

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL



Volume 2 Number 1
January - December 2000



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

*Department of Educational Foundations,
Leadership, and Technology*

Department of Educational Foundations,
Leadership, and Technology
College of Education
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama 36849
334.844.4460

J. R. Llanes, Auburn University

Education Leaders' Visions for and Roles in Simultaneous Educational Renewal

Authors: [Corinne Mantle-Bromley](#), Colorado State University, [Ann M. Foster](#), Poudre School District, [Carol A. Wilson](#), Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal, [Elizabeth Kozleski](#), University of Colorado at Denver and [Beverly Anderson-Parsons](#), Insites

Reference as (APA style): Mantle-Bromley, Corinne; Foster, Ann; Wilson, Carol; Kozleski, Elizabeth & Anderson-Parsons, Beverly. Educational Leaders' Visions for and Roles in Simultaneous Educational Renewal. *International Journal: Continuous Improvement Monitor*, 2:1. Edinburg, TX, The University of Texas-Pan American. Available on the web:

<http://llanes.auburn.edu/cimjournal/Vol2/No1/mantle.pdf>

©Copyright J. R. Llanes and University of Texas–Pan American, 2000. All rights are reserved by copyright. Authors retain intellectual property rights to their articles and may re-publish their articles in other publications. *The Continuous Improvement Monitor* may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-profit use for the purposes of education, research, library reference, or stored or distributed as a public service by any networked computer. Any commercial use of this journal in whole or in part by any means is strictly prohibited without written permission. Any use of this journal in whole or in part, including by authors, should include customary bibliographic citation, including author attribution, date, article title, edition, and electronic retrieval instructions.

Abstract

Complex, inter-institutional collaboration requires upper-level administrative support. Furthermore, it is assumed that the institutions' leaders have a common understanding of what might be accomplished together that cannot otherwise be accomplished. This assumption of common vision and purpose was the primary focus of a study of leaders in the Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal (CoPER), an organization of six institutions of higher education and twelve school districts in Colorado, working together to implement John Goodlad's educational renewal agenda.

Interviews of twelve members of the CoPER's Governing Board, including school/college of education deans and school district superintendents, indicated that board members' understandings of the simultaneous educational renewal agenda and of their roles in furthering the agenda varied considerably. This article describes commonalties and differences across the interviews, examining literature pertinent to emergent tensions and to organizational change. It concludes with a description of how the governing board used this and other information to modify their organizational structure, their overall purpose, and their roles in furthering simultaneous educational renewal, thus using the continual improvement process promoted by their educational renewal agenda.

John Goodlad has written for nearly two decades now about the distinction between educational reform, outside efforts to fix "things gone wrong" ([1999, p. 575](#)) and educational renewal, where educators continually reflect on and improve both practice and systems that support best practice. Goodlad and others (see [Goodlad, 1984](#); [Holmes Group](#),

1986; 1990; Carnegie Forum, 1986) have suggested that collaboration between schools and teacher preparation programs could foster such renewal. The most prevalent vehicle for school-university collaboration has been partner schools or professional development schools (PDSs), places where school and university educators work together to a) better educate children and youth, b) better prepare teachers, c) better provide adults with professional development, and d) conduct inquiry that leads to ongoing improvement (Clark & Hughes, 1995).

It is widely acknowledged that complex inter-institutional arrangements, particularly PDS-type arrangements, cannot be sustained without both upper-level administrative support and the commitment and energy of those implementing changes. Fullan suggests that complex organizational change of long-established patterns requires a "simultaneous top-down bottom-up influence" (1993, p. 38).

Those who have studied educational change suggest that top administrative support for school-university collaboration needs to be highly visible (e.g., Goodlad, 1994; Fullan, 1991, 1993; Sarason in Fullan, 1991). Furthermore, educational leaders must be able to clearly articulate their vision to various stakeholder groups (Fullan, 1991, 1993; Goodlad, 1988; 1994), including teachers, school board members, parents, state-level education leaders, and the university community in general. Sirotnik, echoing these findings, concluded that a critical, repeated theme in the research on complex organizations was "the importance of leadership at the top, and the ability to clearly, authentically, and consistently communicate mission, vision, a sense of what the organization can and must be about" (in Goodlad, 1994, p. 110).

Clark provides insight into why top-level leadership is so important to successful school-university collaboration. After reviewing partnership literature, he concluded that success is defined, in part, by participation from leaders whose "ideas and persistence will provoke the kinds of interactions that are necessary to overcome the many obstacles present and secure for the collaboration the benefits that can derive from such arrangements" (1988, p. 59). Clark's position, that clarity of purpose is requisite to effective leadership, echoes that of Deming (1986) and others (see Hubbard, 1993), who have long promoted continual improvement processes in business and education arenas.

The Need

As a primary proponent of school-university collaboration, Goodlad has strongly urged the support of top-level administrators (1988, 1994). In presenting his rationale for inter-institutional collaboration, he described what he considered to be a structural minimum essential: "A governing board, preferably but not necessarily composed of the superintendent of each collaborating school district and the dean(s) of the participating schools(s) or college(s) of education" (1988, p. 28). Missing from the literature on school-university collaboration, however, is how governing boards like those recommended by Goodlad view their work. Do they, for example, hold a clearly defined, shared vision? What role do governing board members perceive for themselves in furthering simultaneous educational renewal of both schools and teacher preparation? And, can the board's work also be a part of the continual improvement process?

