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ABSTRACT

As teachers assume a variety of leadership functions traditionally held by the principal and as they become much more of a self-managing professional work group, it is important to examine the implications of these changes for the leadership behavior of professionals credentialed as building principals. This paper presents data from indepth structured interviews with 10 principals (5 elementary and 5 secondary) from two school districts (Centremont and Hillview, Pennsylvania). The school principals' leadership roles in teacher-empowered schools are identified and described. Findings define empowerment, address changes in the traditional role of the building principal, and discuss principal leadership behaviors that support empowered teachers. The experiences with teacher empowerment in these two districts suggest that a clear definition of empowerment is less important than is a commitment to systematically engage teachers in decisions that affect their professional worklives in schools. (7 references) (SI)

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**EMPOWERED TEACHERS-EMPOWERED PRINCIPALS:  
PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS**

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# EMPOWERED TEACHERS-EMPOWERED PRINCIPALS: PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

## INTRODUCTION

Within the current climate of educational reform, the empowerment of classroom teachers has been described in the literature as a means to reinvigorate a stagnant public enterprise and to bring about significant changes in the worklives of teachers and principals and in the lives of the students they serve. With changes in the traditional role of the classroom teacher in schools, it is likely there will be concomitant changes in the leadership roles the school principal assumes. As teachers assume a variety of leadership functions traditionally held by the principal and as they become much more of a self-managing professional work group, it is important to examine the implications of these changes for the leadership behavior of professionals credentialed as building principals.

This paper is a presentation of data from in-depth structured interviews with 10 principals from two school districts. The principals and the teachers with whom they work are currently involved in rethinking, restructuring and redefining professional worklife and leadership responsibilities in their schools. Three general questions guided this research. How do these building administrators define teacher empowerment? How do the professional practices of teachers and principals differ in these schools from those in more traditionally governed and organized schools? If teachers are moving toward more self-governance in their professional work responsibilities, to what degree are these principals evincing group-centered /self-management leader behaviors versus more traditional managerial leadership behaviors?

## BACKGROUND

Though the term empowerment has high visibility and currency in contemporary professional literature, there is no one accepted definition of empowerment among educators and policymakers. The concept of a systematic process by which teachers would assume greater responsibility in their professional worklife is rooted in a large body of research in the areas of participatory decisionmaking, professional development, job enrichment, as well as in the areas of professional autonomy and teacher efficacy. Erlandson and Bifano (1987) summarize by stating, "The considerable amount of research and informed opinion on shared decisionmaking in schools builds a strong case that a more professional, autonomous role for teachers could enhance the effectiveness of the public schools" (p.33).

Any discussion of empowerment must of necessity include an understanding of power itself. Adapting Yukl's (1989) definition of power, power was defined in this interview study as one professional educator's potential influence over the attitudes and behaviors of one or more

targeted educational stakeholders, including administrators, other teachers, students and parents. Thus, teacher empowerment would encompass readjustments of power relationships in schools upward (influence over superordinates), downward (influence over subordinates) and lateral (influence over parallel position colleagues). Readjustments in three major sources of power position power, grounded in formal position authority or control over resources and rewards, sanctions, information and/or work design and the physical environment, personal power, based on individual expertise, loyalty and/or charisma, and political power, related to control over decision processes, forming coalitions, co-opting individuals or groups, and/or institutionalizing power bases) occur as principals and teachers redefine their traditional roles in schools. Thus, as principals and teachers operationalize empowerment in their schools, the readjustments and understandings of power relationships are likely to change the ways each sees his/her role in schools. As teachers begin to redefine and then enforce professional standards of practice, "The traditional roles of both management and labor are significantly reshaped" (Wise and Darling-Hammond, 1985).

