Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools

A research-based resource for school leadership
teams to assist with the School Improvement Process

Dr. Terry Bergeson
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

NINE CHARACTERISTICS
OF HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

**A research-based resource for school leadership teams
to assist with the
School Improvement Process**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

**G. Sue Shannon
Senior Researcher
Research and Evaluation**

**Pete Bylsma
Director
Research and Evaluation**

**January 2003
First Edition**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building, P.O. Box 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200

Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent
Mary Alice Heuschel, Deputy Superintendent, Learning and Teaching
Tom Kelly, Deputy Superintendent, Administration and Operations
Mike Bigelow, Associate Superintendent, Budget and School Business Services
Andy Griffin, Assistant Superintendent, Community Outreach
Greg Hall, Assistant Superintendent, Assessment and Research
Bob Harmon, Assistant Superintendent, Special Programs
Mickey Lahmann, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction
Marcia Riggers, Assistant Superintendent, Operations and Support

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Becoming a high-performing school takes years of sustained commitment. There is no silver bullet – no single thing a school can do to ensure high student performance. Researchers have found that high-performing schools have a number of common characteristics. The professional and research literature has identified various characteristics of improving and effective schools. Educational reformers and theorists have developed programs and processes for assisting school practitioners in creating and maintaining those conditions to help increase student learning.

Through a review of more than 20 studies, Washington school improvement specialists and researchers identified nine characteristics of high performing schools. Some of the studies were reviews of other research that has taken place over many years on the same topic, while others examined high performing schools in specific settings and locations with specific student demographics. This body of research represents findings from both Washington state and around the nation. The bibliography of the research reports and a matrix summarizing the findings are included in this document (see pages 45-47).

The content of each study was analyzed to determine what characteristics were found most often among high performing schools. Performance was usually measured in terms of high or dramatically improving scores on standardized tests, often in spite of difficult circumstances such as high levels of poverty. In every case, there was no single factor that accounted for the success or improvement. Instead, the research found that high performing schools tend to have a combination of common characteristics. Some reports found as few as five characteristics, while others found many more. OSPI's analysis of these characteristics narrowed these lists into nine areas. These schools have:

1. A clear and shared focus.
2. High standards and expectations for all students.
3. Effective school leadership.
4. High levels of collaboration and communication.
5. Curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards.
6. Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching.
7. Focused professional development.
8. A supportive learning environment.
9. High levels of family and community involvement.

Each of these nine characteristics is explained in more detail on the following pages. For each characteristic, the discussion provides
*   definitions of the concepts in the characteristic;
*   explanations of the importance of the characteristic in school improvement;
*   suggestions of how or where to begin implementing the characteristic for school improvement; and
*   a list of resources for further study or reference.

Although these definitions, explanations, suggestions for implementation, and resources are relatively brief, they draw from relevant research and professional literature to help educators deepen their understanding of the characteristics and to offer them practical ideas, strategies and

sample activities for addressing the characteristics. Effectively addressing the nine characteristics leads to "second order" change as philosophy, values, attitudes and beliefs are fundamentally changed. Cursory attention to the nine characteristics, however, may lead to "first order" change that may have little impact on student learning.

As educators are asked to use "scientifically-based research," particularly in relation to new federal laws (e.g., No Child Left Behind), they must examine the quality of research studies. Very few studies meet the Federal government's "gold standard" of experimental design. However, many of the cited studies meet the "silver standard." The consistency of the results which occurs across these studies provides sufficient evidence to have great confidence in their results.

The **nine characteristics are integral to School Improvement Planning** and should be embedded in all stages of the planning and implementation processes. This document is a resource to use with the eight stages of school improvement planning; it is not a substitute or a checklist for the development of the plan.

A "School Assessment Tool" and directions for administering it have been included for school use (see page 48 and following pages). The tool can be completed by school staff and other stakeholders to help start discussions about the level of implementation of the characteristics and areas that need more attention.

NINE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS

1. Clear and Shared Focus   Everybody knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.

2. High Standards and Expectations for All Students   Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. Students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

3. Effective School Leadership   Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They also nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders can have different styles and roles—teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.

4. High Levels of Collaboration and Communication   There is strong teamwork among teachers across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community, to identify problems and work on solutions.

5. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards   The planned and actual curriculum are aligned with the essential academic learning requirements (EALRs). Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understand the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

6. Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time is provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to students who need more help. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

7. Focused Professional Development   A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focuses extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.

8. Supportive Learning Environment   The school has a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

9. High Levels of Family and Community Involvement   There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Families, businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

SELECTED RESOURCES AS STARTING POINTS

Some resources discuss several of the nine characteristics of high-performing schools. The books in the following list provide an effective starting point for busy educators who have limited time for reading. These resources are also useful for school study groups.

Barth, R. S. (1990). Improving Schools from Within: Teachers, Parents, and Principals Can Make the Difference. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Blase, J. and Kirby, P. C. (1992). Bringing Out the Best in Teachers: What Effective Principals Do. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Cotton, K. (1995). Research You Can Use to Improve Results. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Cotton, K. (2000). The Schooling Practices that Matter Most. Alexandria, VA: ASCD and Portland, OR: NWREL.

DuFour, R. and Eaker, R. (1998). Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service and Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Glickman, C. D. (1993). Renewing America's Schools: A Guide for School-Based Action. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Holcomb, E. L. (2001). Asking the Right Questions: Techniques for Collaboration and School Change. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., and Pollock, J. E. (2001). Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies For Increasing Student Achievement. Alexandria, VA.: ASCD.

Newmann, F. M. and Associates. (1996). Authentic Achievement: Restructuring Schools for Intellectual Quality. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Schlechty, P. C. (2001). Shaking Up the School House: How to Support and Sustain Educational Innovation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schmoker, M. (1999). Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement. (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., and Kleiner, A. (2000). Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education. New York: Currency / Doubleday.

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., and Hyde, A. (1998). Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools. (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

EXPANDED DEFINITIONS, EXPLANATIONS, AND IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

1. A CLEAR AND SHARED FOCUS

Everybody knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.

Definition and explanation

Identifying the **core purpose** of an organization is a critical element of effective school systems as well as successful businesses and other entities. Successful organizations require a sense of what its members are working toward (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Strategic planning, a business-world activity adopted in the education-world, has heightened attention to mission and vision in the last twenty years**.** The school improvement literature has emphasized the importance of mission and vision in the context of restructuring and educational reform. Effective systems with **strong program coherence** are more likely to positively impact student achievement than fragmented uncoordinated systems (Newmann, et al, 2001).

Shared emphasis in a school provides direction and purpose for teacher collaboration and increases certainty regarding teaching practice (Rosenholtz, 1989). A clear focus assists in aligning programs and activities for school improvement. A clear and shared focus includes a **vision that captures the imagination and enthusiasm** of members of the organization as well as **specific goals**, which concentrate attention, effort, and resources. A vision is expressed in a vivid, detailed word picture that describes the organization or the school as it would appear when its purpose is successfully accomplished. To effectively determine a specific focus, school leadership and stakeholders use collaborative processes to **target one or two areas** as school goals and then **build consensus** around them. High performing schools succeed in establishing a goal that resonates with the stakeholders.

Implementation suggestions

Several processes have been developed that will assist a school or school district in developing a clear and shared focus. School improvement approaches share several components:
- **description of "what is**" using an analysis of relevant data, i.e. a profile of the school
- **identification of gaps** between "what is" and the aspirations described in the vision which are potential goal areas, i.e. a needs assessment
- **process for decision making to establish specific goals** or focus involving stakeholders to generate ideas and to respond to ideas, to create **ownership and commitment**
- **communication** of the goal or focus with the **whole school community**.

Four specific approaches, using various activities, are briefly described below:

1. The approach described by DuFour and Eaker (1998) begins with a **whole staff study to build a foundation** of research and background. These authors, then, suggest several activities that can be used in **building a shared focus**. **Stakeholders** may be asked to project themselves into the future

and **describe the school** they would like to have, including the behaviors, attitudes, and interactions they would see.

Sentence stems and questions provide prompts for this activity. For example,
    <u>sentence stems</u> used as prompts include:
        (1) "The kind of school I would like my own child to attend would. . ."
        (2) "I want my school to be a place where. . . ."
    <u>questions</u> as prompts include:
        (1) "What would you like to see our school become?"
        (2) "What could we accomplish in the next five years that would make us proud?"

2. Another approach suggested by Sagor (1996) uses "**scenario writing**" as a means for creating a shared vision for a school. To begin the process, teachers are asked to write a **personal success story**. Over a period of time, teachers **pool their stories, review and refine** them. These become a composite scenario that expresses a vision for a school and helps develop a common, schoolwide focus.

3. An approach for goal setting, suggested by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, is based on an **analysis of school data**. In <u>Moving Forward</u> (Woods, 2002) **narrative statements** are suggested as part of the process for selecting school goals and for building consensus. Narrative statements describe the school's data regarding student achievement and sometimes may include student behavior. A small group such as a school leadership team analyzes school data and writes the statements and selects the most important statements. Then individual staff members and finally the whole staff **rate the degree of satisfaction** they feel with the performance described in the narrative and **the level of importance** they attach to each. A process is used to reach consensus on those that are most important and with which there is least satisfaction with the current performance. This leads to a group decision on a goal area as a focus for the whole staff to improve student learning.

4. **Action research** is another approach that helps a school to determine a clear focus. Action research is a broad school renewal process, sometimes called inquiry or critical study, that includes creating vision and goals, taking action, and reviewing progress, then renewing or revising efforts. Calhoun, Glickman, and Sagor have written practical guides for assisting schools in the process of school improvement using action research. Glickman (1993) describes three components of his school improvement model: **a covenant, charter, and critical-study process**. The **covenant** is developed through a democratic process involving all stakeholders and contains beliefs and agreements focused solely on teaching and learning. The covenant is a guide for future decision making. The **charter** is a governance structure for decision making. The **critical study** process is a plan for school improvement that uses the action research cycle.

The **action research steps** include
    1. **using data** to set goals and student objectives**,**
    2. **identifying activities and changes** to be made to accomplish the goals and objectives,
    3. **implementing the steps, which include professional development** and attending to curriculum alignment, instructional and assessment practices and so on, then
    4. **evaluating the results of actions** that have been taken to determine next steps.
These steps constitute a cycle of school renewal.

Whatever approach is used initially, a **process for building consensus** is needed to narrow the focus. The **inclusion of all stakeholder groups** is critical to increase ownership of the vision and focus. The identification of a goal area is only the first step. Using the focus as a "**lighthouse**" for setting and maintaining a course of action is essential to create the conditions needed to increase student performance. The school improvement activities need to be aligned with the focus area to increase coherence in the system and the likelihood of improving student learning.

References (* indicates those cited above)

http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/re-engineering/keyissues/leadership.shtml
Leadership and Organizational Vitality

www.effectiveschools.com

www.prrac.org/additup.pdf
Add It Up: Using Research to Improve Education for Low-Income and Minority Students.

Barth, R. S. (1990). Improving Schools from Within: Teachers, Parents, and Principals Can Make the Difference. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. See chapter 11, Visions of Good Schools.

*Calhoun, E. F. (1994). How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School. Alexandria, VA: ASCD

Conzemius, A. & O'Neill, J. (2001). Building Shared Responsibility for Student Learning. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. See chapter 2, Focus.

Cunningham, W. G. & Gresso, D. W. (1993). Cultural Leadership: The Culture of Excellence in Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. See chapter 4, Vision, Not Criticism, Supports Excellence.

*DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (1998). Professional Learning Communities at Work. Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement. Bloomington, Id.: National Educational Service and Alexandria, VA:ASCD. See chapters 4-5 on Mission and Vision/ Values and Goals.

*Glickman, C. D. (1993). Renewing America's Schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. See chapter 2, The Covenant: Establishing Common Principles of Teaching and Learning.

Holcomb, E. L. (2001). Asking the Right Questions. Techniques for Collaboration and School Change. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Louis, K. S. & Miles, M. B. (1990). Improving the Urban High School. What Works and Why. New York: Teachers College Press. See chapter 9, Vision Building in School Reform.

