

CSRD Connections

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Strategies for Change: Implementing a Comprehensive School Reform Program

Part 2

By Leslie Blair

INTRODUCTION In our last issue of *Connections*, we read about two K–5 schools involved in comprehensive school reform (CSR)—Sierra Vista and Sunrise. Each school had adopted the same national reform model as part of its efforts.

As you may recall, the two schools are fictionalized—each drawn from several case studies of schools involved in school reform. However, none of the case study schools were involved in the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program.

As a recap, Sierra Vista had district office support and was led by an enthusiastic, forward-thinking principal, Suzanne Martinez, who had been working with her staff for several years to create a collaborative, collegial culture with a focus on student learning. The Sierra Vista staff was well on its way to becoming a professional learning community

and believed real progress was being made in student achievement, even though standardized test scores had not risen dramatically.

Sunrise Elementary had undergone a series of school and district leadership changes that made carrying out a reform effort difficult. Many Sunrise staff members had been at the school for 15–20 years, and believed the school had been losing ground in recent years—they no longer felt there was a vision driving the school and many teachers thought the new principal, Carolyn Smith, sought input from only certain groups of teachers. Staff members felt overwhelmed and were disappointed that student test scores had not changed during the reform effort. Sunrise decided to abandon its reform program and concentrate on “teaching to the test”—the current superintendent’s preferred method of increasing scores.

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Six Strategies for Change IN BRIEF

NOTE TO READERS: We would like to remind our readers that the six strategies are not linear, but cyclical and interactive.

Developing an atmosphere and context conducive to change — In a school context that encourages change and improvement, there is an atmosphere of trust. In such a context, the professional staff works collaboratively to reflect on their instruction and on how they are working to achieve their goals for students. Principals in these schools pay attention to the concerns of teachers and are never too busy to listen, interact with staff, and exhibit interest and support.

Developing and communicating a shared vision — Vision refers to mental pictures of what a school or its parts might look like in a changed and improved state—a preferred image of the future. A compelling vision for a school reflects the values held by individuals in a school and in the school community. The vision should help drive all decisions made at the school.

Planning and providing resources — After the vision is agreed upon, a school must prepare a comprehensive plan to serve as a roadmap to guide teachers and administrators along the path of school reform. How resources (including time, personnel, fiscal resources, materials, and physical space) are allocated at a school should reflect the school's vision and its priorities.

Investing in professional development — School improvement efforts usually require that teachers learn new techniques and/or strategies to change practice. Investing in professional development means the school and district are committed to helping teachers learn new strategies and provide an environment of support that includes time for professional development, opportunities for practice, and follow-up coaching and feedback.

Monitoring and checking progress — Problems and challenges will accompany any school improvement effort, no matter how well planned. Problems can range from classroom management issues to new state mandates to student learning issues. These challenges are not necessarily negative and can result in an improved reform effort, if they are addressed promptly. Monitoring and checking progress incorporates formal and informal methods that may include standardized student testing, examining student data, or frequent principal visits to classrooms.

Continuing to give assistance — As teachers and administrators change their practice and implement new strategies and methodologies to support their school improvement plan, personal and management needs arise from time to time, requiring continuing assistance. As staff members move from novice to expert in their improvement efforts, technical assistance should be structured to accommodate these changes in expertise. Not only do facilitative leaders provide coaching and technical assistance as needed, but they look for and applaud positive progress on the part of each staff member.

Terms Used in This Issue of *Connections*

Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) — A research-based approach to school improvement in which schools focus on meeting the needs of all students. The key word is comprehensive; the school improvement plans are not piecemeal but integrate all factors that influence teaching and learning.

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program — This federal appropriation assists low-performing schools in implementing effective research-based school improvement models. These models help schools address the needs identified in their school improvement plans. The funding was first appropriated in FY98. State agencies applied for funding, then held competitions in their respective states, making awards of at least \$50,000 to the winning schools which had developed comprehensive reform plans.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) — An organizational arrangement in a school where teachers and administrators establish collegial relationships to continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn in order to enhance their effectiveness as professionals. In a PLC, the principal shares leadership—and thus power and authority—through inviting staff input in decision making. There is also collective learning among staff and application of that learning to solutions that address students' needs. Research literature has shown that effective PLCs also have a shared vision that is developed from the staff's unwavering commitment to students' learning and is consistently articulated and referenced in the staff's work. Effective PLCs also provide coaching, support, assistance, and feedback for teachers.

Strategies for Change, continued from page 1

In the last issue, we provided an overview of the six strategies a facilitative leader may take that can help ensure a school's success in implementing school reform (see "Six Strategies for Change," left). The strategies—first described in 1992 by researcher Shirley Hord on the basis of her work and that of her colleagues—focus on eliminating the barriers that can hinder school reform and success. The last issue examined the first three strategies listed and discussed how these played out at Sierra Vista and Sunrise elementary schools. In this issue, we are going to review the remaining strategies and discuss the Sierra Vista and Sunrise situations with regard to

- investing in professional development,
- monitoring and checking progress, and
- continuing to give assistance.

As in the last issue, we focus on Sierra Vista's success and Sunrise's challenges in implementing these strategies.

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CASE STUDY

Sierra Vista Elementary

Sierra Vista principal Suzanne Martinez has always believed that working collaboratively is the ideal way for a school staff to work. She also believes in encouraging teachers to take leadership roles and to make instructional and management decisions at the school.

When she first came to Sierra Vista in 1994, Ms. Martinez found the teachers willing to work together once they were encouraged to do so. She immediately formed study groups at the school to research topics that were issues or challenges on the campus. One of the groups assessed the school's existing professional development program, leading to a discussion by teachers of the types of professional development they needed.

The leader of the cadre admits that most Sierra Vista teachers had not paid much attention to professional development. He says, "We mostly attended district training sessions. Once in a while there would be conferences we would want to attend, but these mainly had to do with topics we were interested in individually or that a small group of us were interested in."

Ms. Martinez recognized that such a haphazard approach to professional development was not coherent enough for a school about to undertake a reform effort. As teachers became accustomed to working in groups and discussing issues freely, she began to lead them in discussions about training and professional development. As a group, the staff designed a professional development plan that included: 1) training from the model developer, 2) training for the reading program that the school adopted prior to undertaking comprehensive school reform, and 3) meeting together in cadres, by grade level, and as a whole staff on a regular basis to discuss their instruction and student learning.

Ms. Martinez has been working to develop a professional learning community, which she sees as the most important piece of a school's professional development program. She often leaves articles for her

teachers to read related to developing professional learning communities and the benefits of such communities. Ms. Martinez also instituted a change in the school schedule by lengthening the school day slightly, so that the students could be released by noon every other Friday to allow the staff time to meet together on those afternoons.

