1988), David (1989), and Mojkowski and Fleming (1988) see participative democracy in school decision-making as one way to reconnect communities and schools for the benefit of all.

The Theory of Types of SBDM

Another theory for studying SBDM is by categorizing various implementation models of SBDM as types. Some of the types identified by researchers include those in which administrative control dominates, professional control in which the professionals in an organization dominate, community control in which the community members dominate, and equal control types in which the power is distributed equally among all the SBDM stakeholders.

In a meta analysis of 83 empirical studies of SBDM conducted by Leithwood and Menzies (1998), four pure types of SBDM emerged: administrative control, professional control, community control, and equal control. Each type showed both positive and negative effects on students, teachers, and others in the community. All the types provided little evidence of a positive effect on students, and all the types illustrated a range of variations in their respective sites. Studies ranged from 1985-1995, with greater attention on studies from 1990-1995. Almost all the studies were field-based. The purposes and goals, the basic assumptions, the locus of decision-making power, which decisions were addressed, and the role of SBDM members of each type were examined.

The administrative control type of SBDM (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998) means the principal decides. In this form of SBDM, there is increased control to

central office and the school board for the efficient expenditure of resources for students' benefit. Site councils advise the administrators, and the administrators' control of SBDM councils varies from site to site.

The teachers decide in the professional control type of SBDM. This type is based on the assumption that professionals have the most relevant knowledge for making decisions (Hess, 1991). Teachers comprise the largest proportion of membership of the site council, and as a result, they demonstrate an increased commitment to the implementation of decisions. Columbus, Ohio, Miami, and Los Angeles employ the professional type of SBDM.

The community control type of SBDM puts parent and community members in charge of decision-making. The goals of the site council focus on the belief that the curriculum should directly reflect the values and preferences of the parents and the local community (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999; Ornstein, 1983; Wohlstetter and Odden, 1992). The purpose is increased accountability to parents and the community, based on the assumption that it is the schools' responsibility to keep its customers satisfied (Bryk, Easton, Kerbow, Rollow and Sebring, 1993; Malen, et al., 1990; Wohlstetter, 1990; Wohlstetter and McCurdy, 1991; Wohlstetter and Morhman, 1993). Parents and community members comprise the majority membership on site councils.

The equal or balanced control type means that parents and teachers equally share the decision-making on site councils. The goal is to accomplish community and professional control because, since they are more knowledgeable, teachers make better decisions and they are more accountable to parents. Equal

control assumes that professionals are responsive to parents' and the community's values and preferences, and that both teachers and parents bring important knowledge to bear on decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, budget, and personnel. Site councils hold all the decision-making power and balance the membership equally between school and community. Little empirical evidence of equal control exists (Malen and Ogawa, 1988).

Leithwood and Menzies (1998) find that the community control type of SBDM shows the most evidence of positive and negative student effect, although professional control evidences the greatest impact on teachers who see SBDM as positive except for the increased workload it precipitates.

Wagstaff and Reyes (1993) also found that involving the community, teachers, and principals in decision-making provided the greatest promise for school improvement. In their study of five districts reputed for adopting and institutionalizing SBM as the decision-making process in all or some of their schools, Reyes and Wagstaff (1993) identify four distinct models of SBDM: (1) SBM/SDM, (2) SBM/SDM with principal veto power, (3) SBM/Loose Central Office control, and (4) SBM/Tight Central Office Control. Findings concluded that SBM/SDM showed the most promise for empowering teachers, parents, and staff to work with principals in making the fundamental decisions for school improvement. Stakeholders who participated in this model reported the most positive response when interviewed about SBDM.

The Theory of Reform Approaches to Anticipated Outcomes

Another theory for analyzing SBDM focuses on the approach and the outcomes it was intended to produce. Some approaches to SBDM focus on improving the school culture or climate, while some are aimed at curricular and instructional strategies. While the approaches to SBDM vary as much as the schools in which SBDM is instituted, the anticipated outcomes for SBDM are the same, that schools involve families and citizens in finding ways to close the achievement gap between White and minority students and raise the level of student achievement for all students.

In the school culture/climate approach to SBDM, stakeholders focus their attention on the mission of the school. They decided what they wanted boys and girls from their communities to learn based on the communities' needs, and then established the objectives and strategic plans to accomplish those ends. Often, strategies for increasing teachers' and students' morale, attendance, and motivation were included in the action plans that emerged in this approach to school reform.

In the curricular and instructional approach to SBDM, stakeholders made decisions about specialized programs and resource utilization they believed would lead to higher student achievement for all students in their school. In addition, there was increased accountability for outcomes.

The parental/citizen involvement models of SBDM were aimed at greater public engagement in schooling. A part of this approach included the integration of the school with the community resources and agencies. In addition,

stakeholders called schools to realign themselves with the community in a way that all students and community members would benefit.

SBM AND SBDM IN TEXAS

Texas adopted the administrative control type of SBDM. In 1990, the Texas Legislature mandated districts to establish district and campus SBDM committees. Principals, were given primary authority for the hiring of campus personnel after faculty consultation. In addition, principals' appraisals were to be tied to student achievement, and established the allowance for waivers from inhibiting state laws (Herman and Herman, 1993). While Texas school districts were busily implementing this legislation, Texas House Bill 2885 of 1991 (TEC Ch. 21, Sec. 21.931, 1991) established the formation of "district and campus committees, identified principals as the primary authority for campus staff appointments, and tied principal appraisal to student attainment of performance standards and allowed for waivers to the legislation" (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998, p. 328). Under state regulation, each district in Texas was directed to develop its own school plan. Legislation "directed the campus committees ...to undertake responsibility for improving student outcomes through goal-setting, curriculum, budgeting, staffing patterns, and school organization" (Herman and Herman, 1993, p. 187). The move toward SBDM was a move toward professional control (Charles A. Dana Center, 1998).

In the professional control model of SBDM, the professionals, principals and teachers, were in control of the decision-making that would get at solving the problems at the local campus that kept all children from achieving at a high level.

But in the years immediately following the 1991 mandate for SBDM, Smith (1998) noted that community members began to complain that the SBDM committees had too much control over the decisions affecting the school. Parents believed their concerns were going unheard, although they were sitting members of the SBDM committees. As a result, in 1995, the Texas legislature went back to the drawing board to revise the 1991 legislation in a way that addressed the parents' concerns. This was a move toward a community model with principal veto power. Under the revised legislation, the principal's role as decision maker was more clearly defined, and SBDM council's roles were more clearly defined as advisory in nature to Dr. Horn (TEC, 1995). Furthermore, parent membership now accounted for half the SBDM committee composition (Smith, 1998). Needless to say, the traditional principals' influence patterns began to change slowly, as they shared decision-making with local stakeholders, both from the school and community arena (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998, p. 329).

CONFLICTING RESEARCH FINDINGS

While the large body of research conducted over the past ten years has produced information about the types of SBDM, conflicting findings about the effects of SBDM on student achievement have also surfaced. SBDM proponents cite studies supporting the premise that SBDM positively affects student achievement, while the opponents cite studies that SBDM shows no effect on student achievement, or in some cases, that it has a negative effect on student achievement. The lack of empirical evidence that student achievement is positively affected by SBDM may be attributed to its premature evaluation as a

reform initiative (Oswald, 1995). Researchers recommend three to fifteen years' minimum commitment to SBDM before its success is evaluated.

BENEFITS OF SBDM

Studies that support SBDM as a boon to student achievement identify many common benefits to students, schools, parents, and communities. The increased empowerment of teachers in decision-making and clarity on professional development based on students' needs create improved achievement and equity due to changes in curriculum and instruction, build teacher collegiality through increased shared goal setting and planning, and foster collaboration of parents, teachers, and community members.

Those closest to the problems are empowered

Empowering those closest to the problems leads to increased commitment to the implementation of the decisions (Blase, 1995; Griffin, 1995; Weiss, 1993). Control over solving the problems ameliorates stress and burnout (Bryne, 1995). Teachers are closest to the problems related to student achievement (Hess, 1991; Allen and Glickman, 1992). This may account for the fact that most teachers believe SBDM positively affects students' achievement. Principals also report feeling empowered by SBDM. They experience increased flexibility and discretion in decision-making (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998).

Curriculum and instruction changes

Greater teacher effectiveness and efficiency through the identification and implementation of changes in curriculum and instruction result in better student

achievement outcomes for all students. Thirty-six studies of 83 in a meta analysis by Leithwood and Menzies (1998) found that stakeholders believe instructional strategies are better for all students because the school has more control over instruction.

An exploratory qualitative study conducted by Ovando (1994) examined stakeholders' perceptions of the extent to which schools using an SBM approach were engaged in decision-making associated with curriculum and instruction. Ovando looked at what roles teachers were playing, and what strategies were employed to assure the quality of the instructional program. She found that the participating schools were making progress in addressing curriculum and instruction to meet students' needs, but that additional study is needed to determine further how curriculum and instruction changes affect student achievement. Also, the impact of the changing roles of teachers on their teaching performance and on instruction should be studied.

Collegiality grows

Standards and accountability play a part in the equity of increased student outcomes (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998; Clune and White, 1988; David, 1989; Mojkowski and Fleming, 1988). As teachers set goals and plan instruction with principals, collegiality grows. As educators and parents set goals and plan instructional outcomes, collaboration grows.

Parent and community involvement increases

Parents feel they have more input due to SBDM (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998). Thirteen of 83 studies reported greater involvement of stakeholders. Seven

studies reported a more professional and healthier school climate. Drury and Levin (1994) reported increased community engagement as a benefit of SBDM.

PITFALLS OF SBDM

Just as proponents of SBDM cite studies that find SBDM to positively affect student achievement, opponents cite studies that find no positive affect on student achievement. A large body of the research identifies common problems associated with the implementation of SBDM. The fact that SBDM ascribes itself to no clearly established goals or accountability means there is no empirical measure for its success or failure. Another problem is the varied implementation across school sites intra and inter districts. Varied implementation makes accountability for and evaluation of student outcomes difficult for schools, districts, and the state. In addition, varied implementation makes it virtually impossible for evaluators and researchers to determine the effects of SBDM on student achievement.

The lack of clarification of stakeholders' roles on site councils is another problem often cited by principals, teachers, and parents. This could be attributable to the inadequate training for participation in SBDM, which in turn could be due to a lack of funding for the implementation of SBDM. An increased workload for teachers and principals who serve on site councils is another implementation problem that may stem from a lack of funding to support the reform.

Varied implementation

Malen (1990) describes the implementation of SBDM as "piecemeal." Authority can transfer from state to school boards, school boards to

superintendents, superintendents to principals, principals to other members of the school community such as teachers and principals or some combination of two or more of these (Oswald, 1995). In a literature review, Bauer and Bogotch (1997), found that in many districts, SBDM teams developed their own rules of operation, and the limits of their decision-making were unclear. This problem emanated from the districts' fear that their interference into boundary setting would deprive SBDM committees of their needed autonomy.

Lack of role clarification

Stakeholders on site councils were often unclear about their roles and responsibilities because roles were ambiguous (Oswald, 1995; Prash, 1990). In nine studies of 83 on SBDM, parents and community members reported little perceived change in their roles and decision-making opportunities (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998). Parents, teachers, and principals reported little delegation of power in six of 83 studies, resulting in friction between teachers, principals, and district administrators.

Inadequate training, follow-up, and support

SBDM training and team building for stakeholders on site councils is often inadequate. Training often occurs once for a brief time, if at all, which may be a result of the lack of funding for SBDM as a mandated reform initiative. As site councils serve their constituents, there often is a lack of support or follow-up by central office or the school board if problems or questions arise.

Studies report that stakeholders see SBDM as time-consuming and often uncomfortable (Prash, 1990). Teachers participate as a brake on the pace of

school reform (Oswald, 1995). They think of it as just another fad in the menu of reform initiatives. Principals push against the opposition of teachers (Weiss, 1995). An increased need for professional development, training, follow-up, and support is evident from these studies (Oswald, 1995; Malen; Prash, 1990).

Increased workload

All stakeholders on site councils suffer the effects of an increased workload due to meeting preparation and attendance. Some members may experience even more extensive work due to additional council leadership responsibilities. Evidence shows teachers experience additional work and time constraints when they must miss class during the school day to attend site meetings, not to mention the increased workload due to preparation of plans for a substitute teacher (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998; Jantzi and Leithwood, 1996). In addition, teachers experience stress and burnout from their participation on site councils (Huberman, 1989; Tuetteman and Punch, 1992).

Principals do not escape an increased workload due to their participation on site councils. Nine studies of 83 (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998) reported that all forms of SBDM increased principals' work by creating the need for more management. Time for attention to instructional leadership was minimized, although they experienced increased accountability for student performance (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998).

Lack of clear goals or accountability

Allen and Glickman (1992) found that unclear processes create confusion that fragments people's actions. A lack of clarity leads to a lack of progress

(Liontos, 1994). A major implementation problem lies in the fact that “schools want accountability, but state statutes still hold school boards accountable for results of decisions. State and district policies may require school board and district involvement” (National School Board Association, 1994).

In another study that reviewed data on SBDM councils in a large, urban district, Levey and Acker-Hocevar (1998) found that 80% of schools had a functioning SBDM council, but many were ineffective because the schools did not clearly define the roles or discuss the competencies crucial to implementing SBDM.

Inadequate funding

Inadequate funding undergirds most of the implementation problems of SBDM (David, 1989; Gomez, 1989; White, 1989). By looking at the prospect of adequate funding for SBDM, stakeholders become more cognizant of its shortcomings. First, adequate funding, training, follow-up and support would help to clarify the stakeholders’ roles and help to smooth out the implementation bumps when problems arise. Second, site councils might meet after school hours or on weekends if stakeholders were remunerated for their time or if child care was provided, which would help ease the burden on teachers who regularly miss class time, and for parents and community members who miss work to attend meetings. Councils could begin the decision-making process by taking time to establish clear goals and student achievement outcomes for their unique community.

QUANTITATIVE STUDIES ON SBDM

Many of the previous and current studies on the effects of SBDM on student achievement are quantitative in nature. They may measure changes in performance achievement on standardized pre and posttests as indications of positive or negative impact. In other studies, stakeholders' perceptions of SBDM may be measured by the use of surveys or questionnaires.

Hoetger (1998), in "A Case Study of Community Control and Its Impact on Student Achievement, the Curriculum, and Student Attitudes in Detroit Mumford High School," examines the impact community control in Detroit had on a typical, comprehensive, neighborhood high school by analyzing standardized test scores and class schedules. Results indicated "there was no appreciable improvement in achievement and that there was a coincident undermining of the richness of the curriculum after community control" (Hoetger, 1998, iv).

Bell (1996) in "School-Based Management and Student Achievement," studied the effects of SBDM on achievement by analyzing "variability in 4th grade IOWA test scores, while controlling for per-pupil expenditure, socioeconomic status of the student body and school size, and the correlation between the change in 4th grade IOWA test scores over a three-year period and SBM implementation" (Bell, 1996, iv). Findings showed that SBM did not contribute significantly to the variance in 4th grade IOWA standardized test scores nor significantly in the correlation between the change in 4th grade IOWA test scores over a three-year period and SBM implementation.

In “Shared Decision-Making and Student Achievement,” Munumer (1999) examined the impact of SDM on student achievement by paring non-League schools in their district with League schools. A t-test was performed on ITBS performance from 1993-1998. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference. Surveys examining several SDM issues were also conducted. Results from the surveys also did not support the claim that SDM positively impacts student achievement.

Sampson (1999) in “Models of Site-Based Management and Parent Perception of Student Achievement: A National Study,” studied the effectiveness of SBM models through the collection of survey data (questionnaires). The study found that over fifty percent of the school districts surveyed implemented some type of SBDM. Furthermore, in all the schools studied, the types of SBDM differentiated by who initiated SBDM in the school district, superintendents, school boards, or state mandates.

Onwuchekwa (1996) in “Site-Based Decision-Making and Student Achievement: A Case Study of Spring Branch Independent School District,” examined the impact of SBDM on student achievement through its impact on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) achievement in Spring Branch Independent School District in Houston, Texas. Findings showed that SBDM showed no progressive impact on student TAAS achievement scores over a three-year period.

Finally, Hopkins (1999) in “Site-Based Management and Student Achievement,” studied the impact of SBM through the examination of changes in

student achievement on the Michigan Assessment of Education Program (MEAP). From the data gathered, there appeared to be no impact of SBM on student achievement.

Based on this collection, it appeared that a large number of the studies on SBDM examined the effects of SBDM on student achievement, while a noticeably fewer number examined the perceptions of stakeholders in a way that tells the stories of its implementation on local campuses. Hoetger (1998), Bell (1996), Munumer (1999), Sampson (1999), Onwuchekwa (1996), and Hopkins (1999) all studied the impact of SBDM by examining student achievement data, most typically, standardized test scores.

There seemed to be an important voice missing from studies of SBDM and its impact on student achievement. The stories of stakeholders' experiences on site councils could enfold critical information that might impact the further implementation of SBDM and improve student achievement for all students. Through their stories, themes or patterns, meanings may emerge that policy makers and educational leaders could use to improve the implementation of SBDM for the 21st century.

QUALITATIVE STUDIES ON SBDM

Based on this review, it seemed a comparatively small number of qualitative studies about SBDM exist. Almost all of the studies in this review examined the effects of SBDM on student achievement, albeit inconclusively. Interestingly, the social nature of SBDM seemed to demand a social methodology such as narrative to enable researchers to peel away the layers of SBDM. It

seemed the stakeholders' voices deserved to be heard. If their voices were heard, then their stories could be examined for themes and patterns that could critically impact the implementation of SBDM, and ultimately, student achievement.

Because SBDM is socially constructed, it is also contextual in nature. A parallel can be made that because reality is socially constructed, it follows it is also contextual in nature. Interpretivists search for patterns of meaning. An interpretivistic approach to the study of SBDM is based on the assumption that the effects of SBDM cannot be teased out in a way that it alone can be determined to improve student achievement, but that patterns of meaning may emerge that bring clarity to the effects of SBDM on student achievement. According to Janesick (1994), in qualitative research the aim is to look for the meaning and perspectives of participants in the study. Thus, inquiry into the roles and experiences of stakeholders on site councils must be qualitative. According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), "the role of the researcher in an interpretivist study is that of a 'passionate participant' actively engaged in facilitating the 'multi voice' reconstruction of his or her own construction as well as those of all other participants" (p. 115). Stakeholders' narratives, or stories, give them an opportunity to delve more deeply into their experiences. In addition, in analyzing stakeholders' narratives, researchers may discover common themes or patterns that emerge which they may illuminate, resulting in a change of stakeholders' and others' assumptions, practices, and skills related to SBDM.

CONCLUSION

The literature about SBDM presented a conflicting body of evidence on its effects on student achievement, the purpose for which it was designed. Some researchers found a positive impact, while others say it produced a negative effect or no effect at all on student achievement. While this debate continued, schools across Texas and the nation continued to implement SBDM on the premise that student achievement would improve when those closest to the problems controlled the decision-making.

A large number of the studies on SBDM in the past five years have been quantitative in nature, measuring its effects by the evidence of impact on student achievement. So far, the evidence that SBDM positively impacts student achievement is indefinite. Additionally, the multitude of studies about SBDM reveals several types, approaches, pitfalls, and promises. Overwhelmingly, the literature affirms that there are as many models of SBDM as there are districts and schools, due to varied implementation. There seems to be a comparatively smaller number of studies, which provide stakeholders the opportunity to tell their stories about SBDM. These stories could critically impact the further implementation of SBDM.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This review of the literature relevant to SBDM provides readers a brief discussion of the historical context in the United States, a description of localized control, SBM, and SBDM in Texas. In addition, the researcher explains several theoretical frames for analyzing types of and approaches to SBDM. The benefits

and pitfalls are depicted, and a case is made for the appropriateness of qualitative research methods in the study of SBDM. Implications for further research follow the conclusion.

