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ABSTRACT

Changes in the principal's role--from a manager to a facilitator--are integral to most recent restructuring efforts such as the accelerated schools process. Traditional ideas about the role of the principal appear inadequate to the challenge of restructuring now facing the schools. Some researchers in the field have described the principal's new role as a visionary one, in which his or her main task is to supply "transformational leadership." These characteristics are helpful in the accelerated-schools process. Accelerated schools involve school staff in building unity, making decisions, and utilizing students, parents, and the community to improve education. The study of four accelerated schools described in this paper used a case study research method involving interviews, observation, document reviews, and surveys to evaluate two questions: whether there was evidence of change in the role of the principal in each of the four schools; and what factors facilitated change in the role of principals. The schools are located in the South and Southwest and contain high percentages of low-income, minority students. All the schools had traditional top-down administrative structures before beginning the accelerated-schools process. Study of the schools identified five factors affected change in the principal's role: limited district-office involvement, intertwined teacher and administrator roles, curriculum and teaching changes, parental involvement, and technical assistance from a university. The study illustrated that principal leadership style is linked to school restructuring success and the principal's role is critical in the process. (Contains 31 references.) (JPT)

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School Restructuring:
A Study of the Role of the Principal
in Selected Accelerated Schools

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwest Educational
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Abstract

This paper examines change in the principal's role that occurred in four elementary schools involved in implementing the accelerated schools process. The analysis indicates that there was substantial variability among the schools in the extent of change in the role of the principal. The factors that appear to facilitate transitions in the principals' role include: 1) An authentic orientation toward teacher empowerment by the principal, and 2) an orientation of the school district toward site-based management.

Changes in the role of the principal, from a manager or instructional leader to a facilitator--a transformative, empowering leader--is integral to most recent school restructuring such as accelerated schools (Levin, 1987, 1988a, 1988b) models. Yet research that shows how the role of principal changes as part of the restructuring process has been quite limited.

This paper examines school restructuring and the role of the principal based on an examination of four accelerated schools. Three began the accelerated schools restructuring process in Fall, 1990; the fourth began in the Fall of 1989. The focus of the paper is on the factors that appear to facilitate transitions in the principal's role when a school takes on the formal philosophy and processes involved in becoming an accelerated school. The paper has four parts: 1) background on the role of principals and the accelerated schools process; 2) the research approach used in this study; 3) an analysis of the changes in the role of principals and the factors that influenced these changes in the four schools; and 4) conclusions and implications.

BACKGROUND

Public interest in school improvement intensified in the 1980s. As a result, teaching and schooling underwent a spate of examinations resulting in school reform movements that prioritized top-down decision making (Boyd, 1989; Dunlap & Goldman, 1991) and emphasized "instructional" leadership (Leithwood, 1992) on the part of the principal. The more recent

literature on school restructuring, however, suggests a substantially different role for principals. This section first summarizes the literature on the role of principals in school change; then considers the role of the principal imbedded in the accelerated schools literature; and finally, considers the compatibility between these developments as part of the theoretical perspective for the study.

The Principalship

Literature provides a panoply of definitions describing the traditional role of the principal. Several authors argue that the principal determines the organizational relationships within and about the school. Keedy (1990), Lipham and Daresh (1979), Lipham and Rankin(1981) and Austin (1979) state that this traditional image depicts the principal as both maker of initial decisions and decider of which decisions are to be shared with others in the school.

This traditional view of leadership appears inadequate for the challenge of school restructuring now facing schools. Leithwood (1992) defines the term, "instructional" leadership as a focus of the "...administrators' attention on 'first-order' changes--improving the technical, instructional activities of the school through the close monitoring of teachers' and students' classroom work" (p. 9). This definition of "instructional" leadership is similar to transactional leadership, which is generally defined as an exchange of services for various kinds of

rewards that the leader controls, at least in part (Burns, 1978; Leithwood, 1992). Mitchell and Tucker (1992) note, "Transactional leadership only works, unfortunately, when both leader and followers understand and agree about the important tasks to be performed" (p. 31). According to Bass (1987) and Sergiovanni (1990), transactional practices appear to be central in maintaining the organization--getting the day-to-day routines carried out. Yet as Leithwood (1992) emphasizes, "Such practices do not stimulate improvement" (p. 9).