The Sierra Vista teachers have learned to take advantage of those Fridays for discussions about their practice and the reform program, but they have also learned to make the most out of other professional development sessions. For example, when the consultants from the model developer's office come for sessions, the teachers are ready. They prepare a list of questions and concerns beforehand and fax it to the consultants to



make certain those concerns are addressed.

Ms. Martinez also serves as a model to her staff with regard to professional development, evident from the following comments.

A fifth-grade teacher remarked, "Suzanne is very knowledgeable about research in education and what is happening on the cutting edge. She is constantly sharing professional books and articles with staff members. She also stays on top of professional development sessions available to us and encourages us to attend those that fit into the professional development plan we now have." A first-grade teacher noted, "Our principal is into research big time. She knows the latest trends and shares them with us."

Yet another teacher commented, "Ms. Martinez not only encourages teachers to attend professional development activities, she attends along with us."

Student achievement is continuously monitored at Sierra Vista. Grade-level teams examine different data weekly to reflect on progress and determine where instruction needs adjustment. The teams study state standardized test scores, attendance records, discipline referrals, classroom test scores, informal reading skills assessments that are conducted periodically, and student work for which they have created assessment rubrics.

"Once we got used to looking at data carefully and discussing it, we all became very sensitive to changes in student performance, and we wanted parents to stay abreast of their children's learning as well," explains a third-grade teacher. Teachers began using every available bulletin board to display their students work so that parents would have a chance to see what their children were learning. They also began sending home information regarding class progress and activities every two weeks and began encouraging parents to become involved in the school's reading program by keeping a reading log with their children. After involving the parents more, teachers report they have begun receiving more feedback

Staff members at Sierra Vista are very positive about their school, their colleagues, their students, and their principal.

from the parents. One says, “Parents are much more likely to stop by the classroom to touch base with me. Some of my students are very proud of their parents’ new interest in their work.”

At first some Sierra Vista teachers were uneasy about the focus on evaluating student work, test scores, and other data. Several said they felt threatened, thinking that such scrutiny would emphasize their weaknesses and make them appear to be inept teachers. “We soon got over that,” observes one staff member. “We learned how to look at the test scores and other data and think about what it actually means in the classroom and how we should use that information to change our teaching.”

Brian Hammond, one of the model developer consultants, says the staff requested more training on data analysis and evaluation than was initially offered by his office. “We spent two long sessions examining the types of data they are collecting and discussing how to use and analyze the data. Now almost any of the Sierra Vista teachers could present their own workshop on data analysis.”

Ms. Martinez routinely visits several classrooms every day, even if it is only for a minute or two. She uses the visits as opportunities to observe teacher and student progress and she will often catch up with a teacher at lunch to provide feedback or make suggestions. Several teachers have said this was unnerving at first, and some took her suggestions personally. However, over time, her visits have become accepted and appreciated by students and teachers. A recent college grad on the staff says that she is still nervous when Ms. Martinez makes one of her suggestions, but reports, “I have learned to take her criticisms as something supportive. She genuinely wants to help us improve our teaching skills and she is just as

quick to praise as to give a suggestion for improvement.”

The teachers at Sierra Vista have not been “bowled over” by improved test scores since beginning their reform program, but have seen some improvement in test scores overall. And, there have been significant gains in reading scores among certain groups of students. This is not surprising as reading was the faculty’s initial focus, even before becoming involved with comprehensive school reform. At the beginning of year two of their school reform implementation, the Sierra Vista teachers began focusing on math the same way they focused on reading at first. They seem confident there will be a sizeable increase in math scores this year.

Staff members at Sierra Vista are very positive about their school, their colleagues, their students, and their principal. They have a strong sense of camaraderie—they all feel responsible for the success of the students and look forward to continuing to improve each school year.

CASE STUDY

Sunrise Elementary

Sunrise Elementary is located in the Springfield School District, a large district that has been under pressure in recent years to improve student achievement. As noted in the last issue of *Connections*, new leadership in the district office is not supportive of Sunrise’s school reform efforts. The new superintendent has been urging principals to encourage their teachers to teach to the state-standardized test. He advocates after-school tutoring and pullout programs as ways to help students who need additional instruction. The latter directly conflicts with the school’s CSR program philosophy of inclusion. He has also initiated a new math program in the district, which the teachers are not happy about.

Principal Carolyn Smith came to Sunrise from Hilltop, a high-performing, large elementary school where she had been the assistant principal at that school for eight years. Joseph Higgs, the longtime principal at Hilltop, held traditional views of how schools should be run, what type of

professional development should be offered, and how teachers should work together. Having spent most of her administrative career with Principal Higgs, Ms. Smith adopted many of his attitudes and strategies.

Ms. Smith was hired as principal with the hope that she would bring to Sunrise some of the ideas and programs that helped make Hilltop successful. She knew the problems at Sunrise would be challenging. However, her experiences at Hilltop did not prepare her for the sometimes chaotic atmosphere that existed at Sunrise and in the Springfield district.

Discipline was a problem at Sunrise that needed to be dealt with immediately. Ms. Smith attributed part of this problem to some of the staff members who had lowered their expectations of students as the community evolved from a middle-class community to one where poverty was commonplace. Many of the teachers assumed that these families did not care as much about education, and Ms. Smith knew that not much would change at the school until teacher attitudes changed and new alliances were formed with parents. She personally cared a great deal about the students and worked closely with the counselor to help make certain the basic needs of the students and their families were met. While important, this took up a great deal of Ms. Smith’s time.

Although grade-level teams at Sunrise were supposed to meet twice monthly, Ms. Smith did not require the teams to report back to the entire group during monthly staff meetings. Instead, she met from time to time with the grade-level team leaders for updates. The effectiveness of the grade-level teams and the amount each team discussed instruction and student learning varied by grade level. As often happened at whole staff

Sunrise was actually making some progress before they decided to abandon their reform program. It was very difficult for them to see the advances they had made.

meetings, many of the grade-level teams spent time discussing routines, school procedures, and the mechanics of special events such as field trips or schoolwide assemblies. Although student achievement or implementation of new practices related to the school reform program were occasionally discussed, typically grade-level team meetings had little impact on the school's reform efforts. Two exceptions were the second and third grade teams, which functioned more effectively than the other teams—they spent time discussing practice and student learning. Not surprisingly, these teachers felt more positive about their teaching and student progress than did other teachers at the school.

One of the second-grade teachers commented on how her team worked. "We provide a lot of support to each other. If I am having a problem with a particular student or parent, then I bring it up at our team meeting. We discuss the situation, and I usually come away with a couple of solutions. We share lesson plans a lot and often spend some time talking about what our model consultant has taught us."