Authors of recent studies on SBDM such as Schuttlöffel (2000), Brunner (1998), and Dempster (1999) recommend several areas of needed research. The recommendations represent studies in disciplines other than and in addition to education such as sociology, policy and planning, leadership, and economics. In many of these recommended areas of study, the disciplines are so interconnected that it is difficult to categorize topics by discipline. This suggests that future studies on SBDM could be interdisciplinary. In topics more closely related to education, researchers suggest further study on the intended and unintended effects of SBDM in relation to public education (Dempster, 1999), in addition to school autonomy and its effects on SBDM (Schuttlöffel, 2000), how public schools and their communities can be reconnected (Brunner, 1998), and the effects of SBDM on urban schools (Schuttlöffel, 2000).

Some of the recommended research topics more closely linked to the discipline of sociology and leadership include SBDM and the effects of fairness and equality for all (Dempster, 1999), the issue of school leadership (Schuttlöffel, 2000), and SBDM as an issue of diversity (Brunner, 1998). Others include dilemmas requiring ethical decisions by principals such as student selection, streaming, exclusion, and teacher experience related to SBDM (Dempster, 1999), the effects of SBDM on the role of the principals, on teacher effectiveness, and on student learning (Ibid. 1999).

Chapter 3

Methodology and Procedures

INTRODUCTION

My purpose in this chapter is to describe the methodology and procedures used in this study. The chapter is divided into six sections. Section one, the introduction, describes the purpose of the chapter and the study. Section two explains the research design, section three describes the participants, and section four explains the procedures and data collection. Section five includes the data analysis, and the last section summarizes the chapter.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of my study was to determine the perceptions of parents, teachers, and administrators from an elementary school in Texas about implementation strategies in site-based decision-making (SBDM) based on their experiences as stakeholders on site councils. From their stories, I looked for themes of implementation strategies that were workable and that did not work.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions guided the research: (a) What are the experiences of stakeholders involved with SBDM that illustrate the workable, unworkable, and needed implementation strategies? (b) What themes emerge from stakeholders' stories that can further inform policy makers and educational leaders about SBDM implementation strategies that are workable and needed?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology used in this study was qualitative; a single case study. "Case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied," and "is defined by interest in the individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used" (Stake, 1994, p. 236). An instrumental case study examines a particular case "to provide insight into an issue of refinement of theory" (Ibid. p. 237). The case plays a supporting role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The data for this study were collected over a six-month period, August 2002 through the last day of January 2003.

SUITABILITY OF THE METHODOLOGY TO THE STUDY

A large body of the extant research on SBDM takes a quantitative approach, comparing students' or schools' pre and posttest scores on standardized tests. Evidence from these studies does not clearly identify SBDM as having a positive or negative effect on student achievement; rather a conflicting body of

research evidence is produced. Advocates for SBDM believe it produces positive effects, and opponents believe it does not.

I believe that much of the story about the effects of SBDM remains untold, due to the methodological limitations of previous studies. Stakeholders' stories are the closest we can come to experience SBDM. Through their stories, we can educate the self and others (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994).

Because SBDM is a phenomenon, and because reality is socially constructed, it made sense to use a qualitative methodology for this study. The case study approach is based on the assumption that the effects of SBDM cannot be teased out in a way that it alone can be determined to improve student achievement, but that patterns of meaning may emerge as stakeholders' tell their stories that bring clarity to the effects of SBDM on student achievement. In addition, patterns of meaning may unfold that could be instrumental in the reauthorizing of SBDM as a reform initiative.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

Strengths of the methodology, trustworthiness and authenticity, were established through triangulation. To reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation, I employed various procedures, including the redundancy of data gathering and procedural challenges to explanations (Denzin, 1989; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Illustration as to how SBDM occurs in the circumstances of one case can be valued and trustworthy knowledge. Generalizations from differences between any two cases are much less likely to be trusted than generalizations from one" (Stake, 1994, p. 242).

Although generalizations cannot be made from this case to others, the rich description of the stakeholders' experiences provide the transferability of the findings to readers in similar contexts with information they may use to inform their future implementation of SBDM.

Time constraints due to my work schedule and the work schedules of the participants limited the scope of the study.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The methodological design is a single instrumental case study. "As a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the method of inquiry used" (Stake, 1994). The stakeholders from one elementary school campus in Texas who participated in their SBDM council, in addition to Dr. Diamond, the Superintendent from the respective district, were interviewed. Observations of campus SBDM meetings, in addition to observations of district documents and documents from SBDM meetings on the campus, provided study data. This particular case was examined to provide insight into the issue or refinement of theory relative to SBDM (Stake, 1994).

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS OR ORGANIZATIONS

The Poppyfield Independent School District (a pseudonym), a central Texas school district with a population of approximately 22,500, provided the setting for the case study. The district's enrollment for 2002/03 totaled 15,743 students represented by two high schools and one alternative high school, four middle schools, thirteen elementary schools, and one primary school. The district's demographic student composition included 46.8% White, 18.2% African

American, 26.3% Hispanic, 8.1% Asian, and .06% Native American, with 42 native languages spoken and 25.89% receiving Free/Reduced Lunch. The district received “Recognized” status on the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) for 2001/2002, 2000/2001, and 1999/2000.

Paul Revere Elementary School in the Poppyfield Independent School District provided the setting for the purposeful case sample. Paul Revere was selected based on its school improvement and its principal’s tenure over the past five years. In 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, the campus AEIS rating was “Recognized,” and in 2001-2002, the campus rating fell to “Acceptable” due to a drop of 0.9% among Hispanics passing all tests, and the 9.2% increase in the Hispanic enrollment from 2000-01. This drop could have been attributed to the district’s 2001-02 designation of Paul Revere as a bilingual campus.

Grade levels ranged from Early Childhood for three year olds through fifth grade. The total enrollment for 2001/2002 was 692 students. Demographically, the campus student composition included 21.1% African American, 49.4% Hispanic, 22.4% White, 5.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.3% Native American with 48.1% Economically Disadvantaged and 31.9% Limited English Proficient.

The purposeful case sample included representatives who formerly, currently, or never served on the site council of Paul Revere Elementary School, including parents, teachers, and principals, and district administrators. The total sample of fifteen respondents included four parents, three of whom were non-members, seven teachers, one of whom included the counselor and one of whom was a non-member, and four administrators, including Dr. Diamond, the

superintendent of the district, Ms. Money, a central office staff member who served on the campus SBDM committee, Dr. Horn, the principal, and Ms. Edger, assistant principal, at Paul Revere Elementary School. The respondents represented both male and female gender, and varied in age and in ethnicity, relative to the site council membership and non-membership. Also, their years of experience serving on the site council for their respective school varied.

The respondents were selected in varying ways. I selected Dr. Diamond based on her leadership in the implementation of SBDM in the district. I perceived Dr. Diamond as the responsible party, by virtue of her position, for carrying out and monitoring the district's programs including the implementation of SBDM.

I selected many of the other respondents by virtue of their participation on the CAAC. Ms. Money, the central office staff member was selected based on her participation on the Paul Revere CAAC as a liaison between the district and the campus. The counselor, chairperson, and teachers, and one parent were selected by virtue of their membership on the CAAC and their agreement to participate in the study. One teacher non-member volunteered to participate in the study based on the solicitation of her campus CAAC chairperson. Of the twelve CAAC members, three teachers declined the invitation to participate.

In addition to the district and school personnel, I selected three non-member parents for interviews during a campus-wide academic event one evening in January. During the Super Bowl Math Night event I asked two teachers I knew from our work together during the data collection to help me identify parents who

were very involved at Paul Revere. The identified the parents in attendance they felt were the most involved and initiated the parents' participation in the interview by introducing me to them and the purpose of my study. Due to the parents' trust in the teachers who introduced me, the parents were all willing to temporarily suspend their participation in Math Super Bowl for the purpose of the interview about decision-making at their school.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS

The Administrators' Profiles

The category of administrators in the study included two levels: (1) district administrator, and (2) campus administrator. Dr. Diamond¹ for the district, one central office staff member, Ms. Money,² the superintendent, Dr. Horn,³ and assistant principal, Ms. Edger,⁴ at the campus comprised the administrator category of respondents.

Dr. Diamond, Superintendent

Dr. Diamond's district tenure encompassed four years, with this serving as her first superintendency after 31 years in public school education. She did not serve on the district's site council.

¹ Dr. Diamond is a pseudonym for the superintendent.

² Ms. Money is a pseudonym for the central office staff member.

³ Dr. Horn is a pseudonym for Dr. Horn of Paul Revere Elementary School.

⁴ Ms. Edger is a pseudonym for Ms. Edger of Paul Revere Elementary School.

Ms. Money, Central Office Staff

Ms. Money, the central office staff member, served as a district liaison to the campus SBDM committee, attending all campus SBDM meetings. She was a veteran educator with 23 years of educational experience: 1.5 years in the district, and this year on the campus committee.

Dr. Horn, Paul Revere's Principal

Dr. Horn was an African American female who served as principal of Paul Revere Elementary School. She had served in an administrative capacity on the campus for five years. Dr. Horn served as assistant principal for two years at the campus prior to her principalship. She served as the leader of the Campus Academic Advisory Committee (CAAC). She did not serve on the District Advisory Committee (DAC).

Ms. Edger, Paul Revere's Assistant Principal

Ms. Edger was the White female assistant principal who had also served in an administrative capacity on the campus for five years. She completed her administrative internship during her first year at the campus. She served as assistant principal for four years. Ms. Edger served on the campus site council, but she did not serve on the DAC.

The Teachers' Profiles

The teacher category of respondents represented seven female teachers whose grade level experience, as well as their experience on the respective council, varied.

Ms. Holmes, Teacher and CAAC Chairperson

Ms. Holmes⁵, an African American female teacher, served as the CAAC chairperson. She held eight years' educational experience, with five years occurring in Poppyfield ISD at Paul Revere Elementary School. She was the only chairperson this CAAC had known during the five years the school had been in operation. She had also served on the DAC for two years prior to the study.

Ms. Horton, the Counselor and CAAC Member

Ms. Horton,⁶ a White female was included in this group. She held 12 years' experience in education, one of which was in Poppyfield ISD. She was new both to Paul Revere and to service on the CAAC in 2002-03. She had not served on the DAC.

Ms. Jones, Teacher and CAAC Member

Ms. Jones, a White female, held four years' educational experience, all four in Poppyfield ISD at Paul Revere Elementary School. She was a veteran of four years on the CAAC, but she had not served on the DAC.

Ms. Lewis, Teacher and CAAC Member

Ms. Lewis, a White female, held 20 years' educational experience. Five of her years were experienced in Poppyfield ISD, all at Paul Revere Elementary School. She was a new CAAC member for the 2002-03 school year. She had never served on the DAC.

⁵ Ms. Holmes is a pseudonym for the CAAC chairperson.

⁶ Pseudonyms are used for all the respondents in the study to protect their anonymity.

Ms. Arnold, Teacher and CAAC Member

Ms. Arnold, a White female, held nine years' educational experience, including four in Poppyfield ISD at Paul Revere Elementary School. She served on the CAAC for three years, but she had not served on the DAC.

Ms. Rivas, Teacher Member of the CAAC

Ms. Rivas, a Mexican American female was in her first year of experience in education. Accordingly, she was new to the district, to Paul Revere Elementary School and the CAAC. She was not serving on the DAC during this year.

Ms. Cole, Teacher and Non-member of the CAAC

Ms. Jones, a White female, was a former CAAC member and a current non-member of the campus SBDM committee. She held five years' educational experience, all occurring in Poppyfield ISD at Paul Revere Elementary School. She had served on the CAAC for two and a half years. She had never served on the DAC.

The teachers' collective educational experience ranged from one to 20 years, averaging 8.4 years (n=7). Their experience in this district ranged from one to five years. Their tenure on the campus SBDM committee ranged from the current year to five years, averaging 2.5 years (n=7).

The Parents' Profiles

The parent respondents were representative of the single parent member of the respective site council as well as three parents who were non-members.

Ms. Sanders, Parent CAAC Member

Ms. Sanders, a White female, was the parent site council member in 2002-03 who also served as member of the non-professional school staff, where she had been employed for three years as a teacher's aid. She had not served on the DAC. She had three children enrolled at Paul Revere and had been part of the district for three years.

Mr. Davy, Parent CAAC Non-member

Mr. Davy, an White male, was not a member of the CAAC. Mr. Davy's three children were enrolled at Paul Revere Elementary School for three years. He was not aware of the site-based decision-making process or of the CAAC or the DAC during his interview with me.

Ms. Eugene, Parent CAAC Non-member

Ms. Eugene, a Palestinian female, was not a member of the CAAC or DAC. Her four children were enrolled for the first time at Paul Revere Elementary School in 2002-03. She was not aware of the CAAC or of the DAC.

Ms. Frut, Parent CAAC Non-member

Ms. Frut, Mexican American female, was not a member of the CAAC or the DAC. She had four children who had been enrolled at Paul Revere Elementary School for four years.

I selected and interviewed the non-member parents during an evening school-wide event in January. Each parent was asked to respond to the same interview questions as the rest of the respondents, in English. A translator

provided the questions in her native language for the parent who spoke Spanish. My observations from these interviews in the form of field notes were coded for themes.

THE SAMPLING METHOD USED TO SELECT PARTICIPANTS

Site Selection.

The method used to select the sample district site in Texas was convenience sample selection (Patton, 1990) based on its geographical location in central Texas and purposeful based on the district's recognized Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) rating in 2001.

Case Selection.

The elementary school that served as the particular case was purposefully selected with the guidance of the district research and evaluation officer (DREO) based on Dr. Horn's five-year tenure and on distinguished campus improvement in the last three years. At the time of selection, the campus was recognized based on the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). The DREO recommended three elementary schools in the district that met the selection criteria. I worked with the DREO to make a final selection of the school to be used in the case study. Once the case elementary school was selected, I worked with Dr. Horn to plan all the interviews and campus observations of SBDM meetings.

Interview participants were selected by purposive selection based on their current positions as superintendent and central office staff, and by their former, current, or non-member participation on their respective 12-member site council.

PROCEDURES AND DATA COLLECTION

Denzin (1978) identifies the use of a variety of data sources in a study as triangulation. The data collection instruments for this study included: (1) field notes from observations of two site council meetings in the fall, (2) seven interview questions which guided the focus group discussion, (3) careful review of the minutes from site council meetings for information pertinent to the research questions, and (4) recordings and transcriptions from interviews with the superintendent, a central office staff member who served on the campus SBDM committee, two campus principals, seven faculty, six of whom were site council members, and the parent site council member. The three non-member parents' interviews were observed and recorded as field notes and coded for themes pertinent to the research questions. Transcripts included two site council meetings and a site council focus group meeting in which twelve members of the site council participated. These data served as field texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) to represent aspects of the field experience.

FIELD TEST

Prior to the data collection, I conducted a field test with three colleagues who were knowledgeable about SBDM to determine the reliability of the interview and focus group questions prior to data collection at the elementary school site. The interview protocol elicited responses indicative of the kinds of information expected.

TYPE OF INSTRUMENT USED

I pre-formulated questions that served as the catalysts for respondents' answers during interviews with the site council on the respective campus, although other questions were asked to extend their responses when narrative themes began to emerge. In this active interview process as described by Holstein and Gubrium (1995), I intentionally provoked responses by indicating narrative positions and orientations for the respondents to engage in addressing the study's research questions. I used the same questions, or "interview schedules," (Ibid. p.56) with the focus group, in individual interviews with site council members and non-members, respective campus principals, parents, and in interviews with Dr. Diamond and central office staff member

Each meeting with respective campus stakeholders (a focus group with the site council and individual interviews) was scheduled for an hour; thus, each participant in the study logged a minimum of two hours of conversation. Field notes of observations I made during the SBDM meetings, in addition to recordings and transcriptions of responses to the interview or focus group questions were collected and coded for themes pertinent to the study's research questions.

Two site council meetings at the respective campus averaged ninety minutes each in length and were recorded with the full knowledge and permission of Dr. Horn and all the participants. Field notes, in addition to recordings and transcriptions, were also collected and coded.

I also reviewed a collection of documents relative to SBDM including the district and campus SBDM policy manuals, agendas and minutes of campus SBDM meetings, and campus improvement plans (CIP) from 1999 to the present. I also collected and coded field notes of observations from the documents.

STEPS FOLLOWED TO GATHER THE DATA

I created an interview and observation guide that described the purpose of the study, the design, a description of the participants and the procedures for data collection, a description of the field test, the type of instrument used, the steps followed in gathering the data, and a description of the data analysis. Protocols included the proposed chronology of study events, a sample consent form for exempt proposals, and the proposed interview questions. The questions targeted the definition of SBDM, the respondent's experiences with SBDM, the kinds of training received, the kinds of decisions by the site council that affected student achievement on their campus, and the strengths and weaknesses of SBDM in general, in the district, and at the campus.

I surveyed fifteen central Texas school districts' DREO departments based on the districts' "Recognized" or "Exemplary" district performance rating to determine their interest in participating in the study.

Thirteen of the fifteen surveys were returned with a negative response, but a follow-up call to one of the two districts' DREOs that had not responded proved fruitful. I selected the district site based on the convenience and purposeful selection criteria. The selected site received a letter that confirmed their selection and set up the expectation for a follow-up phone call to the site in two days. At

that point, the DREO and I collaborated in discussing the study and the district's protocol in facilitating research studies, and determined the elementary schools in the district that met the selection criteria for the specific case. Once the DREO had surveyed principals of the respective school sites as to their willingness to participate, I worked with the DREO to make the final selection. After the case site was selected, I worked with the Dr. Horn to describe the study and schedule the campus meetings with parents, teachers, and principals for the fall semester.

I scheduled an hour introductory meeting with the site council members for August to explain the study and their roles as participants. This introductory meeting occurred at the school site after a regularly scheduled site council meeting. Issues of observation and reportage were discussed, and limits of accessibility were suggested. A letter stating the agreements between the participants and me was distributed at the meeting and returned either after the meeting or in the mail.

For the purpose of data collection, I conducted interviews and attended campus SBDM meetings for six months, from August 2002 through January 2003, at which time all participants received a letter of thanks from me for their participation.

I coded all the data, analyzing the field notes and transcripts for themes or patterns of meaning, and conducted member checks with the participants for reliability and validity.

DATA ANALYSIS

Major data in qualitative studies stem from documentary and related sources (Finnegan, 1996). For the respective campus, I analyzed and coded documents including the district and campus SBDM policies, the campus meeting agendas and minutes for school years 1999-2003. I also analyzed and coded the minutes of two site council meetings. I analyzed and coded the field notes from observations of the two site council meetings, interviews, and focus group meeting. I also analyzed and coded transcripts from the two site council meetings, a focus group meeting, and interviews. Finally, I conducted member checks by providing “drafts of how participants are presented, quoted, or interpreted and listen well for cries of concern” (Stake, 1994, p. 244) to establish that the findings represent the participants’ true beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about SBDM.

I used constant comparative analysis to look for statements and indices of behavior in the interview transcripts, described by Janesick (p. 48,1998) as “bracketing,” pieces of narrative in the text that showed emerging themes as well as points of tension that did not seem to fit the emerging themes. I applied Denzin’s (1989) recollection of Husserl’s earlier conception of bracketing, the concept of holding the phenomenon, in this case, of SBDM, up to serious inspection by (1) locating key phrases within the personal experience that spoke to the phenomenon, (2) as an informed reader, interpreting the meanings, (3) obtaining the respondents’ interpretation of these findings, (4) inspecting these meanings for essential, recurring features of SBDM, and (5) offering tentative

statements about the phenomenon in terms of the recurring features. These methods of triangulation created trustworthiness and authenticity for the study.

THE RESEARCHER AS AN INSTRUMENT

I served the role of observer participant as described by Clandinin and Connelly (1994). In observing and participating in this study, three distinct kinds of experiences shaped my beliefs, values, and biases about SBDM. First, my background and three decades of experience as an elementary teacher, professional development specialist, and assistant principal and principal of elementary schools served as preparation to conduct this study.

During the first 15 years of my public school teaching career, my principals were very much in charge of the decisions that were made on the campus. I never thought of questioning the decisions made for our school, neither was I aware of principals ever soliciting input from any of us on the faculty in making the decisions, they just made them and then announced them to us in a faculty meeting or in a memo in our mailboxes.