The Governing Board of a Multi-Institutional Collaborative

In Colorado, six institutions of higher education (IHEs) and approximately thirteen school districts are members of the Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal (referred to as

CoPER or the Partnership). CoPER, in turn, is a member of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), founded by John Goodlad and his colleagues in 1985 (see [Goodlad, 1988](#)). CoPER members are committed to the NNER's simultaneous educational renewal agenda, which centers on the concept of school and university collaboration for continual renewal of both schooling and the preparation of new teachers.

In agreement with Goodlad's belief in the importance of top leadership described above, the CoPER Governing Board comprises superintendents of member school districts, deans or directors of the IHEs' schools or colleges of education, arts and sciences faculty, and two directors of CoPER. The governing board meets monthly; chair duties alternate annually between IHE and district-level members.

High rates of administrative turnover, common across the country, are also apparent within this governing board's membership, both for IHE and school district personnel. Although one governing board member, a superintendent, has been with CoPER since its inception in 1986, others have only recently joined the board. Additionally, the organization has not received the same level of attention from all board members. Some regularly have sent a representative to monthly meetings rather than attend themselves.

To what degree, then, did the CoPER Governing Board share a common vision of school-university collaboration? How did members view their roles in furthering the simultaneous educational renewal agenda of CoPER? And, could the board use answers to these questions to improve their work?

Overview of the Study

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs, visions, and perceived roles of CoPER's governing board members related to the simultaneous educational renewal agenda of the NNER. At the time of data collection, the governing board comprised thirteen school district superintendents (or their designated representatives), six deans or directors of member schools/colleges of education (or their representatives), two assistant deans of colleges of arts and sciences, and two executive officers of CoPER. District-level board members represented rural, suburban, and city schools. IHE members represented research universities and four-year state colleges.

Methodology. Twelve board members were available and willing to participate in the 30-45 minute individual, tape-recorded interviews during a regularly scheduled CoPER board meeting in May of 1998. One interview was unusable as the tape recorder malfunctioned. The remaining eleven interviews were transcribed verbatim and were later coded for primary themes using HyperResearch, a computer software program facilitating qualitative data management and analysis.

A protocol, used for each interview, included a set of seven questions and potential probes or requests for elaboration. The four members of the evaluation team, graduate assistants, and colleagues of the evaluation team conducted the interviews.

Data were analyzed by the lead author for emergent themes, both across the group and within the subgroups of IHE and public school membership. After initial coding of data related to the concept of simultaneous renewal, the lead author randomly selected two sets of interview data (out of the possible eleven) and gave them to a second member of the evaluation team. The second member, using the initial codes, recoded the data. The two researchers agreed upon 30 of 36 possible coding episodes (83% reliability) without any

initial discussion of the concepts. After additional clarification, a slightly modified set of codes was used for further data analysis.

Four questions are addressed in the presentation of data analysis that follows:

1. What does "simultaneous renewal" mean to the various governing board members who were interviewed?
2. What, according to board members, is CoPER's current status regarding simultaneous renewal?
3. How do board members view their roles in furthering the simultaneous renewal agenda?
4. How do board members view their roles as members of the CoPER Governing Board?

Relevant literature is examined as data is presented.

Data Analysis

Simultaneous renewal: What is it? As stated earlier, the length of time various members had been on CoPER's governing board ranged from those newly hired to their positions to one member who was a part of CoPER's original governing board in 1986. Board members' explanations of simultaneous renewal reflected this variation in experience. Responses ranged from a one-sentence statement to a ten-minute explanation. Members were consistently asked for examples and were asked to clarify those aspects of their responses that seemed vague.

Four concepts were present in *all* governing board members' explanations of simultaneous renewal: collaboration across school and IHE boundaries, professional development of teachers and teacher educators, improved teaching and/or learning, and P-12 students. Using this reductive approach, a common definition, across all governing board members' interviews, resulted: Simultaneous renewal is collaboration across school and higher education institutional boundaries which provides professional development of its adult participants, resulting in improved teaching and/or learning for P-12 students.

Collaboration was defined by board members in a variety of ways. Expansion on the concept of collaboration included descriptions of joint activities such as teaching, dialogue, reflection on practice, inquiry into practice, decision making, and implementation of jointly-made decisions. Expansion on the concept of professional development included that which was embedded into daily work, was meaningful to participants, and ultimately led to refinement of practice.

This simple definition, however, did not come close to capturing some members' visions for simultaneous renewal. Upon changing the criterion for inclusion in a collective definition from a concept present in all interviewed board members' explanations to one present in at least half of the board members' explanations, five additional concepts were added: IHE students, relationships that stimulate change, seamless, ongoing, and process. Using the nine concepts, the following definition emerged: Simultaneous renewal is a seamless process of collaboration across school and higher education institutional boundaries. This collaboration fosters relationships that stimulate change, thereby providing ongoing professional development of its participants, and leading to improved teaching and learning for both P-12 and higher education students.

Distribution of concepts. Figure 1 visually presents the distribution of concepts at the individual level and at the district/IHE level. The purpose of including this chart in the data presentation is to demonstrate that the concept distribution was fairly equal across district and IHE representation. The CoPER director's comments were not included in this distribution, as they would have been identifiable as neither district nor IHE comments. Her removal from this process did not alter the definition; her comments were included in the other aspects of data analysis and presentation.