Sarason (1990) maintains that the blame for the "predicable failure of education reform" rests, in large measure on existing power relationships in schools. Leithwood (1992) notes that "instructional" leadership is "...an idea that has served many schools well throughout the 1980s and the early 1990s. But...no longer appears to capture the heart of what school administration will have to become."

In the light of current restructuring initiatives designed to take schools into the 21st century, the traditional role of the principal needs to change to facilitator, keeper of the dream, or "transformational" leader (Bolman, Johnson, Murphy, & Weiss, 1991; Leithwood, 1992; Fullan, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1992; Levin, 1988). Leithwood (1992) states that, "...'transformational leadership' evokes a more appropriate range of practice; it ought to subsume instructional leadership as the dominant image of school administration" (p. 8). Roberts (1985) describes "transformational leadership" as,

The collective action that transforming leadership generates empowers those who participate in the process...transforming leadership is a leadership that facilitates the redefinition of a people's mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment, and the restructuring of their systems of goal accomplishment. (p. 1024)

Sashkin (1988) describes the new role of the principal as a visionary. Fullan (1992) concurs and notes that good principals do not create a vision independently and impose it on people; rather that effective principals develop a collaborative culture in which participants build vision together. Sergiovanni (1992) states that he has abandoned his earlier views about leadership and now believes that professionalism and leadership are contradictory (Brandt, 1992). He notes, "The more professionalism is emphasized, the less leadership is needed. The more leadership is emphasized, the less likely it is that professionalism will develop" (p. 42).

Thus, the traditional role of the principal appears to be changing relative to the substantial changes and school-wide reforms that are beginning to take place in schools. Recently, policy makers and analysts have begun to champion a new solution for revitalizing the schools. This solution utilizes a shift from the top-down concept of hierarchical arrangements and fixed division of labor to the bottom-up theory of schools-based, participatory management, and school-site empowerment.

Accelerated Schools

The accelerated schools process provides a methodology for such fundamental school restructuring. The Accelerated Schools process involves school staffs in building a unity of purpose, taking responsibility for decision-making and the consequences of those decisions, and building on the strengths of the students, parents, and community curriculum and instructional processes in the schools. The leadership style of the principal needs to either be or needs to become conducive to the role of facilitating this empowerment process. Thus, when a school undertakes the Accelerated Schools process, the role of the principal should change.

Accelerated Schools emphasize acceleration rather than remediation for all students regardless of any label/s previously attached to the students or the school. Developed by Henry M. Levin (1987) at Stanford University, the model provides a well defined set of principles that, in combination, would fundamentally change the operation of the school if they were implemented.

The concept of accelerated schools is based on three principles (Levin, 1988a). First, unity of purpose, "refers to the agreement among parents, teachers and students on a common set of goals for the school that will be the focal point for everyone's efforts" (p. 22). The second principle, empowerment, "refers to the ability of key participants to make important decisions at the school level and in the home to improve the

education of students" (p. 22-23). Third, building on strengths, "refers to utilizing all of the learning resources that students, parents, school staff, and communities can bring to the educational endeavor" (p. 23). In combination, these assumptions provide a basis for implementing a new form of school organization. Principals clearly have a role in this transformation process which has not been fully explored in the literature.

The accelerated schools process is a three-stage transition from a conventional school structure, to a new structure openly chosen by the school community. First, members of the school community (administrators, teachers, parents, and students), take stock of the school as it is currently structured and develop a vision of the school as it might be. Second, the school community assesses the gaps between the present conditions in the school and their vision of the school, and develops a set of priorities to guide the restructuring process. Finally, the school restructures into cadres, i.e. working groups with teachers, parents, students, and other members of the school community, that initiate inquiry processes aimed at addressing the priority areas.

The cadres form the basic working units in the restructuring process. Their work is coordinated by a steering committee. The Steering Committee is a group of members from the school community, usually composed of the administration, representatives from the cadres, one representative of each

department, and other key members as decided by the entire school. It is the task of the Steering Committee to make certain that the cadres are keeping true to the vision and following the steps of the inquiry process.

The Steering Committee is also the intermediate governing body of the school as all decisions concerning the school go to the Steering Committee. The Committee makes the decision to turn certain topics back to the cadres for further study and turn certain other topics to the School-As-A-Whole for final decision. The School-As-A-Whole (SAW) is composed of the stake holders in the school--the entire staff, representative students, parents, and local community members. The SAW is charged with the responsibility of making final decisions on matters affecting the entire school. Thus, the entire school community becomes empowered as they share the responsibility of governing the school with the principal, instead of the principal having the sole responsibility.