Research in the psychology of group process and self-management also help to frame the current investigation. In his research on decision groups, Bradford (1976) describes two contrasting profiles of the leader and the groups they lead. The more traditional role of leaders is one in which the leader would have "the initiative and power to direct, drive, instruct and control those who follow" (p. 8). In "group-centered" leadership, the role of the formal leader, in contrast, is characterized by greater sensitivity to group-maintenance functions and to the feelings and needs of individuals in the group(s). Responsibility for group effectiveness rests with the group not one individual seen as its leader. Thus, both task and group maintenance functions are shared among group members. Yukl (1989) summarizing Bradford's findings describes six group-centered leader behaviors. The leader:

- 1.) views the group as a collective entity while he/she listens attentively and observes nonverbal cues to be aware of member needs, feelings, interactions, and conflict;
- 2.) serves as a consultant, advisor, teacher and facilitator, not as a director or manager;
- 3.) models appropriate leadership behaviors and encourages members to learn to perform these behaviors themselves;
- 4.) establishes and nurtures a climate of approval for expression of feelings as well as ideas;
- 5.) encourages the group to deal with any maintenance needs and process problems, within the context of the regular group meetings; and
- 6.) relinquishes control to the group and allows the group to make the final choice in all appropriate kinds of decisions (pp. 243-244).

Though outside the arena of public education, the research of Manz and Sims (1987) on leadership for self-managing work teams has important implications for the empowerment of teachers in schools. In this line of inquiry the researchers describe the leader as an external colleague ("coordinator") to the work group because he/she holds a distinct role from that of other members of the particular work group. These authors posit that if these work groups are indeed self-managing, then there is a need to identify just what the formal leader/manager's role is with relationship to the group and to the accomplishment of key tasks. These investigators again contrast the behaviors of traditional leaders of groups to those behaviors of leaders of self-managing work groups. Their study suggests that there is a legitimate role for external leaders (coordinators) of self-managing work teams but that this leadership role differs from both traditional and participative leader behaviors. The most important leader behaviors to nurture and facilitate a work team's own self-management and task effectiveness were: *self-observation* (monitoring and being aware of group task performance); *self-evaluation of performance*; and *self-reinforcement* (the leader encourages the work group to be self-reinforcing of high group performance). Though less important, Manz and Sims list three additional self-management leader behaviors. The leader encourages work group *self-criticism* (being critical of low group performance), *self-goal-setting* (setting performance goals), and *rehearsal* (going over an activity and thinking it through before action is taken).

Hackman (1986) states that leaders of self-managing work teams have two primary responsibilities, *monitoring* and *taking action* to facilitate favorable performance conditions for group maintenance and task completion. Specifically, Hackman describes how leaders apply the functions of monitoring and action across five enabling conditions: direction, structure, context, coaching, and resources.

Based on these understandings of power and leadership roles with self-managing work groups, the primary purpose of this paper is to identify and describe the school principal's leadership roles in teacher empowered schools. Several questions guided the research and analysis. How do these principals define empowerment in their schools? What distinctions do principals make in contrasting their leadership and teacher empowerment to more traditionally organized schools? From the principals' perspectives, to what degree are sources of power (position, personal, and political) within these schools reallocated among teachers and the principals? If these sources of power have in fact been renegotiated in a school, how does this readjustment of power relationships change the traditional leadership role of the school principal? In what ways do the behaviors of school principals reflect group-centered and self-managing work team leader behaviors?

## METHOD

To address the major research questions, the researcher conducted structured interviews with 10 school principals, 5 elementary and 5 secondary. The data from these interviews focused on these building administrators' perceptions of empowerment and their understanding of how empowerment of teachers in their schools affected their leadership roles. The principals and the schools in which they worked were identified by professional colleagues as educational settings in which wider applications of shared decisionmaking and greater professional autonomy was evidenced. Though these two school districts are by no means completely representative of the diversity of school district type and size in this large northeastern state, the interview data from these respondents do provide initial evidence on how empowerment is played out in the daily lives of teachers and principals respectively in a medium sized city district, Centremont, (8000 ADM) and a rural small town comprehensive district, Hillview, (2500 ADM).