Concept	District Administrators					IHE Administrators				
<u>Interview Number:</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>
Collaboration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Professional development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Improved teaching and/or learning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
For P-12 students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
For higher education students		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Relationships that stimulate change		X	X			X	X		X	X
Seamless			X	X	X		X	X		X
Ongoing	X		X				X		X	X
A process			X			X	X		X	X
Figure 1. Distribution of concepts related to simultaneous educational renewal found in school district and IHE administrators' and descriptions.										

Nine additional concepts were stressed in particular board members' explanations of simultaneous renewal but were mentioned in fewer than half of the interviews. The concepts were often framed in what should be in place if simultaneous renewal were to become a reality. The concepts are listed here in descending order of frequency of appearance:

- Should lead to an ever-expanding participant group
- Should be value-based
- Should lead to changing roles
- Should be non-hierarchical
- Should increase experiential learning
- Should increase trust
- Should break down institutional barriers
- Should increase ongoing inquiry into practice
- Should require full commitment from all institutions involved

Several problematic issues arose from the board members' views of simultaneous renewal. Only 60% of those interviewed talked about the importance of inter-institutional relationships in fostering renewal. These relationships, however, are seen as the linchpin of renewal: Symbiosis, Goodlad claims, "refers to unlike organisms (or institutions) joined intimately in mutually beneficial relationships" (1988, p. 14). The PDS literature to date paints a clear picture of the difficulty and time involved in establishing and maintaining relationships across institutional cultures (e.g., Johnston, 1997; Sandholtz & Finan, 1998; Snyder, 1994; Teitel, 1998; Whitford, 1994). If top-level administration does not visibly acknowledge, value, and reward the effort it takes individuals to foster these close relationships, few may be sufficiently developed to instigate change in established practice.

A second problematic issue is the absence of a discussion, across numerous members' interviews, of the troubling norm of established hierarchies. Goodlad and Sirotnik (1988) discuss the nature of partnerships when historically, the relationships between schools and universities have been hierarchical. Several school-based board members spoke about the dominance of university agendas within CoPER, yet very few board members discussed issues of equality or non-hierarchy related to the simultaneous renewal agenda. Failure to discuss historical issues of dominance have caused difficulties for school-university partnerships in the past. Campbell, Strawderman, and Reavis (1996), for example, described a culture of mistrust within school-university collaboration, primarily due to university personnel seeing themselves as providers of knowledge. Teitel (1998) reported that universities often bring with them paternalistic motivations and beliefs that damage relationships and inhibit true collaboration. Johnston described how important it was to discuss "issues of power, intimidation, and lack of parity" in the beginning of a school-university collaboration (1997, p. 166). Johnston found that past hierarchical relationships could and did change. She and her co-authors, however, doubted that the time and effort necessary to bring about such changes could be sustained over time.

The need to increase experiential learning of preservice teachers, voiced by several governing board members, is easy to agree with. All students need to apply their learning. It is likely that university students and faculty both benefit from increased field experiences. Absent from governing board members' discussions, however, was the flip side of this coin: Do school faculty also need to increase the theoretical foundations of their work? Unless the work of both institutions is valued, school-university collaboration will be difficult to sustain, and improvements in current practice will be minimal. Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, and Stokes (1997) reported a strong existing devaluation of theory by school faculty in PDSs they studied. Primacy of experience was evident throughout their interviews with teachers. The authors later reported that the teacher preparation program at their institution had begun to hire clinical, school-based faculty, rather than tenure-line faculty, to work in the PDSs, thus ensuring a strong emphasis on experience and minimal focus on theory (Bullough, Hobbs, Kauchak, Crow, & Stokes, 1997).

The value (or lack thereof) that school personnel attach to theoretical understandings is an important link in ongoing educational renewal. Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Klein (1995) reported that a primary characteristic of master teachers is their ability to use both theory and experiential wisdom to make decisions. Johnston concluded that school-university collaboration requires that participants value the "differences in perspective and expertise that we have" (1997, p. 166). Unless school personnel value and increase their theoretical understandings as teacher educators carefully listen to and learn from the knowledge of practicing educators, renewal as envisioned will not occur. Reusch and Bateson explain the necessary interplay between theory and practice: "The theorist can only build his theories about what the practitioner was doing yesterday. Tomorrow the practitioner will be doing

something different because of these very theories" (1987, p. 272). Both theory and practice are necessary if renewal is to occur.

Coincident with the infrequency of a discussion of theory by governing board members is the infrequency with which board members discussed inquiry and research as vital to the simultaneous renewal agenda. Only three board members mentioned inquiry as they explained their visions of simultaneous renewal. The case studies conducted by the CoPER evaluation team supported the low priority and occurrence of inquiry into teaching and learning within CoPER partner schools (Anderson-Parsons, Foster, Kozleski, & Mantle-Bromley, 1997). A principal recently explained teachers' reticence to engage in formal inquiry this way: "It's [research] not built into their day," she said. "It's not even seen as their job" (Mantle-Bromley, 1999).