Newmann, F. M & Associates. (1996). Authentic Achievement. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

*Newmann, F. M., Smith, B. A., Allensworth, E. & Bryk, A. S. (2001, January). School Instructional Program Coherence: Benefits and Challenges. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

*Peters, T. J. & Waterman, Jr., R. H. (1982). In Search of Excellence. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

*Rosenholtz, S. J. (1989). Teachers' Workplace. The Social Organization of Schools. Longman.

*Sagor, R. (1996). Local Control and Accountability. How to Get It, Keep It and Improve School Performance. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. See chapter 3, The Three Building Blocks of Accountability: Vision Setting, Action Research, and Performance Assessment.

Schlechty. P. C. (2001). Shaking Up the School House. How to Support and Sustain Educational Innovation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. See chapters 2 and 8.

*Schmoker, M. (1999). <u>Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement</u> (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. See chapter 2, Goals, and the website at www.ascd.org/framebooks.html

*Senge, P. M. (1990). <u>The Fifth Discipline. The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization</u>. New York: Doubleday Currency. See Part III, The Core Disciplines: Building the Learning Organization.

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). <u>Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education</u>. New York: Doubleday Currency. See Part IX, School Vision.

*Woods, D. (2002). <u>Moving Forward: From Where You are to School Improvement that Lasts. A Research-based Guide</u>. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

2. HIGH STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. Students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

Definition and explanation

Standards and expectations are terms used to address several concepts:
- the content standards, which are the learning targets;
- the performance standards, which answer the question "how good is good enough?" and
- expectations, which is confidence that students will meet both the content and performance standards that have been set.

The standards movement has served to clarify the **academic purpose for schools**. Performance levels have established the **desirable quality of achievement** for students to meet.

Research, beginning with studies in the late 1960's, describes the impact of teachers' expectations on student performance. Teacher expectations may be described according to three general types:
- teacher's **perceptions** of student's current level,
- teacher's **prediction** about the amount of academic progress a student will make over a given time, and
- degree to which a teacher "**over- or underestimates** a student's present level of performance" (Bamburg, 1994).

Some have called the concept of teacher expectations the "Pygmalion" effect or "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Good and Brophy, 2000). Student behavior is impacted by opinions and perceptions that others have for them which in turn become self-fulfilling prophecies. Good and Brophy describe the process as follows:
1. "The **teacher expects different**, **specific behavior and achievement** from particular students.
2. Because of these different expectations, the **teacher behaves differently** toward various students.
3. This **treatment tells students what behavior and achievement the teacher expects from them** and how they are expected to behave and perform.
4. If this treatment is consistent over time, and if students do not resist or change it in some way, it will likely **affect their self-concepts, achievement, motivation**, levels of aspiration, classroom conduct and interactions with the teacher.
5. These effects generally will complement and reinforce the teacher's expectations, so that **students will come to conform to these expectations** more than they might have otherwise.
6. With time, students' achievement and behavior will conform more and more closely to that originally expected of them. **High-expectations students will be led to achieve at high levels**, while **low-expectations students will not gain** as much as they could have" (p. 79).

Teachers tend to have **lower expectations for students of color and poor students** than for white students and more affluent students. Students of color and poor students are more often assigned to remedial or low track classes. Ferguson (in Jencks & Phillips, 1998) notes that black students are

more impacted by teacher perceptions than are white students. Students are aware of the differences in the way teachers treat students believed to be high and low achievers. Some students see the differential treatments as biased and inappropriate (Good & Brophy, 2000).

Implementation suggestions

Teachers' behavior generally corresponds with their perceptions of the students' abilities. School staff can set high expectations for performance and behavior for students and work collaboratively to review and improve their own instructional practices. Teachers must **examine their practices to ensure fair and equitable treatment** of all students. A variety of strategies can be used to assist teachers in this process. **Peer observations**, although risky in some school environments, help to "mirror" classroom behavior so a teacher can make adjustments if necessary. **Video taping** class instruction can provide feedback as well. **Listening to students** is also revealing as teachers, or a third party, may use surveys to ask for their perceptions of classroom activities and environment.

The following steps might be used to **examine the level of expectations** held for a class. Teachers can
- Focus, individually or as part of a team, on **questioning strategies**, which are important instructional tools that often reflect expectations.
- Read and discuss the research in a **study group setting and work together** to improve their use of the strategies.
- **Reflect on instructional practice** related to expectations.

Research findings by Good & Brophy (2000) provide examples of **differential teacher treatment of high and low achievers** drawn from reviews of the research literature. The following questions, based on the research findings, guide teachers in reflecting on their practice.

Am I . . .
1. "waiting less time for low achievers to answer" questions than for high achievers?
2. "giving lows answers or calling on someone else rather than trying to improve their responses by giving clues or repeating or rephrasing questions"?
3. using "inappropriate reinforcement: rewarding inappropriate behavior or incorrect answers by lows"?
4. "failing to give feedback to the public responses of lows"?
5. "calling on lows less often to respond to questions, or asking them only easier, nonanalytic questions"?
6. "seating lows farther away from the teacher"?
7. "demanding less from lows (e.g. teach less, gratuitous praise, excessive offers of help)"?
8. "interacting with lows more privately than publicly, and monitoring and structuring their activities more closely"?
9. making differences in "administration or grading of tests or assignments, in which highs but not lows are given the benefit of the doubt in borderline cases"?
10. engaging in "less friendly interaction with lows, including less smiling and fewer other nonverbal indicators of support"?
11. using "less eye contact and other nonverbal communication of attention and responsiveness (forward lean, positive head nodding) in interaction with lows"?

12. using less of the "effective but time-consuming instructional methods with lows when time is limited?"
13. "exposing lows to an impoverished curriculum (overly limited and repetitive content, emphasis on factual recitation rather than on lesson-extending discussion, emphasis on drill and practice tasks rather than application and higher-level thinking tasks)"? (p. 85-86).

Three suggestions from Good & Brophy are helpful in avoiding negative expectation effects:
- Consider students' **full range of abilities** when developing expectations, including different types of intellectual abilities.
- Keep **expectations flexible and current**. Teachers need to keep expectations in perspective to be sure interpretations of what they notice in classrooms are accurate.
- Emphasize the positive by providing **feedback, diagnosis, re-teaching, and "stretching** the students' minds by stimulating them and encouraging them to achieve as much as they can" (p. 108-109).

High standards and expectations require more than lip service. The mantra "all students can learn" must be followed by instructional practices and teacher behavior that demonstrate that teachers believe in the students, believe in their own efficacy to teach students to high standards, and will persist in teaching them. **Teaching advanced skills** and teaching for understanding together with basic skills are required for all students to achieve at high levels.

References (* indicates those cited above)

www.rand.org/multi/achievementforall/
Research Areas – Education

www.mcrel.org/products/learning/raising.html
Raising the Achievement of Low Performing Students

www.goodschools.gwu.edu/
NCCSR publications. Issue Briefs. April 2001. A Brief on Turning Around Low Performing Schools

http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archives/completed/cors/Issues_in_Restructuring_Schools/ISSUES_NO
    _8_SPRING_1995.pdf
Issue Reports. No. 8. Spring 1995 "Issues in Restructuring Schools"

http://www.edtrust.org/main/main/DTM.asp
Dispelling the Myth: High Poverty Schools Exceeding Expectations

http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v5n10.html
Cultural Differences and the Construction of Meaning: Implications for the Leadership and Organizational Context of Schools, Robert A. Pena, Arizona State University.

www.nwrel.org/cnorse/booklets/achieve/2.html
Improving Black Student Achievement. See chapter 2: School-Related Factors and Teacher Behavior that Contribute to Low Self-Image in Students; and worksheet B: Teacher Behaviors That Support a Positive Self-Concept Among Minority Student.

*Bamburg, J. D. (1994). <u>Raising Expectations to Improve Student Learning</u>. NCREL Monograph. www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrshp/le0bam.htm

Cole. R. W. (Ed.) (1995). <u>Educating Everybody's Children. Diverse Teaching Strategies for Diverse Learners. What Research and Practice Say About Improving Achievement</u>. Alexandria, VA: ASCD Improving Student Achievement Research Panel.

Cotton, K. (1995). <u>Research You Can Use to Improve Results</u>. Alexandria, VA: ASCD and Portland, OR: NWREL. See chapter 4, Interactions.

*Ferguson, R. (1998). "Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations and the Black-White Test Score Gap". in Jencks, C. & Phillips, M. (Eds.). <u>The Black-White Test Score Gap</u>. Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institute Press.

*Good, T. L. & Brophy, J. E. (2000). <u>Looking in Classrooms</u>. 8th edition. New York: Longman.

Haycock, K., Jerald, C. & Huang, S. (2001, Spring). <u>Closing the Gap: Done in a Decade. Thinking K-16</u>. The Education Trust. 5(2). http://www.edtrust.org/main/main/reports.asp

Means, B., Chelemer, C., & Knapp, M. S. (1991). <u>Teaching Advanced Skills to At-Risk Students: Views from Research and Practice</u>. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

National Commission on the High School Senior Year. (2001, October). <u>Raising Our Sights. No High School Senior Left Behind</u>. The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. Princeton, NJ.

Payne, R. K. (1998). <u>A Framework for Understanding Poverty</u>. Baytown, TX: RFT Publishing Co.

Renzulli, J. S. & Reis, S. M. (1985). <u>The Schoolwide Enrichment Model. A Comprehensive Plan for Educational Excellence</u>. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press, Inc.

Williams, B. (Ed.) (1996). <u>Closing the Achievement Gap. A Vision for Changing Beliefs and Practices</u>. Alexandria, VA. ASCD. www.ascd.org/readingroom/books/williams96book.html

3. EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They also nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders can have different styles and roles--teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.

Definition and explanation

Effective school leadership has been characterized according to qualities exhibited by successful leaders as well as based on views of teachers. Burns provides a global definition of leadership: "Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers. This is done in order to realize goals mutually held by *both* leaders and followers" (Burns, 1978, p. 18). These goals represent ". . . the values and the motivations--the wants and needs, the aspiration and expectations--of both leaders and followers" (p. 19).

Research and professional literature have emphasized the critical role of the principal in improving schools and increasing student achievement. As indicated by Burns, **leadership depends upon relationships** and **shared values between leaders and followers**. Effective principals, with good leadership skills, increase the likelihood that school improvement will occur. Other school staff may also share leadership roles and responsibilities.

Leadership attributes and behavior
Rich descriptions of leadership attributes and behavior are provided by researchers and authors. Some of the perspectives that further describe and explain effective leadership follow.

In writing about effective educational leadership, Sergiovanni (1990) describes dimensions of "**value-added leadership**" which can create "extraordinary" school performance. These dimensions include **performance investment** (which results from "opportunities to experience deep satisfaction with one's work" (p. 19); **symbols and meaning** (which help create an environment that binds people together); **purpose** (the beliefs and vision of a school); **enabling teachers and schools** (giving latitude to take action linked with the beliefs and vision); **accountability** (school-based responsibility for decision making and results); **intrinsic motivation, collegiality, and leadership** by "outrage" (a symbol of importance and meaning related to a school's purpose which may take the form of both "leading and prodding" (p. 24).

Barth (1990) emphasizes the importance of a vision to unite a school staff, to form a **community of learners and a community of leaders** for improving schools from within. He argues that everyone, students, teachers, parents, and administrators, is capable of leading and of becoming an active member in 'a community of leaders'" (p. xvi).

Elmore (2000) presents another view of leadership in the context of standards-based reform. To achieve large-scale improvement in student learning, he writes, the concept of leadership needs to be "deromanticized." Because most of the improvement must come from the **people who are directly responsible for instruction**, not from the management of instruction, **leadership needs**

to be distributed throughout a school organization based on individual predispositions, interests, knowledge, skills, and roles. Distributed leadership means **"multiple sources of guidance and direction**, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture" (p. 15).

Blase & Kirby (1990) offer insights from teachers' perspectives on the qualities and everyday strategies of open and effective school principals that tend to positively influence, motivate and empower school staff members. Examples of these strategies include
   • using recognition and praise,
   • using good communication skills,
   • providing support,
   • setting high expectations,
   • increasing involvement, and
   • allowing professional autonomy within the parameters of school goals.