The ten respondents included three female and two male elementary principals and five male secondary principals who had been in their current administrative positions from one to seven years. All of the principals had substantial teaching prior to becoming principals, however, the three female principals, averaging 15.3 years, doubled the males' classroom teaching experiences. Three of the respondents carried the title of assistant principals. Two of these assistants provided job descriptions and self-reports of major responsibilities which suggested they were co-principals who divided equally the role demands with the building principalship. The student enrollments in the buildings of the 10 principals ranged from 425 to 1010.

Interview responses were recorded on a structured interview instrument. After the interviews and at the end of each day, the researcher checked each response set for accuracy and comprehensiveness and transcribed the interview data and notes. In terms of processual immediacy, the investigator repeated (where necessary or appropriate) previously given responses to the principals as a transitional questioning strategy in the interview sequence and as a means of validating the accuracy of researcher recorded data.

## PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Defining empowerment

Though a clear definition of empowerment may not be readily apparent in the current literature on school reform, these principals could quickly describe what empowerment meant in their buildings. Empowerment here means: "Teachers are invited to participate in the way the school is managed." "This is a systematic way to improve the educational climate...and this is connected to our district's goals and priorities for the products of learning, work environment, and the relationships between people." "The idea is for teachers and administrators to share in the ownership on matters that affect us both. The focus is on daily worklife issues. It is in the sands of

daily operations where things happen." "The goal here is for teachers to have ownership in decisions in their worklife. To make the workplace a better life and to solve real problems." "To me shared governance is involving professional staff in things that are related to their job and that impact instruction and quality of the work place. I don't involve teachers in petty things. That doesn't make them feel professional."

The interviews revealed two distinct strategies for enlisting more fully the energies and ideas of all personnel in these two school districts. In Centremont, the superintendent in cooperation with the local teacher president, regional union representative and local industrial council leaders decided to adopt a structured model of problem finding and solving in which teams of teachers and administrators were trained by a third party consulting firm for work at building and district levels. Once these teams were trained, they trained others in the district in an ever expanding network of group problem solving "opportunity finding" units. The boundary lines were clear in terms of what problems or opportunities these teams could address. The board of education flatly rejected the words empowerment and shared governance. The "teams are dealing with technical issues and concerns that need resolution, not policies. This is not shared governance. We're not talking about policies."

In Hillview there was no formal model for empowerment or problem solving. Here teachers and principals were "invited" by the superintendent and the school board to empower one another and to become involved in curriculum review, staff development programming, and facilities planning and design. The superintendent and board initially provided resources for teachers to do a critical review of their K-12 curriculum. With money to pay substitutes for 15 teacher work days, 20 teachers were released "to write and think about curriculum. It was an expensive investment for the district." Building on the success of this model over the past five years, the district has continued to tap the expertise and energies of its professional staff to address specific building level problems, to develop, plan and implement professional development programs, and to provide input and make critical decisions in district-wide building projects and school renovations.

Empowerment was operationalized distinctly in each district as well as within each building. In neither district was the empowerment of teachers a top-down hierarchically imposed reality accomplished with "blitzkrieg" administrative strategies. As one high school principal noted, "I wouldn't come home from a conference with an idea and try to impose it. It wouldn't work here." Successful empowerment in each of these districts has been built upon the foundations of readiness, volunteerism, legitimacy, ownership, incrementalism, individual skill enhancement, and two critically important resources-- time and money.

One respondent noted, empowerment is "a process that evolves slowly. People have to be ready to participate. People need to have trust, collegiality. There is a need for a great deal of

readiness in a productive way rather than in a negative way. Involvement can backfire if you're not careful. We have been permitted to seek our own comfort level in shared governance." After years of administrator dependency and of not being asked for their involvement or their expertise in many school decisions, it is not surprising that all teachers are not involved or convinced that the "invitation" to become empowered is in fact a sincere one and not just another contemporary, fleeting buzzword. As an elementary principal states, "Wanting teachers to make decisions doesn't mean they're ready. It's a slow process to teach teachers to make decisions." The notion of incrementalism in empowerment is an important one. One respondent noted, "Teachers, they're just feeling their way into it. There is a certain amount of hesitancy. You could almost see teachers saying, 'You mean we can actually do these things.'" Another principal stated, "Like I asked teachers, 'When would you like to have faculty meetings?' Choosing the time, day, etc. They were aghast! Things like deciding if children could go outside. I just passed out our guidelines and asked them to decide. They had no strategies, techniques for making decisions." As confidence grows and experiences in decisionmaking add to repertoire of professional skills, more teachers volunteer and see the benefits of their involvement.