Focus of the Study

The new images of the role of principals as facilitators, etc. is highly compatible with the accelerated schools process. This study focuses on the change in the role of principals in schools that engaged in the accelerated schools process. It examines the change process in four accelerated schools. All four of the schools used in the study were into the restructuring process at the time of the site visits in Spring 1991. Three of the schools visited were nearing completion of their first year

of the process, and entering the inquiry (or implementation) stage. The fourth school was ending its second year and had one year experience with the new environment. The analysis of the four cases focuses on: 1) Whether there was evidence of change in the role of the principals in each of these four schools; and 2) what factors facilitated or inhibited change in the role of principals.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The case study research method was used for this study. Case study research involves an assortment of research methodologies, including interviews, direct observations, document reviews, archival records, participant observation, and surveys (Baldrige, 1971; St. John, 1981; Yin, 1984). The specific approaches used to collect and analyze information on the four schools is discussed below.

Data Sources

Institutional documents were collected and analyzed. Documents such as test scores, attendance records, parental involvement and attendance at meetings, memoranda, administrative documents, grant applications, vision statements, surveys, and brainstorming papers were utilized in the change process. These documents were also examined in the case study.

Interviews were conducted at each school site, including teachers, administrators (principals and assistant principals), and others (e.g. social workers and parents). The principal of each of the schools was consulted to identify the parents and

teachers to be interviewed. An attempt was made to talk to people who both supported and resisted the change process. An interview guide used for the study asked questions about: a) The status of each school before the implementation of the accelerated schools concept or change process; b) the status of the school at the time of the interviews; and c) the factors that facilitated or inhibited change in the schools. A total of 35 people were interviewed for the study.

The questions about the status of the school before the restructuring process and at the time of the site visit, as well as about factors that influence the change process. Questions about histories and current status of the school considered five dimensions: a) relations with the central office; b) the role of the principal; c) the role of teachers; d) the role of parents and the community; and e) pedagogical processes in the school. This paper focus on the role of the principals. However, changes in all of the factors have been analyzed (Davidson, 1992) and will be discussed, as they pertain to the topics of the paper.

Field notes were taken during the interviews and most of the interviews were taped. After each interview, a written record was made of each session, using a method recommended by Lofland and Lofland (1984). These records contained: a) Summaries and notes of what was said; b) recorded transcription of important responses, c) notes on methodology, and d) personal emotional experiences. Each taped interview was typed verbatim and the transcript was sent to the interviewee for review and

verification of facts. In the case of the few interviews that were not taped, due to technical difficulties, the transcript was typed from the field notes and sent to each interviewee for review and verification of facts.

Case studies were developed and analyzed for each of the schools (Davidson, 1992). The names of the schools and interviewees were changed in order to disguise the real identities. Names were disguised to assure openness. Disguising was also important because the analyses critically examine the extent of change in each school and the reasons why change occurred.

Analysis Methods

Two analysis methods were used. First, a continuum was developed to assess the extent of change in the role of principals. One side of the continuum (the left) represented the characteristics of the traditional mode of school organization: Top-down decisions with the principal as the authority figure. The other side of the continuum (the right) represented the extreme characteristics of the accelerated schools model: Bottom-up decisions with the principal as the facilitator. Each side of the continuum was further divided into "extreme" and "moderate," indicating degree of the characteristics on either end of the continuum. The middle quatrain of each continuum was considered neutral. For example, the extreme quatrain would assume virtually all the characteristics of the top-down mode, in the case of the left dimension; or the participatory mode, in the

case of the right dimension. The neutral category assumes a combination of relations. The distinction between the five quatrains assumes predominance of one form of relations or the other. Table 1 illustrates the continuum.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The assessment of the initial status of the schools, before the accelerated schools process, focuses on the role of the principal. Judgments were made about quatrain on the continuum based on the following criteria:

1. Did the principal pay more attention to rules and regulations than relationships?
2. Did the principal maintain a sense of control through the enforcement of rules and regulations, along with taking the total responsibility for pertinent information and decision making?
3. Was the principal an active listener and team participant?
4. Was the principal able to identify and cultivate talents among faculty and staff, work productively with parents and the community, and keep the school focused on goals they all agreed upon and understood?
5. Did the principal have the training and specific techniques to encourage cooperative group processes such as problem solving or goal setting?