Throughout the interviews is an assumption that change is positive. Change, however, can have either benign or negative effects. The only way to know whether changes from collaboration result in good for children and educators is by building inquiry into the ongoing patterns of schooling. If teachers and school administrators are to reframe their roles to include ongoing inquiry, however, the vision and the support to do so must be as clearly evidenced by their top administrators as that for practice. This strong support of school-based inquiry does not yet appear to be embedded in CoPER leaders' visions of renewal.

Although board members' visions for simultaneous renewal varied, they did report progress in numerous ways.

Progress in the Simultaneous Renewal Agenda

Governing board members reported that they saw some progress in the simultaneous renewal agenda. The progress, according to both district and IHE administrators, primarily had been limited to those directly participating in partner school relationships. This limited impact is inherently problematic for district administrators who see value for two or three schools but none or little for the remaining 100-plus schools in their districts.

Teacher preparation improved. The area of improvement most frequently mentioned by governing board members was the preparation of new teachers. Several of the member IHEs had all of their teacher candidates participating in a PDS, for either a semester or an entire year. All participating IHEs had instituted extended field experiences throughout new teachers' preparation. One district administrator said, "I think we've changed student teachers. . . they're much more realistic in terms of what they understand. They've taken more of the complete duties of teachers than just the teaching duties" (da9). An IHE dean agreed, saying "I think the [university] students are significantly better prepared and much more sure of themselves. And that would come from talking to students" (ua10).

Increasing the confidence of new teachers is critical to improving teaching and learning and has similarly been reported by others involved in PDSs (e.g., Blocker & Mantle-Bromley, 1997; Neubert & Binko, 1998; Yerian & Grossman, 1997). Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Klein (1995) summarized research on the importance of teachers' self-confidence, finding that a high level of self confidence influenced teachers' job satisfaction and was related to lower rates of both absenteeism and attrition.

Collaborative efforts valued. Board members spoke highly of collaborative efforts occurring in their respective partnerships. Numerous faculty, for example, were engaged in joint conversations about teaching and learning. Describing school faculty involved in PDSs, one

school administrator claimed, *"They've grown professionally"* (da9). Another school administrator appreciated the *"many opportunities for professional development"* (da3) that had been made available to school faculty.

IHE administrators also saw the value of collaborative activities. *"You see a richness we've never had before, where the faculty really interchange all the time, talk about ideas, teach together, research together"* (d12). This kind of professional growth has been reported by others involved in school-university collaborations (e.g., [Anderson, 1997](#); [Kirschner, Dickinson, & Blosser, 1996](#)).

Less frequently mentioned were several other areas of progress. For example, only three administrators mentioned that trust was being established. One administrator described the emergence of an agreed-upon set of values and principles. Another felt that educators were more critically examining their practice. And still another saw partner school participants beginning to accept some responsibility for their counterparts' student outcomes. If educational renewal were to become an ongoing process as envisioned by the governing board members, each of these areas would need to become regular norms within the collaboratives. The fact that they were not seen as norms and that they were infrequently mentioned indicates the amount of work yet to be done in establishing truly collaborative partnerships.

Limitations to the Simultaneous Educational Renewal Agenda

Although governing board members saw some progress, they were quick to point out that advancement had been limited. Board members described six barriers that, from their perspectives, limited the progress of educational renewal. They also described a critical need for outcome data if collaboration were to be sustained. The barriers are reported here in order of descending frequency of occurrence in the interview data, and are followed by board members' discussion of impact data.

Inconsistent understandings and commitments. Board members reported great variation in both understanding of and commitment to the educational renewal agenda among their constituency. One school administrator explained,

"People don't really understand what the Colorado Partnership is, and ... I know there are faculty members who do not know the full functions of a partner school. We still need to get the word out as what is our common goal." (da3)

An IHE administrator described a similar situation:

"We have some wonderful supporters, and people who're really a part of what's going on ... and a lot of people who don't know a thing about, well not much about what's going on." (ua7)

According to governing board members, school and IHE education faculty who were not involved in partner schools tended to be uninformed. This also appeared to be true for arts and sciences faculty in higher education institutions and for the public in general.

It is interesting to note that the inconsistent understandings of board members' constituencies was also true about the board members themselves. Several interviewed

board members were unclear about the agenda, the purpose of the governing board, or their roles in furthering the agenda.

Site specific and insufficient impact. Another commonly mentioned limitation was the minimal impact of collaboration on member districts' work. District administrators saw very little about school-university collaboration that extended beyond the specific partner schools. One administrator explained:

"We have three partner schools. And that's not very many partner schools when we have a hundred and forty-two schools in our district. And that's disappointing to me now that I look at it and reflect back." (da2)

Another district administrator concurred:

"Right now we only have two partner schools in our district. . . There's not that strong a commitment." (da3)

Making a strong case for school-university collaboration, the Holmes Group theorized that PDSs would become demonstration sites for other area schools (1986) and that the PDS would provide a vehicle responsible for introducing new ideas into all schools (1990). These school administrators' comments suggest that the Holmes Group's vision of the PDS as a vehicle for other schools' growth is far from being realized within CoPER partnerships.