Implementation suggestions

Effective leaders in high performing schools may exhibit various leadership "styles" and use different decision-making models. However, some **qualities seem to be shared,** in part, if not totally. Effective school leaders
   • lead by example,
   • focus first on students and their learning,
   • support and empower their colleagues,
   • are "learners,"
   • understand change processes,
   • recognize and reward the achievement and struggles of others,
   • invite participation and share responsibility,
   • use "expectations" to change attitude and behavior, and
   • create "safe" learning environments in which others can take risk to improve.

Leadership approaches
Creating collaborative professional learning communities is an approach principals and school leaders can use to improve student learning. The **involvement of all stakeholders** is necessary to develop collaborative professional learning communities. Barth (1990) states that a "good school… is a place where **everyone is teaching and everyone is learning**--simultaneously, under the same roof" (p. 163). He writes that the adults enter into a collaborative relationship and create an "ecology of reflection, growth, and refinement of practice" (p. 162). Principals and district office leaders also can tap leadership talent among staff members by providing professional development for staff that have interest and potential and can empower staff members by delegating responsibility and mentoring them to insure success.

What can leaders, school principals or other persons, do to enhance their effectiveness, particularly as instructional leaders? Although leadership is a complex combination of personal dispositions, beliefs and learning, the following steps can be taken to assist in creating a culture for school improvement.

1. Develop positive, **respectful relationships** with staff, parents, and students. Steps to help create these relationships include
   - be visible in classrooms, hallways, school grounds, and at community activities,
   - listen attentively and follow through on commitments; build trust by keeping one's word and respecting others' views,
   - model the behavior and attitudes that are expected of others; hold up a "mirror" to reflect on the "messages" one conveys,
   - be positive and optimistic; demonstrate a belief in the efficacy of staff and students,
   - read, learn, and share effective practices, research findings, and inspiration.

2. Create a **professional learning community**. Steps to assist in developing a professional learning community include
   - collaboratively developing school mission, beliefs, and vision with involvement of all stakeholder groups,
   - collaboratively developing agreements and guidelines for decision making and other appropriate procedures for governing the school,
   - delegating responsibilities and providing professional autonomy within the parameters of the mission and vision,
   - staying current about research and regularly engaging others in dialogue,
   - creating opportunities for staff to learn together through study groups or other mechanisms; finding time for professional work during the school day to extent possible.

3. **Focus on learning** and review school rules, routines, curriculum and instruction to **ensure coherence** in the system. Steps to assist in emphasizing the focus include
   - communicating the importance of learning goals through consistent messages (for example, asking students, what have you read? not just, how was the ballgame?),
   - engaging adults in study groups to improve instruction; encouraging adults to mentor or coach one another to improve instruction,
   - using regular meeting times as opportunities for staff sharing about their learning and their instructional practice and for professional development,
   - supporting appropriate curriculum mapping and instructional improvement efforts.

References (* indicates those cited above)

www.naesp.org/comm/prss10-29-01.htm
Leading Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do

www.mcrel.org/toolkit/systems
Leadership and Change Process, "Asking the Right Questions."

www.nwrel.org/scpd/re-engineering/keyissues/leadership.shtml
Leadership and organizational vitality

www.aasa.org/   American Association of School Administrators
www.naesp.org/   National Association of Elementary School Principals
www.nassp.org/   National Association of Secondary School Principals
www.nhsa.net/   National High School Association

www.nmsa.org/   National Middle School Association
www.pdkintl.org/ Phi Delta Kappa International
www.nea.org/   National Education Association
www.aft.org/   American Federation of Teachers

*Barth, R. S. (1990). Improving Schools from Within: Teachers, Parents, and Principals Can Make the Difference. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

*Blase, J. & Kirby, P. C. (1992). Bringing Out the Best in Teachers: What Effective Principals Do. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Bolman, L. G. & Deal, T. E. (1995). Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

*Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership. New York: Harper Row Publishers.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1989). Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century. Report of Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Conley, D. T. & Goldman, P. (1994). Facilitative Leadership. How Principals Lead without Dominating. Oregon School Study Council. 37(9).

Cunningham, W. G. & Gresso, D. W. (1993). Cultural Leadership. The Culture of Excellence in Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

*Elmore, R. F. (2000, Winter). Building a New Structure for School Leadership. The Albert Shanker Institute.

Fullan, M. (2001). Leading in a Culture of Change. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Irvin, J. L. (Ed.) (1997). What Current Research Says to the Middle Level Practitioners. Columbus, OH. National Middle School Association. See section VII, Leadership.

Kaplan, L. S. & Owings, W. A. (2001, November). "Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: Recommendations for Principals." National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin. 85(628). www.nassp.org/news/bltn_tch_qul_stdnt_ach1101.html

Keefe. J. W., Valentine, J., Clark, D. C., & Irvin, J. L. (1994). Leadership in Middle Level Education: Leadership in Successfully Restructuring Middle Level Schools. Columbus, OH: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Louis, K. S. & Miles, M. B. (1990). Improving the Urban High School: What Works and Why. New York: Teachers College Press. See chapter 2, Making Change Happen: Leading and Managing.

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (1996). Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution. Report of NASSP in partnership with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on the High School of the 21st Century. Alexandria, VA: NASSP.

Newmann, F. M., Smith, B. A., Allensworth, E. & Bryk, A. S. (2001, January). School Instructional Program Coherence: Benefits and Challenges. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Schlechty, P. C. (2001). Shaking Up the School House: How to Support and Sustain Educational Innovation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc. See Part Three, Transformational Leadership.

Senge, P. et al. (2000). Schools that Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education. New York: Currency / Doubleday. See chapter XII, Leadership.

*Sergiovanni, T. J. (1990). Value-Added Leadership: How to Get Extraordinary Performance in Schools. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.

4. HIGH LEVELS OF COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

There is strong teamwork among teachers across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community, to identify problems and work on solutions.

Definition and explanation

Collaboration is defined by Webster's **as working jointly with others or together**, especially in an intellectual endeavor. Collegiality is often used as a synonym to describe sharing of authority among colleagues. Collaboration is a term popularly used to describe a variety of joint endeavors in school improvement. Cooperative work among teachers is one dimension; shared participation in school governance is another; partnerships among schools and business for financial support and collaboration among schools and other public agencies to provide social services are others (Johnson, in Pounder 1998, p. 9). Although all of these activities are important, this section will focus primarily on **collaboration among school staff, teachers and principals**, in the interest of improving student learning. Other themes are treated under the remaining characteristics of high performing schools.

Within the context of collaboration among school practitioners, the following definition from Little (1981) is particularly appropriate: "Collegiality is the presence of four specific behaviors, as follows: Adults in schools *talk about practice*. These conversations about teaching and learning are frequent, continuous, concrete, and precise. Adults in schools *observe each other* engaged in the practice of teaching and administration. These observations become the practice to reflect on and talk about. Adults engage together in *work on curriculum* by planning, designing, researching, and evaluating curriculum. Finally, adults in schools *teach each other* what they know about teaching, learning, and leading. Craft knowledge is revealed, articulated, and shared" (cited in Barth, 1990, p. 31).

Several **outcomes may be associated with collegiality**, according to Little: "Decisions tend to be better; implementation of decisions is better; there is a higher level of morale and trust among adults; adult learning is energized and more likely to be sustained. There is even some evidence that motivation of students and *their* achievement rises, and evidence that when adults share and cooperate, students tend to do the same" (Barth, p. 31).

The study on teacher work environment by Rosenholtz (1987) emphasizes the **importance of collaboration for teacher efficacy and student achievement**. From the research data, Rosenholtz identified "moving" and "stuck" schools. "Moving" schools were characterized by consensus on goals, teacher sharing and mutually helping one another, participating in decision making related to their work, and opportunities to increase their own learning. Most teachers in moving schools expressed a hopeful and positive view of themselves and their capacity--that "everything was possible" (p. 210).

Collaboration requires **interdependence** and may be perceived as a loss of autonomy and discretion (Barott & Raybould, in Pounder, p. 29). The potential for conflict also arises with such interdependence. However, Pounder writes that teacher work groups produce more enriched and more motivating work than does traditional individual teacher work (p. 74). The findings from the

Rosenholtz study also build confidence that there are more benefits than costs to collaboration for the professional as well as for students.

Indicators of a context open to change include many that are related to collaboration.
- Reducing isolation -- includes policies that foster collaboration, effective communication, collegial relationships, a sense of community, and reduction of isolation.
- Increasing staff capacity -- policies that provide greater autonomy, staff development, and involvement in decision-making.
- Providing a caring, productive environment includes positive teacher attitudes, students' heightened interests and engagement with learning.
- Positive and caring relationships among staff, students, administrators, supportive community attitudes and parents.
- Promoting increased quality, a norm of continuous critical inquiry, continuous improvement and shared vision or sense of purpose (Boyd & Hord, 1994, in Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 196).

Implementation suggestions

Traditional school organization, teacher responsibility, and structures of time and space must be reviewed and altered for collaboration to occur. Typical school organization perpetuates teacher isolation, fragments time and generally encourages autonomy and personal discretion rather than collaborative actions. Specific changes to school organization may include
- using common planning time for teachers,
- assigning teams of teachers to groups of students,
- setting aside regularly scheduled blocks of time for in-depth professional development,
- developing teacher work groups for given projects, or
- implementing professional development that promotes collaboration such as faculty study groups.

However, just making superficial changes in structure will not guarantee collaboration unless the connections between the structures and the impacts on instructional practice are made clear (Elmore, May 2002).

Little (1981) describes **the key role of the principal** in collaborative schools. She found that the prevalence of collegiality in a school was closely related to four specific behaviors of the principal:
1. "States expectations explicitly for cooperation among teachers.
2. Models collegiality, that is, enacts it by joining with teachers and other principals working collaboratively to improve conditions in the school.
3. Rewards collegiality by granting release time, recognition, space, materials, or funds to teachers who work as colleagues.
4. Protects teachers who initially engage in collegial behavior and thereby risk the retribution of their fellows" (cited in Barth, 1990, p. 33).

"Professional communities develop in a variety of ways. Some begin when teachers decide what standards they believe are important; others when a team of teachers figures out how to group students in a multiage classroom so that time, student activities, and work can be more flexibly arranged; and still others begin when teachers work together on ways to build on each other's skills, abilities, and subject-matter expertise by forming an interdisciplinary unit. A growing body of research has documented the growth of teacher's professional communities in elementary and

middle schools and their importance in changing the culture of their schools and the ways teachers work with students" (see Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 62, for research studies).

"Strong professional communities are built when principals and staff enhance their resources by reinforcing **a climate of support and respect for teachers' work and by pursuing a continuous cycle of innovation, feedback, and redesign in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.** Teachers' capacity to teach well is enhanced when professional opportunities are focused, coherent, and sustained (rather than diffused, fragmented and episodic)" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995, in Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 62).

Conditions that need to be in place to implement collaborative working environments include:
- **time** for teacher relationships to develop, to do the joint work, and to sustain the effort;
- **trust** to discuss values, differences in approaches and understanding and trust to accept and respect that there are multiple perspectives,
- a norm of open **professional work discussions** that are "thoughtful, explicit examination of practices and their consequences" (Little cited in Evans-Stout, p. 131),
- **tenacity to stay the course** to allow change to occur and new practices to be institutionalized, and last,
- **interactions that are deep discussions** of practice, values, instructional methods, and conceptions of learning. "Teachers become both autonomous and interdependent -- or individually different while mutually dependent" (p. 131).

References (* indicates those cited above)

www.naesp.org/comm/prss10-29-01.htm
Leading Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do

www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html
Professional Learning Communities, "Constructing communities of cooperation"

www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues91/4.html
Addressing the Challenges, What are we learning?

www.prrac.org/additup.pdf
Add It Up: Using Research to Improve Education for Low-Income and Minority Students.

*Barott, J. E. & Raybould, R. (1998). "Changing Schools into Collaborative Organizations." in D. G. Pounder (Ed.). Restructuring Schools for Collaboration. Promises and Pitfalls. New York: State University of New York.
*Barth, R. S. (1990). Improving Schools from Within: Teachers, Parents, and Principals Can Make the Difference. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. See chapter 3, Becoming Colleagues; and chapter 4, Building a Community of Learners.
Bryk, A. S. & Schneider, B. (2002). Trust in Schools. A Core Resource for Improvement. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
Conzemius. A. & O'Neill, J. (2001). Building Shared Responsibility for Student Learning. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. See chapter 4, Collaboration.
Cunningham, W. G. & Gresso, D. W. (1993). Cultural Leadership: The Culture of Excellence in Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. See chapter 5, Collegiality is the Catalyst.

DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (1998). <u>Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement</u>. Bloomington, IN. National Educational Service. See chapter 2, A New Model: The Professional Learning Community.

*Evans-Stout, K. (1998). "Implications for Collaborative Instructional Practice." in D. G. Pounder. (Ed.). <u>Restructuring Schools for Collaboration. Promises and Pitfalls</u>. New York: State University of New York.

*Elmore, R.F. (2002). "Hard Questions About Practice." <u>Educational Leadership</u>. 59(8).

Glickman, C. D. (1993). <u>Renewing America's Schools: A Guide for School-Based Action</u>. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. See chapter 6, Becoming an Educative Community.

*Hall, G. E. & Hord, S. M. (2001). <u>Implementing Change. Patterns, Principles, and Potholes</u>. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Hord, S. M. (1997). <u>Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement</u>. Rev. ed. Austin. Texas: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Jensen, J. L. (2002). "Creating Time for Professional Learning Teams." <u>Implementing Professional Learning Teams Process Guide</u>. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

*Johnson, B. L. (2000). "Organizing for Collaboration: A Reconsideration of Some Basic Organizing Principles." in Pounder, D. G. (Ed.). <u>Restructuring Schools for Collaboration.</u>. New York: State University of New York Press.

Lieberman, A. (Ed.) (1995). <u>The Work of Restructuring Schools: Building from the Ground Up</u>. New York: Teachers College Press.

*Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. (1999). <u>Teachers Transforming Their World and Their Work</u>. New York: Teachers College Press and Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Merenbloom, E. Y. (1990). <u>The Team Process: A Handbook for Teachers</u>. (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.

Murphy, C. (1997, Summer). "Finding Time for Faculties to Study Together." <u>Journal of Staff Development</u>. National Staff Development Council.
http://www.nsdc.org/library/jds/jsdsm97murp.html

*Rosenholtz, S. J. (1989). <u>Teachers' Workplace. The Social Organization of Schools</u>. New York: Longman.

Schmoker, M. (1999). <u>Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement</u>. (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA. ASCD. See chapter 1, Teamwork.
www.ascd.org/readingroom/books/schmoker99book.html

Stigler, J. W. & Hiebert, J. (1999). <u>The Teaching Gap: Best Ideas From the World's Teachers for Improving Education in the Classroom</u>. New York: The Free Press. See chapter 7, Beyond Reform: Japan's Approach to the Improvement of Classroom Teaching; chapter 8, Setting the Stage for Continuous Improvement; and chapter 9, The Steady Work of Improving Teaching.

5. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENTS ALIGNED WITH STATE STANDARDS

The planned and actual curriculum are aligned with the essential academic learning requirements (EALRs). Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understand the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

Definition and explanation

Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment adds coherence and effectiveness to teaching and learning processes. Alignment is defined essentially as the match or overlap between **what is taught** (learning standards, curriculum), **how it is taught** (instruction) and **how it is tested** (assessment).

Research studies from the past twenty years or so indicate that the overlapping (alignment) of testing content and curriculum content was highly significant in explaining improved test scores. This research also supports **aligning the curriculum and tests as a means for leveling the "playing field"** for poor students and students of color (English & Steffy, 2001). A recent study of a comprehensive alignment process, which included professional development, aligning curriculum, and filling the gaps, revealed "desirable gains despite the traditional predictors of poor student achievement" (Moss-Mitchell, 1998, p. 96, cited in English & Steffy.)

An **aligned system increases equity and excellence for students** when (1) learning standards or targets are known, (2) sufficient opportunities are provided to learn them, (3) instruction is focused on the targets, (4) assessments match the content of the learning standards, and (5) assessment formats are familiar. English and Steffy call this the "doctrine of no surprises" (p. 88).

In a standards-based system, the learning standards identify the subject knowledge and skills students are expected to learn. The curriculum is the subject matter through which students gain knowledge and skills and includes concepts, principles, theories and organizational frameworks of the content areas. Assessments provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate what they know.

Implementation suggestions

Educators individually and collaboratively must engage in professional dialogue and curriculum development to create a comprehensive, deeply aligned system. Several steps are required for aligning the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Alignment
1. **Unpack the essential academic learning requirements**. Educators must analyze the standards to ensure they understand the knowledge and skills that students are required to learn. In examining the standards, educators need to begin with the benchmarks and determine grade level responsibility to ensure that the content is taught and reviewed sufficiently in a coherent and developmental fashion.

2. **Review the match** or fit of the actual "curriculum-in-use" with "tests-in-use." Educators need to analyze the match between the "tests in use," including state, district and classroom-based tests,

and the "curriculum-in-use" to determine the fit. The test specifications for large-scale assessments are an important resource as they provide teachers with a deeper understanding of the knowledge and skills required by the tests, including vocabulary and types of questions. **Infusing assessments into instruction** is critical so that teachers, and students themselves, know how well students are mastering the content; then teachers can plan and adjust lessons and units accordingly. Varied and appropriate assessment approaches must be used to serve different learning purposes and to increase student experience with a range of testing methods.

To determine the **match of textbooks** and supplemental materials and activities with the learning targets, educators must systematically check instructional materials against the essential learnings. Simply following textbook suggestions does not guarantee coherent programs of curriculum and instruction. Where textbooks do not match, additional supplementary materials must be obtained.

3. **Evaluate and refine curriculum** by filling any identified gaps in the taught curriculum and reduce undue repetition or redundant content.

4. **Identify effective instructional methods** for teaching both basic and advanced application skills through ongoing review of professional and research literature. Staff need to work together in implementing these methods.

5. **Provide teachers the opportunity** to hone their skills through school-based ongoing professional development.

6. **Give students sufficient opportunities** to learn the content and to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Curriculum

Curriculum mapping is one approach to assist teachers in collaboratively reviewing curriculum, instruction, and assessment for alignment purposes. A school map promotes professional communication and collaboration to improve student learning. A map makes the taught curriculum clear and public so that the faculty can analyze and make decisions to find and fill omissions or gaps and to reveal and eliminate unnecessary redundancies, such as teaching the same novel or animal (e.g. dinosaurs) several years in a row.

A practical process for mapping includes these steps:

1. Teachers individually **identify what they are currently doing**. In many schools teachers may know little about what others are teaching. Teachers "map" the actual content taught according to the school calendar. A complete map will include essential learning requirements, curriculum content, skills, instructional materials, assessments, and estimated length of time for instruction. These latter elements can be added as the maps are more fully developed during the process.

2. Teachers **share their original individual maps** with the whole faculty.

3. The **whole faculty reviews** the maps looking for any **gaps in content and skills and for redundancies**, examining in particular the information within grade levels and across grade level maps. When revisions are needed, some changes can be made immediately; others will require long-term research and development.

4. Faculty members work together to **identify effective instructional methods** for teaching the content and skills and to **create classroom and school-based assessments** that are used in monitoring student progress and making day-to-day decisions about instruction.

The curriculum map provides an **overall picture** that also is helpful when teachers want to **integrate instruction** around concepts and themes. **Essential overarching questions** to guide instruction can be generated from the maps. Maps are dynamic and continuously reviewed and revised (Jacobs, 1997).

Effective instruction
Effective instruction and appropriate assessments, linked to **principles of learning**, are needed to help students learn the essential academic learning requirements and to meet the performance standards. Some principles that support learning have been synthesized from research studies. Learning with understanding, using pre-existing knowledge, and taking control of one's own learning or active learning, are key concepts from the "new science of learning" (Bransford, et al, 2000).

Instruction that builds on the following principles is likely to increase student learning.
- **Constructing knowledge** -- learners are active participants in the learning process using their prior knowledge and experiences.
- **Active engagement** – learners respond to having a choice, time to reflect, opportunities to participate in decisions about their work, express learning in a variety of ways, do something with what they learn, and have some open-ended experiences or "mystery" in their learning, rather than encountering only predetermined results (Perrone, 1994, cited in NWREL document).
- **Meaningful content** -- students make connections with the content; content is personally relevant.
- **Collaboration and social interaction** -- students work together, teach one another, converse about their learning.
- **Reflection / Self-Assessment / Metacognition** -- students are aware of their thinking processes and how to regulate the processes by monitoring and directing the process, and making adjustments when something isn't working.
- **Inclusivity** – students need to feel valued and welcomed in classrooms; they need teachers who believe in them and expect them to do well (NWREL, School Improvement Program).

Research-based instructional strategies, identified by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), have potential to increase student learning. These are
- identifying similarities and differences,
- summarizing and note taking,
- reinforcing effort and providing recognition,
- homework and practice,
- nonlinguistic representations,
- cooperative learning,
- setting objectives and providing feedback,
- generating and testing hypotheses, and
- cues, questions, and organizers.

Standards for effective instruction have been developed by researchers. Instruction that **emphasizes intellectual quality**, according to research by Newmann and Wehlage, includes **construction of knowledge**, disciplined **inquiry** and **value beyond school**. These important components, or standards, for instruction and assessment increase student achievement across student groups (1995).

Assessment
Assessments must also align with the learning targets and purposes for the assessment. Assessment methods, as presented by Stiggins (1997), include selected response, essay, performance assessment, and personal communication including observations. Some methods are most appropriate for classroom use; others work well for both classroom use and for large-scale tests. Stiggins has laid out several principles for sound assessment and key decision points for planning and conducting appropriate assessment. This topic is discussed more thoroughly in the section on Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

References (* indicates those cited above)

www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs
research you can use.

www.mcrel.org/products/diversity/
A report from McREL's diversity roundtable. Including at-risk students in standards-based reform.

www.wested.org/

www.goodschools.gwu.edu   Brief for Practitioners: Turning Around Low Performing Schools -- Implications at the School, District, and State Levels.

www.middleweb.com   Reinventing the Middle School, Middle School Journal, Sept. 2001

www.wcer.wisc.edu/archives/completed/cors/issues_in_Restructuring_Schools/
Authentic Pedagogy: Standards that Boost Student Performance

www.wcer.wisc.edu/archives/completed/cors/Issues_in_Restructuring_Schools
Another look at high school restructuring

www.cresst96.cse.ucla.edu/index.htm
Newsletters. Policy Brief 4   Assessment and accommodation for English language learners

www.nap.edu/openbook/0309069955/html/
Adding It Up: Helping Children Learn Mathematics (2001)

www.ascd.org   Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
www.aera.net/   American Educational Research Association
www.ncss.org/   National Council of Social Studies
www.ncte.org/   National Council of Teachers of English
www.reading.org/   International Reading Association

www.nctm.org/   National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
www.nsta.org/   National Science Teachers Association
www.tesol.org/   Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
www.naeyc.org/   National Association of Education of Young Children
www.cec.sped.org/   Council for Exceptional Children

Berliner, D. C. & Casanova, U. (1993). Putting Research to Work in Your School. New York: Scholastic. (1996 Renewal. Arlington, Heights, IL: IRI Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc.).

*Bransford, J. D. Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.). How People Learn. Brain, Mind, Experience, and School. Washington DC: National Academy Press.

Carr, J. F. & Harris, D. E. (2001). Succeeding with Standards: Linking Curriculum, Assessment, and Action Planning. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Cotton, K. (1995). Research You Can Use to Improve Results. Alexandria, VA: ASCD and Portland, OR: NWREL.

Daniels, H. & Bizar, M. (1998). Methods that Matter: Six Structures for Best Practice Classrooms. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

DePorter. B., Reardon, M., & Singer-Nourie, S. (1999). Quantum Teaching. Orchestrating Student Success. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Drake, S. M. (1993). Planning Integrated Curriculum. The Call to Adventure. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

English, F. W. (1992). Deciding What to Teach and Test. Developing, Aligning, and Auditing the Curriculum. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

*English, F. W. & Steffy, B. E. (2001). Deep Curriculum Alignment, Creating a Level Playing Field for All Children on High-Stakes Tests of Educational Accountability. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Irvin, J. L. (Ed.) (1997). What Current Research Says to the Middle Level Practitioner. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association. See Section III, Curriculum.

*Jacobs, H. H. (1997). Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K-12. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Lewin. L. & Shoemaker, B. J. (1998). Great Performances: Creating Classroom-Based Assessment Tasks. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Marzano. R. J. & Kendall, J. S. (1998). Implementing Standards-Based Education. Washington DC: National Education Association.

*Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies For Increasing Student Achievement. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

McNeil, J. (1995). Curriculum: The Teacher's Initiative. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Merrill.

McTighe, J. & Ferrara, S. (1998). Assessing Learning in the Classroom. Washington DC: National Education Association.

*Newmann, F. M. & Wehlage, G. G. (1995). Successful School Restructuring. A Report to the Public and Educators by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Newmann, F. M. & Associates. (1996). Authentic Achievement: Restructuring Schools for Intellectual Quality. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

*Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (no date) Key Principles that Support Learning. School Improvement Program, OTE II, unpublished document.

O'Neil J. & Willis, S. (Eds.). (1998). Revitalizing the Disciplines. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Perkins, D. (1992). Smart Schools: Better Thinking and Learning for Every Child. New York: Free Press.

Popham, W. J. (1995). <u>Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know</u>. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

*Stiggins, R. J. (2001). <u>Student-Involved Classroom Assessment</u>. (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Stiggins, R. J. (1998). <u>Classroom Assessment for Student Success</u>. Washington DC: National Education Association.

Stigler, J. W. & Hiebert, J. (1999). <u>The Teaching Gap: Best Ideas from the World's Teachers for Improving Education in the Classroom</u>. New York: The Free Press.

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (1998). <u>Understanding by Design</u>. Alexandria, VA. ASCD.

Wilson, S. M. & Peterson, P. L. (1997, September). <u>Theories of Learning and Teaching: What Do They Mean for Educators</u>? U. S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Excerpt on www.nwrel.org/scpd/re-engineering/keyissues/theories.shtml

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (1998). <u>Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools</u>. (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

6. FREQUENT MONITORING OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time is provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to students who need more help. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

Definition and explanation

Monitoring, broadly defined, is "**analyzing what we are doing against the results we are getting**" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 6). Monitoring requires regularly reviewing and refining the processes that most "directly contribute to designated results" (p. 7). Measures used in monitoring provide feedback to teacher and learner, as well as other stakeholders, that are essential for making changes to ensure continual learning progress.

Monitoring teaching and learning requires paying attention both to student learning results and to the effectiveness of school and classroom procedures. **Learning is monitored by tracking a variety of assessment results** such as test scores, student developed products, performances, and other evidence of learning. **Teaching is monitored by teachers themselves** through self-reflection **and by supervisors for program and teacher evaluation**. Information about the **effectiveness of instructional processes**, educational programs, and materials is gathered through instructional artifacts, observations, dialogue, examination of student work, and so on. Assessment results are used for planning instruction for individual students as well as for school-wide decision making and planning. Classroom and school practices are modified based on the data.

Effective monitoring should be **"low stakes"** and **occur frequently**. In other words, **monitoring provides feedback primarily for purposes of improvement**, not for making major decisions about a student's future or a teacher's career. In a supportive school environment focused on continual improvement, feedback allows teachers to make procedural corrections, reteach, and encourage student efforts, as well as to change their practices. "**Errors are treated as learning opportunities**, not test failures, and should lead to additional instruction and practice opportunities." Students should be given multiple opportunities to learn to encourage their persistence in overcoming initial failures (Good & Brophy, 2000, p. 229, 230).

Implementation suggestions

School districts, schools, and teachers need to develop **systems for gathering information on student learning and teaching practices** at the classroom and school levels. The data then should be routinely collected and analyzed and instructional methods and activities modified accordingly.

A number of school improvement experts provide **suggestions for using data to increase student learning**. Schmoker (1999) outlines an approach that can be relatively easily implemented and has potential to produce early results to "**jumpstart**" school improvement. He suggests these steps:
- Teachers work in teams to determine a **baseline of student achievement in a goal area** using teacher-made and textbook published tests as well as data from district and state tests.
- Teachers select an **instructional strategy and use** it in their classrooms.

- Teachers assess student work at relatively short intervals. These assessments provide **immediate and ongoing feedback** on the effectiveness of the instructional strategy. Such **monitoring becomes motivating** as effective instruction improves learning. This progress creates "**zest**" or enthusiasm **for continuing the hard work** of improving student learning.

Formal and informal assessments are used for monitoring teaching and learning. Several authors provide helpful ideas.

Monitoring student learning
A variety of measurement tools are available for **monitoring student learning**. **Methods that are used must match** the learning targets and the purposes for which the tests will be used. Several **reasons given for measuring** student learning include:
- Making sure students "do not fall through the cracks."
- Assessing individual or group achievement.
- Diagnosing learning problems.
- Certifying or graduating students.
- Guiding curriculum development and revision.
- Improving instruction.
- Being accountable.
- Understanding which programs are getting the results we want.
- Knowing if we are achieving our standards.
- Knowing how we compare to others in the nation. (Bernhardt, 1998, p. 63).

Sample **measurement tools** include
- classroom observations or anecdotal records.
- portfolios of student work.
- teacher-made tests and rubrics.
- Grades.
- criterion-referenced measures (often developed by state, district, or textbook publishers).
- authentic and performance assessments.
- norm referenced large-scale tests.

Tests may be norm referenced to compare students with peers or criterion referenced to assess specific instructional objectives.

Assessment methods include selected response, essay, performance assessment, and personal communication including observations, according to Stiggins (1997). Some methods are most appropriate for classroom use; others work well for large-scale tests; some methods can serve both purposes.

Stiggins has laid out several **principles for sound assessment** and key decision points for planning and conducting appropriate assessments. These principles include:
- Assessments require clear thinking and effective communication.
- Classroom assessment is key.
- Students are assessment users.
- Clear and appropriate targets are essential.
- High-quality assessment is a must.
- Understand personal implication (Stiggins, 1997).

Key **decision points** include:
- Determining learning targets and purposes.
- Selecting appropriate methods based on those.
- Deciding the specifics of the assessment: who will be tested, what content will be tested, and what specific test methods are appropriate.
- Developing test items.
- Administering and scoring the assessments.

<u>Monitoring teaching and school processes</u>
Examining school and classroom processes requires collecting information on actual practices and **comparing progress toward the school goals**. Bernhardt poses guiding questions that help educators examine school processes and provide a basis for collecting and analyzing data and making needed changes for improving teaching and learning. She suggests that educators ask:
1. What do teachers want students to know and be able to do?
2. How are teachers enabling students to learn?

Conditions that schools and teachers can influence include instructional and learning strategies, instructional time and location, student-teacher ratio, organization of instructional components, assessments, philosophies and strategies of classroom management, and personal relationships among students and between students and teachers (Bernhardt, p. 96). Bernhardt suggests using rubrics to give schools an idea of where they started, where they are now, and where they want to be. These rubrics serve as **school assessments** and help focus a school staff on both the quality of instruction and the degree to which instructional processes are implemented.

References (* indicates those cited above)

http://www.mcrel.org/products/assessment/designing.asp
Designing a Sustainable Standards-Based Assessment System

*Bernhardt, V. L. (1998). <u>Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement</u>. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, Inc.
Bernhardt, V. L. (2000). <u>Designing and Using Databases for School Improvement</u>. Larchmont, NY. Eye on Education, Inc.
Conzemius, A. & O'Neill, J. (2001). <u>Building Shared Responsibility for Student Learning</u>. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. See chapter 3, Reflection.
Cotton, K. (1995). <u>Research You Can Use to Improve Results</u>. Alexandria, VA: ASCD and Portland, OR: NWREL. See chapter 7, Assessment.
Cunningham, W. G. & Gresso, D. W. (1993). <u>Cultural Leadership: The Culture of Excellence in Education</u>. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. See chapter 7, Quality, Information, and Improvement.
DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (1998). <u>Professional Learning Communities at Work. Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement</u>. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service. See chapter 6, Sustaining the School Improvement Process.
*Good, T. L. & Brophy, J. E. (2000). <u>Looking in Classrooms</u>. (8th ed.). New York: Longman.
Hill, B. C., Ruptic, C., & Norwick, L. (1998). <u>Classroom-Based Assessment</u>. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.
Holcomb, E. L. (2001). <u>Asking the Right Questions: Techniques for Collaboration and School Change</u>. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Jenkins, L. (1997). <u>Improving Student Learning: Applying Deming's Quality Principles in Classrooms.</u> Milwaukee, WI: American Society for Quality. See section II, Improving Learning; section IV, Enthusiasm Maintained; and section V, Decision Making for Improved Student Learning.

Sagor, R. (1996). <u>Local Control and Accountability: How to Get It, Keep It, and Improve School Performance</u>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. See chapter 9, Bringing Out the Best in Teachers and Programs.

Schlechty. P. C. (2001). <u>Shaking Up the School House: How to Support and Sustain Educational Innovation</u>. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc. See Part Two, Creating Quality Learning Experiences.

*Schmoker, M. (1999). <u>Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement</u>. (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.   www.ascd.org/readingroom/books/schmoker99book.html

Schmoker, M. (2001). <u>The Results Fieldbook: Practical Strategies from Dramatically Improved Schools</u>. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.   www.ascd.org/readingroom/books/schmoker01book.html

*Stiggins, R. J. (1997). <u>Student-Centered Classroom Assessment</u>. (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.

7. FOCUSED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focuses extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.

Definition and explanation

Professional development is a general term that covers a **breadth of learning opportunities for educators**, generally on-the-job, following pre-employment, or "preservice," preparation and training. Inservice and staff development are frequently used synonyms. A growing consensus, in relation to educational reform, acknowledges professional development as the best hope for changing instruction to improve student learning.

Effective professional development, when viewed as competency-based rather than deficit-based, is a **shared, public process**; it promotes **sustained interaction**; emphasizes **substantive, school-related issues**; relies on **internal expertise**; **expects teachers to be active participants**; emphasizes **the why as well as the how of teaching**; **articulates a theoretical research base**; and **anticipates that lasting change will be a slow process** (Collinson, cited in Hawley & Valli, 1999, p. 134).

Several converging developments are responsible for the consensus on the importance of professional development. Research on school improvement has linked **change with professional development**. Research studies confirm the **ineffectiveness of conventional staff development** strategies for making substantive improvement in instruction and supports adoption of different ways to facilitate professional learning (Hawley & Valli, 1999, p. 128). In other words, "go and get" training by outside experts with educators as "passive recipients" is less effective than "job-embedded" professional development that occurs through multiple forms that are facilitated over-time (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997, p. 14).

High standards for student performance **require capacity for complex and collaborative problem solving**. **Facilitating learning requires much more of educators** than teaching by telling; consequently, teachers are required to develop deeper knowledge and new skills.

The "new science of learning" applies to the design and implementation of learning opportunities for adults as well as for children. Anderson and Murphy (1998, cited in Hawley & Valli, 1999) present four principles of learning:
1. a **knowledge base** (building on prior knowledge that is a basis for associating and filtering all new experiences),
2. **strategic processing** (thinking about and regulating one's own thoughts and behavior),
3. **motivation and affect** (intrinsic motivation, personal goals, motivational quality of learning tasks), and
4. **development** (the common stages of learning development related to the individual).

The effectiveness of professional development must be **evaluated in relation to impact on student learning and improvement of teaching performance**, not just documented levels of participant satisfaction (Guskey, 2000). Standards for staff development, developed by the National Staff Development Council explicitly call for a focus on **improvement of learning for**

all students and address three key areas -- **context, process, and content**. **Context** standards include organizing adults into learning communities and requiring leadership and resources. **Process** standards include use of student data, multiple sources of information and research for decision making, and include applying knowledge about human learning and change. **Content** standards address equity for all students, quality teaching, and family involvement (NSDC, 2001).

Professional development that "works," according to experts in the field, reflects some common themes, including the
*   importance of **explicitly connecting teacher and student learning**,
*   supporting **professional collaboration** and collegial accountability with time and space for conversation, joint action, and critique,
*   coupling **teaching and assessment** practices,
*   encouraging the development of a **common language** through oral and written communication,
*   developing and using structured tools and protocols to guide discussion, and
*   using the **real-life events of teaching** as the source of professional development. (Lieberman & Miller, 2001, p. ix).