Though the principals encouraged and worked closely with their staffs to become involved in decisionmaking, participation and the invitation to greater empowerment was based on teacher readiness and volunteerism. All staff in these schools were clearly not ready to assume a wide range of decisionmaking. As one respondent stated, "Everybody has a contribution to make and these contributions differ at different times in their careers." However, these principals did not just want a few leader-teachers. As one principal stated, "I don't want to just bring 6-10 up, I want to bring everybody up. It doesn't do any good to just improve professionalism of 6-8 when you have 60 on the staff."

Given the opportunity to decide and make a difference in issues that are important to them, teachers do want to be involved in decisionmaking. In response to a question about which areas of decisionmaking teachers most want to be involved in, the principals cited curriculum issues (both inside and outside the classroom), building management and use of facilities, student discipline issues, and staff development. After identifying and dealing with concerns in these areas, teachers build on their successes in terms of group process skills and outcomes.

Legitimacy and ownership are equally important to empowerment. "An example of professional participation is in the curriculum process. Teachers were used to gather data on evaluation, on what we're doing and changes that are needed, to read the literature, make visits to other schools and programs. That's where we began and modeled shared decision making. We began to build trust and a feeling that it was legitimate." A key criterion for legitimacy is that involvement is a meaningful use of teachers' time and expertise. Legitimate empowerment does not mean teachers will choose to become involved in every aspect of school affairs. Clearly

teachers have preferences. One principal stated, "I think some think they could make contributions in any area." However, "Teachers don't want to be bothered with the nuts and bolts decisions of running the building. They'd burn out." Another respondent added, "Teachers choose things day to day that affect learners and that they're interested in. They are very positive. Teachers through the quality circles believe the time invested is time well spent. They can take something away from it. It's not just another meeting." An elementary principal summarized the benefits of teacher involvement in decisionmaking in the school. It, "Gives teachers ownership in their work day and work place. I'd be foolish not to want input from people I work with daily. I'm always open to suggestions and creative criticism. People feel more worthwhile, feel needed and wanted it makes the workplace a better place."

As these principals assessed the benefits and possibilities of greater professional empowerment in their schools, they cited repeatedly the importance of money and time. Clearly the infusion of dollars into a curriculum review process and into training programs for problem solving teams helped to provide the financial support necessary to initiate and subsequently realize the goals in each district respectively. As one high school principal stated, "Teachers come up with so many ideas to implement that it would have costed \$5 million! We try to implement what we can."

Given the current structure of the teacher's workday, it is not surprising that time for planning, interacting, and carrying out program efforts are greatly constrained by daily time constraints. One elementary principal stated, "If (empowerment) fails it will be because of a lack of time. I want it to succeed but time is lacking." Buying time in the teacher's workday or during the summer translates into significant budget allocations. In Centremont another problem during the school year, is that with fewer substitute teachers available in their communities, it is nearly impossible to provide adequate blocks of time during the school day without negatively affecting the instructional program.

The press of time was also reflected in these principals' descriptions of the demands and requirements for realizing empowerment in their schools. Pressed for adequate time, with recognition of the amount of time needed to deal with many complex issues, and not wanting to abandon their teaching duties, some teachers are becoming fatigued while others in these schools are making choices as to which tasks they want to devote their time. Finally, there is the need for patience to wait for results in the empowerment process itself and its by-products.

#### **Changes In the traditional role of the building principal**

Based on a definition of power as the potential influence of one individual over the attitudes and behaviors of another, it is important to examine how teacher empowerment in these buildings has affected the role of the principal. Using Yuki's (1989) three categories of sources of power, *position*, *personal*, and *political*, to what degree is there evidence of readjustments in the

power relationships and sources of power in the daily worklives of teachers and principals in these schools? Changes in the sources of power and power relationships among teachers and principals may not be immediately apparent in a visit to these schools. No radical changes in formal position titles and structures yet exist. The principal is still located in the main office, the school day is still the traditional one, and teachers and students are in their classrooms. Nevertheless, important changes are evident in the ways these educational professionals work together.