Scarce resources. Several board members discussed limitations related to resources of personnel, time and money. A district administrator said,

"It's doing about as much as it can relative to the numbers of people available to participate.... We've acknowledged as a group that if we had more resources available from higher education, there would be more public schools that would want to be involved." (da5)

And a university administrator commented:

"We've had some real moderate successes, but if we're going to move it up to another level, it's going to take a lot more time and energy." (ua7)

Scarcity of resources, especially the costly resource of time, tends to be a common concern of those directly implementing school-university collaboratives (Bullough, Hobbs, Kauchak, Crow, & Stokes, 1997; Rodriguez & Breck, 1995; Sandholtz & Finan, 1998). Rarely, however, do implementers have much control over budgets and resource allocation. The same cannot be said for administrators such as deans and superintendents. It is within these board members' authority to reallocate admittedly limited resources should they chose to do so.

Insufficient reward structures. Both university and district administrators felt that present reward systems were insufficient. A university dean said,

"We need to figure out ways in the higher ed institutions to reward and recognize what higher ed faculty are doing with schools. Very often they're not provided enough incentive and value to work in schools.... Their work in schools is not as valued as research." (ua1)

Another university administrator questioned the rewards for school faculty:

"I don't know what kind of rewards there are at the K-12 setting, other than some of the intrinsic rewards, maybe a course release here or there, or a conference." (ua7)

A district administrator concurred:

"The teachers get the raw end of the deal, because they're working with those teacher candidates more than anyone, and they get compensated twenty-five dollars a semester." (da3)

University reward structures are commonly reported as a primary barrier to PDS work (e.g., [Bullough, Hobbs, Kauchak, Crow, & Stokes, 1997](#); [Button, Ponticell, & Johnson, 1996](#)). Rhodes and Bellamy, both university administrators, recently reported changes within the evaluation of their PDS faculty, bringing the reward system more closely in line with expectations of IHE faculty working in schools ([1999](#)). Similar to changing resource allocations, it is top-level administrators who have the authority to initiate and support system-wide, policy-level changes in reward structures, should they choose to do so.

Personality-dependent partnerships. Several board members discussed the fragile nature of the partnerships, questioning the extent to which relationships were personality-dependent. One university administrator explained,

"Superintendents change, deans, people in roles like mine, change. You would think at each institution that the thrust of the partnership activities are strong enough so that would continue, but personalities in leadership roles are significant." (ua7)

This same administrator later said,

"We have some fairly sophisticated relationships, I think due to individual personalities as much as anything else." (ua7)

Another university administrator agreed:

"What it really boils down to me is individual personalities. . . Now, if we can identify the specific characteristics of those individual personalities and then limit ourselves to only hiring those people, hey, that would be great." (ua1)

Informally, PDS participants know that special qualities are needed for those who span the boundaries of two institutions ([Sandholtz & Finan, 1998](#)). House, however, cautions that many key people in reform efforts are "asset specific." That is, their knowledge and skills cannot be easily transferred to another person or another setting. These key people have acquired deeply embedded personal knowledge that is both context specific and person dependent. "In asset-specific situations," House explains, "the identity of the person with whom one is doing business does matter. Sometimes the identity of the other party is the main safeguard one has" ([1996](#), p. 7).

One-sided agenda. One school administrator expressed the concern that the majority of collaborative effort seemed focused on improving schools and that rarely was the focus on improving teaching and learning at the IHE level. Although this was only one board member's concern, it paralleled a concern of imbalance raised by some teachers during

partner school evaluations. Teachers at one site felt that most labor in the collaborative endeavors was provided by school rather than IHE personnel (Anderson-Parsons, Foster, Kozleski, & Mantle-Bromley, 1997). Goodlad and Sirotnik (1988) also describe becoming “truly equal partners” (p. 211) as a serious challenge to school-university collaboration. As previously mentioned, Teitel (1998) found that a focus on school change rather than both school and IHE change, and minimal involvement from the IHE, are both causes of PDS failure.

Lack of documented impact. Various board members spoke of how critical it was for CoPER members to document and measure the impact of collaborative work. Board members primarily focused their discussion of measurement on their desired ultimate outcome of collaborative work: improved student achievement. This district administrator’s statement demonstrates a common level of concern regarding expected outcomes:

“All of us right now in this state I think are very focused on student achievement, very focused on results. And if we can’t show that the partnership, in any area that they’re working in, is making a difference to what happens in the classroom, and that is higher achievement, I don’t think we’re going to exist.” (da2)

An IHE administrator echoed the concern:

“Now that we’re in schools, so what? What has that done? And how has it increased student achievement? That is the bottom line.... That’s where the struggle is right now with the partnership—being able to prove it’s value-added to the overall goal of schooling.” (ua1)

Although all board members felt strongly about the need to measure progress and impact, several board members urged that data other than student achievement data be considered relevant. One board member felt that interviews with participants were appropriate in determining the effect of the partnership on their practice. Another felt that employment data of beginning teachers would be important to examine. The following board members’ comments demonstrated a belief that CoPER members should maintain a broad perspective when evaluating their work:

- *“How are people doing once they get hired? What is different about the student’s experience in a partner school?” (ua10)*
- *“Hopefully over time we’d collect some comparative data showing that kids that are involved in these kinds of settings do in fact have broader experiences, greater depth ... not only in the more measurable kinds of achievement but in terms of ... interests, in terms of commitment to schooling and in terms of levels of engagement.” (da5)*

District administrators reported immediate pressure from their primary stakeholders (parents and district-level board members) to demonstrate that the money and time spent in partnership endeavors were beneficial to children. Governing board members agreed that careful measurement of progress was critical to sustaining efforts and resources.