6. Was the principal willing to assume the role of facilitator?

The criteria used to assess the place a school fell on each continuum was the same in all cases. The responses obtained in the interviews and the direct and participant observation were used to make judgments about placement. In order to assess the organizational structure of each school before the implementation of the accelerated schools process, judgments were made based on the responses of teachers that had been members of the faculty prior to the adoption of the process. The continuum was used to assess the extent of change in the role of principals. Interview results are presented to illustrate the judgments used to place schools on this continuum.

Second, analyses of other factors included in the full study (Davidson, 1992) are reexamined in these schools. The other four factors were analyzed using a similar methodology to the one developed for principals. The results of these other analyses are only discussed as they pertain to changes in the role of teachers.

ANALYSIS

This analysis focuses on change in the role of the principal in the four accelerated schools. The analysis is presented in four parts: Overview of the schools; the initial role of principal; the current role of the principal, focusing on the extent of change; and factors influencing change.

Overview

Each of the schools is located in an urban public school system in the South and Southwest sections of the United States. Two were located in the same large urban district in a southern state (Griswald and McBride Schools); one in a medium-sized urban district in the same Southern state (Forest School); and one in a suburban district adjacent to another large urban center in a Southwestern state (Cedarcrest School).

Two factors lead to the selection of Cedarcrest School as a model for the present study:

1. The motivation of the Principal and the teaching staff to execute the project based on their beliefs in the concepts of the project.

2. The successful implementation of the first year of the project.

The other three schools--Forest, Griswald, and McBride--were in the initial phase of implementing the accelerated schools concept. They were selected because the researchers had the opportunity to study them as part of the University of New Orleans Accelerated Schools Project.

Cedarcrest Elementary School is part of the Alamo Heights Independent School District in a large metropolitan city in the southwest section of the United States. The majority of the district is made up of middle to upper class families. Alamo Heights has a reputation of being a private school district for upper class, anglo children. Cedarcrest School is separated from

the other schools in this affluent district by a railroad track and a freeway, or in the words of the current Principal, "...a double barrier." At the time Cedarcrest was constructed, the neighborhood consisted of middle class homes with an enrollment of 99% white and 01% Hispanic.

The demographics of Cedarcrest changed when the large, tree covered area in front of the school was converted into a vast apartment complex thus increasing the number of school age children living in the Cedarcrest district. Due to age and deterioration, the apartments have become government-subsidized, low income housing. More than 90% of the students in these complexes come from Hispanic immigrant families. More than 91% of the students are on the free and reduced lunch and breakfast program at school. Spanish is the first language for most of the families living in the complexes and many students enter school speaking no English. The students were performing in the bottom 25th percentile on district administered standardized tests.

Allison Agnew became Principal of Cedarcrest Elementary School in the Fall of 1988 replacing Gail Benjamin. Ms. Benjamin had been at Cedarcrest for a number of years as she was the Assistant Principal before assuming the role of Principal. Allison Agnew became interested in the accelerated schools model after reading an article by Henry M. Levin. Ms. Agnew shared the information with the members of her teaching staff prior to the opening of the 1989-1990 school year. The teachers voted to implement the project in Fall 1989.

The student population of Cedarcrest for the 1990-1991 school was 989. The faculty consisted of 70 teachers, two Assistant Principals, and a Principal. The ethnic breakdown of the student body was 78% Hispanics, 11% whites, 5% blacks, 5% asians, and 0.1% others.

Forest Elementary School was built in 1955 in the architectural style of the period. A member of the Tanglewood Independent School District, Forest is located in a large metropolitan city in the southern region of the United States. The school community consists of single family residences, the majority with incomes below the poverty level. Ninety-eight percent of the student body participated in the free or reduced lunch program for the 1990-1991 school year. During the same school year, Forest had a population of 401 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade with a faculty of 20 teachers, a principal, a secretary, 13 ancillary teachers, eight aides, five cafeteria employees, and three janitorial workers. Racially, the school population consisted of all black students with the exception of 10 white children.

Marilyn Hasie became Principal of Forest Elementary School in 1983. Forest, like Cedarcrest, implemented the accelerated schools concept on its own initiative. A member of the Advisory Council of Forest School introduced the Council to the project through a brochure published by the Stanford University Accelerated Schools Project. On May 23, 1990, the Council voted to implement the accelerated schools concept at Forest. Two of

the Chapter 1 teachers assigned to Forest were instructed to write a grant to fund the project. The grant was funded and Forest began executing the project in the Fall of 1990. Thus, in the initial phase of implementing the accelerated schools process, Forest Elementary School was selected for the present study.