This is quite different from the sentiments of a fourth-grade teacher who says, "If our instruction is not working for a child, it is up to us as individuals to change our instruction, although sometimes I am not certain what I need to do to make it better."

Ms. Smith, accustomed to expecting teacher independence, asked teachers to draft their own professional development plans in addition to the training provided by the model developer. Ms. Smith says she did this because "new teachers have very different needs than veteran teachers." She also believes each individual has a better grasp of what he or she needs in the way of training.

The teachers wanted and needed additional technology training but felt the district would be unsupportive of such requests. The new superintendent established district professional development sessions related to the new math program and required staff members from each school to attend. These have been usually scheduled after school or to begin during the last hour of the school day. A Sunrise teacher sighed, "It is really hard to

learn new things at the end of the day—the majority of district staff development is after school and most of us are just worn out."

Ms. Smith has encouraged teachers to begin keeping their own portfolios, a practice that she and Mr. Higgs had undertaken successfully at Hilltop. "I realize my teachers need to start thinking more positively about their work, and use something besides standardized scores as a measure of progress," says Ms. Smith. She made a presentation at one of the staff meetings and discussed the purpose of the portfolios, showing her own as an example. Several staff members have enjoyed beginning to develop their portfolios, but others just see it as "one more" requirement to meet.

Sunrise staff members rely on the trainers from the model developer's office to provide them with feedback on their progress. They spend very little time assessing their progress when the model trainers are not visiting but seem to spend a lot of time complaining to each other how much trouble the reform program is. Although the consultants have encouraged Sunrise staff to observe each other and provide feedback when implementing new techniques, very few Sunrise teachers report observing other classrooms. Typical comments included that of a long-time Sunrise teacher: "Most of my free time is spent planning and grading. I don't really feel that I need to sit in other classrooms."

According to Brian Hammond, the consultant from the model developer's office, "Sunrise was actually making some progress before they decided to abandon their reform program. It was very difficult for them to see the advances they had made. Our office felt they showed promise, even though some aspects of the model were not being implemented as they should have been." He points to increased student enthusiasm and improved student behavior in some classes as progress.

After two years of implementing the reform program, stagnant test scores disheartened the Sunrise staff. One teacher angrily said, "Many of us have changed the way we teach; we've all changed how we keep class records because of the computers; we've



"Young people only go through school once. They deserve—some people would even say they have the right—to learn to read and do mathematics and learn social studies and see themselves as competent learners."

*Dennis Sparks, executive director,
National Staff Development Council*

changed principals; we've changed superintendents. There is constant pressure on us, and it is too much."

Because Sunrise staff members are so disheartened over the progress of implementing their comprehensive school reform program, most of the staff felt relieved to give up on the program, although some teachers thought they had changed their instruction and activities for the better.

Investing in Professional Development

Professional Development for School Reform and Change

Teacher development is the flip side of the coin of school change and improvement,” declares Shirley Hord, Program Manager for SEDL’s Strategies for Increasing School Success. Likewise, Willis Hawley and Linda Valli note, “One of the most persistent findings from research on school improvement is, in fact, the symbiotic relationship between professional development and school improvement efforts . . . The two processes are so tightly woven that their effects are almost impossible to disentangle.”¹

Schools and teachers often cannot produce the kind of behaviors or skills reform demands because they haven’t learned how.

Hord explains, “Schools and teachers often cannot produce the kind of behaviors or skills reform demands because they haven’t learned how. If you keep on doing what you’ve been doing, you’re going to keep getting the same results. And what we’re aiming for in school reform is better results. That behooves us to take on new programs, new skills, new knowledge, and new behaviors that will produce better results. The goal of professional development is to help people to change their knowledge, their insights, their skills, their behaviors, and their attitudes.”

Professional development that accomplishes this level of change goes beyond the one-shot workshops that have been commonplace and largely ineffective. Hawley and Valli maintain greater investments have not been made in professional development because

“its presumed beneficiaries, teachers, have little positive to say about its usefulness.”²

In the past decade, however, many researchers, advocacy groups, and organizations, including the American Federation of Teachers and the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), have come to recognize the importance of professional development in school improvement, causing the emergence of a new paradigm of professional development. The new paradigm reflects professional development as a shared process that

- fosters sustained collaboration among staff members and includes teachers as active participants,
- emphasizes issues related to the individual school and relies on internal as well as external expertise,
- increases theoretical understanding, and
- recognizes that change is a long-term process.³

The new paradigm, in other words, fosters school improvement and the development of professional learning communities in schools. This type of ongoing, collaborative professional development supports focused, integrated work over a long period of time and differs from traditional professional development that “relies almost exclusively on outside experts and materials without integrating these resources into existing systems of peer collaboration.”⁴

Creating this kind of professional development program not only requires teachers and principals to think about professional development in a different way; it requires commitment from everyone involved—the district,



Dennis Sparks, NSDC executive director

the principal, and the teachers. It requires a commitment of time and resources beyond what districts and schools are accustomed to allocating for professional

development. In fact, the NSDC recommends that 25 percent of teachers’ time be dedicated to learning and collaborative work with other teachers.⁵ This type of professional development also requires teachers to become committed to teamwork and collaboration, even though such collaboration may initially seem clumsy and awkward, even unproductive.⁶

NSDC Executive Director Dennis Sparks says, “If change is going to occur in the classroom between teachers and students, a massive amount of support is required, in the school and in the classroom. Teachers need coaching—usually a great deal of coaching to change what are some fairly complex skills. They need to be part of ongoing groups, like action research groups and study groups that meet on a regular basis.”⁷

Sparks suggests that teachers meet at least weekly to discuss data on student achievement, their students’ work, lesson plans, and focus on things they think will make the school better.

Likewise, Mike Schmoker, author of *Results: The Key to Continuous*

¹ Hawley, Willis D., and Linda Valli (1999). “The Essentials of Effective Professional Development: A New Consensus” in *Teaching as the Learning Profession: Handbook of Policy and Practice*, edited by Linda Darling-Hammond and Gary Sykes. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, p. 129.

² Ibid, p. 134.

³ Ibid, p. 134-144. See also Linda Darling-Hammond and Milbrey W. McLaughlin (1995), “Policies that Support Professional Development in an Era of Reform,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 1995, 597-604.

⁴ King, M. Bruce and Fred M. Newmann (April 2000). “Will Teacher Learning Advance School Goals?” *Phi Delta Kappan*, p. 576-580. See also Appendix F, “National Staff Development Council Standards for Staff Development” in David Collins (1997). *Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development: How to Assess Your Needs and Get What you Want*. Greensboro, NC: SERVE, p. 181-183.