The position power of a traditional building principal has been based on his/her ability to exert control over critical components in the work environment such as resources, rewards, sanctions, information, the design of routine work, and the physical environment itself. Typically the principal could exert maximum influence over these elements and their impact upon others in the school because he/she was "the boss." The self-reports of these principals suggest that control over many of these components is being shared among the professional staff. The degree to which teachers have assumed control over particular aspects in their professional work is idiosyncratic and limited by fiscal realities in these two districts. In terms of resources, teachers at Hillview have complete control over their staff development monies. They also determine the need for, time and day for faculty meetings. During an extensive building and renovation projects across the district, teachers assumed significant roles in the assessment, planning and allocation of physical spaces for the new school and the remodeled ones. In the Centremont control over resources was more constrained and limited to within school special projects such as a Mathathon, a Community Day and teacher raised monies to celebrate birthdays, weddings, and retirements. Perhaps the greatest amount of control came through the teachers' control over instructional resources. Teachers made decisions as to instruction, daily decisions on activities and time allocations. "They really have broad latitude in decision making as long as they don't harm kids." At Hillview, teachers at the high school control the placement and scheduling of students.

Important to the process of gaining control over resources and rewards, the principals indicated that teachers are still in transition. Teachers want recognition and support for their decisions from their principals. "We're in transition in professional development. Now they're seeking approval from the administrators." However, as teachers assume greater responsibility and encourage and empower one another, they are beginning to rely more on themselves and less on their principals. "Teachers don't run in here for every little thing. This building operates on its own." Another principal added, "With any kind of a problem, they feel comfortable in making those decisions themselves."

To facilitate and nurture the sharing of control over decision processes and their outcomes it is important that a non-threatening and supportive environment exists. As one assistant principal indicated, "The principal created an atmosphere to do things here. There are

no consequences for making mistakes, in trying new things." Yet problems do arise as teachers assume control over a variety of decisions in their worklives. "Occasionally, a teacher's decision may negatively affect another staff member. We're trying to get people to tolerate these types of mistakes. We need to be careful not to create negativism. When things/outcomes aren't what they expected. We need to be sophisticated and careful."

Finally, control over information is an important source of power for any role incumbent. In these schools teachers "read the literature and the research." In many areas of curriculum and instruction, such as control over the selection of textbooks and other materials, the assignment and grouping of children, and in assessing the professional development needs of their teacher colleagues, principals deferred to the expertise of their teachers. As one respondent indicated, this blurs the lines traditional lines of authority in the school and at times creates a problem of having to explain to others outside the school that the principal is not omnipotent, omnipresent, nor omniscient. "For example, I might get a call from outside. A parent wants to know what's going on. I'll say I need to talk with the teachers about what they're doing. They think 'why the hell don't you know what's going on in your school?'"

Readjustments to personal power are also evident in these schools. Sources of personal power emanate from individual expertise, personal loyalty and charisma. As one principal noted, "Teachers here ....have a mindset to empower themselves." As teachers share in decisionmaking that affects their students and their own worklives they gain confidence in their own abilities and the choices they make. "Teachers feel the effects of their efforts that they are making and that they are appreciated." As teachers work together to solve identified problems "There's greater respect for each other. They motivate each other." An elementary principal at Hillview described the end of one faculty meeting. "At the end of our last faculty meeting everyone applauded everyone else."

As discussed previously under position power, teachers do have a great deal of professional and subject matter expertise. These principals defer to this expertise so long as it is not harmful to children and within the bounds of district policies. In Hillview, the principals no longer are the intermediaries between the superintendent and the school board. When curricular programs are the subject of board deliberation, special activities need to be presented, or commendations are given for program successes, teachers are there to do the presentations and to receive the praise. "Principals are not middle men for communicating activities." Faculty meetings at Hillview are also occasions for celebrating the individual successes of teachers, such as completing a graduate degree program or receiving outside recognition for their work.