Griswald Elementary School and McBride Elementary School were selected by a Committee to participate in the accelerated school project. The Committee consisted of three professors from the College of Education's Leadership and Foundations Department at the University of New Orleans and members of a large urban public school system. These two schools began the initial phase in the Fall of 1990 and were also selected for the present study.

Dedication ceremonies were held on February 15, 1939, for the building that currently houses Griswald Elementary School. The school is located in the inner or metro section of a large metropolitan city in the southern part of the United States. The community consists of single family residences with incomes that fall in the low income bracket. The student population of Griswald, for the 1990-1991 school year, was 320 with a faculty of 24 teachers and a Principal. The ethnic background of the student population was 100% black. Grades pre-kindergarten through sixth are taught in the school. Griswald School has a history of longevity in the number of years an individual served as Principal. Dr. Ernest Carver served as Principal for 15 years. Both of the two principals preceding Dr. Carver held the

position for 20 years. In the Fall of 1989, William Brewer replaced Dr. Carver as Principal of Griswald School.

John P. McBride Elementary School, a member of the Lake View Independent School District, is situated on a 7.15 acre site in a suburban area of a large metropolitan city in the southern region of this country and opened its doors in 1959. The setting of the school provides for an unusual degree of quiet and privacy and is compatible with house designs in the area. Homes in the area are primarily privately-owned, single-family dwellings. For the 1990-1991 school year, the enrollment of McBride School was 406 in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth. Of these, 60% qualified for free lunch, 12% received reduced priced lunch, and 28% paid the full price for lunch. The ethnic composition of the student body was 99.09% black and .01% white. The faculty consisted of a Principal, a secretary, 15 regular classroom teachers, nine Special Education teachers, nine support personnel, six paraprofessionals, and nine custodial and lunchroom personnel. The administrative history of McBride School is brief in that until 1980, only two people served as Principal of the school. In the fall of that year, Ruth Oliver became the third Principal replacing Carolyn Burns who had held that position for 19 years.

The Initial State of the Schools

Two of the schools exhibited characteristics that justified placement in the extreme quattrain on the left side of the continuum--Cedarcrest and Forest. Both schools were dominated by

the authoritarian and autocratic leadership style of the principal.

Cedarcrest was controlled by the Principal, Gail Benjamin. All six of the teachers and the Assistant Principal who were at Cedarcrest during some or all of the years Ms. Benjamin served as Principal indicated that management was authoritarian. As one teacher explained, "...it [the school] was run primarily in a very traditional approach and basically all the decisions were made from the top down and passed on." Teachers stated that Ms. Benjamin "...went strictly by the book," "...made all the decisions," and "...played favorites." As Judy Jordan recalled, "It made the climate full of a lot of tension." The environment at Cedarcrest was intimidating and demoralizing for all segments of the school community due to the top-down approach utilized by the Principal. The teachers stated that Ms. Benjamin "...went strictly by the book....made all the decisions....[and] played favorites." Another teacher recalled, "It made the climate full of a lot of tension." The environment at Cedarcrest was intimidating and demoralizing for all segments of the school community due to the top-down approach utilized by the Principal.

Forest School also exhibited characteristics that earmarked them for the extreme quattrain on the left side of the continuum. The leadership style of the Principal, Marilyn Hasie, was domineering and controlling. As Penny Maloney remembered, "And it was pretty much what she said was the way it was going to be." Prior to Mrs. Hasie's appointment as Principal, Forest was

controlled by a small group of teachers and the secretary. When Marilyn Hasie arrived, the control of the school shifted from this small group to the Principal. Mrs. Hasie became the authority figure. Even though Mrs. Hasie assumed the leadership role, the influence of the small group of teachers did not diminish. Their role shifted from school leaders to school informers.

Of the seven teachers interviewed at Forest, five had been members of the faculty for a number of years. The consensus of these five interviewees was that control of the school emanated from the Principal but was influenced by a small group of the teachers with longevity on the Forest faculty. The teachers that were not members of the "in" group felt, and were, isolated. As a result, there was very little interaction among the faculty; creativity and self-esteem were at a low point.