⁵ SEDL interview with Dennis Sparks, executive director NSDC, February 2, 2000.

⁶ Schmoker, Mike (1999). *Results: The Key to Continuous Improvement, 2nd Edition*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, p. 15.

⁷ SEDL interview with Dennis Sparks, February 2, 2000.

⁸ Schmoker, Mike *Results*, p. 18.

⁹ Newmann, Fred M. and Gary C. Wehlage (1995). *Successful School Restructuring*. Madison, Wisconsin: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, p. 31.

Improvement advises: “Successful teams need to have such focused interaction on a fairly regular basis—probably once a month for each student learning goal that we set. Experience has taught us that any less than six strategically scheduled opportunities per year can kill momentum and severely jeopardize the chances of improvement.”⁸

The teamwork and collaboration in this type of ongoing professional development helps to create a culture of collective responsibility and helps teachers develop a sense of ownership in the school reform program. Collective responsibility develops as the teachers work toward the clear, shared goals established when planning for the comprehensive school reform program—all teachers begin to share responsibility for all students’ achievement; these goals are reinforced in all classrooms by all teachers. Collective responsibility leads to increased teacher efficacy, according to Fred Newmann and Gary Wehlage, authors of *Successful School Restructuring*. They note, “A culture of collective responsibility puts more peer pressure and accountability on staff who may not have carried their fair share, but it can also ease the burden on teachers, who have worked hard in isolation but who felt unable to help some students.”⁹

Teachers need coaching—usually a great deal of coaching to change what are some fairly complex skills. They need to be part of ongoing groups, like action research groups and study groups that meet on a regular basis.

Creating a Professional Development Program at Your School

Like the school reform process, creating a professional development program that supports collaboration and improved teaching and learning is not an easy or quick process. Table 1

Table 1. Overview of the Planning Process

Component	Primary Decisions	Sources of Information
Content	What knowledge, skills, strategies, values, and beliefs need to be studied?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of student work or performance • Teacher self-assessment • School or district programs or practices • National standards for staff development developed by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC)
Objectives	What will participants know and be able to do as a result of their participation in professional development activities? What is the desired impact on student learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of student work or performance • Professional growth goal setting • School or district programs or practices • National standards for staff development developed by NSDC
Activities	What will participants do to achieve the identified objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five forms of professional development: 1) individually guided, 2) observation/assessment, 3) involvement in a development/improvement process, 4) training, and 5) inquiry • National standards for staff development developed by NSDC
Evaluation	How will the results of the professional development activities be measured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in knowledge, beliefs, values, skills or practices of participants • Changes in student achievement, behavior, attitudes or other characteristics

Source: Adapted from David Collins (1998). *Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development: How to Assess Your Needs and Get What You Want*. Greensboro, NC: SERVE.

can provide some guidance for the planning process. By assessing the teachers’ and students’ needs, the school can develop a good mix of activities for professional development. The mix may include training provided by the national reform model a school has adopted and/or training from an external assistance provider. It

should also rely on internal resources that may take the form of coaching, providing feedback, a “critical friends” group, teacher inquiry, or regularly assessing student work. The important consideration is that the professional development plan should lead to improved student learning and move the school toward reaching its vision.

Investing in Professional Development,
continued from page 7

Dennis Sparks and Susan Loucks-Horsley defined five models of staff development for teachers. The models reflect assumptions about how teachers learn and may be useful to schools and districts when developing professional development plans and activities (see Table 2).

How Did Sierra Vista and Sunrise Measure Up?

In many ways Sierra Vista is ideal regarding professional development. There is a continually growing respect among teachers, students, and families that helps to create a community of support for learning and change. Ms. Martinez wisely recognized the

advantages of the school's becoming a learning community and did everything possible to encourage her staff to work together to maintain a focus on student learning and their own learning.

"We've started looking at professional development in a different way—every conversation can end up being a learning experience," reports a Sierra Vista teacher.

Table 2. Five Models of Professional Development

Individually Guided Staff Development

Learning is designed by the teacher. He or she sets goals and plans activities to help reach that goal. These activities may range from discussions with colleagues, experimenting with new instructional strategies, attending a workshop session, or reading journal articles or other professional publications. The model assumes teachers learn most efficiently when they initiate and plan their own learning activities.

Observation/Assessment

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley say that although observation/assessment "can be a powerful staff development model," many teachers receive little or no feedback with regard to their classroom performance. An assumption of this model is that classroom observation and assessment can provide the teacher with data to reflect upon and analyze, to help him or her improve instruction and ultimately student learning. Also, the colleague observing a teacher can benefit from the process by "watching a colleague, preparing the feedback, and discussing the common experience."

Involvement in a Development/Improvement Process

Teachers may be asked to become involved in developing curriculum, designing programs or engaging in school improvement programs much like the ones in which CSRD schools are involved. By working on relevant projects and problems, teachers acquire specific knowledge or skills through research, reading, discussion, and problem solving.

Training

Training or workshop sessions are conducted with a clear set of objectives or learner outcomes. The outcome will often be increased awareness about a topic or learning a new skill. One assumption of the training model is that there are behaviors and techniques that should be replicated by teachers and that teachers can learn behaviors and strategies not previously in their repertoire. What is often missing from training sessions is the opportunity to practice the behavior or skill being taught and follow up.

Inquiry

Inquiry may be individual or cooperative study by teachers, examining problems and issues related to their practice and reflecting on their practice. One assumption of inquiry as a model is that teachers will build knowledge and develop understanding as they formulate questions and collect data to answer their questions. Inquiry may be formal or informal and can occur in a variety of settings. Organizational support and technical assistance may be required in the inquiry process. Organizational support could include such structures as study groups or resources like materials and release time. Technical assistance could include training in research methodologies or data-gathering techniques.

We've started looking at professional development in a different way—every conversation can end up being a learning experience,” reports a Sierra Vista teacher.

Ms. Martinez set an excellent example for her staff through her own reading and professional development activities. By attending sessions along with her staff, she was not only able to help her staff implement what they learned in training sessions, but she was able to foresee some of the concerns that arose among staff members.

And Sierra Vista was a fortunate school, not just because of Ms. Martinez, but also because it had district support. The school was able to plan its own professional development activities and decide how the money the district allocates for such activities was spent.

At Sunrise, Ms. Smith was accustomed to allowing teachers to act independently. This extended to professional development as well. Though she recognized the need for the model developer's training to continue as it had before she arrived at Sunrise, she did not realize the importance of a coordinated effort for professional development to help the school reach the goals of its reform program. She herself admitted she was too overwhelmed with other problems to get the training *she* needed to ensure implementation of the comprehensive school reform program was effective.