These administrators are not the only ones concerned with the lack of convincing outcomes data related to school-university collaboration. Reviewers of PDS literature all bemoan the lack of evidence related to PDS claims for improvement (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; Arends & Winitzky, 1996; Book, 1996; Fullan, Galluzzo, Morris, & Watson, 1998). Goodlad and Sirotnik (1988) warn of the dangers of attempting to get closure on the impact of

collaborative work too early. They suggest that early pressure for outcomes might circumvent necessary dialogue. One too easily imagines how pressure for results might lead to a vicious circle: local results are maximized, thereby preventing achievement of more global ones. That said, PDS participants must begin showing that the labor- and resource-intensive PDS model is enhancing children's learning if the efforts are to be sustained.

Summary of Progress in Simultaneous Renewal

Although board members acknowledged that progress had been made, the majority felt that there was a great distance to go before the schools and universities were working together as many of the group envisioned. The following comments were typical as board members summarized the partnership's progress:

- *"I think we've got a sense of trust, but it's not full-fledged. We're still a school district, and they're still higher ed, you know?" (sa3)*
- *"I think we have some big steps yet to go in order to get to the point where we can say we're truly working together." (sa2)*
- *"I think we've made some, some progress towards ... this agenda. Minimal. This is hard stuff." (ua7)*

Overall, board members expressed that traditional boundaries continued to operate and that the agendas of school districts and schools/colleges of education remained separate.

Board Members' Perceived Roles in Furthering the Educational Renewal Agenda

Board members' perceptions of their roles varied considerably. Two factors appeared related to the extent to which members had considered their roles: the length of time they'd been involved with the partnership and whether they were representing someone else. One administrator who was representing another, for example, seemed puzzled when asked to describe his/her role in furthering the agenda:

"That's a good question. Because I don't know that we have really taken any responsibility for doing that." (da9)

Most board members, however, indicated that they had a role in the simultaneous educational renewal agenda. The following three themes emerged from their discussions: providing support, communicating their vision, and helping to remove system barriers to collaborative work.

Providing support. Both school district and IHE administrators spoke of their roles in supporting collaborative efforts. Resources, specifically time and money, were seen as critical to successful partner school collaboration. This board member's comments were typical:

"I would see the administrator providing the support systems that are necessary to engage in reflective practice.... Providing resources, providing innovative and creative ways to view time." (ua1)

One administrator saw the need to develop and sustain relationships, particularly at executive and policy-making levels, that could facilitate collaborative work:

"Making sure that relationships at the executive level are solid so that the partnership work that faculty and principals and teachers are engaged in involves less risk. Building the relationships so that transitions in top leadership are less likely to disrupt or dismantle partnership work." (ua10)

Communicating the vision. Board members described the importance of increasing the level of understanding of the collaborative work (its purpose, its relevance) to their respective stakeholders and personnel. Board members described the ongoing need to maintain focus, energy, and interest in collaborative efforts. One administrator, for example, commented that

"I devote a pretty fair amount of attention and a great deal of support to these partner schools and try to highlight with everybody what's going on there, what the strengths of it are and why we are involved and encouraging other schools as they have opportunities." (da5)

Reducing barriers. Both IHE and district administrators saw as their role removing system constraints that impede the work of simultaneous renewal. IHE administrators primarily spoke of the need to align faculty reward systems with partner school work. They also saw a need to ensure recognition for those who further the goals of the partnership.

District administrators, on the other hand, described the need to broaden the simultaneous renewal efforts within their districts. The benefits of collaboration, they felt, needed to be more equitably distributed. In order to achieve this, administrators described needing to increase the numbers of partner schools in their districts and to encourage participation in partnership functions beyond that of partner school personnel. Administrators also indicated their need to be involved in creating new structures and new opportunities for their constituents. It is interesting to note that interviewed board members did not discuss expanding the role of a PDS to that of providing professional development to other schools within the district, as had been proposed in early PDS discussions ([Holmes Group, 1986, 1990](#)) and as had been discussed frequently during board meetings.

Perceived Roles as Members of the CoPER Governing Board

Three roles emerged from data analysis related to board members' role perceptions: providing their perspective, learning from others on the board, and monitoring the balance between IHE and district participation.

Providing their perspective. Most frequently, governing board members expressed the need to continually clarify the purpose and expected outcomes of the Partnership's work. They felt that this would be accomplished by participating in discussions of issues critical to the Partnership's work. Board members felt that their role was to provide their perspective on issues while representing their specific institution's best interests.

Learning from others. Two IHE representatives described one of their roles as learning from the various perspectives represented on the board. One of the administrators commented,

"It just gives you great opportunities to be much more successful just by interacting with the others at all the levels and finding out what's going on, in learning and sharing. I mean almost each and every meeting something comes up that's useful for us." (ua7)

These two board members' recognition of learning from others reflects the concept of collaboration across district and IHE boundaries as a vehicle for professional growth. Although recognized by a small minority of members, participation on the CoPER board fits the board's definition of simultaneous renewal as board members establish cross-institutional relationships.