Parents of the children in the schools where I worked seemed happy to come to PTA and make cookies for the school bake sale when asked, but for the most part, they left the school business to the professional school folks. They seldom inquired about the processes or procedures we employed in educating their children. To the contrary, they seemed grateful that we cared so much and worked so hard to help their children succeed in school and in their lives outside school.

By the end of my teaching career, I served as assistant principal and experienced site-based decision-making in a different way. I watched my neophyte principal collaborate with the young, inexperienced staff to better meet the students' needs. She valued shared decision-making, and I liked the shift in the way we made decisions together that would affect us as well as our students. The shared decisions overall positively impacted the children, instruction, and the curriculum, although some decisions that the group made were more in their best interest and not the students. Parents and community members were not part of the decision-making process, so I experienced a more professional type of SBDM for the two years I served there.

As a result of this experience, I learned that decision-making was a powerful tool that could be used both wisely and foolishly. Also, shared decisions, unless we were vigilant as educators, could be driven by personal agendas, and often those agendas were opaque in the process. Third, I learned that only after decisions were put into play were the effects known. Finally, I learned that sometimes the effects alone did not justify rethinking the decision. If the decisions made were good or bad, they made someone happy or benefited them, so there was little chance of changing the decision for the common good.

My next career move was to the district level of administration. I was not involved working with parents in this district, but the team of seven consultants of which I was a part shared decision-making about district professional development for over 500 new teachers each year. I believe we made decisions with our Director of Staff Development that were never rescinded or retooled by

our assistant superintendent due to our collective experience, knowledge, and wisdom.

Finally, my experience as a campus principal guiding a site-based decision-making committee provided a whole new frame for my thinking about SBDM. I was thrust into the position of participant as a member of the SBDM body on my campus after receiving mandatory district training for all the members. During my tenure as principal, I learned decisions were to be made by consensus, although I held veto power, as long as the veto was not arbitrary or capricious. Also, I learned personal agendas ruled the meetings, although we were charged with making decisions good for all the children at our school. By the end of the first year I also learned the campus improvement planning (CIP) process morphed into an endless battle between everyone's personal ideas of what would best benefit their child. We finally produced a CIP with so many strategies that it was nearly impossible to implement or implement well.

My participation in SBDM as a teacher, a district administrator, and a campus administrator developed my perceptions of SBDM that shared decision-making worked best when there was a common set of values and beliefs among the decision-making body. I know decision makers must be cautious of groupthink, but they must also understand and value the common belief that the needs of all children as a collective body are the ones for whom they are making decisions. Personal agendas need to be dealt with in another way rather than through the SBDM process.

In addition to my professional experience, my preparation to conduct this study also included the completion of three years of course work toward my doctorate in the school of education, the department of education administration, including the completion of two semesters of dissertation work.

OBSERVATIONS OF DISTRICT AND CAMPUS VISITS

During data collection, I made several observations of the district and the campus based on visits to the central office and the campus of Paul Revere. Two visits were conducted at central office, and 13 visits were conducted at the campus. I observed Dr. Diamond in her setting at central office, as well as Ms. Money on a separate occasion, when I conducted their individual interviews. I also observed teachers,' administrators,' and parents' interactivity when I attended two CAAC meetings at Paul Revere, when I visited the campus to conduct individual interviews, and when I conducted the focus group interview. Another observation occurred when I attended the Super Bowl Math Night at Paul Revere to interview parents about SBDM. In all, my observations included ten campus visits and two visits to central office.

Central Office

Upon my visit to central office to interview Dr. Diamond, I found her secretary welcoming and expectant of my visit. My appointment was early in the morning just after the school day had begun, and the day seemed to be running smoothly, since Dr. Diamond was in her office and ready to see me shortly after my arrival at our scheduled time to meet. Dr. Diamond welcomed me warmly, and as our meeting began, we spent the first part of our conversation getting

acquainted. I shared the purpose of my study and the purpose of my interview with her: to determine her perceptions about SBDM in general and of its implementation in Poppyfield ISD. Although I sent the interview questions to her two weeks before the interview, she was not aware of them, so I provided her a copy. Before I began to tape the interview, we conversed for a half hour about her background and mine in education and the history of the district prior to her superintendency in Poppyfield ISD. At that point I began to tape the interview as I asked her the same interview questions I used with the other respondents.

Dr. Diamond was relaxed, open, and candid in her response to all the questions, although she often commented that her responses might not be what I wanted to hear regarding her perceptions about SBDM. At the end of the interview, I thanked her and told her I would bring her transcript of the interview upon its completion to be checked for any inaccuracies. Several days later, I mailed her transcript with a letter stating that she should read it carefully, make corrections if needed, and call or email me with any related thoughts or concerns. Within the week, I received an email from Dr. Diamond stating that the transcript was correct.

As a result of this interview, I felt positive about my study in this district. I respected Dr. Diamond's openness about her perceptions of SBDM, and hopeful that she would use the findings to address implementation in Poppyfield ISD.

My early morning visit to the central office almost two months later to interview Ms. Money also provided a picture of organization and positive climate. The receptionist gave me directions to Ms. Money's office, and I proceeded to

find her waiting expectantly for me. I began taping the interview quickly after her brief explanation that there was a birthday party for one of her colleagues going on, and that she would like to join them as soon as possible. I assured her that we would only be an hour or less. As we began the interview, she was candid, open, and relaxed with her responses. She was congratulatory in her comments of my doctoral work, and shared that she too had completed her course work, but had not begun her dissertation, and at this point the statute of limitations had expired for her to do so.

Ms. Money praised Paul Revere Elementary's principal for her good work involving parents, and completed the interview without rushing to celebrate with her colleagues. At the end I thanked her and told her I would share her transcript upon its completion, and that she should read it carefully for any inaccuracies. In the afternoon we both were at Paul Revere for a CAAC meeting, at which time she thanked me for the interview. Within several days, I sent her the transcript, and in a day or so, she contacted me saying the transcript was correct. She encouraged me in my work on this study.

As a result of my work with Ms. Money, during this interview, at two CAAC meetings, and during the focus group interview, her responses about SBDM were consistent. She always praised Paul Revere and Dr. Horn on their work to improve student achievement for all children and for the school's efforts in including parents.

Paul Revere Elementary School

Introductory meeting

I made a total of 13 visits to Paul Revere during data collection. The first visit was an introductory meeting with Dr. Horn to share the purpose of the study and to arrange the campus meetings. Our meeting was prior to the start of the school year, and Dr. Horn seemed calm, interested, and informed about my study. Initially she received information about my study through the DREO as she invited three principals in the district who met my selection criteria to be possible participants. Dr. Horn seemed proud that the DREO and I selected her school as the case sample.

The introductory visit lasted a bit longer than an hour, as we became acquainted. She briefly discussed her prior educational experiences in another district, and I shared mine. Soon I began to share the interview and observation guide that contained the study's protocols, and to explain my need for an introductory meeting to familiarize myself with the CAAC members and the study, at which time I would provide them an opportunity to agree to participate as respondents. We set a date and time for the meeting nearly a month later

My next campus observation was during the introductory meeting with the CAAC. The introductory meeting with the CAAC was held after school. All the CAAC members attended, although they arrived at varying times after the meeting began. I provided refreshments in hopes of establishing rapport. As each member came into the meeting, I welcomed her to refreshments and introduced myself. Several minutes after the established meeting time, Dr. Horn introduced

me to the group, and then I went over the interview and observation guide. I responded to questions throughout the explanation. At one point, one of the teacher members who later chose not to participate in the study asked questions about my reason for conducting this study at their school. She seemed uneasy that this information might somehow affect Paul Revere if the findings were negative. After my reassurance that the study was confidential and reiterating the selection process and issues of reportage, the chair and two other CAAC members who felt confident about the study, also reassured her that the study's findings would be useful to their school and the district. Although this teacher seemed apprehensive to participation, the others seemed open and willing. At the end of the meeting, I distributed to each member a statement of agreement to participate in the study with an attached stamped, self-addressed envelope. I explained their participation was strictly their choice, and that they should complete the letter indicating their willingness to participate and send the letter to me. I would contact them soon to establish a time for interviews. They thanked me, and then three members handed their letters to me immediately with signatures. I received letters from the other members within the following days. Two members decided not to participate. I followed up with them to make sure they had decided not to participate, rather than just losing the letter or forgetting to mail it. Neither of the two who chose not to participate divulged their reasoning.

CAAC Meetings

The two CAAC meetings went according to the agenda. As I observed I taped the interactions. At the first meeting, there was no meeting agenda

distributed. Twelve members were present, although several came in after the 3:30 p.m. beginning time. Like the members, I received a copy of the CAAC Handbook and the CIP for 2001-02. For the first five minutes, Ms. Holmes briefly summarized the CAAC committee guidelines as creating and monitoring the CIP, examining and allocating grant funds, planning, operation, and the supervision and evaluation of the CIP. Ms. Holmes directed members' attention to the CAAC handbook, "a document not seen before by the CAAC; a new document from the district."

Dr. Horn conducted a review of the TAAS Campus Report, the CIP, and the monitoring process members would follow in contacting the vertical team members based on the CAAC members' areas of interest to determine which strategies were completed, in progress, or needed for the 2002-03 CIP. Dr. Horn explained that due to district time constraints, she created the Campus Plan Needs Assessment without their input for the 2002-03 CIP and submitted it to central office. She told members she welcomed their thoughts if they felt the document needed modifications. No discussion followed this invitation. The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m., although Ms. Money left after only ten minutes and a teacher left at 4:15 p.m. the end of the meeting,

The second CAAC meeting, almost a month, later also went according to the agenda. Ten were in attendance, although three teachers were non-members, and Ms. Money was absent. Ms. Edger also attended this meeting. This was the only meeting she attended during the course of the study.

In this 75-minute meeting, the single objective was to establish the feedback from the vertical teams regarding needed changes to the 2002-03 CIP and finalizing the draft of the CIP. Members reported their conversations with the vertical teams and their recommendations. Three first grade non-members provided information essential to the vertical teams' recommended changes "Dr. Horn assigned groups to work on reviewing, editing, updating, cutting and pasting the Campus Action Plans from the previous meeting (CAAC meeting minutes, October 2003)" She provided a draft of the 2001-02 CIP, and members considered and revised each goal and objective. Ms. Holmes made a few announcements about pending school activities, and the meeting was adjourned.

Focus Group Meeting

The next campus observation took place during the CAAC focus group meeting. The focus group meeting was held on the campus after school. Of the twelve CAAC members, ten attended. Dr. Horn was not in attendance due to a reported district meeting, but Ms. Money was in attendance. Ms. Sanders was also not in attendance. I asked the same interview questions they responded to during their individual interviews, and they responded openly and with a feeling of excitement about their school and their SBDM process. Only at one time a teacher gave a response that was favorable to the process, when she explained her concern about all the meeting time interfering with lesson planning. I congratulated the group on their dedication to the children at Paul Revere, thanked them for their participation, and adjourned the meeting in an hour.

Interviews

My individual interviews with Dr. Horn, CAAC members and non-members went according to schedule. After I initially contacted each individually to arrange an interview time amenable to us both, I went to the campus accordingly to conduct each interview. In all, I made a total of 13 visits to the campus. Initially, I conducted each of the interviews in a special conference room designated by Dr. Horn. Each of the members came to the conference room at their scheduled time where we proceeded. I interviewed Ms. Cole in her classroom at her request and Ms. Edger and Dr. Horn in their respective offices.

At one point in the data collection, I was relocated to the office annex, a small room in which the fax machine, a phone and a small desk were situated. I understood that the former conference room was needed for other important campus meetings that required a larger space than I needed to conduct interviews. Many times while I conducted interviews in the annex, the secretary would interrupt to send or receive a fax. Also, on one occasion, a teacher came to use the phone. Also, due to the noise in the office annex, I was unable to transcribe the interview of one teacher.

In spite of the space challenges, the respondents came to the interviews calm and ready to participate. They each were apprised of the interview questions prior to their interview, and they seemed ready to respond. I began each interview building rapport by asking them to tell me about their educational experiences. They seemed to enjoy revisiting the chronology of their careers, and this helped set the stage for their experiences at Paul Revere related to SBDM and the CAAC.

Super Bowl Math Night

Super Bowl Math Night was held at Paul Revere on the evening of January 31. Due to the difficulties I experienced in soliciting parents' perceptions about SBDM as a result of the low parent participation on the CAAC, Dr. Horn suggested I use this school-wide event to gain parents' perceptions. The event began at 7:00 p.m. when math activities for families and their children were held in the school gym/auditorium. A meal was also served to families and children who purchased a ticket. A colleague accompanied me to translate for parents I would interview whose native language was Spanish. I estimated attendance as 1,000 families, children, and school personnel.

During the school-wide event, Dr. Horn and the teachers facilitated the math activities, and families and their children could select their favorites. A rotation occurred every hour. Outside the gym, in the school foyer, the new PTA president manned a table for the purpose of signing up new members. My conversation with her revealed her lack of knowledge about the CAAC and the SBDM process, although she seem interested as I explained the concepts of SBDM and the CAAC procedures. Her husband, Mr. Davy, became my first parent non-member respondent when she introduced us and explained my purpose for attending the event: to interview parents about their perceptions of SBDM. During the two hours I was in attendance, I also interviewed two other parents. When I left the campus, the event was still in progress.

REFLEXIVITY

In reflecting on the respondents' interactions with me, several thoughts come to mind. First, the CAAC teacher members and non-member who participated seemed eager to participate, willing to tell me their perceptions openly and honestly, anxious to find out the results in hopes it would benefit their campus and their SBDM process. They were all willing and comfortable to answer the interview questions and my probes. Even though I offered to discontinue taping if the probe intimidated them in any way, none opted to discontinue taping. They felt open to discuss all the questions with me, and this openness was reflected in all their responses about their relationship with their principal. They valued their capability to speak freely about campus issues to Dr. Horn both during CAAC and at other times.

Second, in reflecting on my interactions with Dr. Diamond and Ms. Money, I felt they both were proud of their work, the district, and Dr. Horn and Paul Revere. They also were open to my questions and probes, and their responses were candid. I felt welcomed in their offices and in the district. I also felt they were interested in the study's findings that could help them shape their district SBDM process.

Finally, in reflecting on my interactions with Dr. Horn, it can be said that she was instrumental in providing access and channeling communication to the CAAC about my study. For example, she provided me a list of the CAAC members, including a table of the Vertical Team Assignment for 2002-03, on which the CAAC was listed as one of the vertical teams. She added Ms. Sanders,

Ms. Horton, and Ms. Money's names to help facilitate my communication with them. Dr. Horn also facilitated my work with Ms. Holmes, the CAAC chairperson, in securing the members' names and email addresses.

Although our interactions about the study and data collection occurred mostly through Ms. Holmes after my interview with Dr. Horn, she provided Ms. Holmes guidance throughout the data collection process. Ms. Holmes facilitated my meetings with the CAAC members, but when I contacted Dr. Horn with a study-related need, she forwarded my messages to Ms. Holmes for her response. Dr. Horn was not able attend the focus group meeting due to a district conflict.

In sum, Dr. Horn's gift of open access to her campus, her acceptance and welcome to me as demonstrated before CAAC members, faculty, and staff, and her willingness in communicating the aspects of my study to the stakeholders, in a large way, contributed to my rapport with the school staff and parents.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In Chapter three, I described the research design by discussing the methodology for the study and explaining why the instrumental single case study was the appropriate methodology for the study. The salient characteristics of study participants were described and the convenience sampling method was described for the selection of the site. The purposive selection of the participants at the respective campus was explained. The procedures and data collection were explained in detailed chronological steps. Data collection instruments were described as "created for this study" by the researcher. The use of a field test prior to data collection was explained as a measure of reliability and validity.

Trustworthiness and authenticity of the study were explained in the use of the coding methods. Also, my role as an instrument of the study was discussed, as well as my observations and reflections of district and campus interactions

In Chapter four, I provide a description of the study site as well as the study's findings.

Chapter 4

The Findings of the Study

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present a description of the study site beginning with the study case, the Poppyfield Independent School District (ISD), and concluding with the sample, Paul Revere Elementary School followed by the findings of the study.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY SITE

Poppyfield Independent School District

The Poppyfield Independent School District provided the setting for the case study. The “Recognized” central Texas school district with a population of approximately 22,500 was situated in a city inhabited by 21,461 citizens. The district’s enrollment for 2002/03 totaled 15,743 students represented by two high schools and one alternative high school, four middle schools, thirteen elementary schools, and one primary school.

Student Information

The district’s demographic student composition included 46.8% White, 18.2% African American, 26.3% Hispanic, 8.1% Asian, and .06% Native American, with 42 native languages spoken and 25.89% receiving Free/Reduced

Lunch. The district received “Recognized” status on the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) for 2001/2002, 2000/2001, and 1999/2000.

Economically Disadvantaged students totaled 3,807 or 25% as indicated in the Student Information section of Texas Education Agency’s Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 2001-02 District Profile. Limited English Proficient (LEP) students totaled 1, 223 students or 8.0%, while students with Disciplinary Placements totaled 97 or 0.7%.

The number of graduates in the district totaled 869 or 100%. When disaggregated by ethnicity, including Special Education, 115 students or 13.2% were African American, 189 or 21.7% were Hispanic, 485 or 55.8% were White, 78 or 9% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2 or 0.2% were Native American. Graduate from the Minimum High School Program totaled 334 students or 38.4%, while 535 students or 61.6% graduated from the Recommended High School Program/DA. Ninety-five students or 10.9% were Special Education Graduates.

Staff Information

The district’s professional staff totaled 1,217.8 or 74.9%. When disaggregated by type, teachers totaled 1,025.2 or 63%, Professional Support totaled 120.3 or 7.4%, Campus Administration totaled 52.6 or 3.2%, and Central Administration totaled 19.7 or 1.2%. Educational Aides totaled 128 or 7.9%; Auxiliary Staff totaled 280.9 or 17.3% for a total staff of 1,626.7 or 100%.

An analysis of teachers by ethnicity and sex found 826 female teachers or 80.6%, and 199.2 Males teachers or 19.4%. When disaggregated by ethnicity, 60.6 or 5.9% were African American, 109.8 or 10.7% were Hispanic, 841.9 or

82.1% were White, 9 or 0.9% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3.9 or 0.4% were Native American.

An examination of teachers by highest degree held revealed that 16.6 or 1.6% held no degree, 793.8 or 77.4% held Bachelor's degrees, 212.7 or 20.8% held Master's degrees, and 2.0 or 0.2% held Doctorate degrees. According to their years' experience, beginning teachers totaled 75.1 or 7.3%, one to five years' totaled 315.1 or 30.7%, six to ten years' totaled 179.8 or 17.5%, 11 to 20 years' totaled 283.9 or 27.7%, and over 20 years' totaled 171.2 or 16.7%. The number of students per teacher was 14.8.

Teachers' years of experience averaged 10.7 years, while teachers' years' experience with the district averaged 5.1 years. Teachers' salaries ranged from \$30,109 for beginning teachers to \$47,732 for teachers with over 20 years' experience. The turnover rate for teachers was 15.3%.

Tax Information

The Standardized Local Tax Base Value after exemptions was \$3,892,642,697, and the Value Per Pupil was \$256,044. When values were disaggregated by category, the business value totaled \$1,144,452,729 or 25.7%, the residential value totaled \$2,913,785,235 or 65.5%, land values totaled \$312,559,967 or 7.0%, oil and gas values totaled zero, and other values totaled \$76,969,573 or 1.7%.

Budgeted Revenue Information

Total revenues were \$100,355,286 and total revenues per pupil were \$6,601. When revenues were disaggregated by source, local tax totaled \$56,086,420

or 55.9%, other local and intermediate totaled \$3,847,041 or 3.8%, state totaled \$39,101,975 or 39%, and federal totaled \$1,319,850 or 1.3%.

Fund Balance Information

The fund balance information showed the end-of-year 2000-01 audited Fund Balance totaled \$3,764,227. The percent of total budgeted expenditures for 2001-02 were 4.6%.