Ms. Smith's approach to professional development best fits the individually guided staff development model, which assumes that “adults learn most efficiently when they initiate and plan their learning activities.”¹⁰ As a result of her approach, teachers tended to sign up for sessions that sounded fun or interesting to them, but many of these sessions did not address critical skills the teachers needed for the reform program or for working with the students who challenged their old

ways of teaching.

The principal's attempt to introduce teacher portfolios was a good one—the portfolios could serve as a springboard for teachers to discuss their practice. However, the resistance of some teachers to portfolios indicates the need for more discussion and information regarding the benefits of the portfolios. Also, the portfolios should have been connected to the school's CSR program in a meaningful way.

In addition to the individually planned staff development at Sunrise, the superintendent's mandatory district-wide sessions consumed some of the time that teachers could have used to work collaboratively, hold discussions centered around their instruction, or acquire the additional technology training they so wanted. Sunrise staff lacked sufficient common time for meeting and discussion where shared values, expectations and understandings could evolve, reinforcing the focus on the reform program. Although Ms. Smith kept up with grade-level team leaders, her inclination to be a more hands off leader helped reinforce teacher isolation and independence.

It is interesting that the two grade-level teams at Sunrise were functioning as small professional learning communities. This was due in large part to the grade-level team leaders. Here was another missed opportunity—Ms. Smith could have invited those grade-level teams to make presentations to the larger group regarding how they worked or had team members lead whole-group discussions, modeling how their grade-level teams functioned.

For Discussion or Reflection

- How can our shared vision guide us in creating a professional development program?
- What resources are available to guide us in the selection of professional development opportunities?

Getting the Most From Professional Development Sessions with External Providers



Sharron Havens

Sharron Havens, the assistant superintendent for instruction in Lonoke, Arkansas, where schools are involved in the CSR program, has advice for administrators planning to team

up with external providers for professional development.

- **The professional development training should be research based.**
“We like to have evidence of how successfully it has been implemented in other schools, especially in schools that are similar to ours,” says Havens.
- **It is important that the presenters—if they are not currently practicing educators—have been in the classroom recently.**
“Teachers want to see that the presenters really know how this is implemented at a classroom level,” reports Havens. “They’ll listen to research for a while from a college professor, but it needs to be backed up with some practical implementation.”
- **After a training session, find sites where the practices are being implemented successfully and allow teachers to visit those sites.**
- **Help teachers make connections between the professional development training and the way we will implement it in the classroom.**
Havens says, “One of my roles is to find research that can help the teachers better understand the particular issue. Sometimes just sitting around with teachers and talking about the topic will help them make the necessary connections.”

¹⁰Sparks, Dennis, and Susan Loucks-Horsley (1989). Five Models of Staff Development for Teachers. *Journal of Staff Development* 10(4), p. 42.

Monitoring and Checking Progress

Finding and Addressing Problems Increases Success in Implementing School Reform

Problems and challenges are inevitable when implementing a comprehensive school reform program, no matter how well a program is planned. That is why the federal CSRD program includes evaluation as one of the nine components. By monitoring and checking progress throughout the implementation process, we're able to identify problems, challenges and concerns, and address them quickly. Catching problems early ensures a smoother, more successful implementation and can result in an improved program. Monitoring and checking progress can also serve as a source of encouragement to teachers—they will be reminded that changes are being made, that the school is progressing toward its vision of comprehensive school reform.

Checking progress can be accomplished in a variety of ways—formal and informal; qualitative and quantitative. Dennis Sparks, executive director of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), explains how principals can incorporate different methods of monitoring and checking progress:

“Principals can check progress in a number of ways—some of them informal and some of them more formalized. They can be visible in the hallways and in the classrooms of the school by doing walk-throughs of classrooms or more extensive classroom visitations so that they have a sense of the challenges teachers face as they try to implement new strategies. They can be looking at student work with teachers to see if the quality of the work is changing as a result of the new approaches being used. They can look at data from across

classrooms—formalized data that may be in the form of standardized tests or attendance information, for example.”

He stresses, “Data are most useful when principals and teachers discuss it and make sense of it together. They should look at it as trend data so that they can go back several years and see what it used to be like and what it's like today. Schools that are most successful, I have found, are schools that have had some training in data analysis and working together around that data. Because very often it's quite difficult to understand what it's about and what it means. So some training and lots of discussion among teachers with the principal is necessary to make sense of what it means and what it indicates the school needs to work on next to realize its vision.”¹

Monitoring and checking progress can also serve as a source of encouragement to teachers—they will be reminded that changes are being made, that the school is progressing toward its vision of comprehensive school reform.

Like Sparks, Shirley Hord, SEDL program manager and researcher on school change, emphasizes the value of school leaders informally checking progress by consistently visiting classrooms and touching base with teachers. She says, “First of all, this lets teachers know that the administrators or leaders in the building are interested in what they are doing. And, second, it lets them know that this program they are trying to implement, the new work they are trying hard to do, is being appreciated and is a high priority for the school leadership.”²

More Formal Evaluations

Although Shirley Hord does not usually include formal evaluation as part of the strategy “Monitoring and Checking Progress,” we are going to include evaluation as part of our discussion here, as it is a critical component of CSRD that helps schools assess progress. Two kinds of evaluations are often referred to in discussions of comprehensive school reform—summative evaluations and formative evaluations. Many times schools think of evaluation only in terms of summative evaluation, which assesses overall project success and often incorporates state standards and benchmarks, standardized test scores, and statistics such as dropout rates and attendance rates. Summative evaluations tend to look at the degree to which the program has met specified goals and objectives. Formative or process evaluation is important too, in order to make mid-course adjustments as it focuses on ongoing project activities. With formative evaluation we check our progress toward expected outcomes by asking such questions as “What is working?” “What should be improved?” “How should it be changed?” Assessments such as surveys, interviews, observations, and checklists can be used to develop formative evaluations.³

SEDL vice-president and chief operating officer Joan Buttram refers to the formative evaluation as an early warning device. She explains the importance of having an evaluation plan in place early on: “You won't reach your end results if things that were supposed to happen along the way didn't happen. Uncovering problems as they arise and addressing the problems promptly can make or break your final results. The evaluation helps ensure that everything is being carried out as it should be.”

“All too often administrators feel they intuitively know what's going on in the CSRD program, but they can be wrong,” Buttram reports. “They often only talk to a certain group of people

¹ Interview with Dennis Sparks, February 2, 2000.

² Interview with Shirley Hord, January 10, 2000.

³ Collins, Patrick (ed). *Developing Your School's CSRD Evaluation Plan: An Awareness Workshop for Local Schools*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Development, 2000, p. 12-13.

⁴ Interview with Joan Buttram, June 23, 2000.