Based on many research studies on effective strategies, Hawley and Valli (1999, 2000) synthesize nine principles for designing effective "learner-centered" professional development.
1. Content "focuses on **what students are to learn** and how to address the different problems students may have in learning that material."
2. Content is "driven by analyses of the differences between the goals and standards for student learning and (current) student performance."
3. Involves "**teachers in the identification of what they need to learn**, and when possible, in the development of the learning opportunity and/or the process to be used."
4. "Primarily be **school based and integral** to school operations" (in other words, "job-embedded").
5. "Provides learning opportunities that relate to individual needs and are, for the most part organized around **collaborative problem solving**."
6. Must be "**continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support** for further learning, including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and outside perspectives."
7. "Incorporates **evaluation of multiple sources** of information on outcomes for students and processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through professional development."
8. "Provides opportunities to engage in **developing a theoretical understanding** of the knowledge and skills to be learned."
9. "Should be integrated with a **comprehensive change process** that addresses impediments to and facilitators of student learning."

Implementation suggestions

Various effective models that embody these themes have been developed**.** Four approaches are described briefly here with suggestions for successful implementation: intensive mentoring and peer support; teacher inquiry, study groups and action research; collaborative lesson study; and looking at student work. Other more traditional models such as university coursework are not described here.

Mentoring and peer support
Peer coaching, mentoring, and school-based facilitators are variations of this approach**.** Peer coaching and mentoring may be provided formally or informally. Formal programs prepare experienced master teachers as coaches or mentors and provide consistent opportunity and procedures for them to assist others. The school-based facilitators model is another variation of mentoring and peer support. The facilitators may demonstrate lessons, coordinate and facilitate study groups, conduct professional development activities, and generally support the instructional change effort. Informally teachers may observe one another's classes and provide feedback in a non-threatening manner or share stories of what worked for them and what didn't.

Teacher inquiry
Teacher **study groups and action research** are approaches that engage a whole faculty or teacher teams in collaborative investigations related directly to school and classroom practices**.** Teacher inquiry, or investigations, is a relatively broad term that encompasses various approaches. Study groups may serve a variety of purposes, from reviewing research as part of school improvement activities for developing action plans to studying professional books to learn more about curriculum, an instructional method or student learning issues. In these study groups faculty work together to increase their knowledge and develop skills that then may be implemented with mutual peer support. Several authors point to action research as a successful tool for professional development and school improvement and provide detailed suggestions for effective implementation (i.e. Calhoun, 1994, Glickman, 1993, Sagor, 1992). In essence, action research is a cyclical process in which teachers determine focus questions based on their school or classroom situation, collect and analyze data from multiple sources, study and select interventions, implement their strategies, reflect, evaluate, and share their "lessons learned" and begin a new cycle. Action research also is outlined under Clear and Shared Focus.

Collaborative lesson study
Lesson study, which occurs at the local level, is connected to the curriculum of the school, focuses on student learning, involves groups of teachers working collaboratively, and is based on long-term continuous improvement. Steps in lesson study include defining the problem, planning and teaching the lesson, evaluating and reflecting on the lesson, revising it and teaching the revised lesson (to different students), evaluating and reflecting again, and sharing the results (Stigler & Hiebert, p. 152).

Student work
The collaborative **study of student work** may follow various procedures, often called protocols**.** The protocols provide structure that helps create a "safe" environment for professional thinking and conversations. Although the protocols vary in procedures and complexity, generally they call for teachers to examine and discuss the work of students as a means to better understand student learning and to plan instruction accordingly (McDonald, 2001 in Lieberman & Miller p. 212).

References (* indicates those cited above)

http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/pd0cont.htm
Finding Time For Professional Development; Evaluating Professional Growth And Development

*http://www.nsdc.org/educatorindex.htm   Standards For Staff Development (revised 2001)

www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/rpl_esys/pdlitrev.htm
Results-oriented professional development by Thomas Guskey

www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/6/cu12.html
Staff development. Adult Learning and Change by Jocelyn Butler

www.teachers.net

www.ncrel.org/pd/toolkit/lftb/index.htm   Professional Development. Learning from the Best

*Calhoun, E. F. (1994). How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School. Alexandria,
    VA: ASCD.
Cunningham, W. G. & Gresso, D. W. (1993). Cultural Leadership: The Culture of Excellence in
    Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. See chapter 8, Personal and Professional Development;
    chapter 9, Employee Empowerment.
DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (1998). Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for
    Enhancing Student Achievement. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service. See chapter
    12, Staff Development in a Professional Learning Community.
Fullan, M. (1993). Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform. New York: The
    Falmer Press. See chapter 7, The Individual and the Learning Society.
*Glickman, C. D. (1993). Renewing America's Schools. A Guide for School-Based Action. San
    Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
*Guskey. T. R. (2000). Evaluating Professional Development. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin Press.
Hawley, W. D. & Valli, L. (2000, August) Learner-Centered Professional Development. Research
    Bulletin # 27, Phi Delta Kappa Available: http://www.pdkmembers.org/CGI-
    BIN/LANSAWEB?WEBEVENT+L0518383276E707006924087+PDK+ENG
*Hawley, W. D. & Valli, L. (1999). "The Essentials of Effective Professional Development: A
    New Consensus," in Darling-Hammond & Sykes (Eds.). Teaching as the Learning Profession.
    Handbook of Policy and Practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). Student Achievement through Staff Development. White Plains,
    New York: Longman, Inc.
Lewis. C. (2002). Lesson Study: A Handbook of Teacher-Led Instructional Change. Philadelphia,
    PA: RBS Publications.
*Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. (2001). Teachers Caught in the Action. Professional Development
    that Matters. New York: Teachers College Press.
Lynn, L. (Ed.). "Powerful Designs: New Approaches Ignite Professional Learning." (1999,
    Summer). National Staff Development Journal. National Staff Development Council. 20(3).
*McDonald, J. P. (2001). "Students' Work and Teachers' Learning". in Lieberman, A. & L. Miller
    (Eds.) Teachers Caught in the Action. Professional Development that Matters. Teachers
    College Press.
*National Staff Development Council. NSDC Standards for Staff Development. Available:
    http://www.nsdc.org/library/sstandards2001.html
Newmann, F. M. & Associates. (1996). Authentic Achievement: Restructuring Schools for
    Intellectual Quality. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. See chapter 7, Schoolwide
    Professional Community.
*Sagor, R. (1992). How to Conduct Collaborative Action Research. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Senge, P. et al. (2000). <u>Schools that Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares About Education</u>. New York: Currency/Doubleday. See section XI, Development.

Sparks, D. & Hirsh, S. (1997). <u>A New Vision for Staff Development</u>. Alexandria, VA: ASCD and Oxford, CA: National Staff Development Council.

*Stigler, J. W. & Hiebert, J. (1999). <u>The Teaching Gap</u>. New York: The Free Press.

Zepeda, S. J. (1999). <u>Staff Development: Practices that Promote Leadership in Learning Communities</u>. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

8. SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The school has a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff, and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

Definition and explanation

A supportive learning environment can be defined as school climate and culture characterized by **reasonable expectations for behavior, consistent and fair** application of rules and regulation, and **caring responsive relationships** among adults and students. Classrooms are **warm and inviting and learning activities** are purposeful, engaging, and significant. Students are encouraged to "**take risks" in their learning** and are supported as they learn increasingly rigorous content and apply their knowledge in "real world" contexts. **Personalized learning** environments are created to increase positive relationships among students and between students and their teachers. **Students feel that they belong** in the school community. In a supportive learning environment children are **valued and honored;** their heritage and background are viewed as "assets," not deficiencies.

Research in several arenas is relevant to creating and maintaining supportive learning environments:
- Effective schools research provides characteristics of safe and orderly school environments that are "orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand" (Edmonds, cited in Cotton, 2000, p. 6).
- Research on resiliency factors emphasizes the importance of adults in creating supportive environments that foster student resiliency and identify characteristics that foster increased academic success.
- Research on small classes and small schools describes personalized learning environments that increase students' sense of belonging and opportunities to participate actively in the school community.
- Research and professional literature suggest classroom and instructional models that engage students emotionally, intellectually, and socially.
- Research on classroom management and discipline identifies those practices that contribute to productive learning situations.

Implementation suggestions

Taking stock of the school culture, as experienced by students, teachers, and staff, is an important starting point in creating and sustaining supportive learning environments. Conducting surveys that capture perceptions of students, staff, and families provides information on the current quality of a school's environment. Examining other information related to attendance, disciplinary referrals, dropouts, and participation in school activities, etc. also reveals qualities of school climate. Research studies on topics such as those suggested above can be used by faculty study groups to develop a shared knowledge base. This collaborative work provides a foundation for the development of school improvement plans.

Practices in effective schools
Ideas synthesized from the research provide useful criteria for analyzing a school's environment and for planning improvements (Cotton, 2000). The School Improvement Research synthesis addresses a safe and orderly environment, classroom management, and supportive classroom environments. Typical qualities of **safe and orderly schools**, based on the correlates of effective schools research, include

- "A visible and supportive principal,
- Broad-based agreement about standards for student behavior,
- High behavioral expectations that are clearly communicated to students,
- Input from students, especially older ones, into behavior policies,
- Consistent application of rules from day to day and from student to student,
- A warm school climate whose signature feature is a concern for students as individuals,
- Delegation of disciplinary authority to teachers,
- For seriously disruptive students, in-school suspensions accompanied by support" (Cotton, p. 6).

The research on resilience reflects the importance of school personnel and school procedures in creating "**protective factors**" that help students learn to cope with adverse conditions. **Schools help foster resilient students** when they exhibit caring and support with strong personal relationships, positive and high expectations with the necessary support for students to achieve these expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation in school (Benard, p. 100). One research report suggests qualities of instruction that support resilience: "richer explanations, encouragement of extended student responses, encouragement of students' success, focus on the task's learning processes" (Waxman, et. al., 2002, p. 37). "**Turnaround" teachers**, those that succeed with at-risk students, **focus on the strengths** of all students; they especially empower overwhelmed youth to see themselves as survivors rather than as victims. They help **students process adversity** in their lives, to see adversity as impermanent, and to see setbacks not as pervasive but as surmountable or temporary. Turnaround teachers are student-centered, using students' strengths, interests, goals and dreams as the starting point for learning and thereby tapping students' intrinsic motivation for learning" (p. 40).

Personalized learning environments increase the likelihood that students, particularly students of color and poverty, will receive the **personal and academic support** they require in order to thrive in schools. Research on class size in the early school years shows positive effects when classes are reduced to between 15 and 20 students. The effects are greater for minority and poor children than for children in general (Cotton, p. 16). Organizing schools into smaller communities such as "schools within a school," assigning students to teachers for an extended time (e.g. looping), block scheduling, teacher teams, and creating small schools are ways to increase the potential for students and teachers to get to know one another well and to build trust and positive relationships. A supportive learning environment is especially crucial when students are asked to develop advanced thinking skills which require them to try new ways of working with ideas and information (Cotton). Smaller school groups also increase the potential for more varied and engaging instruction such as more hands-on learning experiences, authentic projects or community-linked activities.

Positive learning climate
Teachers can create classroom environments that effectively support children's learning. Effective strategies are summarized in the research synthesis (Cotton) and exemplified in the instructional

model "Quantum Teaching." From the research synthesis teacher behaviors that build effective classroom climate include:

- "Communicating high expectations for student performance; letting students know that they are all believed capable of meeting basic objectives, and no one is expected to fail.
- Holding students accountable for completing assignments, turning in work, and participating in classroom discussions.
- Providing the time, instruction, and encouragement necessary to help lower achievers perform at acceptable levels; this includes giving them learning material and activities as interesting and varied as those provided for other students.
- Monitoring their own beliefs and behavior to make certain that high expectations are communicated to all students regardless of socioeconomic status, race, gender, or other personal characteristics.
- Paying attention to students' interests, problems, and accomplishments.
- Encouraging effort, focusing on the positive aspects of students' answers, products, and behavior.
- Communicating interest and caring to students, both verbally and through such nonverbal means as giving undivided attention, maintaining eye contact, smiling, and nodding, to build rapport with students.
- Exhibiting democratic leadership and encouraging students to express and defend their views on significant issues.
- Sharing anecdotes and incidents from their personal experience and using humor as appropriate" (p. 17).