Budgeted Expenditure Information

Total expenditures were \$100,128,019 or 100%. When disaggregated by object, operating expenditures totaled \$85,814,435 or 85.7% and non-operating expenditures totaled \$14,313,584 or 14.3%. Total operating expenditures were \$85,810,885 or 100%. When disaggregated by function, instruction totaled \$52,033,962 or 60.6%, and the other 11 functions totaled \$29,838,865 or 39.4%. Per pupil expenditures totaled \$6,586.

Program Information

An analysis of students enrolled by program showed that 1,205 students or 7.9% were enrolled in bilingual/ESL Education, 95 or 0.6% were enrolled in Career and Technology Education, 1,035 or 6.8% were enrolled in Gifted and Talented Education, and 1,835 or 12.1% were enrolled in Special Education. Most teachers, 782.8 or 76.4% served the population of Regular Education students, with the next highest number, 101.2 or 9.9% serving Special Education students. The district's largest budgeted instructional operating expenditures was Regular

Education with \$38,068,552 or 73.2%, while the remaining five programs totaled \$13,960,300 or 26.8%.

Class Size Information

At the elementary level, class sizes ranged from 17.6 in Grade 1 to 27.4 in mixed grades. At the secondary level, class sizes ranged from 21.5 in foreign languages to 24.5 in social studies.

Percent Passing TAAS

An analysis of the percent of students passing TAAS (Sum of grades 3-8 and 10) in reading was 94.5%. When disaggregated by ethnicity, African American students passing totaled 91.4%, Hispanic students totaled 92.7%, White students totaled 96.5%, Native American students totaled 88.4%, and Asian/Pacific Islanders totaled 95.2 %.

When disaggregated by gender, Males passing reading totaled 93.3%, while Females totaled 95.7%. Economically Disadvantaged students totaled 89.4%, while Special Education students totaled 85.8%.

In writing, students passing totaled 92.3%, while African American students totaled 88.8%, Hispanic totaled 89.7%, White totaled 94.6%, Native Americans totaled 92.9%, and Asian/Pacific Islanders totaled 94.7%. Males totaled 89.4%, while Females totaled 95.4%. Economically Disadvantaged totaled 83.7%, and Special Education totaled 79.2%.

In math, students passing totaled 95.2%. African Americans totaled 91.2%, Hispanics totaled 94.3%, White totaled 96.8%, Native Americans totaled 93.2%, and Asian/Pacific Islanders totaled 97.4%. Males totaled 94.9% and

Females totaled 95.5%, while Economically Disadvantaged totaled 91.4% and Special Education totaled 86.5%,

In social studies, students passing totaled 89.5%. African Americans totaled 85.5%, Hispanics totaled 86.2%, White totaled 93.4%, Native Americans totaled 80.0%, and Asian/Pacific Islanders totaled 95.6%. Males totaled 88.4% and Females totaled 90.7%, while Economically Disadvantaged totaled 79.3% and Special Education totaled 80.9%.

On all tests, students passing totaled 89.9%. African Americans totaled 83.7%, Hispanics totaled 87.1%, White totaled 93.2%, Native Americans totaled 88.6%, and Asian/Pacific Islanders totaled 93.0%. Males totaled 88.1% and Females totaled 91.9%, while Economically Disadvantaged totaled 81.7% and Special Education totaled 76.6%

The district's attendance rate was 96.1% and its annual dropout rate for grades seven through 12 was 0.3%. The graduation rate of the class of 2001 was 86.8%, with 2.9% receiving Graduate Equivalent Diplomas (GED), 5.3% continuing high school, and 5.1% dropping out over the four years.

Paul Revere Elementary School

Paul Revere Elementary School, a school rated by The Texas Education Agency as "Acceptable" for 2001-02 in the Poppyfield Independent School District, provided the setting for the purposeful case sample. Grade levels ranged from Early Childhood for three year olds through fifth grade. The total enrollment for 2001/2002 was 692 students.

Student Information

Demographically, the campus student composition included 21.1% African American, 49.4% Hispanic, 22.4% White, 5.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.3% Native American with 48.1% Economically Disadvantaged and 31.9% Limited English Proficient (LEP). The campus AEIS rating dropped from Recognized to Acceptable in 2001/2002 due to a drop of 0.9% of Hispanic students passing all tests taken. This could have been attributed to the campus's designation by the district as a bilingual campus in the 2001/2002 school years, and the 9.2% increase in the Hispanic enrollment from 2000/2001.

Staff Information

The campus employed a total staff of 72.8 or 100% comprised of 56.6 or 77.9% teachers, 5 or 6.8% professional support staff and two or 2.7% campus administrators. The White staff totaled 37.6 or 66.4%, while the minority staff totaled 28.4 or 39%, with 4 or 7% African American, 14.1 or 24.9% Hispanic, and .9 or 1.6% Native American. When disaggregated by sex, 52.9 or 93.4% were Females and 3.7 or 6.6% were Males.

The majority of teachers, 17.2 or 30.4%, held from six to ten years of experience, while 11.9 or 21% were considered beginning teachers and 18.3 or 32.3% held from one to five years' experience. Only 6.2 or 11% held from 11 to 20 years' experience, while three or 5.3% held over 20 years' experience. The teachers' average years' experience totaled 6.2 years, while their average experience with the district totaled 2.4 years. Average teacher salaries ranged

from \$22,333 to \$47,817 according to their years of experience. Campus administration salaries were \$54,600.

Budgeted Operating Expenditure Information

An examination of the budgeted operating expenditure information revealed a total campus budget of \$3,072,770. By function, the instructional budget totaled \$2,297,070 or 74.8%, instructional leadership totaled 34,241 or 1.1%, school leadership totaled \$192,264 or 6.3%, and other campus costs totaled \$549,195 or 17.9%. Per pupil costs totaled \$4,440. When disaggregated by function, instructional costs totaled \$3,369, school leadership totaled \$278, and other campus costs totaled \$794.

Program Information

An analysis of Paul Revere's program information revealed that 220 or 31.8% of the students were enrolled in bilingual/ESL Education, 10 or 1.4% were enrolled in Gifted and Talented Education, and 94 or 13.6% were enrolled in Special Education. The high percentages of bilingual/ESL Education students were indicative of the school's recent identification as one of the districts' three bilingual campuses.

The largest number of the campus' teachers, 44 or 77.7%, served students in Regular education, while the next largest number, 10.4 or 18.4%, served Special Education students. The smallest number of teachers, one or 1.8%, served the Compensatory Education students, while 1.2 or 2.1% served the bilingual/ESL Education students.

The largest budgeted instructional operating expenditures were for Regular Education at \$1,444,105 or 62.9%, while the smallest were for Gifted and Talented Education, totaling \$32,954 or 1.4%

Class Size Information

Class size information derived from teacher responsibility records showed differences when disaggregated by grade and subject. The lowest class size average was 14.6 in Grade 1, and the highest was 19.2 in Grade 5.

Percent Passing TAAS

An analysis of the Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System 2001-02 Campus Performance Report showed that 90.4% passed reading. When disaggregated by ethnicity, 95.5% of African Americans, 82.5% of Hispanics, 98.3% of Whites, and 100% of Asian/Pacific Islanders passed. When disaggregated by gender, 91.6% of Males and 89.2% of Females passed. Among Economically Disadvantaged students, 81.4% passed, while 95% of Special Education students passed.

Results from the writing test showed that 85.7% of all students passed. When disaggregated by ethnicity, 81.3% of African Americans, 81.6% of Hispanics, 93.8% of Whites, and 100% of Asian/Pacific Islanders passed. When disaggregated by gender, 81% of Males and 91.4% of Females passed. Among Economically Disadvantaged students, 78.9% passed.

In math, test results showed that 96.6% of students passed. When disaggregated by ethnicity, 98.4% of African Americans, 93.4% of Hispanics, 100% of Whites, and 100% of Asian/Pacific Islanders passed. When

disaggregated by gender, 95.3% of Males and 97.7% of Females passed. Among Economically Disadvantaged students, 94.7% passed, while 100% of Special Education students passed.

On all tests, 86.9% of students passed. When disaggregated by ethnicity, 92.5% of African Americans, 77.2% of Hispanics, 96.7%% of Whites, and 100% of Asian/Pacific Islanders passed. When disaggregated by gender, 85.9% of Males and 88% of Females passed. Among Economically Disadvantaged students, 76.7% passed, while 87.5% of Special Education students passed.

The attendance rate was 97.3%, with the highest attendance rate, 98.4%, occurring among Asian/Pacific Islander students, and the lowest rate, 96.9%, occurring among the Native American students.

THE FINDINGS

The findings address the research questions, “What are the experiences of stakeholders involved with SBDM that illustrate the workable, the unworkable, and needed implementation strategies?” and “What themes emerge from stakeholders’ stories that can further inform policy makers and educational leaders about SBDM implementation strategies that are workable and needed?” I report the findings from each group’s experiences, as well as the themes about what strategies were workable and needed for policy makers and educational leaders further information.

Both the stakeholders’ experiences that illustrate what implementation strategies worked, did not work and were needed, as well as the themes about what strategies were workable and needed that could further inform policy makers

and educational leaders fall into six patterns or themes, based on their responses to questions they were asked during individual interviews and during a focus group meeting at the end of the data collection process. The six themes are (1) definitions of SBDM; (2) perceived experiences serving on SBDM committees; (3) perceived SBDM training experiences; (4) perceived effects of SBDM on student achievement; (5) perceived strengths of SBDM; and (6) perceived weaknesses of SBDM. In addition to the six themes, many sub-themes also emerged about implementation strategies that can further the practice of SBDM.

Question 1: What are the experiences of stakeholders involved with SBDM that illustrate the workable, unworkable, and needed implementation strategies?

The Administrators' Perceptions

SBDM Defined

SBDM is a process for involving stakeholders in discussing issues and policy, goal setting, and planning

All of the administrators in Poppyfield ISD saw SBDM as a process for involving stakeholders in discussing issues and policy, goal setting, and planning. Coming to consensus on what was good for the students in the district, and the shared decision-making on major issues about curriculum, instruction, and budget, created buy-in among the stakeholders. The buy-in for all the decisions led to school improvement within the district mission and goals.

While district leaders in Poppyfield ISD viewed SBDM as a process for goal setting and planning, they recognized Paul Revere Elementary School as the

“binding force” in the SBDM process. The district was divided geographically, culturally, and economically by a major highway that intersects the district, in addition to two county boundaries representative of both the rural and suburban cultures of those school communities in this same district. This division created a perceived obstacle to a common set of values or beliefs, and a difference in student achievement needs from school campus to campus within the district. Dr. Diamond expressed her concern about the difficulty of implementing SBDM in Poppyfield ISD.

You know site-based [management], it sounds great. It’s very hard to implement. It depends on what kind of district. If you have a small...district and there’s one community that might be much easier to do because everybody has the same, [sic] they go to the same schools, they have...those particular boundaries. We have kids who live in [city omitted] city limits. We have kids who live in the country. We have...it is not one community and we have got [a major highway] running right through which means that it separates this side from that side and there is no connection like there would be in a small town. To me site-based management would be so easy, [if] it had one high school, [sic] everybody had the same da-da-da. I have many different cultures. Like I said I have 42 different languages. Six or seven different governmental entities...That makes it hard for site-based district-wide. That’s why I said it makes a lot more sense that it helps with campuses.

Although district administrators viewed Paul Revere as SBDM’s binding force, they recognized that the campus had less “wobble room” to make curriculum decisions. Consequently, the district administrators viewed themselves as servant leaders to Paul Revere and other campuses in setting the vision and mission and training campuses on best practices. Dr. Diamond commented,

With the curriculum, I call it servant leadership, in a way; we are not here to perpetuate ourselves as central office. We are here to assist campuses in two prongs: for instance, not just state assessment, we are talking about all

kinds of things...They have less wiggle room on site-based because they are so busy learning, the new assessment, the new best practices, etc., etc., and then implementing that in their room that I think as a district we deal with other issues as well. We have more leeway on what site-based decisions may be...can do.

The campus administrators at Paul Revere Elementary School were the ones who involved the stakeholders in the actual decision-making about what was best for the students, even though they were constrained due to the required TAKS objectives and the district's standards, along with more time constraints to learn best practices. Ms. Edger perceived that

...The campus members make as many decisions as possible for the campus, and that they make those decisions within the guidelines of the district's mission, the district's goals.

SBDM Experiences

SBDM is a great idea, but difficult to implement

SBDM was difficult to implement in Poppyfield ISD, due to the geographical, cultural, and economic differences in the community. It was ideal for the administrators, but without the campus committee, it would have been just a great idea. Practical application of the SBDM model for stakeholders coming together to discuss their ideas and plan what was needed for the district's students had to happen at the campus where the decisions could be based on the specific needs of the students at Paul Revere.

Strategic Planning, rather than SBDM, provided a focus for district improvement

The place to begin in asking stakeholders to discuss the district's needs happened four years ago with Dr. Diamond's hiring. Her first step in the process included pulling the community stakeholders together for strategic planning, led by an outside consultant. The outcomes functioned to provide a district and campus focus for improvement the community stakeholders wanted and needed for their children: technology, communication between home and school, and more course differentiation. The following three years focused on organizing and implementing instructional and professional development. Now, after four years, she felt the time may be right for phase two of SBDM, which would mean another venue for parents and community stakeholders to express their wants and needs for the district's students. More attention to the SBDM process may serve as this venue. Dr. Diamond remarked,

When I first came in, we did Strategic Planning. Out of that came some good information about what people perceived about where we needed to go. It wasn't under the configuration of site-based, but it functioned the same way.

The district employed a professional model of SBDM in which the professionals, Dr. Horn and teachers, made the decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, budget allocation, and personnel. Although Dr. Diamond felt confident that the campus committees were doing a good job of involving the parents and community via regular teacher communication with the parents, she alluded to the idea of a district readiness for "phase two" of the SBDM process.

This phase would include more involvement by parents and community members on the campus committees.

I am probably ready for step two. For the first three years of my tenure, my number 1 priority had to be organizing and implementing instructional and professional development because we had none. When you are a superintendent, and you come to an area, a district, you have to assess what their needs are.

Part of the district SBDM implementation policy included the appointment of a district representative to serve on each campus committee and to attend each Campus Academic Advisory Council (CAAC) meeting. Ms. Money was assigned to Paul Revere's CAAC and served on two campus SBDM committees annually. Through her participation she came to know the parents, teachers, and community members as well as the intricacies of how the campuses ran. Through her service at each meeting she attended, she came to understand Paul Revere's needs as depicted by the campus SBDM committee. She remarked,

Some of the wonderful things that I have experienced is getting to know some of the parents, and I understand the real needs of specific campuses, how those needs differ, and how the history of the campuses differ. And the ideas that are brought to the table by the constituents are all different. I really enjoy knowing the people involved in what truly makes the school run, not just the administrators, but the teachers and the parents and the community members that really do care, that really do show up at odd hours of the day and really care about their campus.

At the campus level, the administrators' experiences differed from the district administrators'. In her third year as principal, following two previous years as assistant principal at Paul Revere Elementary, Dr. Horn spoke in first person as she described her work in creating a support program for her bilingual students.

Last year was our first year to become a full fledged bilingual school. So we have had shifts in our population. If you look at our kids who are monolingual, and who were here, our kids did very well last year. Our bilingual kids, though, frankly did not. And that's certainly an area that I felt we needed to concentrate on for this year, and that's why I made the position, or created the position of a bilingual support person.

Her use of the single pronoun I indicated her ownership in the process, somewhat to the exclusion of her SBDM committee members. She explained her role when she was assistant principal as curriculum manager in improving student achievement by organizing the Super Bowl Family Math Night as part of the family involvement. Her failure to explain her inclusion of the SBDM committee in this curricular decision further exemplified the professional model of SBDM in place at Paul Revere Elementary School.

During the Ms. Edger's five-year tenure at Paul Revere Elementary, she spotlighted her work with the SBDM committee as monitoring to ensure the alignment of the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) with the district's goals.

One role that I have in the site-based team is to make sure that things they are doing are reflected in the campus plan, as well as to make sure that the things they are doing are following campus goals.

Through this monitoring, she was primarily responsible for the areas of social skills and discipline management. Monitoring seemed to be the best application of her time, since, due to scheduling difficulties and the complexity of her job responsibilities; she seldom was able to attend the site-council meetings. Although she considered herself a part of the committee, her name did not appear on the membership role, and she only attended one of the four campus meetings that occurred during the data collection.

Training

Learning is most important

The reality is that teachers are tired, and SBDM is just one more thing on their plates. When Dr. Diamond spoke about her training in the concepts of SBDM, she reflected on her graduate school courses and her experiences on a SBDM committee in a previous district. There she developed the belief that SBDM was “contrived” made up of “pre-ordained goals” driven by what the leader wanted.

In her care to avoid being seen as a leader with “pre-ordained goals” as her professors and former district leaders had been, Dr. Diamond described herself as “reality-based.” While she defined SBDM as a good idea, she countered her thinking with the idea that “people are up to here.” She explained her feelings about SBDM almost as an obstacle to instruction.

I see [SBDM] as important and then again when I say site-based decision-making I will tell you right now that our people are so up to here. It’s not that it is not important, but I am reality based.

To further exemplify her perceptions, she reiterated “learning is the most important thing right now. Instruction is our number one.” She sensed that teachers and principals were tired from all the new programs and demands placed on them by standardized testing, and she preferred their attention be focused on teaching and learning.

Dr. Diamond seemed to realize that SBDM training might not be advantageous to teachers’ and principals’ increased focus on teaching and

learning. This ideology seemed to substantiate her relaxed expectations for the district's training model for SBDM committees. She described the district's SBDM training model as "minor training two years ago...by a former assistant superintendent now retired..." with some minor follow-up with district principals. She stated that new hires to the district in the past two years had not received SBDM training.

Although when she became superintendent she recognized the need for some type of community needs-sensing, the strategic planning process, rather than SBDM, provided the information she needed to move the district forward in improving student achievement. In her first year as superintendent she viewed strategic planning as her "number one goal," although she felt now, four years later, that the district was possibly ready for the phase-in of another type of community involvement, possibly a stronger emphasis on SBDM as a decision-making model.

In comparison, the Ms. Money's reflections on her SBDM training resembled Dr. Diamond's. She also drew from her college courses on the concepts of SBDM, and based on her understanding of decentralization, had "never been in a district where the budget was decentralized." Her SBDM ideology included the belief that even though there were "pockets of decentralization," there was "no SBDM, as long as budgets are still controlled by central office." She also felt that there were "as many versions of SBDM as there are individual campuses."

The campus administrators' training experiences differed somewhat from the district administrators'. Dr. Horn described her SBDM training with Poppyfield ISD as a single meeting at the first of the school year.

Well, I know we did have a [sic] training at the beginning of the year, this year, from our Assistant Superintendent. And I believe that training was in August at our August C and I [curriculum and instruction] meeting. We received a notebook...we generally went through the notebook...I've had that training.

In August 2002, during the first meeting led by the assistant superintendent, principals received an overview of the district's SBDM policy provided to them in a notebook, including a description of the CIP process and a template. This was the first year principals received a copy of the district's SBDM policy. Consequently, the same training model principals received was replicated at Paul Revere, beginning with a review of the CIP. Although Dr. Horn did not consider the CIP review and monitoring throughout the year as formal SBDM training, she explained training as "a continuous process" that occurs through the campus vertical teams and the site committee.

Although Paul Revere's SBDM committee received an initial meeting that could be considered informal training, since the Ms. Edger was absent, she received no SBDM training, and had never received training during her eight-year district tenure. Neither principal seemed to have much information or understanding about the district SBDM council training or process, although they believed there was one representative from their campus on the district council.

Perhaps as a result of the little SBDM training principals received, both cited communication as most important to the SBDM training process. Ms. Edger

mentioned facilitative leadership as one example of communication critical to the SBDM process. She felt that although SBDM depended on a team effort, facilitative leadership was vital. While she perceived the SBDM committee's role as the check and balances for monitoring the CIP, she described Dr. Horn's facilitative leadership role as the collection of data from parents through surveys and school events and the analysis of student achievement data, a job-embedded, continuous training process for SBDM committee members.