Jose Carrillo, principal of Martin Elementary School in Deming, NM, is an example of a visible principal. Carrillo often visits the classrooms and participates in class activities. Martin is one of the 21 CSRD awardee schools in New Mexico, and was one of the CSRD “step-ahead” schools that participated in the 1999 Improving America’s Schools conferences.

to get feedback or they only see a few parts of the program being implemented. A good evaluation plan can provide an overall view of how the program is being implemented.”⁴

Some of the reform model developers include implementation checks as part of the technical assistance provided to schools. Margarita Calderón, who works with Success For All (SFA) schools around the country, strongly encourages implementation checks as part of a school’s CSR program. She says SFA representatives visit every classroom at each SFA school three times a year, using the same observation instrument. She reports, “We invite the principal, assistant principal, and curriculum specialist to come with us into these classrooms. After each visit, we debrief them so that we’re teaching them how to observe, what to observe, and how to organize the feedback that they will later give to the teacher. Implementation visits with feedback are probably the strongest element in ensuring that there is quality of implementation and that [the reform program] is impacting student academic achievement.”

Planning for evaluation should be included as part of the planning process for your CSR program. Evaluation questions and objectives should be developed for the different

components of the school’s comprehensive school reform program. For example, consider the professional development component. To assess this component of the program, a school might ask itself several questions, such as “Did all of the teachers participate in necessary training sessions?” “Were the people who conducted the sessions well trained and effective?” “How have the professional development activities created change in classroom practices and teacher effectiveness?” “Do teachers need additional training or coaching?”

Uncovering problems as they arise and addressing the problems promptly can make or break your final results.

To answer this first question, a school could look at the attendance records for the professional development. If not all teachers participated, but should have, then further probing may be needed to determine why they did not.

One way to answer the last two questions may be to observe teachers in action in their classrooms. Another way is to survey teachers. Sharron

Resources for Planning Your Evaluation

Two products developed by regional education laboratories can help you plan an evaluation for your CSRD program:

- **Evaluating for Success** by Louis F. Cicchinelli and Zoe Barley, published by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), can be found online at <http://www.mcrel.org/csrd/evalguide.pdf> This is a good basic guide for developing the evaluation component of your CSRD program. It includes eight worksheets that can be used in planning an evaluation and provides examples of completed worksheets.

- **Developing Your School’s CSRD Evaluation Plan: An Awareness Workshop for Local Schools**, published by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL), may be ordered by calling Janice Wright at 1-800-547-6339. The overall goal of the Evaluation Awareness Workshop is to familiarize school practitioners with the benefits of a strong local evaluation of CSRD. The training package includes a sample agenda, scripts, overhead transparencies, participant handouts, and sources of further information.

Monitoring and Checking Progress, *continued from page 11*

Havens, assistant superintendent for instruction in Lonoke, Arkansas, explains how her district does this either on paper or in small group discussions:

“We often have teachers fill out a survey maybe a month or two after the professional development and ask them, ‘How much are you implementing the ideas you heard in the workshop? To what degree are you implementing these? Have you implemented any of the ideas?’ Kind of a checklist where they can indicate the level at which they feel like they have implemented what they learned in training.”

The district also queries teachers about why they are not implementing the strategies or skills the session focused on. Havens continues, “We ask them, ‘Do you need some additional training? What can we do to help you better understand the professional development or understand why you’re not implementing what you’ve heard?’”

Havens reports that it is often difficult to look at student achievement data and determine whether a professional development session has impacted instruction and learning because of the number of interventions or strategies that are being implemented at one time in a particular achievement area. “For example,” says Havens, “the current goal with the school reform initiative in the elementary school is to focus on reading and that includes lots of different kinds of professional development related to reading. But it also includes some changes in reading practices. It includes changes in the focus of the school, making sure that kids are aware that reading is important. Even the signage in the school lets people know that we’re focusing on reading. So it’s very difficult to know that the reason for the increase in student achievement is related to a particular professional development session.”⁵

External Assistance May Be Needed

Schools may feel overwhelmed trying to determine how to focus the evaluation and how to integrate the collection of evaluation data into existing procedures. Buttram stresses the importance of getting help from an outside consultant if needed. “Someone from the outside can give you a fresh perspective. Sometimes school staff are more willing to talk to an outside person who doesn’t have a stake in the program—they are more likely to be honest about what is or isn’t happening.”⁶

CSRD schools in large districts may have an advantage when it comes time to develop an evaluation as most large districts have evaluators on staff. For schools in small districts where such help isn’t available, Buttram suggests turning to area universities and colleges or to a regional education laboratory. When seeking help from universities, check with the departments of education, social services, and/or psychology. These are the departments that tend to have faculty with evaluation experience. Schools may find professors who are interested consulting or who may be willing to supervise graduate students to assist in designing and conducting evaluations.

A final part of the evaluation is to put the findings into use. This means creating opportunities to discuss findings with staff and decide if changes should be made. It means celebrating successes and learning from mistakes. It also means sharing findings with stakeholders outside of the school building—the superintendent, the school board, parents, and community. Keeping

stakeholders informed and interested can bolster the support for your CSR program.

How Did Sierra Vista and Sunrise Measure Up?

One reason Sierra Vista’s reform program was thriving was that Ms. Martinez regularly led her staff in looking at student data. Sierra Vista teachers seemed to enjoy studying data and determining what progress their students were making. Ms. Martinez also demonstrated how important she thinks the teachers’ work was by visiting the classrooms and following up with teachers regarding their instruction. She served as a valuable support system for her staff and set the tone for the entire school reform program.

On the other hand, Ms. Smith had not begun to promote the study of student data on a regular basis nor did Sunrise teachers have organized discussions about the informal indicators of school change, such as student attitudes or how certain students were struggling. Due to this lack of reflection, the staff not only missed out on seeing what adjustments should be made to their program, but also missed what may have been valuable indicators of progress in their school reform program—progress that the consultant from the model developer’s office saw easily. Ms. Smith had the right idea trying to implement teacher portfolios, as she realized the need for her staff members to view their progress through a lens other than that of standardized test scores. However, as mentioned previously, the staff needed additional training to make the portfolio process successful.

For Discussion or Reflection

- How do we obtain effective tools and processes to use in assessing our progress?
- What types of data do we need to help us assess our progress?
- What are the possible explanations contributing to our findings? How can we use this information to improve our program?

⁵ Interview with Sharron Havens, January 21, 2000.

⁶ Interview with Sharron Havens, January 21, 2000.

Continuing to Give Assistance

Continuing to give assistance is strongly linked with the fifth strategy we discussed. “Assessing and assisting really go together like a hand in a glove,” says Shirley Hord, SEDL program manager and school change researcher. But Hord says continuing to give assistance is a strategy that is often overlooked when implementing school change and reform.