An **instructional model** based on years of experience with thousands of at-risk students has been called "**Quantum Teaching**." The model **promotes beginning instruction by first entering the students' world** "Theirs to Ours, Ours to Theirs" (similar to the Get, Give, Merge, Go strategy). **Basic tenets** of the model include

- using all aspects of the classroom environment to reinforce messages about learning,
- providing learning experiences before "labeling" with the specific vocabulary,
- acknowledging every learning effort,
- removing all threats,
- believing in students,
- building rapport, knowing students well,
- engaging students' emotions,
- modeling, listening, reframing negative situations to find the positive,
- promoting integrity, commitment, and responsibility.

The authors DePorter, Reardon, and Singer-Nourie (1999) provide **teacher-friendly suggestions** for implementing these strategies in ways that promote students' learning. The model suggests ways for teachers to create positive, productive learning environments. The model advocates use of practices based on theories of accelerated learning, multiple intelligences, neuro-linguistic programming, inquiry learning, and experiential learning, among others.

Classroom management
Last, research on **classroom management and discipline** suggests certain practices that contribute to positive classroom climate and to improved student achievement. Selected examples of good practice, from the synthesis by Cotton, include:

- "Classroom rules and procedures that are specific and clearly explained at the beginning of the school year and periodically reinforced thereafter, especially with children in grades K-3.
- Beginning classes quickly and purposefully, with assignments, activities, materials and supplies ready for students when they arrive.
- Standards that are consistent or identical with the building code of conduct and that are applied consistently and equitably.
- Involvement of older children in establishing classroom standards and sanctions.
- Teaching and reinforcing positive, prosocial behaviors and skills, especially with students who have a history of behavior problems.
- Focusing on students' inappropriate behavior when taking disciplinary action—not on their personalities or histories" (Cotton, p. 7).

References (* indicates those cited above)

www.goodschools.gwu.edu/
NCCSR Publications. Bookmark. November 2001. Improving School Climate

www.learningfirst.org/pdfs/safe-schools-report.pdf
Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools

www.wested.org/policy/pubs/full_text/pb_ft_csr23.htm
Policy Brief 23, Class Size Reduction: Lessons Learned from Experience

www.prrac.org/additup.pdf
Add It Up: Using Research to Improve Education for Low-Income and Minority Students.

www.ed.gov/pubs/ClassSize/practice.html#student
Class Size and Students At Risk
Instructional Practice and Student Behavior

http://staff.washington.edu/sdrg/
Social Development Research Group, U of W., David Hawkins and Richard Catalano

http://www.nwrel.org/   www.safetyzone.org/
National Resource Center for Safe Schools; National Mentoring Center

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/   School Mental Health Project, Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor

epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v9n30.html
Committing to Class-Size Reduction and Finding the Resources
    to Implement It: A Case Study of Resource Reallocation

Adelman, H. & Taylor, L. (1999) New Directions in Enhancing Educational Results:
    Policymaker's Guide to Restructuring Student Support Resources to Address Barriers to
    Learning, The Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA, Los Angeles.
*Benard, B. (1996). "Fostering Resiliency in Urban School." in Williams, B. (Ed.). Closing the
    Achievement Gap: A Vision for Changing Beliefs and Practices. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Brandon. R. (2000). Impact of Peer Substance Use on Middle School Performance in Washington, Washington Kids Count, Human Services Policy Center, Evans School of Public Affairs, Seattle, WA: University of Washington.

Cotton, K. (1995). Research You Can Use to Improve Results. Alexandria, VA: ASCD and Portland, OR: NWREL. See chapter 2, Management and Organization.

*Cotton, K. (2000). The Schooling Practices that Matter Most. Portland, OR: NWREL and Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

*DePorter, B., Reardon, M., & Singer-Nourie, S. (1999). Quantum Teaching: Orchestrating Student Success. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. See chapter 4, Orchestrating a Supportive Environment; chapter 9, Orchestrating Life Skills.

Dryfoos, J. G. (1998). Full-Service Schools: A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth, and Families. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Education Series.

Dryfoos, J. G. (1998). Safe Passage: Making It Through Adolescence in a Risky Society. New York: Oxford University Press.

Elias, M. J. et. al. (1997). Promoting Social and Emotional Learning. Guidelines for Educators. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Freiberg, J. (Ed.) (1999). School Climate: Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments. New York: The Falmer Press.

Hawkins, J. D. (1999). "Preventing Crime and Violence Through Communities That Care." European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research, 7.

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., Kosterman, R., Abbott, R., & Hill, D. G. (1999). "Preventing Adolescent Health-Risk Behaviors by Strengthening Protection During Childhood." Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 153(3).

Irvin, J. L. (Ed.) (1997). What Current Research Says to the Middle Level Practitioner. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association. See section II, Teaching/Learning.

Johnson, D. W. & Johnson, R. T. (1995). Reducing School Violence through Conflict Resolution. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Kohn, A. (1996). Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Kushman, J. (Ed.). (1997). Look Who's Talking Now: Student Views of Learning in Restructuring Schools. Portland. OR: Regional Educational Laboratory Network by the Restructuring Collaborative.

NASSP. (1996). Breaking Ranks. Changing an American Institution. Report of NASSP in partnership with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on the high school of the 21st century. Alexandria, VA: NASSP. See chapter Three. School Environment. Creating a Climate Conducive to Teaching and Learning.

Payne, R. K. (1998). A Framework for Understanding Poverty. Baytown, TX: RFT Publishing Co.

Payton, J. (Project Director). (2002, August). Safe and Sound. An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning Programs. Chicago, Il: The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning.

Starkman, N. et. al (1999). Great Places to Learn: How Asset-Building Schools Help Students Succeed. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.   www.search-institute.org/

Stockard, J. & Mayberry, M. (1992). Effective Educational Environments. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press, Inc. See chapter 2, School and Classroom Climates; chapter 3, School Resources and School and Classroom Size.

*Waxman, H. C., Gray, J. P., & Padron, Y. N. (2002). "Resiliency Among Students at Risk of Academic Failure." in Stringfield, S. & Land, D. (Eds.). Educating At-Risk Students. NSSE Yearbook. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

9. HIGH LEVEL OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Families, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

Definition and explanation

Family and community involvement is a general term used to describe a myriad of activities, projects, and programs that bring parents, family members, and other stakeholders together to support student learning and schools or to bring family, community, and business into the schools. Schools need to "**build connections to families and communities as a means of deepening the relationships** that support child development and of acquiring the knowledge about students needed to teach responsively" (Darling-Hammond, 1999). These connections traditionally have ranged from Parent Teacher Organization (e.g. PTA) meetings, back-to-school open houses, parent-teacher conferences, fund raising and chaperoning school events to in-class volunteering, parent education programs, and business partnerships. Currently, the literature has extended the definition to include other **types of involvement** such as **shared decision making** regarding student learning and **home and community-based support** of student learning. Families and other adults can be involved in the education of young people through a variety of activities that demonstrate the importance of education and show support and encouragement of students' learning. These are legitimate approaches for involvement and do not necessarily require adults spending time at the schoolhouse.

Many research studies over the years have reinforced the **importance of the relationship of family and school to student achievement**. These "overlapping spheres of influence" explain the shared responsibility of home, school, and community for the development and learning of students (Epstein, et al, 1997). The **responsibility for initiating the partnerships lies primarily with schools and districts**. Epstein asserts that "the **strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and home are the specific school programs and teacher practices** that encourage and guide parent involvement" (cited in Lewis & Henderson, p. 18). Epstein has developed a framework for school, family, and community partnerships based on the "overlapping spheres" concept. The framework includes **six types of involvement** for comprehensive partnerships: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community.

Need for options
In diverse communities, family involvement will need to include options that accommodate family circumstances, provide choices, validate the family's culture and values, and explicitly emphasize the importance of family support of the student's learning. **Families should have the opportunity to participate in defining** and developing a school's involvement opportunities. The National PTA has published standards, with suggestions for implementation, to guide the development of parent/family involvement programs. The PTA standards, which are similar to Epstein's types of involvement, include the following:
- Communicating. Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Parenting. Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- Student Learning. Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

- Volunteering. Parents are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are sought.
- School Decision Making and Advocacy. Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Collaborating with Community. Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Implementation suggestions

Explicit policies and procedures are helpful to set expectations and to guide the development of family involvement and partnerships. The planning of programs for increasing involvement needs to include **allocation of resources for both implementation and appropriate professional development** to ensure that teachers and principals have the "know how" to effectively engage families and communities.

School-based practices
Based on research studies, some **validated practices** have been identified for engaging and working with parents and community members. The following suggestions for schools and districts reflect those practices (Cotton, 2000):
- "Conduct **vigorous outreach** activities, especially in culturally diverse settings to involve representatives from all cultural groups in a community.
- Develop **written policies** that acknowledge the importance of parent/community involvement and providing ongoing support to parent involvement efforts.
- Make **special efforts to involve** the parents of economically disadvantaged, racial/ethnic minority, and language minority students, who tend to be underrepresented among parents involved in the schools.
- Work with **cultural minority parents and community members** to help children cope with any differences in norms noted between the home and the school.
- **Communicate repeatedly** to parents that their involvement can greatly enhance their children's school performance regardless of their own level of education.
- Make parents of young children aware that the earlier they become involved in their child's education, the more it benefits his or her learning.
- Communicate to parents that students of all ages benefit from parent involvement.
- **Encourage parents of young children to read** to them, every day if possible, and for at least 10 minutes at a time.
- Send home to parents information about upcoming classroom activities, examples of students' work, and suggestions for at-home learning activities.
- **Offer parents different parent involvement options** to choose from, based on their schedule and interest, e.g. helping their children learn at home, helping out in the classroom, providing transportation for field trips.
- **Involve community members** in schoolwide and classroom activities, giving presentations, serving as information resources, serving as reader/responders for students' published writing, etc.
- Encourage parents to provide a suitable place with necessary materials for children to study at home and to monitor the homework habits of children at least through the elementary grades.
- Be mindful that parents are busy people with limited time and refrain from asking them to devote unrealistic amounts of time to school-related activities.

- Publish indicators of school quality and provide them to parents and community members periodically to foster communication and stimulate public action" (p. 19).

Community-based involvement
Community partnerships may include **formal and informal relationships** between schools and districts and the business community. A range of programs can support student learning. Some examples of <u>formal</u> partnerships may be "adopting" a school or district through which a business may provide resources, e.g. people, equipment and/or money, to assist with school improvement. <u>Informal</u> relationships result when adults serve as role models or mentors such as "lunch buddies." This program encourages adults to regularly meet a student at school during lunch.

Children benefit from adults in schools and communities serving as models and mentors. Clark (1990) described **community-based constructive learning activities** such as professionally guided learning activities, leisure activities including reading, writing, and conversation, museums and recreational activities. Those that assisted students with their learning met these criteria: they provided opportunities for time devoted to the activity, promoted active thinking while doing the task, provided supportive input by knowledgeable adults and peers, and included standards, goals, and expectations related to the activity (cited in Henderson & Berla, p. 41).

Other suggestions for partnerships and involvement programs abound. The **National PTA** document provides suggestions for implementing the standards and gives examples of school programs. The Washington State PTA **Family Involvement Guide** also includes extensive suggestions for parents, families and schools; the sections are organized according to the National PTA standards. The **School, Family, and Community Partnerships handbook** provides descriptors of each of the six types of involvement, potential benefits, and sample action planning materials. Publications from the **Center for Law and Education** highlight research studies and also include stories of effective parent and community involvement (Lewis & Henderson).

References (* indicates those cited above)

www.wssda.org/   Washington State School Directors Association

www.pta.org/   National Parent Teacher Organization

www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/standards/index.asp
National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

www.wastatepta.org/resources/Parent%20Resources/intro.htm
You Can Make a Difference for Public Schools, Family Involvement Guide
10 Ways to Help Your Child Succeed

www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/pa0cont.htm   School Improvement Pathways
Family and Community. Supporting Ways Parents and Families Can Become Involved in Schools.

www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000   Family, school, and community involvement.

www.edletter.org/   Harvard Review, past issues. September/October 1997. Six types of involvement.

www.ed.gov/pubs/Reform/ School based reform. Role of parents and community in school reform

www.ed.gov/pubs/SER/ParentComm/index.html
Studies in Education Reform: Parent and Community Involvement in Education

www.nwrel.org/scpd/re-engineering/keyissues/schoolfamily.shtml
Students at the Center. School, Family, and Community Partnerships

www.prrac.org/additup.pdf
Add It Up: Using Research to Improve Education for Low-Income and Minority Students.