SBDM Decisions Affected Student Achievement

TAKS Talks determined ways the district could help the campus

While Dr. Diamond felt that strategic planning, rather than SBDM, initially served the district's purpose in identifying the student achievement priorities, Ms. Money identified a district SBDM strategy called TAKS Talks as a strategy for identifying student achievement needs at the campus level. She described the TAKS (Texas Academic Knowledge and Skills) Talks process as one in which she and Dr. Horn met "once or twice yearly to determine campus needs and areas central office can help, such as tutoring." These Talks coincided with the district's annual benchmark testing in correlation with the TAKS test to be given in the spring.

During the Talks, Dr. Horn and Ms. Money collaboratively determined areas of need for students not passing the benchmark test. They discussed possible interventions funded and provided by the district that could be used to address the students' needs at Paul Revere Elementary. Through TAKS Talks, Ms. Money

acquired a comprehensive understanding of the student achievement needs at Paul Revere, as well as the success of the interventions implemented throughout her continuous participation in all the campus SBDM meetings throughout the year.

A focus on student achievement data, TEKS alignment, and increased parent involvement positively impacted student achievement

At the campus, the administrators concurred that the SBDM committee's focus on Paul Revere's student achievement data proved science and math were areas of need. Through decisions of the SBDM committee, a science vertical council was created, and through the council, the science textbook was aligned with the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills), a model now used throughout the district's other elementary schools. Additional SBDM decisions led to the campus adoption of a "hands-on, inquiry instructional model," the creation and implementation of grade-level science benchmark tests, a collaboration with a local university for instructional support, and the seeking and reception of a sizable grant for science resources added to the lab, the creation of an outdoor learning environment, field trips, and an annual Science Family Night.

Regarding Paul Revere's math student achievement needs, the SBDM committee followed much the same process for improvement. Through their decision to create a campus math vertical team, a focus on "hands-on instruction" developed that reached "beyond the adopted curriculum to parent involvement through a Super Bowl Math Night."

The Parent Academy was another intervention decided on by the SBDM committee designed to increase parent involvement in improving student

achievement in science and math. In this strategy, community members, parents, teachers, and students came together annually for one evening to focus on needed areas of student achievement. During the Parent Academy, teachers, parents, and community members led sessions in which parents and their children worked together to address a particular learning need such as a math problem or a science experiment.

Another strategy decided on by the SBDM committee included the addition of an annual Literacy Night for parents and their children. In Literacy Night, a venue similar to the Super Bowl Math Night, the Science Family Night, and the Parent Academy, parents and their children worked side by side on literacy-related student achievement topics in sessions led by teachers.

In other words, parent involvement increased exponentially at Paul Revere due to the SBDM committee's decisions, but only after their work in assessing the student achievement data and creating faculty vertical teams in the content areas of science and math that aligned the textbooks to the TEKS. All the administrators perceived these strategies that grew out of SBDM decisions as positively impacting student achievement at Paul Revere.

SBDM Strengths

Both district and campus administrators perceived many strengths of SBDM, in general, in the district, and at the campus, although their perceptions differed in the sub-themes that emerged through their stories.

Shared knowledge and new ideas developed through input and dialogue

Although Dr. Diamond felt that SBDM was “a great idea, but not always practical,” she quickly cited free discussion, shared knowledge, the potential for “mind-opening,” and follow-through as strengths of the SBDM process. She identified even-more-important strengths as input and dialogue, an awareness of others’ thinking and wants, and priorities.

In her explanation of the potential for “mind-opening,” she exemplified her perspective by explaining, that, compared to the educators, the involvement of people who were not educators on SBDM committees brought a different perspective to the decision-making process. She perceived educators as often “opinionated, ...defining education based on their own educational experiences,” so the infusion of ideas from stakeholders outside the educational arena held the potential to open educator’s minds to new ideas.

Those closest to the problems make the decisions

Ms. Money, in further speaking about the strengths of the SBDM process, commented, “Those closest to the needs and business at hand make the decisions...[they have] hands-on personal knowledge [of the needs]. Personal responsibility, integrity, and parent involvement are fundamental to SBDM.”

She perceived SBDM’s strengths centered on “personal responsibility and integrity first; then, a common set of goals and boundaries are essential.” She insisted that “SBDM’s greatest strength lay in the involvement of parents in the educational process with kids at the center of all decision-making.”

The Teachers' Perceptions

SBDM Defined

During data collection, SBDM was defined from both CAAC teacher members' and the non-member's perspectives. Consequently, their definitions matched.

SBDM was an advisory process

Both groups defined SBDM as a process whereby an advisory group helped Dr. Horn make budget, curriculum, safety and procedural decisions, and monitored the progress on the CIP, based on staff members' decisions on campus improvement. An example showed that teacher members perceived their role as advisory, to work with Dr. Horn in decision-making to improve student achievement at Paul Revere ES.

Well, I know that in the way we act on our campus is we act as an advisory. We work with Dr. Horn, kind of look over the programs that we have on campus along with her and all the special needs of the campus and help her make decisions. We help her make decisions about what needs to be done around the campus.

Researcher: When you say, "About what needs to be done," can you give me some examples?

We work on things like budget issues, curriculum issues, we look at where our money is going and we decide whether it is useful where it is and whether it is serving its purpose where it is or whether it needs to be reallocated somewhere else. Um, we um, talk about safety issues on campus; we talk about procedural issues on the campus and what is working and what is not working and um, [sic] depending on where the meeting leads is where the conversation leads us kind of end up into a lot

of different things on campus. Whatever seems to be the concern at the time ends up on the CIP [CAAC] agenda.

SBDM was a collaborative, inclusionary process

Another theme emerged from the Ms. Cole's story. She perceived the CAAC's process as one of collaboration, gathering input from the rest of the faculty on key issues before making decisions, and then addressing the faculty with the CAAC's decisions to address the need. She stated,

I would say it is just a cooperative effort of everyone in the school coming together... and deciding what's best, what the needs are, where we need to be going, what we've done that didn't work, how we need to make changes. Usually whenever we have a meeting it is to where we will meet and there will be a proposed question, we will separate so we have time back to our teams and talk about it and then come back. That way everyone is truly represented instead of just the member that is on the [CAAC], but I think that is a wonderful idea.

Her definition clearly delineated the role of inclusion the CAAC teacher members filled in involving their co-teachers who were not on the CAAC. Administrators, teachers, and parents alike repeated this theme of the whole school's involvement in decision-making through other venues such as the vertical teams and content area vertical teams throughout the data collection. Together, their definitions significantly demonstrated that all the teachers, both CAAC members and non-member, clearly understood the purpose and implementation model of SBDM.

SBDM Experiences

Based on their clear understanding of SBDM's purpose and its implementation model, the CAAC teacher members' experiences fell right into line with the administrators' in several ways. Several sub-themes emerged from their stories.

Teachers learned and worked together

They spoke of their work together, "actively pursuing and gaining new knowledge about budget allocations," especially in light of Paul Revere's recent designation as a bilingual campus.

Teachers felt empowered

Teachers perceived they were empowered by the SBDM process in many ways. First, several members liked "being in the know" about campus related issues. They repeatedly mentioned their enjoyment at "having access to information first hand," seeing the "campus achievement data and parent surveys for themselves," and the ability to verify first-hand that the issues being reported by the administrators were the real issues. One teacher gave an example that explained her feeling of empowerment.

I enjoy being able to get the information, see some of the data of progress, of the parent evaluations and stuff like that, that we had at the first meeting. And then...when we were going over other things.

Teachers valued the open communication with administrators SBDM provided them

Their stories exemplified the freedom they felt in sharing their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about campus improvement strategies with Dr. Horn during CAAC meetings. One teacher explained her perception of this freedom.

I feel like it's a format to bring to the floor any kind of issues or anything that I see that the school needs, not that it's necessarily directly addressed at that time, but I think you have a proper open forum in the way that we run ours, that, you know, I think that in the long run, that's going to help [us] make good decisions, even if that ... decision is not what you are working on right then.

Teachers valued the CIP organization and division of labor in monitoring

Ms. Horton's experiences supported CAAC members.' She reiterated, like many of them, the division of labor in monitoring parts of the CIP relative to their areas of skill or expertise.

Each member has input and we all worked on the campus improvement plan. That was the most recent meeting.... I think it's really good that we all represent a different area and we all chose the area that was where our interests were. I worked on the guidance program and keeping [sic] the part about keeping the school safe.

Teachers valued their child-centered focus

In addition to all the other experiences, they cited their deep appreciation for the "child-centered focus" that undergirded decision-making at Paul Revere. One teacher put it most succinctly, when she said, "We focus on how to improve our campus for the children and how we can help our children meet success."

Teachers felt rushed throughout the SBDM process

Several teacher members perceived scheduling as an SBDM challenge. One teacher expressed “a lot of rushing to meet deadlines,” in addition to some rushed meetings when the CIP deadlines crept up on the CAAC, although she felt the rest of the year ran smoothly where “everything always falls into place.”

Teachers were “fuzzy” on procedural issues

In many stories regarding their knowledge of how they came to serve as CAAC teacher members, many could not explain how they came to be on the committee, or how their role on the committee would end. A few were also fuzzy about their term limit, or if there was one in place. One teacher new to the CAAC felt she gained her position on the committee “by default,” since she was the new teacher on her grade level team, and the other teachers on her team “needed a rest.”

SBDM Training

Overwhelmingly, teachers perceived they received “no training,” except for the first meeting of the year.

Teachers perceived the first CAAC meeting as their training

In the year’s first meeting, Dr. Horn provided an overview of the previous year’s CIP. At the end of the meeting, teacher members understood their role as CIP monitors, so they volunteered or were assigned particular areas of the CIP

they would monitor for progress, based on their skills or expertise. Before the next meeting, they were expected to interview the vertical team leaders about CIP items relative to their assigned areas that were needed, completed, or in progress. After their interviews, teacher members came to the next meeting with their reports, from which the plans for the 2002-03 CIP progressed.

Training meant learning-by-doing

Although formal training on roles and procedures was lacking at the beginning of the year, during the rest of the year, the CIP monitoring process became a type of “continuous training,” as CAAC teacher members learned their roles and the SBDM process through participating in the meetings. This learning-by-doing perception pervaded their stories, as they spoke of “listening to people talk,” and “just kind of fallen [*sic*] into it, and just kind of learned by...sitting through the meetings and figuring out ...what exactly we do.”

Although the teacher members’ consensus was they had “no training,” they seemed to feel comfortable with the learning-by-doing training process they experienced. One teacher’s perceptions exemplified this feeling when she explained,

I think this school works well with just working with each other, but I’m not sure if the training would kind of draw them [CAAC teacher members] away from the needs.... I think when we throw in the training, then it becomes more formal and we lose sight of the kids, in the process.

Parents and community members needed more training

Although teachers perceived the learning-by-doing method of training was adequate for them, they perceived parent and community members needed more training because they were outsiders to the campus issues and SBDM processes. One teacher's comments exemplified her feelings. "Parents could probably benefit a little more from some training... because they are a little more reluctant to come in because they don't know what [SBDM] is."

SBDM Decisions Affected Student Achievement

Three sub-themes emerged from teachers' perceptions about SBDM decisions that affected student achievement: (1) Curriculum decisions; (2) instruction decisions; and (3) budget and personnel decisions. A fourth sub-theme explained teachers' perceptions of why their SBDM decisions had positively affected student achievement at Paul Revere ES.

Curriculum was affected by teacher members' decisions

Teachers, both CAAC members and the non-member, cited curriculum decisions such as "TAKS Talks," "Science Family Night," "Super Bowl Family Math Night," "Parent/Student Academy," "end-of-year home visits," as well as staff development opportunities to support math and science, as positive aspects of campus curriculum improvement.

Teachers' perceptions aligned with the administrators' perceptions that the CAAC's clarity of focus on science and math content areas strengthened curriculum at Paul Revere. In addition to science and math initiatives, teachers cited "Math Stars," "peer mediation," and "Career Day" and the addition of

“Accelerated Reader” as curriculum initiatives they perceived positively affected student achievement. One teacher perceived that “adding extra curriculum, not on top of the curriculum, but more creative maybe more higher-level thinking, stretching the kid’s imagination more” was the reason curriculum was positively affected by their SBDM decisions.

One of the things we do is we support the community and the fact that we have our home visits that we do at the end of the year contributes to that and the fact that we meet parents on their own terms...we invite parents to the school by having a Parent/School Academy, by having the science and math nights and all those things have parents involved, so first of all parents know there’s a connection. Second of all, it’s academic. And so they understand, the kids know that parents know that academics are important so it’s kind of two things they are learning the math when they are doing the math game, but they are also seeing the support that the parents are giving that.

Teachers’ instructional decisions affected student achievement

Teachers cited the addition of an “after-school tutoring” program, a “student rewards program for attendance, science, and math,” and “end-of-year home visits with parents” as instructional decisions positively affecting student achievement.

Teachers also perceived some negative examples of instructional decisions. In one negative example, teachers cited “Walk Abouts,” a process in which teachers observed co-teachers’ teaching as a form of professional development throughout the school year. Each year after CIP monitoring, the Walk About process remained on the CIP because teacher members felt they were a good idea, but the process did not seem to work in reality. In describing the need

to modify an instructional decision concerning Walk Abouts, one teacher explained,

Every year...everyone is thinking the same thing. Every year we discuss whether or not we need [Walk Abouts] and every year we find that we do need it so every year we modify it...because it wasn't quite meeting the need that we thought it was going to the way we planned for it to go.

Another negative example teachers cited included the deletion of the "Junior Great Books" program from the CIP. Management seemed to be the issue, since teachers found it difficult to include the program in their daily reading instruction. At one point, a parent volunteer took on the project, but finally, the program was deleted from the CIP when the volunteer moved.

Budget and personnel decisions affected student achievement

Teachers perceived the CAAC's major grant-writing initiatives for the improvement of science at Paul Revere as enhancements to the budget allocations. Major staff development opportunities grew as a result of the additional grant monies received. Through the grant-writing process, teacher members perceived they "always had some things in place" that came through their "stepping out and pulling in something more than what's just regular."

A negative example of a budget-related personnel decision - the only personnel example cited in the data collection - grew from a campus need to reduce the teaching force due to decreasing enrollment at a particular grade level. One teacher exemplified her perceptions by saying,

It's always a negative time when we stop to talk about budget, teacher allocations, and all that stuff, and do we have the money to keep 'so and

so' next year and we kind of help make those decisions too.... So, nobody actually wants to be there at that time of the year...

Teacher unity affected student achievement

Teacher members perceived their unity as the primary reason SBDM positively affected student achievement. One teacher felt,

Teachers' hearts are really set to make sure that our students... are the priority, making sure they get everything that they need here...it seems like that the hearts of the teachers are involved [sic] have really made it [the CAAC] a cohesive team.

SBDM Strengths

In the stories about their perceived strengths of SBDM, both teacher members' and Ms. Cole's centered in on three major sub-themes. First, they perceived their commitment to the process and the students at Paul Revere as one of the greatest strengths. Second, they perceived the freedom they felt to speak their thoughts about campus improvement initiatives another great strength, as well as the freedom to control decision-making for what was best for their students. Third, they perceived the inclusion of the whole faculty in campus improvement at Paul Revere set their school apart in the SBDM process.

Many teachers perceived Paul Revere's school-wide commitment to the SBDM process as its greatest strength, "being able to look at our children specifically, at their needs and then addressing whether we are meeting those needs specifically in terms of our kids instead of looking at some test or something." They perceived their ongoing examination of "where we are and what we are doing and evaluate each thing that we do" allowed them to provide

“corrective feedback to what we said we were doing.” This level of commitment to the SBDM process provided the validity they needed to become even more committed to the process.

Another teacher further exemplified her perceptions of commitment as strength by saying,

The strengths, [pause] just that the people are serving on that committee want to be there; they want to be here for the kids and it is a big important thing to them. It's not something that they take lightly. They take it very seriously and everyone is really involved and wanting to promote the success of the school and the families.”

Freedom to communicate strengthened the SBDM process. “Freedom” and “openness” were used frequently in the stories as teachers shared their perceived strengths of SBDM. The freedom they felt to speak freely about their thoughts and ideas in the best interest of Paul Revere’s students’ specific needs strengthened decision-making.

One teacher expressed her perceptions about the freedom to speak freely. “I think its benefit is that when you, anytime you give a voice to someone and let them say what they think the needs are of a campus also, it increases morale, it’s the ownership thing.”

Freedom to control decision-making strengthened the SBDM process. The strongest freedom teachers perceived was the freedom to control decision-making in the best interest of their students, as opposed to the district imposing decisions about what was best for Paul Revere’s students. They perceived the teachers knew best what students needed “because they are with the students” and had “a better idea of what best works for which students.” They also perceived teachers

deserved to be “listened to” because they were able to provide information about individual students’ needs to others when needed.

Another teacher explained her perceptions by saying,

We feel that we have control of what goes on in our school as opposed to someone else. If you have control then it is up to you to either, for it to either [sic], be a success or it to be a failure. And you know it puts more pressure on you, but I think it’s a good pressure because you always are striving to do better and you are always striving to do the best you can and we always strive to make the best decisions that are in the school’s best interest as opposed to somebody else telling us what to do and us not agreeing with it or something else and not really giving 110% because it’s not a decision that we made; it was a decision that somebody else made.

Inclusion of the whole school in decision-making strengthened the SBDM process. Another strength exemplified through the teachers’ stories was the inclusion of the whole school in school improvement through decision-making. Vertical teams were the venue cited most often in teachers’ perceptions. They discussed the process whereby vertical teams provided the input to CAAC members for decisions to be made and, later, feedback to CAAC members about the effectiveness of decisions that were implemented by the teachers and staff school-wide. A teacher commented,

One of the strengths overall with the school is innovation of having the vertical teams. I have been in schools where one person on a grade level tended to do all of the jobs, and so by having a vertical team for grade levels then we have got a representative in all areas. And so when we get together as a group, then each person is able to share. Then many people manage the job. That is a much better feeling than just being the workhorse on the team.

SBDM Weaknesses

Interestingly, teachers also recognized some weaknesses of SBDM.

Exclusion weakened the SBDM process

Ironically, two teachers surprisingly perceived the exclusion of some teachers' capability to serve on the CAAC for various reasons as a weakness to the process. One said,

I think on the negative side of [inclusion], there are teachers who may never make it [serve on the CAAC] and they won't know what we know, how the school, and yes, they are involved in their own way [sic], but there is something different about being here and making the decisions and helping to make those decisions that you see a difference in just working and being behind, I guess I would say, behind the scenes, but I know ... just being familiar with it is a difference.

Increased workload weakened the SBDM process

Although teachers perceived the SBDM process positively as a whole, they expressed concerns over increased workloads due to increased CAAC meeting requirements. Their stories suggested a concern for the loss of attention to their individual students' needs for the good of the whole student body. One teacher exemplified this perception when she said, "I think the positives do outweigh the negative, but I feel like we are meeting to death sometimes."

She explained she was expected to attend two grade level meetings, a vertical team meeting, and a faculty meeting, in addition to two or three committee meetings each week, and although she recognized the importance of CAAC meetings, she was concerned about the needs of the students in her classroom.

They are trying to spread the workload between everybody; you are just so overwhelmed sometimes, What about the kids? ...I need time to plan this

really good science lesson.... Although I do see...the pros outweigh the cons, it is frustrating sometimes when you go home exhausted at six o'clock and you feel like you haven't done much beneficial things in your classroom for the kids.

Lack of commitment weakened the SBDM process

One teacher cited the lack of commitment by some teacher members on the CAAC as detrimental to the process. She perceived some who “don't care as much [to make the school better]” were there “to put it on their resume' or whatever and they just don't show the same enthusiasm.”

The Parents' Perceptions

From the parents' perceptions, the same six themes emerged as in the administrators' and teachers,' but the sub-themes that emerged within each of the themes varied to a great extent. Overall, the parents' stories about their SBDM experiences at Paul Revere contributed significantly to the case study in its entirety, and to future Paul Revere parents and community members, both those who wish to serve as CAAC members, as well as those who support them.