She explains, “There is an assumption that if we have a professional development session and we provide teachers and administrators with half a day or a day or maybe even two to three days of training, that will be the end of it and now they will be well

Other benefits of becoming a PLC include the moral support that is available to community members and the feeling of trust that encourages teachers to take risks and practice new skills and strategies.

equipped to implement this new program in a high-quality way. And what we’ve learned out of research over and over again is that this is patently not true. What has to happen is coupling the checking progress with the giving of assistance.”¹

Through evaluation and assessment, then, school leaders can determine what the staff—including the administrative team—needs to meet school improvement goals. Hord likens this to what a teacher does with his or her students: “In a classroom, teachers will be helping students to learn new skills and monitoring their progress. Then they will give assistance to particular kids who need that. The same thing needs to happen with adults learning, so that after you have checked

progress, you will know who needs what kinds of assistance. There’s the high probability that there are two or three people, or small groups of people who need the same kind of help.”

Follow-up assistance to teachers engaged in comprehensive school reform may take many forms. Hord emphasizes that it is up to the school leaders to look at the change process from different points of view because teachers learn differently and change at different rates; they need different kinds of support and assistance to change. For example, changing teacher attitudes may be much more complex than providing assistance to a teacher who needs additional help improving his instruction on a particular topic in one subject.

Not surprisingly, one of the most effective methods of follow-up and continuous assistance results from the collaboration and collegiality that develop as a school becomes a professional learning community (PLC). These communities provide teachers with some of the best opportunities both for learning and extending their learning. For example, through discussion with colleagues, teachers are apt to reflect seriously about their practice including new skills or strategies and the implementation of a comprehensive school reform program. Other benefits of becoming a PLC include the moral support that is available to community members and the feeling of trust that encourages teachers to take risks and practice new skills and strategies.²

Another effective method of additional assistance is coaching, where a peer, the principal, or an outside consultant provides additional instruction and support.

Dennis Sparks, executive director for the National Staff Development Council, is a strong advocate for coaching. “Very often teachers will discover that there might be some knowledge gap that they have in terms of the content they’re teaching, or that

maybe they’re using a new strategy 90 percent effectively, but there’s a part that they have omitted,” Sparks explains. “The coach in a classroom can provide the kind of fine-tuning where a slight change in [teacher] effort can make a big difference in student learning.”³

Peer coaching is actually beneficial to both the person being coached and the person who is acting as coach. David Collins explains in *Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development*, “As you watch a colleague’s teaching performance, you mentally rehearse the model that was presented during training and compare it to what is being demonstrated in your partner’s classroom. The act of analysis that is part of observing increases your understanding of the practices being demonstrated. When you observe a colleague teaching, you are learning from the teaching

“We forget to congratulate people. Even the most reluctant of our teachers or parents have contributed in some way and so we need to acknowledge them, and reward them.”

*Wendell Brown
Principal, Alderson Jr. High*

performance of your partner.”⁴

Additional assistance may also take the form of going to visit other schools where a certain practice or program is in place, or in obtaining outside materials such as reading or videos.

“Having the opportunity to visit other teachers on their grade level, implementing the same program can be a very, very powerful kind of assistance to teachers,” reports Hord. “Sometimes there are videotapes of these programs and so an individual

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¹ Interview with Shirley Hord, January 10, 2000.

² Collins, David. *Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development* (2nd edition). Greensboro, N.C.: SERVE, 1999, p. 97-107.

³ Interview with Dennis Sparks, February 2, 2000.

⁴ Collins. *Achieving Your Vision*, p. 95. See also Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (1988). *Student Achievement Through Staff Development* (2nd edition). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Continuing to Give Assistance

continued from page 13

teacher or small group of teachers may get together and view a tape and discuss it and talk about what they've learned from the videotape," she adds. "One could even invite a teacher from another school who is having a successful implementation of a program or model to come talk with teachers at the local school and to share what they're doing and what's been successful."⁵

School leaders can also serve as cheerleaders, encouraging staff to keep trying to implement the reforms, to keep their energy up, and most importantly, to stay focused on the vision. Therefore celebrating successes could be another form of continuing assistance

"It's something we seldom do—celebrating even the smallest of accomplishments," observes Hord. "Whether it's a school change process or just in our own daily living interacting with friends. Change can be very anxiety producing for many people. And so if those people who are anxious do even the slightest bit to learn new skills and try them out, then a great deal of applause—either public or private—is helpful," says Hord. "Celebrating progress is much too often overlooked and it is very effective when people are given that applause or that affirmation of what they've been doing."⁶

Margarita Calderón, a researcher with the John Hopkins Center for Research on Students Placed at Risk, and Wendell Brown, a principal at Alderson Junior High in Lubbock, Texas, agree the power of recognition as a motivational tool is sometimes overlooked.

Calderón says, "We forget to congratulate people. Even the most reluctant of our teachers or parents have contributed in some way and so we need to acknowledge them, and reward them—give them additional incentive so they'll want to keep on trying for the following year. Nobody

complains about celebrations. There's never too much or too many."⁷

Brown, whose school is one of the CSRD awardees, says he is a firm believer in complimenting teachers individually, face to face, to let them know that he appreciates all of their efforts. "We want to acknowledge very, very clearly what staff members have done, their growth, and the effort they've put in. We announce that in our faculty meetings. We talk, we say good things about individual teachers as well as groups of teachers who have pulled together to attack a particular issue. So everything that we do is built around acknowledging the teachers," he reports. "But," Brown adds, "we do it in writing, too, because it's concrete and tangible. As teachers look at building portfolios about the successes they've had, it's very important for them to be able to validate that when they're looking at their professional growth."⁸

Brown says that observing and acknowledging professional growth goes hand in hand with being able to redirect staff as well, because it lets staff know that as a leader "you're observing and recognizing and encouraging growth and development. That redirection is also part of growing and caring, and you know and they know that it's not personal, it is part of the professional growth process."

How Did Sierra Vista and Sunrise Measure Up?

Once again, Principal Suzanne Martinez did a great job in the area of continuing to provide assistance. Ms. Martinez was a visible principal, checking progress and following up on her observations. Teachers seemed to appreciate her candor, whether she was giving positive reinforcement or constructive feedback. She was able to provide her staff the right balance of praise and redirection about which Principal Wendell Brown spoke. Sierra Vista also celebrated successes with

parents, helping to create support for the school and its reform program within the greater community.