Finally, one of the most concrete examples of personal professional empowerment is reflected in this principal's assessment of growth and maturity among her faculty. As teachers begin to redefine the K-6 curriculum and how they will use the district curriculum guide, "They see

the curriculum guide less a 'The Bible' and see themselves more able to make those decisions about what's appropriate for their kids." The control and monitoring is not over the individual teacher and how closely he or she is alligned with the curriculum guide. The concern is for desired student outcomes. With outcomes as measures of accountability, the teachers feel freer to make pedagogical-curricular decisions that meet their students' needs and are appropriate in the context in which they work .

In terms of political power, teachers and principals have exerted a great deal of influence over localized building level decisions. Despite histories of highly centralized budgeting, planning and evaluating functions at the district level, these schools maintained control over critical decision processes in curriculum implementation. Given this traditional base of power, the Hillview district used a long-range curriculum review process to initiate greater involvement of teachers in shared decisionmaking in the district. "That's where we began and modeled shared decisionmaking. We began to build trust and a feeling that it was legitimate." From this model grew district-wide committees for textbook and instructional materials selection, district and building level professional development program planning and implementation teams. As teachers assumed leadership in these areas, they were asked to lead in other areas. As their skills for group process and consensus building matured, teachers in three schools assumed control of faculty meetings. The principals became resource people and facilitators to the faculty. As one respondent stated, "Once teachers get the ball rolling with positive and energetic people, critics are ignored or addressed by positive leaders in the teacher group. Teachers go to teachers on resolving problems."

In Centremont the problem solving team network has become the unit of control for teachers in building level and district decision processes within the tightly controlled parameters of what the central administration defines as allowable issues. However, within these boundaries there is great freedom to identify, rank and resolve important worklife and professional concerns. As the language used by these teams suggests,(opportunity finding rather than problem finding) the work of the teams is outcome oriented and positive. The creative energies and ideas of teacher teams are employed to resolve important issues not simply to provide a list of grievances. Along with empowerment comes "Ownership in some decisionmaking and with ownership comes commitment."

#### **Principal leadership behaviors which support empowered teachers**

How have these readjustments in the sources of power within these schools affected the role the building principal? Yukl (1989) summarizing Bradford's research (1976) provides a useful analytical framework for assessing changes in what principals do in schools where teachers are sharing in decisionmaking and leadership functions. In contrast to the more traditional hierarchical

role definition, the group-centered leader works in a setting in which responsibility and control are shared by the group. Thus the leader's role as one in which he/she:

- 1.) views the group as a collective entity while he/she listens attentively and observes nonverbal cues to be aware of member needs, feelings, interactions, and conflict.
- 2.) serves as a consultant, advisor, teacher and facilitator, not as a director or manager.
- 3.) models appropriate leadership behaviors and encourages members to learn to perform these behaviors themselves.
- 4.) establishes and nurtures a climate of approval for expression of feelings as well as ideas.
- 5.) encourages the group to deal with any maintenance needs and process problems, within the context of the regular group meetings.
- 6.) relinquishes control to the group and allows the group to make the final choice in all appropriate kinds of decisions (Yuki, 1989, pp. 243-244).

To what degree do the principals' responses indicate that their leadership role reflect these group-centered leader behaviors?

Given the source of these interview data, it is important to recognize that corroborating data from teachers within these schools would strengthen the assertions about actual changes in these 10 principals' behaviors in their leadership role. With this limitation acknowledged, I will review the respondents' insights into how their individual role has changed and how they perceive those changes within the context of teacher empowerment. The data reveal that each principal, to varying degrees, exercises each of Bradford's prescriptive group-centered leader behaviors in their work.