SBDM Defined

SBDM was a collaborative, problem-solving process

Ms. Sanders defined SBDM as:

The process is there [sic] where like... the parents and teachers can all kind of sit together and make sure that there is something, a plan of some sort for everyone to be working on.... It is just a steady flow of finding out what is happening instead of when a problem occurs.

She cited her perception that “there is a lot of stuff that you don’t realize that may be bothering some of the teachers” that could be problematic if they went unattended or if care was not taken to “understand where everybody is coming from.” Through the implementation of SBDM, she perceived “we kind of bring it out when nobody’s upset,” and to her, that validated the process.

Conversely, when Davy, Eugene, and Frut defined SBDM, Mr. Davy commented, “I’ve heard the name SBDM,” while Ms. Eugene and Ms. Frut had “not heard of it” or had no knowledge of SBDM. Rather, than asking them their perceptions of SBDM, I spent several minutes explaining the concept of SBDM and its major components to the parents, based on their limited knowledge of the process.

SBDM Experiences

SBDM was connected with academics and Wednesday meetings

When asked about her experiences with SBDM as a CAAC member, Ms. Sanders recalled hearing about “the Wednesday meeting” during her three-year employment as a Teacher’s Assistant (TA), although she had little knowledge of what those meetings were about, or that they were connected with the campus SBDM process. She perceived her lack of understanding of the SBDM process resulted from her lack of work “around the actual learning part,” since her TA work occurred in the Special Education and Physical Education departments.

Job competence insured the parent's CAAC membership

Ms. Sanders explained her SBDM knowledge prior to her membership as limited, saying, "I have never done any of these type of [meetings]...[I] didn't even know what it was until I walked in [to the meeting] the first day." When asked, "How did you get this opportunity?" she responded, "[Dr. Horn] walked by my [sic] and said, 'Would you be on the CAAC?' and I said O.K. There wasn't a whole lot of discussion." She perceived Dr. Horn selected her based on her competent past work at the campus.

Mr. Davy, and Ms's. Eugene and Frut could speak of no experiences relative to SBDM at Paul Revere, although Ms. Frut did mention she served as "English as a Second Language (ESL) parent committee representative when asked by the ESL teacher."

SBDM Training

Parents lacked SBDM training

When asked about her SBDM training, Ms. Sanders summed it up simply as "I wouldn't think I've had any." She apologetically explained her lack of training by stating, "I didn't know if they needed any criteria beforehand. [Dr. Horn] didn't think I had any that I know of." From her perceptions about her lack of training, at first, she seemed to feel confident that she was sought out for her competence, and then, in a moment, felt somewhat responsible for her incompetence with the SBDM process, although she still believed Dr. Horn

recognized something about her that prepared her for her role as CAAC member. In her final comments on her training, Ms. Sanders continued, “I have never really worked with kids other than teaching them tennis, but other than that I have never done the actual academic part.”

Comfort with the staff did not suffice for the lack of training

Ms. Sanders also admitted she felt comfortable with the staff and her role on the campus committee, although she perceived she would benefit from some training. She perceived training could help her better understand the SBDM process, thus allowing her to feel more comfortable and confident in speaking up in the meetings when she felt she had something to offer.

I ...think [I] would definitely benefit by having something [training] because like when I go into the meeting it's like I don't really feel like saying anything because nothing comes to my mind. I don't understand the whole process that well.... It just looks like a bunch of graphs and seeing how you are doing that way, but sometimes it can seem a little on the boring side so maybe I don't have the background to make it more exciting.

Parents were unsure of the selection process to include more parents and community members.

Ms. Sanders also perceived that an additional parent or community member would add value to the committee and the process. She perceived that Dr. Horn tried to find other parent and community representatives, but Ms. Sanders did not know what the process had been for doing so, or if or how the process of finding additional parent and community members was developing.

I can see that there should be maybe another parent... I thought there was, yea, the community member. I thought they wanted to try to get someone like that, that's not a parent, which might be good.

When Davy, Eugene, and Frut were asked about their SBDM training experiences, I asked them to perceive what they thought training for parents might consist of, since they had already demonstrated they held extremely limited knowledge about SBDM as a process. Due to my prior explanation of the process, the parent non-members were able to respond somewhat to the question about perceived training.

Parents perceived input with teachers and principals a SBDM strength

When Mr. Davy was asked, "If parents were trained, what might the benefits be?" he responded, "I suppose the strengths would be input with [italics added for emphasis] you, instead of to [italics added for emphasis] you." His perception was further exemplified by his discussion about parents hearing the teachers' and principals' concerns first-hand and being able to respond to them immediately as a benefit of training parents in the rudiments of SBDM. Ms. Eugene and Ms. Frut had "no idea" about training and what its benefits might be.

SBDM Decisions Affected Student Achievement

Parents did not speak freely at meetings

Ms. Sander's limited experience on the CAAC consequently limited her knowledge of any SBDM decisions that were affecting students' achievement, but she offered a perception about the "standardized testing." Her perception was

negative in regard to the prompting teachers were providing students to help them be test-ready. Her explanation exemplified her perception that testing, to her, was limiting students' learning.

The testing they do on kids, as a parent, I think they do a little bit too much prompting for the kids. I don't know if they are showing what's supposed to really supposed to be learned or they are showing, make sure you circle, and you have to underline the subject. It just seems like they are not giving the full meaning of what they should be learning; they are just so worried about that test. I know that the teachers have to worry about how they look good on the graphs, but sometimes I think it goes too much worrying about how your school looks than how the kids are really learning, [sic] are they going to retain it later on.

Although she was concerned about the amount of testing and the level of teachers' preparing students for the test, she admitted she had not spoken up about her concerns at the CAAC meeting, but she expressed her willingness to do so, "if she got the time."

Parents did not connect academic school events with the SBDM process or CAAC

Mr. Davy, Ms. Eugene, and Ms. Frut were unable to comment on their perceptions about decisions that affected students' achievement at Paul Revere ES. Interestingly, they did not connect their present participation in the school-wide math night to student achievement or to a possible decision-making process.

SBDM Strengths

The teachers and principals were willing to solve problems quickly

When asked about perceived strengths of SBDM, Ms. Sanders commented on a school climate issue. She perceived the teachers' and principals' willingness

to problem-solve issues in a proactive manner, before the issues “become [sic] a larger problem” a major strength, especially because she perceived teachers’ and principals’ feelings were involved with the problems to be addressed. She perceived a willingness on their parts to be “open to everything and making sure things are going smooth and on the right track” as positive.

Highly caring teachers

Another strength Ms. Sanders perceived was the “teachers... that they care as much as they do.” Since her recent two-week substitute assignment to a second grade class, she perceived teachers’ talent at teaching the whole class, and as a result, she perceived parents should “definitely appreciate our teachers more.”

Parents’ heightened awareness to teachers’ concerns

When Davy, Eugene, and Frut were asked about strengths of SBDM, based on their limited knowledge and experience, they perceived “an awareness of teachers’ problems” as a strength of SBDM. They seemed unusually concerned about teachers’ needs, although they all perceived teachers to be a major strength of Paul Revere ES. Ms. Eugene’s story exemplified her perception as she commented, “Teachers know what is best. They are doing good things for students at Paul Revere. Better than the other school.”

Ms. Frut also perceived Paul Revere ES as successful when she exclaimed, “This school is great for my kids! They’re doing well here.” Although she perceived some unidentifiable aspect of the school culture was making a positive difference for her children, she asked, “How does this committee help

families and kids?” and then she answered herself by saying, “If this committee is responsible [for the good things going on] then, I like it!”

SBDM Weaknesses

Limited parent and community members’ active participation prevented heightened awareness and understanding of teachers’ needs

In considering the weaknesses of SBDM, Ms. Sanders recognized several. First, she felt that “having another parent and community member on the committee would be good because...sometimes our parents, even though they come to a lot of the events, don’t realize how much our teachers do.” She perceived parents needed “to be informed more [about how much teachers do].” She perceived Paul Revere’s lack of a Parent Teacher Organization (PTA) prevented parents from fully understanding the teachers’ role, and from the acknowledgement that “teachers needed more help than they were getting.”

Another weakness Ms. Sanders perceived was her ineffectiveness to serve the school community based on her lack of understanding of where she fit in the SBDM process. Her story exemplified her perception.

Do I really understand what I’m doing? Am I really any benefit on the whole committee if I don’t really understand where I’m supposed to fit in? Maybe a little more instruction before they ask somebody to be on it to make sure they understand what’s going on.

Although she cited several weaknesses of the SBDM process, overall she perceived the process as worthwhile and that she was “enjoying it enough. It is definitely opening up my eyes.”

Conversely, once again, based on their limited knowledge and SBDM experience, Davy, Eugene, and Frut had little comment on the weaknesses of SBDM, but the male parent non-member perceived that “Agreement [on solutions to problems] would be difficult.”

Question 2: “What themes emerge from stakeholders’ stories that can further inform policy makers and educational leaders about SBDM implementation strategies that are workable and needed?”

While analyzing the six themes that emerged from the stakeholders’ stories and their examples to support their perceptions, the findings (Table 2, p. 136) indicted strategies that were workable and needed in the implementation of SBDM. Through further analysis in interpreting the findings about what strategies were workable and were needed, the aspects of implementation seemed to fall into four categories: (1) processes; (2) procedures; (3) measurement of school outcomes and (4) measurement of achievement outcomes. This two-tiered examination of the findings resulted in a multi-faceted report of findings: (1) what strategies were workable, as described by stakeholders, regarding processes, procedures, measurements of school outcomes, and measurements of achievement outcomes; and (2) what strategies were needed, as described by stakeholders, regarding processes, procedures, measurements of school outcomes, and measurements of achievement outcomes. Because the stakeholders’ collectively represented both the district and the campus SBDM process, the examples they cited included both district and campus processes, procedures, measurements of school outcomes, and measurements of achievement outcomes.

Stakeholders' experiences that showed how SBDM was implemented in either the district or at the campus were categorized as findings of implementation processes that were either workable or needed in the district or on the campus. In the same way, their experiences that focused on strategies or activities that were implemented as a result of the SBDM process were categorized as findings of implementation procedures that were either workable or needed in the district or on the campus. Similarly, their experiences about measurements of school outcomes focused on measures of improved district or school culture that either were workable or needed; and, finally, their experiences about measurements of achievement outcomes focused on measures of improved student achievement used by the district or campus as a result of the SBDM process that were workable or needed. When an experience was not cited through the stakeholders' stories to address, for example, processes, procedures, measurements of school or achievement outcomes, I interpreted that to mean the administrators and the CAAC needed to determine examples to support those areas.

In categorizing the findings by what strategies were workable and what strategies were needed, more findings fell into the category of what was workable, and fewer findings fell into the category of what was needed in SBDM implementation. I interpreted the higher number of findings about strategies that were workable and the lower number of findings about what strategies were needed as an informal program assessment of SBDM in the district somewhat, but more so at Paul Revere. In other words, the strategies that stakeholders perceived as workable could be interpreted as strategies that were in place, somewhat, but

needed further implementation, while the strategies they perceived as needed may have been altogether missing in the implementation, or in need of rethinking.

An example of a process that was workable but in need of work at the district level was the inability to achieve a global perspective, and an example of a procedure that was workable but in need of work at the district level was the district calendar selection. It is important to note I interpreted the connection between the two implementation strategies. For example, Dr. Diamond explained the district's inability to achieve a global perspective as an implementation process that was workable but needing more work, and the district calendar selection, a procedure that also was workable but needing work, seemed to be an example I identified from stakeholders' stories that supported the idea that achieving a global perspective could add value to the calendar selection.

In order to bring clarity to each aspect of implementation of the SBDM process, I categorized the findings for each part of the research question to describe what strategies were workable processes, procedures, and measurements of school outcomes or achievement outcomes, and what strategies were needed processes, procedures, and measurements of school outcomes or achievement outcomes. Again, it is important to note that I linked the findings related to processes, procedures, and measurement outcomes based on the collective stakeholders' stories, so they are described collectively in the findings, as a body of knowledge that may impact the implementation strategies more profoundly in Poppyfield ISD and at Paul Revere if taken together, rather than as single strategies.

What was Workable?

Achieving a global perspective

The district's process for achieving a global perspective about what was needed in the district regarding budget allocations, curriculum and instruction, and personnel issues was a concern for Poppyfield ISD's superintendent. Dr. Diamond spoke at length about the her immediate decision to engage the community in the Strategic Planning process in her first few months on the job. Although the strategic planning provided a needed understanding of what the community expected from its schools and school leader, the process has been three years ago, and the she conceded in her interview that it could be time for a new information gathering and decision-making process to evolve.

As far as the model we have, it's probably involvement at the campus. I did use strategic planning at the very beginning to get input and I had representatives for all those [sic] entities, to get input on what was going on, and what did they see as needs and perceived needs of the district, they clearly did come out. I am probably ready for step two.

The stakeholders' mention of the district's procedure for selecting a universal district calendar seemed to exemplify the district's difficulty in achieving a global perspective. When asked if there had ever been a time when the CAAC made a decision they believed they had autonomy to make that was overruled by the district, one teacher responded,

The only thing that I know of, the only thing that has come to mind is the calendar, setting the school calendar and our DAC, our district sit-based whatever makes that decision but they would ask us or we got to vote and then ...we didn't know how the voting went. We were just told you know, this was the calendar that won and we are assuming that you know, majority, excuse me, you know, majority ruled.

The fact that there seemed to be no specific examples in stakeholders' stories of measurements of school outcomes or achievement outcomes related to the district's inability to achieve a global perspective could have been indicative of the need for attention by the DAC and the CAAC to measurements of school and achievement outcomes related to the district's inability to achieve a global perspective of all its citizens.

Inconsistent Levels of SBDM Effectiveness

Dr. Diamond shared her concern that the SBDM process and the level of its implementation procedures were limited and inconsistent across the district. She considered the campuses as the binding force, especially the elementary campuses, due to their close and regular communication and interaction with parents.

For different reasons than the elementary campuses were able to achieve more consistency in implementing the SBDM's processes and procedures, Ms. Money expressed her concern that challenges varied in the high schools' and middle schools' consistent implementation of SBDM.

I think it's the nature of the beast. Your high school campuses are larger. They are harder to govern. They are much more varied; there are ten thousand more things going on. And it's much more difficult to get people to bring their global perspective to the table and to allow those decisions to be made.

One measurement of a school outcome related to levels of effectiveness that she mentioned was a commitment by some to the process, but she viewed an inconsistent level of commitment to the SBDM processes and procedures as an area of concern.

Its varying levels of effectiveness depend on the true commitment of the people involved. And the true feel that people have that their voice does matter. The second you bring people into a committee and you tell them to make decisions and they work hard and you ignore their decisions, they completely lose faith in that system and they won't continue to participate and they know that they are really powerless. So, unless you really do grant power to the people and you really listen to them and you really do involve [them] you really don't have an effective committee....I think it's working well in this district on certain campuses. I think our elementary campuses do better than our high school campuses.

Time management

Time management was a process related to SBDM that needed work, according to stakeholders' stories. They spoke of numerous campus meetings that were connected to the CIP as well as overlapping campus meetings timelines, making scheduling and time management a measurement of a school outcome that needed work. A teacher exemplified her concerns about the measurement of the school outcome of teacher workload as overwhelming sometimes.

To bring out the negative, because I think the positives do outweigh the negative, I feel like we are meetinged [sic] to death sometimes because I am on the kindergarten team and we have two kindergarten meetings a week for planning and then just for things we need to know that is going on. And then we have vertical team and we have faculty meeting and then everybody is on at least two or three committees. And you just feel like you are trying to, although they are trying to spread the workload between everybody, you are just so overwhelmed sometimes, what about the kids?

Dr. Horn commented that the science benchmark testing scores last year were lower than expected, and this provided an example of a measurement of achievement outcomes that was related to teacher workload.

As a result of this science vertical team working to improve what we do in science at this school because we knew our kids would get testing in science this year so we backed up and started working to try to prepare our

kids. We created science tests from the grant last year. We had a science vertical council that included vertical team members as well as CAAC members who worked together to talk about what we need to do in science. We collaborated with a professor from Southwest as well as someone from the Dana Center...and of course, our science coordinator...was the coordinator of this particular grant. So again, CAAC members, vertical team members, and staff members working [sic] to make this all happened [sic]. Now the role of the CAAC was of course to monitor and oversee and make sure that we were doing all of the things we said we wanted to do or felt like we needed to do to improve science here at the school. So that is one example of how we all, how all the different pieces that we have here at the school work together to ensure that that happens.

Parent involvement

The process of involving parents in SBDM process needed work in both the district and the campus. Only one parent member served on the campus committee, and technically she could not be counted by virtue of the fact that she was employed as a teacher assistant at Paul Revere. District policy warranted parent membership by parents who were employed by the district. Many stakeholders cited their concerns about the limited parent participation on the CAAC, but the procedures of nomination and selection of parents were vague among the parent respondents. Ms. Sanders stated,

I have done any of these type of [meetings]...didn't even know what it was until I walked in the first day...Dr. Bell walked by and said, 'Would you be in the CAAC?' and I said o.k. There wasn't a whole lot of discussion. Dr. Bell feels I am competent, ...but I don't know that I am.

Community involvement

Community involvement was another SBDM process that needed work. The procedures for nominating and selection were vague among CAAC members

as well as parent respondents, although the parent non-members expressed a great interest in knowing more about ways to join. When asked what the nomination procedures for getting members on the CAAC were, Dr. Horn commented,

Teachers nominate, parents can volunteer, and we can ask people to come... That's basically what we do... And then, again with the community members we just go out there and try to find someone to be part of the site-based decision-making team... If you look at our school we are a neighborhood school, there's not a lot of businesses around here. We, I understand, again, because the shared leadership aspect, our chairperson asked the person at the store up the street to become part of our CAAC and he agreed to do it, but he was not at the last meeting. So, I am hoping that he will at the next meeting join us so that we have community representation. It occurred to me that I should ask someone [from another neighborhood business] because they've helped us in the past in other areas, so that's something that I really need to do, to find out if someone's on our [sic] and I'll probably do that this year. I would say that is an area we need to improve.

Training

Training in the process and procedures of SBDM was limited for parents and teachers. Many stated that they depended on their training from other districts where they had worked to help them through their CAAC roles. One teacher explained her training as “just kind of fallen into it.”

I've just kind of fallen into it and just kind of learned by just sitting through meetings and figuring out what exactly we do... I just learned by sitting back and watching [the chair and Dr. Horn], watched everybody and how they contributed and went back to talk to my team about things that we thought needed to be changed or concerns that we had. But any formal training, we've never, to my knowledge, we've never had any kind of formal training on what site-based is.

What was Needed?

Meeting economy

Meeting economy or a more efficient organizational process of scheduling campus meetings related to SBDM and school improvement was needed. The data collection procedures as stakeholders perceived them were time-consuming and complex, and one teacher explained her feelings and recommendations for a new procedure the involved collapsing the CAAC into the existing vertical teams.

I think how important it is ...we can get information because we are trying to make data-driven decisions, get information from those vertical teams and this [the CAAC] is a vertical team. I think that would be very useful. I think it would be far more effective that we got feedback from vertical teams, information from vertical teams, rather than serving on so many committees because we could put forth more effort and more time into our site-based decision-making.

Communication

Communication about several aspects of the SBDM process was needed both in the district and at Paul Revere. One reoccurring procedure that was needed was training regarding stakeholders' roles, term limits, and nomination and selection processes. Regular communication to stakeholders about DAC meetings, both the scheduling of meetings and the reporting of outcomes were needed.

Ms. Edger focused her procedural concerns on the DAC.

District wide, I would say their relative weakness is that the representative from each campus that is on the DAC has to make sure that they are getting campus feedback and everything on what's going on and a lot of times they don't know what is going to be on the agenda until the day before or when they get there...They email out the agenda, but it doesn't always come right away and again, it's left to that campus rep person to be

involved with their campus. And I know on some campuses that happens, and on some campuses that doesn't happen.