Baker, E., Herman, J., & Bain, J. What Makes a Good School? A Guide for Parents Seeking Excellence in Education. (undated) Los Angeles, CA: The Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards & Student Testing. http://cresst96.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Files/GoodSchool.pdf

Cotton, K. (1995). Research You Can Use to Improve Results. Alexandria, VA: ASCD and Portland, OR: NWREL. See chapter 8, Parent and Community Involvement.

*Cotton, K. (2001). Schooling Practices that Matter Most. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

*Darling-Hammond, L. (1999). The Right to Learn. Blueprint for Creating Schools that Work. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Dietel. R. (2001, March). "How is My Child Doing in School? Ten Research-based Ways to Find Out." Our Children Magazine. National Parent Teacher Association. http://cresst96.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/pages/infoparent.htm

DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (1998). Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service. See chapter 11, The Role of Parents in a Professional Learning Community.

*Epstein, J. L., Coates, L., Salinas, K. C., Sanders, M. G., & Simon, B. S. (1997). School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. www.csos.jhu.edu/

*Henderson, A. T. & Berla, N. (Ed.). (1994). The Family is Critical to Student Achievement: A New Generation of Evidence. (4th printing 1997) Washington D. C: Center for Law and Education.

*Lewis, A. C. & Henderson, A. T. (1998). Urgent Message: Families Crucial to School Reform. Washington, D. C. Center for Law and Education.

Morrow, L. M. (Ed.) (1995). Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. International Reading Association, Inc.

Payne, R. K., DeVo, P., and Smith, T. D. (2001). Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities. Highlands, TX: aha! Process, Inc.

Shockley, B., Michalore, B., & Allen, J. B. (1995). Engaging Families: Connecting Home and School Literacy Communities. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Stiggins, R. & Knight, T. (1997). But Are They Learning: A Commonsense Parents' Guide to Assessment and Grading in Schools. Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute.

*Washington State PTA. Family Involvement Guide. http://www.wastatepta.org/resources/family_involvement_guide.PDF

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Research Sources for Nine Characteristics

National Research Reports

- Comprehensive School Reform: Five Lessons from the Field. Education Commission of the States, 1999.

- Dispelling the Myth: High Poverty Schools Exceeding Expectations, Education Trust, 1999.

- Educational Reform and Students at Risk, Vol. I-III, Robert Rossi and Samuel Stringfield, U.S. Department of Education, 1995.

- *Hawthorne Elementary School: The University Perspective*, Bruce Frazee (Trinity University, Texas), Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk, 1(1), 25-31, 1996.

- Hope for Urban Education: A Study of Nine High-Performing, High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools, Charles A. Dana Center, Univ. of Texas (Austin), U.S. Department of Education, 1999.

- Key High School Reform Strategies: An Overview of Research Findings, Mary Visher, David Emanuel, Peter Teitelbaum (MPR Associates), U.S. Department of Education, 1999.

- Leave No Child Behind: An Examination of Chicago's Most Improved Schools and the Leadership Strategies Behind Them, Karen Carlson, Shobha Shagle-Shah, and Delia Ramiriz, Chicago Schools Academic Accountability Council, 1999.

- *Organizational Characteristics of Schools that Successfully Serve Low-Income Urban African American Students*. B. Cole-Henderson. Journal of Educational Students Placed at Risk, 5(1 & 2), 77-91.

- Profiles of Successful Schoolwide Programs, Volume 2: Implementing Schoolwide Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1998 (http://www.ed.gov/pubs/idea_profiles/).

- Promising Practices Study of High-Performing Schools. Jerry Junkins Promising Practices Institute. Just for the Kids, July 2000.

- *Promising Programs for Elementary and Middle Schools: Evidence of Effectiveness and Replicability*, Olatokunbo Fashola and Robert Slavin (Johns Hopkins University), Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk, 2(3), 251-307, 1997.

- Schooling Practices That Matter Most, Kathleen Cotton, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2000.

- Schools that Make a Difference: Final Report. Twelve Canadian Secondary Schools in Low-Income Settings. N. Henchey, with M. Dunnigan, A. Gardner, C. Lessard, N. Muhtadi, H. Rahma, and C. Violato. Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education, November 2001.

- *Stories of Mixed Success: Program Improvement Implementation in Chapter 1 Schools*, Catherine George, James Grisson, and Anne Just (California Department of Education), <u>Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk</u>, 1(1), 77-93, 1996.

- <u>Successful School Restructuring. A Report to the Public and Educators by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools</u> , F. M. Newmann and G. G. Wehlag,. University of Wisconsin, 1995.

- *Toward an Understanding of Unusually Successful Programs for Economically Disadvantaged Students*, Lorin Anderson and Leonard Pellicer, <u>Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk</u>, 3(3), 237-263, 1998.

- <u>Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders</u>, U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

<u>Washington State Research Reports</u>

- <u>Bridging the Opportunity Gap. How Washington Elementary Schools are Meeting Achievement Standards</u>, J. T. Fouts, M. L. Abbott, and Baker, D.B. Washington School Research Center, May 2002.

- <u>Making Standards Meaningful: High School Reform Efforts in Washington State</u>, Sara Taggart and Mary Beth Celio, Center on Reinventing Public Education (University of Washington), October 2001. (A summary of this publication is published by the Partnership For Learning.)

- <u>Making Standards Stick: A Follow-Up Look at Washington State's School Improvement Efforts in 1999–2000</u>, Robin Lake, Maria McCarthy, Sara Taggart, and Mary Beth Celio, Center on Reinventing Public Education (University of Washington), April 2000.

- <u>Making Standards Work: Active Voices, Focused Learning</u>, Robin Lake, Paul Hill, Lauren O'Toole, and Mary Beth Celio, Center on Reinventing Public Education (University of Washington), February 1999.

- <u>Organizing for Success (Updated): Improving Mathematics Performance in Washington State</u>, Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, July 2000. (This updated edition includes results from the original *Organizing for Success* published in July 1999.)

- <u>Reality of Reform: Factors Limiting the Reform of Washington's Elementary Schools</u>, Jeffrey Fouts and Carol Stuen, Seattle Pacific Univ., Mary Alice Anderson, Yelm School District, and Timothy Parnell, Lake Washington School District, May 2000.

- <u>School Restructuring and Student Achievement in Washington State: Research Findings on the Effects of House Bill 1209 and School Restructuring on Western Washington Schools</u>, Jeffrey Fouts, Seattle Pacific University, January 1999.

- <u>Washington State Elementary Schools on the Slow Track Under Standards-Based Reform</u>, Maria McCarthy and Mary Beth Celio, Center on Reinventing Public Education (University of Washington), October 2001.

RESEARCH BASE
Summary

Characteristics of High Performing Schools

	Clear & Shared Focus	High Standards & Expectations	Effective School Leadership	High Levels of Collaboration & Communication	Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Aligned with Standards	Frequent Monitoring of Teaching & Learning	Focused Professional Development	Supportive Learning Environment	High Level of Family & Community Involvement
National Reports									
Comprehensive School Reform	X			*	X	*	X		X
Dispelling the Myth		X			X	X	X		X
Educational Reform and Students at Risk	X		*	X	*	X	X	X	*
Hawthorne Elementary School	X	X	X	X	*		X		X
Hope for Urban Education	X	*	X	X	X		X	X	X
Key High School Reform Strategies		X		X			X		X
Leave No Child Behind	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Org. Characteristics of Schools that Successfully Serve …	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Profiles of Successful Schoolwide Programs	X	*	X	X	X	*	X	*	X
Promising Practices Study of High-Performing Schools	X	*	X	*	*	X	X		
Promising Programs for Elementary and Middle Schools	X				X	X	X		
Schooling Practices That Matter Most	X		X		*	X	*	X	X
Schools that Make a Difference	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Stories of Mixed Success	X		X	X	X		X		X
Successful School Restructuring	X	*	X	X	X	*	X	X	*
Toward an Understanding of Unusually Successful …	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Turning Around Low-Performing Schools	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Washington Reports									
Bridging the Opportunity Gap	X	X	X	X	*	X	X	X	X
Make Standards Meaningful	X	X						*	
Make Standards Stick	X	X	*	X	X	X	X		X
Make Standards Work	X			X	*		X		X
Organizing for Success	X	X	X	X	X	*	X		X
Reality of Reform			O	*				O	O
School Restructuring and Student Achievement in WA	X			X			X		X
Washington State Elementary Schools on Slow Track …	O		O	O	O		O		
Total	**22**	**16**	**18**	**21**	**21**	**15**	**23**	**12**	**21**

X   Explicitly identified as key finding or in discussion of findings
*   Inferred or identified indirectly in descriptions
O   Identified as important by noting the absence or lack thereof

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT TOOL

High performing schools tend to have a combination of common characteristics. To help assess your school in these areas and facilitate the school improvement process, circle the number that best describes the extent to which each statement listed below is true in your school.

Characteristic	No Extent	Little Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent	Very Great Extent
1 All staff have a clear understanding of a common focus.	1	2	3	4	5
Staff share and believe in the same focus and vision.	1	2	3	4	5
2 Staff set high standards for all students.	1	2	3	4	5
Staff have high expectations for all students.	1	2	3	4	5
3 Leaders know what is needed and seek help when necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
Various staff assume different leadership roles.	1	2	3	4	5
4 Staff plan and work extensively with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
Staff communicate frequently about academic matters.	1	2	3	4	5
5 Curriculum and instruction are aligned with state standards.	1	2	3	4	5
Staff understand and use assessments to guide instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
6 Student progress is analyzed on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
More support is provided to students who need help.	1	2	3	4	5
7 Professional development is focused in areas of most need.	1	2	3	4	5
Extensive and ongoing professional development is provided.	1	2	3	4	5
8 Students feel safe in a healthy learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5
Students feel respected and connected with teachers and staff.	1	2	3	4	5
9 Many families actively participate in school-related activities.	1	2	3	4	5
The community has many links to the school.	1	2	3	4	5

An analysis of the above statements can help determine the areas in which
your school may want to concentrate its improvement efforts.

School Assessment Rating Summary

School Rating	1 Clear & Shared Focus	2 High Standards & Expectations for All Students	3 Effective Leadership	4 High Levels of Collaboration/ Communication	5 Alignment with Standards	6 Frequent Monitoring of Learning & Teaching	7 Focused Professional Development	8 Supportive Learning Environment	9 High Parent/ Community Involvement
5.00									
4.50									
4.00									
3.50									
3.00									
2.50									
2.00									
1.50									
1.00									
Team Average									

Instructions for Completing the *School Assessment Rating Summary*

The *School Assessment Tool* is designed to stimulate discussion and to identify areas in which a school should consider for improvement efforts. The tool is designed for a school but could be adapted for a district as a whole.

Step 1: Decide the context for completing the *School Assessment Tool.*

- Make sure everybody applies the rating to the same context (e.g., a particular school).

Step 2: Individually complete the *School Assessment Tool.*

- Each of the nine characteristics has two statements. Have each person complete the survey.

- After rating all the statements, have each person compute the average for the two statements for each of the nine characteristics (for example, a 2 and a 3 would have an average of 2.5). Put that average in the left hand column next to the "boxed" number.

Step 3: Have each person plot their averages for each characteristic on the *School Assessment Rating Summary* and discuss their results.

- The *Summary* has a column for each of the nine characteristics and the range of possible scores of the rating. The horizontal lines are a grid for marking the average. Have each person plot their average for each of the nine characteristics and then connect the averages with a line.

- When all members have plotted their averages across the page, review the patterns of the ratings with each other. Is there a general consensus or a wide disparity in ratings? Have those with widely different ratings briefly discuss why they made their ratings.

Step 4: Calculate the average and plot the overall results.

- Later when time permits, tabulate the results and calculate the averages for all staff and enter that number at the bottom of the *Summary*.

- Plot the average for all staff. If possible, note the range of averages and the presence of any "outliers."

Step 5: Use the results to make plans for school improvement in areas of most need.

- Review the results and identify the areas that need the most attention.

- Start making plans to address the areas of most need. Review the information in this document to help identify ideas and resources that can be used in the planning and implementation processes.