The Sunrise staff, by and large, did not receive assistance from each other, as shown by the fact that they spent little time discussing instruction and visiting each other's classroom. Although the technical assistance provided by the national model encouraged observing others in the classroom and providing feedback, the staff may have needed additional training to feel comfortable actually doing so. For a variety of reasons, Carolyn Smith was not a highly visible principle at the school; therefore little coaching was available from her. She did not take it upon herself to try and obtain additional assistance for her staff related to incorporating technology, although many wanted such training.

Because the school did not celebrate its successes much or spend time reflecting on what went right in the implementation process, there wasn't the motivation for teachers to continue the comprehensive school reform program, even though Mr. Hammond, the consultant, was able to see progress. Instead, there was a sort of downward spiral, with teachers spending time talking among themselves about what was wrong with the reform plan. As was true with the other five strategies, if Ms. Smith had received more support from the district and had more training in the area of school change and reform, she may have been better able to encourage her teachers and provide the example and direction they needed.

For Discussion or Reflection

- What types of assistance will we need to maintain the momentum of our reform efforts?
- What are good forums for celebration and acknowledgment of success? What kinds of success should be celebrated?

⁵ Interview with Shirley Hord, January 10, 2000.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Interview with Margarita Calderón, January 21, 2000.

⁸ Interview with Wendell Brown, January 21, 2000.

Suggestions for Sierra Vista and Sunrise

Sierra Vista's success and Sunrise's challenges would not surprise Margarita Calderón, a researcher with Johns Hopkins University's Center for Research on Students Placed at Risk. Calderón, who works with CSRD schools across the country notes, "The teachers may have materials, they may have workshops, they may have a lot of things related to reform in place. But it's really the messages from the principal, it's the messages from the central administration that motivate teachers." Calderón believes, "The onus is on the principals. . . . They set the tone. They model for their teachers. It is their responsibility to set the structures in motion and to keep them in motion."¹ Though the principal carries much of the responsibility for the success of a CSR program, his or hers is not the only leadership that is necessary—shared leadership is crucial, as we discussed in the last issue of *Connections*.

Calderón says that if shared leadership is *not* strong, "When a principal leaves, most of the teachers are devastated and we see an innovation going by the wayside." The change of principals at Sunrise, in the absence of strong shared leadership, left the school unable to continue effective implementation of its CSR program. The same thing occurs even when a school or district is doing well but has too much riding on one person. The authors of *Leadership for School Improvement* write, "Those who have been involved in reform have noted the void—and subsequent lack of progress—that can appear when the "hero-leader" leaves. . . . Although people in the organization may work collaboratively on an initiative, they may nonetheless continue to look to a single figure for the vision or energy to guide and sustain an initiative or reform."²

In light of the importance of shared leadership, Principal Suzanne Martinez



Wendell Brown, principal at Alderson Junior High School, is a firm believer in letting teachers know that he appreciates all of their efforts.

should continue encouraging teachers to assume strong leadership roles in the school reform program. Additionally, since progress has been fairly slow, Sierra Vista teachers may need to intensify efforts to reach their goals for student achievement. This may mean the staff should look more closely to determine what changes in instruction are needed and which students need additional instruction.

For Sunrise, it might be helpful if the district hired an assistant principal or instructional guide to help Principal Carolyn Smith wade through the administrative tasks necessary to run a school of more than 600 students and to help provide needed instructional leadership for the teachers.

The school should also work to rebuild its relationship with the community, making an effort to reach out to parents and get them involved. Wendell Brown, the principal of Alderson Junior High in Lubbock, Texas, believes comprehensive school reform can bring about powerful changes in a community. He says, "Comprehensive school reform is not

just about the campus—it is about impacting the lives of our children for a long time and changing the face of the community so that the entire community connects to learning in an exponential way. For an educator there is no greater gift."³

And even though Sunrise has discontinued its CSR program, beginning to examine student data would provide valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses in instruction and curriculum and perhaps encourage teachers to make instructional and attitudinal changes for the sake of their students.

"Young people only go through school once," says Dennis Sparks, executive director of the National Staff Development Council. "They deserve—some people would even say they have the right—to learn to read and do mathematics and learn social studies and see themselves as competent learners. They're only going to make that journey once. And it's our obligation, I believe, as educators to make certain that that's the very best experience that those kids can have."⁴

¹ Interview with Margarita Calderón, January 31, 2000.

² *Leadership for School Improvement* (2000). Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, p. 10. On-line at <http://www.mcrel.org/products/school-improve/leadership.asp>.

³ SEDL interview with Wendell Brown, January 21, 2000.

⁴ SEDL interview with Dennis Sparks, February 2, 2000.

New CSRD Competitions

For the five states in SEDL's region, the following chart provides information about the upcoming CSRD competitions and funding for new awards. For more information on CSRD, including model descriptions, contact information, links to other CSRD Websites, CSRD program updates, and other information, visit SEDL's CSRD Website at www.sedl.org/csrd. The US Department of Education also has a Website listing all 50 states' CSRD allocations for 1998-2000, at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/csrdfy2000final.html>.

State	RFA (Date Available & Date Due)	Money Flows to Schools	FY '00 Funding Available for Schools (Approximate)	Potential Number of Schools (Approximate)	Special Considerations
Arkansas	9/1/00 Letter of intent to apply due 9/12/00 RFA available 9/13/00 Grant workshop 11/15/00 RFA due	1/10/2001 Money goes to schools	\$685,000	14 (\$50,000 per grant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets low-achieving schools • Schools submit letter of intent • Technical assistance provided prior to application
Louisiana	8/00 Letter of intent to apply due 1/01 RFA available 2/28/01 RFA due	7/2001 Money goes to schools	\$1,408,000	28 (\$50,000 per grant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets low-achieving schools • Connecting CSRD application process with Title I School Improvement and other state funds • Schools submit letter of intent • Technical assistance required prior to application • Nine components of CSRD tied to statewide school improvement planning process
New Mexico	8/00 RFA available 12/01 RFA due	3/2001 Money goes to schools	\$565,000	11 (\$50,000 per grant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets low-achieving schools • Connecting CSRD application process with Title I School Improvement and other state funds • Technical assistance provided prior to application
Oklahoma	6/30/00 RFA available 8/15/00 RFA due	9/1/2000 Money goes to schools	\$930,000	18 (\$50,000 per grant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets low-achieving schools • Technical assistance provided prior to application • On-site visits to determine "readiness" • School improvement plan required
Texas	9/00 RFA available 12/00 RFA due	7/1/2001 Money goes to schools	Estimated \$24,000,000 (6,275,982 for FY '00 plus estimated \$18,000,000 for FY '01)	320 (\$50,000 – \$100,000 per grant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds for FY '00 and FY '01 combined • Any school may apply—low-performing schools given priority points • Funds awarded by individual school scores, not district composite scores

Please note: Information on chart is subject to change.

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