Time management

Time management was already reported as a process that was working somewhat, but one that needed more work, especially in the area of meeting scheduling. In examining time management as a definitely needed process, lesson planning was the procedure teachers most often mentioned. One teacher cited her concerns.

I need time to plan this really good science lesson or you know, if I wasn't working on testing and da da da [sic] although I do see the pros outweigh the cons, it is frustrating sometimes when you go home exhausted at six o'clock and you feel like you haven't done much beneficial things in your classroom for your kids.

Parent and community involvement

Parent and community involvement was needed in the SBDM process. As demonstrated by many of the stakeholders' stories, they all seemed to be aware that parents and community members were absent from the process. Some of the stakeholders expressed their concern that training was needed for parents, since they were perceived as outsiders to the school's processes and procedures. Ms. Holmes explained her perceptions by saying,

I think our parents could probably benefit a little more from some training because, and our business partner, because they are a little more reluctant to come in because they don't know what it [SBDM] is. I think you have that problem in the beginning, drawing them in. They will never know what it is until they are actually in it. What [sic] they get in it they find out what they do and are pretty happy with it, I think.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

For the purpose of providing readers an understanding of the context of the study, in this chapter I provided a description of the study site, including the case, Poppyfield ISD, and the sample, Paul Revere Elementary School. The description of the case site will help readers identify similarities between this site and theirs, and from the comparison, they will feel better equipped to use these findings to inform their implementation of SBDM.

First, I described the district's information including students, staff, taxes, budget revenues, fund balance, budgeted expenditures, programs, class size, and the percent of students passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test for 2001-02. Next, I provided a description of the campus' information including students, staff, budgeted expenditures, programs, class size, and the percent of students passing the TAAS test for 2001-02.

Next, I discussed the findings related to the research questions. In examining the administrators,' teachers,' and parents,' perspectives about their SBDM experiences about what was workable, and what was needed, six themes emerged based on the interview questions they were asked. In addition to the six themes, many sub-themes also emerged which provided examples from their experiences and combined to create the narrative of the stakeholders' perspectives about SBDM in Poppyfield ISD and at Paul Revere Elementary School. Their stories served to identify Poppyfield's type of SBDM as the professional control type (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998) based on the high concentration of teachers to parents and community members on the CAAC (nine teachers, two

administrators, one parent). Their perceived strengths and weaknesses supported the strengths and weaknesses of SBDM in the current literature.

Chapter 5 will present a summary of the findings, the conclusion, and recommendations.

Chapter 5

Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

My purpose was to determine the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents from an elementary school in Texas about site-based decision-making (SBDM) based on their experiences as stakeholders on their site council. From their stories, I identified implementation strategies that worked, did not work, and that were needed for the successful implementation of SBDM.

Two questions guided the research: (1) What are the experiences of stakeholders involved with SBDM that illustrate the workable, unworkable, and needed implementation strategies? and (2) What themes emerge from stakeholders' stories that can further inform policy makers and educational leaders about SBDM implementation strategies that are workable and needed.

The study's methodology was qualitative a single case study. The case was instrumental because it examined this particular case at Paul Revere Elementary School, "to provide insight into an issue of refinement of theory" (Stake, 1994, p.236). This case plays a supporting role, facilitating our understanding of SBDM. The data for this study were collected over a six-month period, August 2002 through the last day of January 2003.

Because SBDM is a phenomenon, and because reality is socially constructed, the case study made sense as a methodology. The case study

approach to the study of SBDM was based on the assumption that the effects of SBDM could not be teased out in a way that it alone could be determined to improve student achievement, but that patterns of meaning could emerge from stakeholders' stories that could bring clarity to the effects of SBDM on student achievement.

As a result of the study, I provided readers with a rich description of the stakeholders' perceptions and recommendations for implementation based on their experiences, so that readers in similar contexts such as Poppyfield ISD or Paul Revere Elementary may use them to inform their future implementation of SBDM. The stakeholders' stories, filled with rich descriptions of their experiences, protected the findings and their recommendations from my biases regarding SBDM.

Interpretation of Administrators' Perceptions

In interpreting their perceptions about SBDM's strengths, the administrators captured many of the benefits identified in the SBDM literature. First, those closest to the problems were empowered (Blase, Griffin, 1995; Weiss, 1993; Allen & Glickman, 1992; Hess, 1991). Dr. Diamond perceived that the campuses in Poppyfield were empowered by the decentralization of decision-making to the professionals, principals and the teachers. Although Ms. Money felt that power could have been more decentralized, especially in the area of budget, she believed the CAAC's she served felt empowered through strategies like TAKS Talks to make decisions about the strategies to improve student achievement.

Second, curriculum and instruction changes were benefits of SBDM (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). In this case, science and math curriculum and instruction changed dramatically as a result of SBDM at Paul Revere. As Ovando (1994) found, Paul Revere, like other schools involved in reform, was making curricular and instructional progress through aligning the textbooks to the TEKS, and focusing instruction on hands-on and inquiry-based approaches, and benchmark testing, but they needed more time to determine the direct and indirect links to the improved student achievement in science and math, including more time to study the teachers' changing roles in their teaching performance.

Finally, parent and community involvement increased (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998; Drury & Levin, 1994). The administrators perceived that the increased involvement of parents and community members through the content-area focused school events such as Super Bowl Math Night, Science Family Night, Literacy Night, and the Parent Academy contributed to the improved student achievement in science and math as determined through teachers' informal measures such as observation and class participation, and more formal measures such as grading. The administrators perceived a healthier and more professional school climate due to the increased community engagement that resulted from SBDM.

Limitations of Administrators' perceptions

Improved or high formal standardized test scores on the TAKS test in the spring were one important piece of evidence lacking in substantiating their perceptions that SBDM led to improved student achievement at Paul Revere. The

time to see improved student achievement for all Paul Revere students also limited the reality of their perceptions

Interestingly, the Dr. Horn and Ms. Edger perceived different SBDM strengths than the district administrators.

Freedom and collaboration met stakeholders' needs

Dr. Horn perceived the school as a community of learners addressing children's academic and social needs as well as the parents' and community's needs. She cited "raised awareness through information sharing" as a major strength of SBDM at Paul Revere. She exemplified her ideas about information-sharing by explaining her desire that all members of her faculty, not just SBDM committee members, felt the freedom to share their ideas, not just the need to "rubber stamp" her ideas. She punctuated her comments by discussing the strength of communication and the proviso of focus for the district's vision and mission, as the campus went about "working together for school improvement based on the district's mission." An additional strength in the area of collaboration included the capability of SBDM to be replicated in all the district's schools.

Shared leadership built trust and ownership among stakeholders

Ms. Edger's perceptions revealed the theme of trust. She discussed the strengths of shared leadership and partnership with the teachers and parents through the SBDM process. Many of her ideas about strengths stemmed from her beliefs about building leadership capacity within the stakeholders' ranks. She viewed SBDM as a way to generate ownership and buy-in for school initiatives.

The team building, collaboration, and trust generated through SBDM stood out in all her perceptions of strengths, but she clearly established her belief that facilitative leadership was the key to achieving these strengths. Without facilitative leadership, she warned,

I would never ever try to go back in time from this. I think that would be disastrous...because you lose, when you empower people and then take away their power, you do a lot more damage than what you had before you empowered people. And because you would lose the partnership of what we do and if you try to do what we do in education in isolation, you won't succeed, no matter what the job is, whether it is teacher's assistant, or teacher or administrator or superintendent, if you try to do your job in isolation, you will be unsuccessful.

Collegiality among the stakeholders increased

In interpreting the campus administrator's perceptions of SBDM's strengths, they supported another benefit discussed in the SBDM literature: the benefit of increased collegiality among the stakeholders (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998; David, 1989; Clune & White, 1988; Mojkowski & Fleming, 1988). At Paul Revere, Dr. Horn and Ms. Edger both believed communication standards and accountability played a part in the equity of increased student outcomes. They believed that collegiality grew as teachers on the SBDM committee collaboratively set goals and planned for instructional outcomes, and collaboration and trust grew as educators and parents set goals and planned collaboratively.

SBDM Weaknesses

The final theme to emerge from the administrators' perceptions was the weaknesses of SBDM. In general, Dr. Diamond and Ms. Money named several weaknesses.

The lack of a global perspective

The lack of stakeholders' knowledge about schools and school improvement on SBDM committees emerged as a weakness of the SBDM process. In their general perception, district administrators viewed as a weakness the lack of stakeholders' personal responsibility and integrity in decision-making caused by personal agendas over the global perspective of what was needed and good for all the district's students. "The inability to meet goals due to the stakeholders' differing priorities or values" was cited as an example in Poppyfield ISD. This perception suggests Tyack's disconnection theory that fractured economic, religious, and political connections must be addressed before any reform including SBDM can be successful (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The district's dispersed geographical boundaries hampered the district SBDM committee's ability to communicate, achieve consensus on common needs and values, and work toward common goals. For this reason, the district administrators viewed the campus SBDM committee as the "binding force," where communication, needs, and values were more representative of the Paul Revere school community. As Ms. Money commented,

Our elementary campuses do better than our high school campuses....I think it's the nature of the beast. Your high school campuses are larger. They are harder to govern. They are much more varied; there are ten

thousand more things going on. And it's much more difficult to get people to bring their global perspective to the table and to allow those decisions to be made.

Varying levels of effectiveness

This weakness, according to the district administrators, could be based in general on stakeholders' varying levels of commitment and trust toward schools and schooling. Too much centralization, especially on budget decisions was cited as an example to support this theme. This perception suggests the theory of professionalism (Cohn; Crowson; Little; Louis; Lutz & Mertz, 1992) versus participative democracy (Clune & White, 1998; David, 1989; Mojkowski & Fleming, 1988) in SBDM as a way to reconnect communities and schools. From the district administrators' perspectives, a pure form of SBDM called for more decision-making power distributed to the campus SBDM committee in making budget decisions and allocations for student achievement needs. "Ultimately, when the money issue is still governed by central office, you don't have true site-based decision-making."

Time

Several weaknesses related to time constraints emerged from the all the administrators' stories. One time constraint meant finding a common meeting time to accommodate all the stakeholders' schedules. This need hampered SBDM committee membership at both the district and campus levels. Second, at the campus level, 100% meeting attendance by the CAAC (Campus Academic Advisory Council) was limited, due to the conflicting meeting schedules of other campus groups or committees such as vertical teams. Third, campus

administrators perceived that time constraints in scheduling meetings conducive to both the education professionals and the parent and community members prevented participation by the latter. To accommodate the campus personnel's time constraints and not meet after school hours or on week-ends, CAAC meetings were held from 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays as needed, and only once per month during the six months of data collection. Dr. Horn attributed the low parental participation and no community member CAAC participation to the early meeting time, which also could have prohibited prospective parental and community members' participation. She conceded this weakness as one for future consideration by the CAAC.

A fourth time constraint cited by district administrators as a weakness included finding the time necessary to meet student achievement goals. In the four CAAC meetings I attended during the six months of data collection, the twelve-member attendance varied in number and role by a minimum of two members each time. This change in attendance required more time outside the meeting for members to follow up with the members who were not present, and that need created another time constraint for all the members: The time to bring all the members to the same level of understanding on the issues presented at the former meeting before any action could be taken at the next meeting. In other words, decision-making and forward movement toward accomplishing student achievement goals was thwarted by the time needed to build a common knowledge base of the problems and the suggested strategies to address them. As stated by Ms. Money,

You cannot postpone decisions in order to get the committee together to help you make certain decisions. You just have to choose to do it yourself, and you just have to make the decision and move on sometimes that will accommodate the team and sometimes it doesn't.

The fifth time constraint was the lack of timely communication about upcoming meetings to the district SBDM committee members. Administrators perceived that DAC (District Advisory Council) members often were not aware of meetings due to abrupt meeting announcements too close to scheduled meeting times. They also felt that although DAC meetings were announced to Dr. Horn, sometimes the announcement might not make it to the campus DAC representative in a timely manner, so that the campus member might not be able to attend.

Interpretation of Teachers' Perceptions

In interpreting the teachers' perceptions about SBDM at Paul Revere, I found that over all, they were excited and committed to the process. They believed they were instrumental in advising Dr. Horn, helping her make decisions for the special population of students at their school without the interference of district mandates. They perceived that the collaboration among CAAC members and the inclusion of input and feedback from the vertical teams strengthened their SBDM process. These perceptions supported Lederhouse's (2001) idea that decision-making power should reside in the hands of the teachers, because without their active involvement, curricular and instructional changes will occur ever more slowly.

Teachers also felt empowered by their service on the CAAC. Clune and White (1988), David (1989), and Mojkowski and Fleming (1988) believe teachers' participation in decision-making is participative democracy in action, and consider their involvement as one way to reconnect communities and schools for the benefit of all. Through the teachers' interactions and relationships with the families of children in their classrooms at Paul Revere, and through their first-hand access to school information and their close relationship with Dr. Horn in the campus improvement process, they enjoyed the freedom of freely speaking their minds about concerns and ideas to improve student achievement.

The professional model of SBDM Leithwood and Menzies (1998) identified in a meta-analysis of 83 empirical studies on SBDM was exemplified at Paul Revere ES through the organized CIP process and the division of labor in monitoring. Leithwood and Menzies and Hess (1991) both determined that teachers in the professional model of SBDM held the most relevant knowledge for making decisions. In this model, as at Paul Revere Elementary School, teachers comprised the largest membership of the site council (two-thirds), and they demonstrated an increased commitment to the implementation of decisions. This supported the idea presented by Blase, Griffin (1995), and Weiss (1993), that empowering those closest to the problems led to increased commitment to the implementation of the decisions. Teachers also felt empowered through their responsibilities in this process. Most importantly, their perception that the CAAC was child-centered in all the decisions made was fundamental to their commitment for the SBDM process.

Although teachers were committed to the SBDM process, their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses seemed paradoxical. In other words, the strengths they identified also readily came through their stories as perceived weaknesses of the process. Among the weaknesses, teachers realized a few minor challenges in serving as members of a site council dedicated to the curricular and instructional approach (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998) to improving student achievement, such as increased workloads and fuzziness about procedures that may have stemmed from their lack of formal training. This perception supports the work of Oswald, (1995), Malen; and Prash (1990), which recognized an increased need for professional development, training, and follow-up and support for SBDM. While teachers believed learning-by-doing SBDM was adequate for them, they perceived parents and community members needed more training to understand the school and the SBDM process.

Another perceived weakness was teachers felt rushed from time to time throughout the campus improvement process, especially when the CIP deadlines crept up on them, but they were more than willing to suffer all the consequences of their participation as CAAC teacher members, especially the increased workload they experienced, because they believed they were making a difference for students' achievement through the myriad of curriculum, instruction, and budget and personnel decisions effected each day at Paul Revere ES. These perceptions support the findings by Leithwood and Menzies (1998), Jantzi and Leithwood (1996), Huberman, (1989), and Tuetteman and Punch (1992), that

teachers experienced stress and often burnout from their participation on site councils.

Limitations of Teachers' Perceptions

One particular limitation emerged from teachers' stories. From my perspective, teacher members were more supportive, than advisory, in their role. Although teachers expressed their role as advisory in their discussion of the SBDM process, their examples implied they were there more to support Dr. Horn's wants and needs for Paul Revere.

The process for creating the CIP provided an example to support this idea. As I was able to ascertain from the data collected in six months, teacher members either agreed with Dr. Horn's recommendations for campus improvement, or they suggested the details for ways to flesh out the recommendations. There was little evidence that they were actually involved in the data collection or analysis, or in brainstorming with Dr. Horn before an initiative or solution was decided upon. It appeared Dr. Horn guided the decision-making by gathering the data, analyzing it, making a set of recommendations to address the problem, evaluating and prioritizing the recommendations with CAAC members, and then welcoming them to speak freely about their ideas in regard to the recommendations. In her example, one teacher described their role as supportive, rather than advisory.

I see it as Dr. Bell comes to us and asks us questions about how she thinks things at the school level should be run, you know, referring to budget, and planning, and your plans and we decide that as a committee. And we decide that on this level as opposed to the district telling us, you know, when to do stuff and how to do it and how they spend our money as a committee we decide that stuff together.

These perceptions support the current literature that, at Paul Revere as in the 83 studies analyzed by Leithwood and Menzies (1998), principals and teachers reported little delegation of power as a result of SBDM. But contrary to their findings that this power differential created friction between teachers, principals, and administrators, in Poppyfield ISD and at Paul Revere ES, teachers and administrators were consistently and completely satisfied with the power differential remaining with Dr. Horn. Although Paul Revere teachers seemed committed to the SBDM process, I felt satisfied that they demonstrated the skill and commitment to become more advisory in the SBDM process.

Interpretation of Parents' Perceptions

Ironically, even in their overall limited knowledge (perceptions) of the SBDM process, and of the CAAC specifically, the parents praised the teachers and Dr. Horn, perceiving that everyone at Paul Revere was working hard for the children ensuring that every child was successful. The parents were not concerned that they should be included in the SBDM process, because everything at Paul Revere was “so much better than at any of the other schools they had experienced in the district,” and they attributed that high level of success strictly to the work of the teachers and principals.

One reason for the parents' positive perceptions of the student achievement initiatives at Paul Revere might have been due to the high level of parent involvement in the various annual school-wide academic events. The high parent/student turnout at the math night event was impressive, and the enthusiasm displayed on parents' and students' faces and in their voices that night further

convinced me that a large majority of parents perceived themselves as extremely involved in their children's academic achievement.

It bears mentioning that Poppyfield ISD's policy for Planning and Decision-Making Process: Campus level (BQB Local, 1996) stated the required membership for the CAAC as follows: twelve members total, four of whom were district and campus professional staff (principal, a district staff member, and two classroom teachers), and six of whom were representative parents, community members, and business representatives.

This information is significant in that the district currently employed Paul Revere's CAAC parent member as a Teaching Assistant at the school. Technically, based on district policy, she was ineligible to serve on the CAAC, Therefore, in reality, there was no parent representation on Paul Revere's CAAC for the 2002-03 school year.

In interpreting the CAAC membership rosters from 2000-01 through 2002-03, I found the following parent and community member data: 2000-01, sixteen total CAAC members comprised of three district and campus representatives, ten classroom teacher representatives, two parent representatives, and one community representative; 2001-02, eleven total CAAC members comprised of three district and campus representatives, eight classroom teacher representatives, no parent representatives, and no community representatives; and 2002-03, thirteen total members comprised of two district and campus representatives, ten classroom teacher representatives, one parent representative, and no community representatives.

Consequently, for the past three years, Paul Revere's CAAC had not met the district's standard for parent and community representation, as observed in examination of the CAAC rosters from each year. Some of the perceptions for this deficit were reported in the stories told by the administrators and teachers.

Limitations of the Parents' Perceptions

In light of the single member parent's participation on the CAAC at Paul Revere, and the absence of community member's representation, I surmised that representatives from these stakeholder groups had been difficult for Paul Revere's principal to attain. However, later in the data collection, I perceived, based on observations and perceptions of other stakeholders, that parents' and community members' representation on the CAAC was not a priority to the administrators and teachers, due to the professional model of SBDM implemented at Paul Revere.

Even though parents' perceived Paul Revere as a successful campus for all children, especially theirs, they were perhaps unaware of the potential value added by their awareness of or participation in the CAAC. The professional model of SBDM at Paul Revere worked so well for the teachers, principals, parents, and students that the need for a different model that included more parent and community member participation seemed insignificant.

The fact that Paul Revere's SBDM process had not progressed from the administrative type Texas adopted in 1991 (Texas Education Code Chapter 21, Sec. 21.931) to the community model with principal veto power Texas mandated

in 1995 (TEC, 1995), as described in the SBDM literature, seemed contradictory to the parents' positive perceptions.

Additionally, although the district policy required an equal ratio of school and district to parent and community representatives on the CAAC, Ms. Money on Paul Revere's CAAC did not seem concerned about the lack of parent and community representation. Her positive perceptions at the focus group meeting seemed contradictory to the district's expectations for parent and community representation on the CAAC and to the SBDM process in general, but nonetheless, exemplified her feelings about parent involvement at Paul Revere.