Monitoring the balance of IHE and district participation. Two district administrators spoke of the need to examine the current balance of interaction and focus at the governing board level. They expressed the feeling that the IHE board members took greater initiative in participating in discussions than did the district administrators, and although the members were unclear about how to ensure a proper balance, they felt strongly that the issue of balance should be addressed. This imbalance was also present, they felt, in the focus of the board's and the partnership's work:

"Maybe the frame change is, it moves from the focus on what will we do in schools to make them different, to what will we do at the university to help them look at their job in a different way." (da9)

One district administrator felt that the nature of partner school relationships (that is, one IHE working with several schools), actually facilitated this unequal balance. Lkening the relationships to an umbilical cord, the administrator described a pattern of relationships with individual schools and the institution of higher education. The district administrator concluded:

"And the irony of that is that once again, the university is enthroned. So the triangle is that the partnership has to extend among schools as well as among universities, ... that the schools have partnerships, one with another, as well as with universities." (da6)

Conclusions and Next Steps

Findings from this examination of education leaders' visions and role perceptions eerily paralleled existing literature at the PDS site level: Although governing board members agreed that the Partnership and their involvement in the educational renewal agenda were beneficial to their respective institutions, they did not always agree on common goals. Hierarchies, reminiscent of historical patterns, resurfaced in unanticipated places. Turnover in key positions resulted in uneven understandings and ownership of the Partnership's agenda. Resources and rewards were problematic. And finally, participants tended to view issues from a stance protective of their individual institutions rather than a stance reflective of united, mutual benefit.

The interviews additionally highlighted a problematic reality: Board members did not all define their roles as furthering the educational renewal agenda. They could not, as a collective body, "clearly, authentically, and consistently communicate mission, vision, a sense of what the organization can and must be about" (Goodlad, 1994, p. 110).

The story, however, does not end here. As has been envisioned in educational renewal literature, the board members used this information and ongoing reflection on their work to redefine their roles and use their leadership positions to influence change that would support educators in their respective institutions who were working toward simultaneous educational renewal.

Using the continual improvement process: Changes at the governing board level.

Results from this study, along with ongoing reflection and discussion related to the board's purpose, led to significant changes in the board's structure and objectives. After considerable discussion, the CoPER Governing Board turned its attention to addressing a changing state policy environment that was impacting the Partnership's ability to attain its goals. Structurally, the board delegated the operational decision making to a coordinating committee. This move freed the board to devote its meetings to discussion of the state policy environment, with a view toward providing another voice in the state policy discussion. The intent was to use the power of the united school and university voices to help inform the public, and thereby help inform policy, about what is actually occurring in public education in Colorado. It was also an attempt to remind the public of the larger goals of public education in a democracy.

Each governing board meeting focused on a particular topic of mutual interest to the school districts and IHEs, such as the moral dimensions of education, teacher quality, and accountability. When the discussion resulted in common understandings and agreements, as they often did, Partnership staff as well as board members developed opinion-editorial articles, which were then submitted to newspapers statewide. Article themes included the public purposes of education in a democracy, the use and misuse of test data, and other topics. The board also developed a policy reflection matrix and a process to help Partnership districts and IHEs examine how their own policies hindered or promoted the simultaneous educational renewal agenda.

A further structural refinement came with the creation of new committees to advance the Partnership's work. A program committee took on the task of coordinating Partnership initiatives and activities, as well as determining gaps and redundancies. An operations committee was charged with attending to policy and communication, including work with community, media, and legislators. This committee's work was used to inform the work of the governing board as a whole. The new structure was designed to keep the governing board meetings open for continued attention to their central concern: helping create the conditions under which simultaneous renewal can occur.

Governing boards such as this one are critical to the success of the school-university partnerships it oversees. Board members either clearly and passionately articulate their vision or fail to convey its importance to others. Most (but admittedly not all) school and university personnel are too pragmatic to involve themselves in work that is not seen by those in top leadership as valuable. Additionally, members of the governing board have unique influence over reward structures and support systems. If they truly believe in the importance of collaborative work, they are in the position to see that policy and structures support those who are most involved in the work.

The changes this governing board made have increased their attendance at monthly meetings, have deepened their ownership of the educational renewal agenda, and have resulted in public statements of their beliefs and values. The board members used their collective understanding of systems and systems thinking in their efforts to improve not only how they worked together as a board, but also how they improved that which only they could improve: systems supporting those doing the difficult work of changing daily habits.

This governing board's use of data and clarification of its vision and role led to clear improvements. Their process paralleled that proposed by [Goldratt and Fox in 1986](#):

- What is required is a process which will, at any moment, identify clearly the area where an improvement will yield the maximum global impact. This process must enable an organization to achieve the maximum gain from such improvements, while simultaneously helping it to identify the area where the next improvement is needed and to quantify the impact. (p. 144)

Systems thinking demands that attention be paid to interactions between various parts and the results of those interactions on the overall system. It stipulates that the sustainability and progress of the whole predominate over those of the parts—that is, that as far as parts go, bigger is not always better—balance is. The governing board chose to study themselves as one part of a very complex system; board members also looked beyond their own system of schools and IHEs to that of state policy. Their recognition of a need to clarify a collective vision and purpose for their work and to communicate their work to policymakers and the public in general hold the best and perhaps only promise for continuous improvement of the Partnership as a whole.