Of the six group-centered leadership behaviors, listening and attending to the teacher needs, feelings, interactions and conflicts was the most frequently cited. Teachers expect their principals to listen, be supportive, and provide feedback on their initiatives. Since the empowerment experiences of these teachers and principals is still in its early stages, three years in Centremont and 5 years in Hillview, there is a continual need for reassurance and support as teachers initiate and carry out their decisions. As one principal noted, "They want to bounce their ideas off of us. There is a continual need to reassure them that their ideas, plans, even when questioned and challenged, are valued. Maybe they want support without questions. I don't really know."

In many cases there is some reluctance on the teacher's part to assume control for final decisions in certain areas. These principals noted that readiness for such responsibility was imperative. In fact some teachers "Still expect me to be in charge of everything, every discussion." Weaning professional staff from habits of principalship dependency is a conscious

agenda for these school leaders. "There are teachers who would rather be told what to do. There are a few unhappy teachers because they are uncomfortable with empowerment." At times this requires principals to remain silent, delegate the choices to others, or simply be absent from decisionmaking sessions.

Relinquishing control over decisions is liberating for the principals but it is not risk free nor is it easy. As one middle school principal stated, "Initially that was the most frightening thing for me as a principal. It was a growth process for me. They're smarter than I thought they were or that I trusted they would be." Relinquishing control over decision areas is risky because at times, "they're bound to make decisions that you wouldn't make yourself." Principals need to translate their need for control of people and their activities to control over desired outcomes. Referring to his post-observation conferences one elementary principal stated that, "The conference I have with teachers is a 50/50 dialogue. They're expected to contribute equally in terms of their perceptions and goals and outcomes of the class." With program initiatives sprouting up throughout the school, and with teachers assuming the leadership of committees, there is a feeling that the principal can not stay on top of everything that's going on in the school. "Initially everyone has a messianic complex that comes from a compulsion to do everything. One grows out of that because of necessity one can't do everything. One's success depends on the success of others. The only way to be successful is to help others be successful. I'm becoming more and more trusting of groups. Groups don't make the same mistakes individuals do."

With the notion of control being readjusted to reflect shared governance realities, these principals noted their role becoming one more aptly described as that of consultant, facilitator, and teacher of teachers, not the director or manager of everything going on under the school roof. In response to the question, Can you see ways in which your role as principal is changing because of greater involvement of teachers in your school's governance? these principals are seeing their role quite differently from the traditional principal-manager. As one principal stated, "I think initially I viewed things as 'we-they' not necessarily adversarial but differently. I'm not sure how much I've changed as a principal versus how much schools have changed. I'm much more process oriented than 6 years ago." Another adds, "The principal here is not the boss."

Coupled with this change in role is the importance of nurturing a climate of acceptance for diverse ideas and feelings from empowered teachers and the need to model leader behaviors for others to imitate in their own leadership activities in the school. When asked what were the three most important things they did as principals to encourage and nurture teacher empowerment, these ten principals responded that teachers expected them to listen, provide support and remain open to the ideas and feelings of their professional staffs. Teachers, "Expect me to be able to listen." In addition, teachers expect principals to: "Provide teachers with an environment that is supportive, friendly, open and sharing;" "Be open to suggestions;" "Be accepting of input

from committees and parents;" and be "Patient and trusting enough to let things happen." As one principal noted, "There is much more discussion about everything. Everything is subject to debate and discussion." Lastly, the climate of acceptance is further supported by this respondent's belief. "We need to let them make mistakes." Support is provided even when things that were tried did not turn out the way they were planned.

Modeling of particular behaviors by principals is also supportive of teacher empowerment. "Our superintendent has let us fail and screw things up. He models what he expects us to do." Another principal added, "My superintendent models these skills. We talk, we don't always agree. But he models, he listens. He does the stuff he expects of me." Each of these principals was convinced that through modeling of specific leadership behaviors they could pass on strategies and styles that would support teacher leadership in a variety of school settings. Teachers, "Expect me to model a leadership style that's effective." Another added that he encouraged and nurtured empowerment by "modeling and showing them that I'm going to work hard and in the best interest of kids." Modeling of tolerance for individual differences in problem solving and patience in realizing outcomes were also important. Finally, both Centremont and Hillview used the structures they had developed for group problem solving and for the curriculum review process respectively to demonstrate district commitment to teacher empowerment and to demonstrate group process and consensus building strategies.