From the district perspective, Paul Revere is an amazing place and we really admire so much of what goes on. One thing that came out today in a meeting I was in was the awesome involvement of parents and how much you want to pull parents into the educational process, which is so vital and so important. So, from our perspective, we couldn't be more delighted with what goes on here.

STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS: WHAT WORKED

This summary contains a composite of the findings of the research questions and is presented in three main categories: (1) what worked, (2) what was workable, and (3) what was needed.

SBDM decisions affected student achievement

Several aspects of SBDM worked at Paul Revere Elementary School. The stakeholders' perceptions differed somewhat as per their experiences as they honed in on the following strengths. Administrators believed their SBDM decisions affected student achievement. An example they cited was the TAKS

Talks that occurred between Ms. Money who served on the CAAC and the campus principal.

Focus on student achievement data, TEKS alignment, and increased parent involvement

They believed that their focus on student achievement data, TEKS alignment, and increased parent involvement at their school positively impacted student achievement. Shared knowledge and the new ideas that developed through input and dialogue was another strength.

They were empowered to make the decisions that impacted students

Administrators were empowered to make the decisions that impacted students, since the CAAC members were representative of the ones who best knew the students at Paul Revere.

The advisory nature of their service

Teachers' perceptions of what worked focuses a great deal on processes and procedures of SBDM. They perceived the advisory nature of their service on the CAAC as strength.

The collaborative, inclusionary aspect

They valued the collaborative, inclusionary aspect of SBDM they experienced at Paul Revere. They valued and were empowered by learning and working together as part of the SBDM team. They valued the organization of the CIP creation and division of labor in monitoring that the CIP goals and strategies were met.

Open communication with administrators

Teachers expressed a strong sense of appreciation and value for the open communication with administrators that SBDM provided.

Their decisions positively affected the curriculum and instruction

Teachers believed their decisions on the SBDM committee positively affected the curriculum and instructional decisions, thereby positively affecting student achievement. Budgetary and personnel decisions were also made that positively affected student achievement. As a foundation for their decision-making, they believed SBDM engendered teacher unity.

Commitment to the SBDM process and to the students

One of the greatest strengths teachers perceived was a commitment to the SBDM process and to the students at Paul Revere, building on the child-centered focus of each decision they made.

Freedom to speak openly

Teachers felt free to speak their thoughts openly about campus improvement initiatives, and felt empowered to control the decision-making without pressure from the district.

Inclusion

The inclusion of the whole school staff in the decision-making process through the involvement of vertical teams led to the effectiveness of decisions that were implemented by the teachers and staff school-wide.

SBDM was a collaborative, problem-solving process

The parents' perceptions also uncovered many strengths of the SBDM process. SBDM was a collaborative, problem-solving process. Ms. Sanders cited her pleasure that challenges that could easily become problems if not dealt with immediately were worked out through the SBDM meetings.

Input with the teachers and principals

Input with the teachers and principals was a perceived strength.

Teachers were seen as highly caring

Also, as a result of the SBDM process, parents perceived the teachers as highly caring of their students and the school.

Heightened awareness to teachers' concerns

Parents enjoyed their heightened awareness to teachers' concerns as a result of SBDM.

WHAT DIDN'T WORK, BUT WAS WORKABLE? PROCESSES, PROCEDURES AND MEASUREMENTS OF SCHOOL AND ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES

The ability to find a global perspective

The most important aspect of SBDM implementation not working at the district level was the ability to find a global perspective among all the school community, according to Dr. Diamond. She believed the district's geographical challenges created varied needs based on the diverse cultural and socio-economic status of the various school communities. One example of a procedure that did not work for Paul Revere was the district's calendar adoption process. The school's

calendar needs were different than the district needs; nonetheless, the district's needs prevailed.

Varying levels of effectiveness

The high schools and middle schools in Poppyfield ISD were perceived to be less effective in the implementation of SBDM as compared with their elementary school counterparts. The varying levels of commitment and trust toward schools and schooling could have contributed to the varying levels of effectiveness.

Time

Several weaknesses related to time constraints emerged. Finding a common meeting time to accommodate all the stakeholders' schedules. Consequently, meeting attendance was also hampered by meeting schedules that overlapped or conflicted. Low parent and community member participation was attributed to conflicting needs for meeting to be held right after school as opposed to evenings or on weekends. More time was also perceived as needed to meet necessary student achievement goals and to develop understanding of the SBDM and school improvement process for new members to the CAAC. Finally, stakeholders perceived untimely notification of meetings of the DAC, resulting in little awareness of the district's SBDM process or district improvement strategies implemented.

Communication processes

Communication processes were also not working as well as needed, perhaps due to the district's geographical challenges. Communication about the DAC meetings sometimes arrived later than the meeting itself, causing a lack of attendance by Paul Revere's representative. Also, Paul Revere was not always clear about DAC meeting outcomes.

A consistent level of commitment to the SBDM process

Another process that did not work was a consistent level of commitment to the SBDM process. Levels of commitment varied, with the elementary schools leading in commitment, middle schools coming next, and high schools coming in last. In addition, parent and community member participation in the SBDM process was limited. For the most part, their input into district planning was received through the strategic planning process four years ago. Dr. Diamond believed the time might be right for a second phase of parent and community involvement at the district level, and the SBDM process held promise.

Training was learning-by-doing

Several stakeholders perceived their understanding of procedural issues as fuzzy. Many of them were not sure how they came to be part of the CAAC, when their terms expired, and what their roles were during the meetings. They learned the SBDM process by watching and listening to their peers. They were unsure about the selection process for other's benefits.

Increased workload weakened SBDM

Teachers especially felt the burden of an increased workload as a result of their participation in SBDM. They expressed concern for the lost attention to the needs of students in their individual classrooms.

Low parent and community participation

The low parent and community participation concerned all the stakeholder groups, although there was not evidence through their stories or the campus documents that showed they were actively addressing the problem. Dr. Horn admitted this as a weakness of their CAAC, and Ms. Sanders also expressed her concern that she would feel more comfortable to speak up if there were other parent and community members.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Through the stories of their experiences, stakeholders' alluded to recommendations for the future implementation in Poppyfield ISD and at Paul Revere. In the least, parent non-members could have been made aware that there was a venue by which they could participate in the schools' decision-making about curriculum, instruction, budget and personnel. A regular posting of the CAAC agenda prior to the meetings, as well as regular communication in the campus newsletter regarding the CAAC's work, could have provided parents and community members the information needed to keep them abreast of student achievement initiatives occurring at Paul Revere. PISD District policy called for "communication on a systematic basis regarding the work of the council" (Planning and Decision-Making Process: Campus-Level, BQB Local, 1996).

However, as evidenced by the parents' comments, little communication about the CAAC or SBDM process including their opportunity to serve on the CAAC or of the nomination process was readily available.

Communication

Teachers, parents, and administrators were concerned about the limited communication about SBDM. Some were anxious about their roles on the CAAC because they did not understand the processes and procedures they were expected to facilitate. Others were anxious that they did not know about their how and when their terms would end, or how they would approach the possibility of not serving on the CAAC if they so desired, or if they were unable to do so. Some did not know how they were selected to serve, and everyone seemed fuzzy about the process for enlisting more parents and community members for the CAAC. They were also unsure about what had been done to enlist others this year, as well as what had been done in the past.

Parents seemed surprised to know there was a CAAC at Paul Revere, but when the SBDM process was described to them, they seemed interested in knowing more, and welcomed any opportunity for parents to better know and meet teachers' needs. For this reason, ongoing communication to the school community in the form of CAAC updates, the meeting agenda announced in advance of the meeting (in time for interested stakeholders to attend), as well as information about the nomination and selection process could prove to increase parent and community stakeholders' active CAAC participation. Increased communication strategies described in these examples could contribute to

increased measurements of school outcomes related to communication issues such as an increased awareness of school improvement initiatives promoted and facilitated by the CAAC to teachers and staff, particularly CAAC non-members.

Training

I also recommend the district implement district and campus level SBDM training to increase parent and community participation in the SBDM process, thus leading to consistent, high level SBDM programs at all campuses. A standard training model for the district could be replicated at the campus level. The model could provide stakeholders information about the SBDM process in general in one session, and then perhaps, for those who showed an interest after a session on the fundamental concepts, another session could be held for those who want to know more about the procedures. Still another session could be on the intricacies of campus improvement planning. Finally, a session could be held in which principals, families, and community leaders from the respective campuses could come together by campus to analyze and discuss the particular campus achievement data. Then, sometime later, a session could be held to address the nomination and selection process for all stakeholders.

Thorough the implementation of a training model similar to this, stakeholders would come to the DAC and CAAC already understanding the SBDM process and procedures, their role as advisors, and the district and campus goals. Then they would be better prepared to actually do the work of campus improvement, and time would be better served during the year in the campus and the district meetings.

Time management

Another campus-level process that did not work was the increased workload teachers experienced due to all the required campus committee meetings. They expressed frustration with the multiple campus committees on which they were expected to serve and offered several reasons for their frustrations. First, they believed that more efficient data collection could be attained in less time through the vertical teams rather than the several other campus committees. Second, some teachers were excluded from participation on the CAAC due to the constrained meeting size and other various reasons such as meeting scheduling conflicts. Due to long school days caused by multiple campus committee meetings, frustration was exacerbated by a lack of time to adequately plan lessons for the students in their classrooms.

To address these needs, I recommend the creation of a Master calendar to manage campus meetings, as well as an analysis by the CAAC and principals, of effective ways to include everyone on the staff in the SBDM process. The analysis should provide more clarity of focus on the campus improvement goals, and higher productivity in and efficiency in achieving them.

School or student achievement outcomes related to SBDM

Although Paul Revere's CAAC demonstrated a strong focus on data-driven school improvement as evidenced by their work in science, math, and literacy over the past three years, they did not seem to be aware of how their goals, for improving student achievement aligned with the district's goals, or for a timeline they were working against to achieve those goals. An example of a

district goal could have been that each year all students passing TAAS could have increased by 5%. It seemed as though these large district goals were missing, and without district goals such as this, and a specific timeframe in which to attain the goals, Paul Revere does not know if they are moving forward with enough momentum to help the district reach the next level of the AEIS ratings, or if they may be falling behind. The perspective of where the campus improvement levels lie in relation to the district goals is important to the school and district.

Measurement of school outcomes such as parents' perceptions of how the school is involving them in decision-making about curriculum and instruction for their children could be attained through the use of a campus climate survey. Measurements of school outcomes affecting students and teachers could also be attained through the use of a campus climate survey, if questions were designed to address the roles teachers play. The results of a campus climate survey could be tabulated and reported to all the stakeholders as a mechanism for building trust, as well as enhancing communication about ongoing school improvement.

A Process for Assessing the Implementation of SBDM

The stakeholders' stories were the least developed about what was needed to further the implementation of SBDM. I interpreted this as a lack of reflection on and assessment of the SBDM process at the district and campus levels by all the stakeholders, especially by the administrators. Overall, I recommend that the district implement a process for assessing the implementation of SBDM in the district and at the campus. I feel this assessment process is critical to the district's future implementation of SBDM.

A Process for Follow-up and Support During Implementation

The district's follow-up and support to the campus to address implementation needs is recommended as well. I recommend district and campus leaders examine the use of an assessment tool such as the Concerns-Based Adoption Model by Hall, Hord, Huling-Austin, and Rutherford (1987), to identify specific SBDM implementation needs and concerns that, once addressed, may positively impact the school culture as well as student achievement outcomes.

Recommendations for Policy Makers and Educational Leaders

Based on the stakeholders' stories, the following recommendations may assist school leaders and policy makers interested in enhancing the effective implementation of SBDM in the future. First, the implementation of district SBDM training for parents and community members to raise their awareness level, interest, and participation in the process could serve as a catalyst for a more democratic decision-making process in Poppyfield ISD. If families and community members were informed of and clearly understood the entry level points for serving as decision-makers and in other capacities in the district and at the campus, their overall participation might increase, thus resulting in increased achievement for their children and others.

Second, the addition of school and student achievement outcomes at the district and campus level could be the catalyst for moving the district forward in achieving "Exemplary" status on the AEIS, and for more schools attaining higher levels of academic achievement. An example of a way the district could implement a school and student achievement outcome through the

implementation of SBDM is through the adoption of a process for setting the district's annual school calendar. If schools were able to identify the calendar best for their families and community, then potentially more students' and families' needs would be served in a more amenable way. Student attendance could rise as a result, and thus, student achievement would increase. The district's climate of trust in the community would also improve.

Third, the creation of a standard timeline for campuses to meet district student achievement goals would also serve as a recommendation related to measurement of school and student outcomes for future SBDM implementation. In much the same way the district's adoption of a calendar reflective of individual school communities' needs could serve as a catalyst for measurement of increased school and student achievement outcomes, a standard timeline for schools to meet the district's student achievement goals could provide the same benefit.

If implemented, these recommendations could contribute to the development of a common set of district values or beliefs, consistent implementation at all levels, and ultimately, the acceleration of the district's AEIS rating from "Recognized" to "Exemplary."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS

This case study's unique contribution to the field is the stakeholders' stories and perceptions about their actual experiences as SBDM participants and the process and procedures that worked well, that were workable, and the ones that needed work. Their stories provided readers more insight into the implementation process of SBDM than other qualitative and quantitative studies

that this study preceded. The information gleaned from the findings can provide guidance to the district and the campus for their further implementation of SBDM, and to districts and campuses similar to Poppyfield and Paul Revere.

The stakeholders' rich descriptions of their experiences have provided researchers a unique look at stakeholders' perceptions. However, researchers may use the study's recommendations to further inform their research, the findings are limited to the case in the study.

For this reason, many additional studies are needed before educators, families and community members, and policy makers can gain a clear and comprehensive understanding. Further research in the areas of the effects of parent and community involvement on the SBDM process and on the effects of types of SBDM other than the professional model on school and student achievement outcomes could provide further clarification to the SBDM implementation process.

CONCLUSION

The overriding need regarding SBDM's implementation was for communication in the form of teacher, parent, and community training in the concepts and process of SBDM. The extremely low level of parent involvement and the absence of community involvement in the SBDM process exemplified the training need, as well as the over all need for the stakeholders' awareness of the SBDM process and procedures in general, and of the specific procedures and roles at the campus level. Examples from stakeholders' stories indicated the need

for role clarification, information about nomination and selection, and term limit procedures.

The perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents, both those who were CAAC members and those who were not, provided insight into their own implementation of SBDM as a process. They may use this information to improve their process at both the district and campus levels, thus increasing their chances for improved student achievement and an “Exemplary” district and campus AEIS rating. Increased parent and community support for district and campus improvement initiatives as well as increased involvement in academic areas could impact both school and student achievement outcomes.

In the same way that Paul Revere and Poppyfield ISD can use these findings to improve the implementation in their district, policy makers and educational leader can use stakeholders’ perceptions and recommendations in this study to gain ideas for the further implementation of SBDM as a legislative mandate. Although the findings from this single case should not be generalized to another school or district, the stakeholders’ rich descriptions of their experiences about what implementation strategies work, are workable, and needed may be used to inform readers’ implementation in the future.

In conclusion, SBDM’s future at Poppyfield ISD and Paul Revere Elementary Schools resides in the hands of the capable and committed administrators, teachers and parents who believe they are closest to the decisions needing to be made for all students. With great confidence, this researcher cheers

the stakeholders on to rise above their obstacles to implementation by soaring with their powerful strengths, and in time their due diligence will be rewarded.

Table 1.**Respondent Profile**

Administrators					
Name	Years/Education	Years/District	Years/PRES	Years/CAAC	Years/DAC
Diamond	31	4	-----	-----	-----
Money	23	1.5	new 2002-03	-----	2
Horn	13	5	5	5	-----
Edger	20	8	5	5	-----
Teachers					
Name	Years/Education	Years/District	Years/PRES	Years/CAAC	Years/DAC
Holmes	8	5	5	5	2
Horton	12	1	new 2002-03	new 2002-03	-----
Ms. Jones	4	4	4	4	-----
Lewis	20	5	5	new 2002-03	-----

(table continued)

Name	Years/Education	Years/District	Years/PRES	Years/CAAC	Years/DAC
Arnold	9	4	4	3	----
Rivas	new 2002-03	new 2002-03	new 2002-03	new 2002-03	----
Cole	5	5	5	2.5	----

Parents

Name	Children	Years/District	Years/PRES	Years/CAAC	Years/DAC
Sanders	3	3	3	new 2002-03	----
Davy	3	3	----	----	----
Eugene	4	new 2002-03	----	----	----
Frut	4	----	NA	4	----

Note. Blanks indicate no participation. NA indicates No Available information.

Table 2.

What Worked?

<u>Processes</u>	<u>Procedures</u>	<u>Measurement of School Outcomes</u>	<u>Measurement of Achievement Outcomes</u>
Professional Model	Budget allocations	Commitment	Reading benchmark scores
District liaison	C&I alignment	C&I decisions	Student math, reading grades
Proactive approach	Personnel allocations	Freedom	Level parent involvement w/academics
Facilitative leadership	CIP organization	Ownership	Level parent support of C&I initiatives
Advisory role	Monitoring	Unity	
Communication	Input/Feedback	Shared knowledge	
Learning by doing		Trust	
Inclusion	Vertical teams	Collegiality	
Child-centered focus	Highly caring teachers	Improved C&I	
Parent involvement	Academic events		

(table continued)

What Was Workable?

<u>Processes</u>	<u>Procedures</u>	<u>Measurement of School Outcomes</u>	<u>Measurement of Achievement Outcomes</u>
Global perspective	Calendar		
Consistent effectiveness	Varied @ MS, HS	Commitment by some	
Time management	Timelines, Scheduling	Teacher workload	Science benchmark scores
Parent involvement	Parent participation		
Community involvement	Community participation		
Communication	Announcements		
Training	Parent, Teacher selection, Terms		

What Was Needed?

<u>Processes</u>	<u>Procedures</u>	<u>Measurement of School Outcomes</u>	<u>Measurement of Achievement Outcomes</u>
Meeting Economy	Vertical teams	More efficient data collection	
Communication	Teacher training		
Time management	Lesson planning time		
Parent/Community Involvement	Training		

(table continued)

Recommendations for Practice

<u>Processes</u>	<u>Procedures</u>	<u>Measurement of School Outcomes</u>	<u>Measurement of Achievement Outcomes</u>
Training	District/Campus	Global perspective, consistency	High level programs @ all levels
Timeline	CIP, goals	Exemplary status	High graduation rate/college
Communication	DAC	Partnership	Program differentiation, enrichment
Assessment	CBAM	Quality assurance	Higher benchmarks, test scores
Advising	Brainstorming	Clarity of focus	Individualized needs met
Time management	Master calendar	Productivity	Increased learning time
Quality Assurance	Proxy	Efficiency	Teacher/student relationship
Parent nomination	Awareness/selection	Parent support	Parent/student relationships
Comm. Nomination	Awareness/selection	Community support	Student leadership
			Student/Adult relationships

Note. The findings for What Works? What didn't Work? and What is Needed? were generated entirely from the stakeholders' perceptions and their examples to support their perceptions. When an example was not cited to address, for example, procedures, school, or student achievement outcomes, I interpreted that as an implementation need for the administrators and the stakeholders to address in the SBDM process.

Appendix A

Conversations with Administrators, Teachers, and Parents

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you define Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM)?
2. What have been some of your experiences in serving on your campus SBDM committee?
3. What kinds of training, if any, have you received related to SBDM? Please describe in detail including times, places, dates.
4. What kinds of decisions have your SBDM committee made that affected student achievement? Was the effect positive or negative? Please describe in detail.
5. What do you consider the strengths of SBDM in general? In your district? On your campus?
6. What do you consider the weaknesses of SBDM in general? In your district? On your campus?
7. Is there anything you wish to tell me about SBDM that I have not asked?

Appendix B

Working Codes

1. Definitions of SBDM
2. SBDM experiences
3. Training
4. SBDM decisions that affected student achievement
5. Strengths of SBDM
6. Weaknesses of SBDM

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