References

- Abdal-Haqq, I. (1998). *Professional development schools: Weighing the evidence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Anderson, P. J. (1997). Professional development schools: A balanced wheel makes it better for everyone. *TESOL*, 7(1), 19-24.
- Anderson-Parsons, B., Foster, A.M., Kozleski, E., & Mantle-Bromley, C. (1997). *Cross-case analysis of partner school portraits*. Denver, CO: Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal.
- Arends, R., & Winitzky, N. (1996). Program structures and learning to teach. In F. B. Murray (Ed.), *The teacher educator's handbook* (pp. 526-556). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Blocker, L.S., & Mantle-Bromley, C. (1997). PDS vs. campus preparation: Through the eyes of the students. *The Teacher Educator*, 33(2), 70-89.
- Book, C. (1996). Professional development schools. In J. Sikula (Ed.), *The handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 194-210). New York: Macmillan.
- Bullough, R. V., Hobbs, S. F., Kauchak, D. P., Crow, N. A., & Stokes, D. (1997). Long-term PDS development in research universities and the clinicalization of teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(2), 85-95.
- Bullough, R. V., Kauchak, D., Crow, N. A., Hobbs, S., & Stokes, D. (1997). Professional development schools: Catalysts for teacher and school change. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13(2), 153-169.
- Button, K., Ponticell, J. & Johnson, M. (1996). Enabling school-university collaborative research: Lessons learned in professional development schools. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 46(1), 16-20.
- Campbell, T. A., Strawderman, C., & Reavis, C. A. (1996). Professional development schools: Collaboration and change. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 23(2), 83-94.

- Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986). *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Clark, R. W. (1988). School-university relationships: An interpretive review. In K. A. Sirotnik & J. I. Goodlad (Eds.), *School-university partnerships in action: Concepts, cases, and concerns* (pp. 32-65). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Clark, R. W., & Hughes, D. M. (1995). *Partner schools: Definitions and expectations* (4th rev.). Seattle, WA: Center for Educational Renewal, University of Washington.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Wise, A. E., & Klein, S. P. (1995). *A license to teach: Building a profession for 21st-century schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, Center for Advanced Engineering Study.
- Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. London: Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M., Galluzzo, G., Morris, P., & Watson, N. (1998). *The rise and stall of teacher education reform*. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.
- Goldratt, E. M., & Fox, R. E. (1986). *The race*. Great Barrington, MA: North River Press.
- Goodlad, J. I. (1984). *A place called school: Prospects for the future*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Goodlad, J. I. (1988). School-university partnerships for educational renewal: Rationale and concepts. In K. A. Sirotnik & J. I. Goodlad (Eds.), *School-university partnerships in action: Concepts, cases, and concerns* (pp. 3-31). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Goodlad, J. I. (1994). *Educational renewal: Better teachers, better schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Goodlad, J. I. (1999). Flow, eros, and ethos in educational renewal. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80(8), 571-578.
- Goodlad, J. I., & Sirotnik, K. A. (1988). The future of school-university partnerships. In K. A. Sirotnik & J. I. Goodlad (Eds.), *School-university partnerships in action: Concepts, cases, and concerns* (pp. 205-225). New York: Teachers College Press.
- House, E. R. (1996). A framework for appraising educational reforms. *Educational Researcher*, 25(7), 6-14.
- Holmes Group (The). (1986). *Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes Group*. East Lansing, MI: Holmes Group, Inc.

- Holmes Group (The). (1990). *Tomorrow's schools: Principles for the design of professional development schools*. East Lansing, MI: Holmes Group, Inc.
- Hubbard, D. L. (Ed.). (1993). *Continuous quality improvement: Making the transition to education*. Maryville, MO: Prescott.
- Johnston, M. (1997). *Contradictions in collaboration: New thinking on school-university partnerships*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kirschner, B. W., Dickinson, R., & Blosser, C. (1996). From cooperation to collaboration: The changing culture of a school-university partnership. *Theory into Practice*, 35(3), 205-213.
- Mantle-Bromley, C. (1999). [Theory-based study of school-university partnerships]. Unpublished raw data. For more information contact [Corinne Mantle-Bromley](#), Colorado State University.
- Neubert, G. A., & Binko, J. B. (1998). Professional development schools—The proof is in performance. *Educational Leadership*, 55(5), 44-46.
- Rhodes, L. K., & Bellamy, G. T. (1999). Choices and consequences in the renewal of teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 50(1), 17-26.
- Rodriguez, F., & Breck, S. (1995). Professional development schools: Leadership issues and the role of the university liaison. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 11(2), 82-96.
- Ruesch, J., & Bateson, G. (1987). *Communication: The social matrix of psychiatry* (3rd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Sandholtz, J. H., & Finan, E. C. (1998). Blurring the boundaries to promote school-university partnerships. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 49(1), 13-25.
- Snyder, J. (1994). Perils and potentials: A tale of two professional development schools. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Professional development schools: Schools for developing a profession* (pp. 98-125). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Teitel, L. (1998). Separations, divorces, and open marriages in professional development school partnerships. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 49(2), 85-96.
- Whitford, B. L. (1994). Permission, persistence, and resistance: Linking high school restructuring with teacher education reform. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Professional development schools: Schools for developing a profession* (pp. 74-97). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Yerian, S., & Grossman, P. L. (1997). Preservice teachers' perceptions of their middle level teacher education experience: A comparison of a traditional and a PDS model. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 24(4), 85-101.