The last group-centered leader behavior that was suggested in the data related to how the principal encouraged groups to deal with internal group maintenance and process problems. Certainly some of this came through the deliberate modeling of behaviors by these principals as they led groups in their schools. In more subtle ways these principals through active listening and feedback to various groups suggested strategies for addressing concerns, provided insights into complexities that may not have been understood as the problem or concern was identified, and encouraged groups to select problems that were realistic ones for resolving successfully. As one respondent put it, I try to "Plant seeds for the next opportunity." While wanting to be helpful it is still important to "Let others go through a growth process. That one kills me. It's hard for me. I want to direct them." At times, the teacher group had to confront group-process concerns on their own. Referring to an incident when the problem solving approach broke down an elementary principal described how she had been out of the building during this session. "When I asked them what happened, my informal counterpart, a strong person on the staff was a nemesis and had really discouraged the teachers in the session. I told them that they would have to deal with her. They did and they got back on track."

## CONCLUSION

The experiences with teacher empowerment in these two districts suggest that a clear definition of empowerment is less important than is a commitment to systematically engaging teachers in decisions that affect their professional worklives in schools. Though the definition may be ambiguous, the parameters for exercising empowerment clearly are guided by what serves the best interests of students and remains within the mission and policy statements of the district. These ten principals were less concerned about a definition of empowerment than they were dedicated "to share in the ownership on matters that affect" teachers, administrators, students and other educational stakeholders in the community.

Empowerment in these schools is in its early stages of development. These principals see empowerment more as an on-going process in professional work relationships and not an end state. As the process evolves and as teachers and principals participate in shared decisionmaking on mutually important issues, new possibilities, structures and strategies for implementing empowerment will present themselves. Readiness, legitimacy, ownership, and incrementalism characterize the development of empowerment in any school setting. Two key resources to support empowerment are time and money.

These interview data clearly suggest that readjustments to power relationships among principals and teachers have occurred in these schools. Changes in allocations of power based on formal position, personal attributes and political strategies have changed the working relationships of these teachers and principals. The changes in sources are not described by these principals in win-lose terms. Rather than being seen as a threat to the principals, these changes offer many more advantages for enhancing leadership in the school not threatening its foundations. As leadership responsibilities and control are shared among teachers and principals, the traditional role of the building principal is being redefined. In their descriptions of the evolution of the principalship, these respondents supported Bradford's prescriptions for leader behavior: careful attention to individual and group needs, emphasis on consulting and facilitating rather than directing and controlling, modeling and coaching appropriate leader behaviors, nurturing an accepting climate, encouraging teacher groups to be self-monitoring, and relinquishing control by allowing other to make final choices in appropriate kinds of decisions. Though defined somewhat differently, examples of group-centered behaviors from these data are supportive of Sims and Manz leader behaviors for leaders (coordinators) of self-managing work groups. Regardless of the descriptors used to categorize leader behavior, there is a move away from traditional manager-principal behaviors to a facilitator-coordinator leadership.

In a recent article in the *Kappan*, Roland Barth (1988) stated that, "Principals who are successful leaders are somehow able to enlist teachers in providing leadership in their schools." Each of these principals was able to enlist the energies and abilities of others to realize desired

goals. Given that each of these principals and his/her staff are in the early stages of shared governance, it is useful to think about how each is attempting to move toward shared leadership. Barth lists nine behavioral steps that principals can take to empower others for leadership. These steps include articulating a vision to staff, relinquishing control when appropriate, entrusting others with control and not withdrawing it, involving teachers in decisionmaking, assigning responsibilities wisely while accounting for individual differences in ability and commitment, attributing successes to teachers, sharing failures, believing in teachers, and admitting ignorance. The responses of these 10 principals provide ample evidence that they have indeed taken many of these behavioral steps, sometimes large steps in other cases small ones, but nevertheless positive movements along the road to teacher-principal empowered schools.

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