Before the adoption of the accelerated schools process, the school community of Griswald School, like Cedarcrest and Forest, operated under the traditional, top-down leadership style of the Principal, Dr. Ernest Carver. The majority of the faculty at Forest and Cedarcrest were displeased with the authoritarian style of the Principal, but the teachers at Griswald were satisfied with the operation of the school under the leadership of the Principal. Due to the expressed satisfaction of the faculty, Griswald School was judged to match the features of the moderate quattrain on the left side of the continuum. Three of the teachers interviewed were members of the Griswald faculty

before the change process. All three interviewees stated that "...there were no major problems." Even though Dr. Carver, the Principal, ran the school in a top-down manner, Maria Andrieu remembered that, "We had good leadership under Dr. Carver." The school ran smoothly, the teachers recalled, because Dr. Carver handled the discipline problems and made the decisions.

The attempt on the part of the Principal to make a meaningful change in the structure of McBride School can be identified with the neutral quatrain on the continuum. When Ruth Oliver became Principal of McBride School, she inherited a school community accustomed to and conditioned by the authoritarian, top-down leadership style of her predecessor. All but one of the teachers interviewed at McBride had been on the faculty for ten or more years and agreed that both teachers and parents had little opportunity for decision making and/or input into school decisions. As Joy Ellis stated, "We [the teachers] were told what to do and we did it."

Mrs. Oliver had been Principal of McBride for nine years before the implementation of the accelerated schools model and had attempted during those years to change the organization of the school. Her endeavors fell short until some of the members of the faculty retired and were replaced by, in Ruth Oliver's words, "...younger and/or fresher people."

Status of School at the Time of the Site Visit

There was more variation in the role of the principals at the time of the site visit. Allison Agnew at Cedarcrest and

William Brewer at Griswald had served as principal of their respective school for one year before the implementation of the accelerated schools process. Marilyn Hasie had been Principal of Forest School for seven years and Ruth Oliver had been Principal of McBride for 10 years prior to the adoption of the accelerated schools process.

Cedarcrest, one of the schools with a new principal, had the most visible evidence of change. When Allison Agnew became Principal of Cedarcrest she arrived with a vision and the knowledge that empowerment and professionalization on the part of the school community would bring that vision to life. All of the teachers interviewed acknowledged that Ms. Agnew was the catalyst for the change that occurred at Cedarcrest. Judy Jordan expressed the attitude of the entire school community when she stated, "...she [Allison Agnew] was the one that brought it [the accelerated schools project] to us and showed us what to do and how to get there." The leadership style utilized by Allison Agnew correlates with the attributes of the extreme quatrain on the right side of the continuum.

There had also been a change in principals at Griswald but the leadership change was not as successful. Each of the teachers interviewed at Griswald School articulated that little headway had been made in implementing the accelerated schools process. The teachers agreed en masse that the reason for the slow progress was the leadership style of the Principal, William Brewer. Sharon Campbell, as ranking teacher, related the feeling

of the faculty when she remarked that, "...they [the teachers] feel that [the Principal] isn't supportive of anything that's done. They feel that he is very critical of things that are done." The attitude of the Principal and the resentment on the part of the faculty and staff match the characteristics in the extreme quattrain on the top-down side of the continuum.

There was also some evidence of change at McBride, one of the schools that retained the principal. The Principal, Marilyn Hasie, was not the catalyst for the change that occurred at Forest School; yet at the time of the site visit, Mrs. Hasie had begun to question some of her authoritarian traits. As Penny Maloney, noted, "And I see her [Mrs. Hasie] as more comfortable with her role. I've seen her more willing to take chances and to give faculty members the leeway to experiment. I think she's become much more open and available. And trusting of us."

Even though a softening had occurred in the autocratic leadership style of Marilyn Hasie, two problematic areas remained. First, the division in the faculty that existed before the adoption of the accelerated schools process still existed. During the interviews, several of the teachers stated that a group of four or five teachers still have the "ear" of the Principal.

The second problem, as the teachers explained, dealt with the Principal's lack of organizational skills that resulted in confusion and dissatisfaction on the part of faculty and staff. The teachers interviewed noted that meetings were changed or

called off at the last minute. The school calendar was not accurate. The time frame for faculty meetings was never followed. The limited progress toward a participatory leadership style on the part of the Principal coincides with the aspects of the moderate quatrain on the left side of the continuum.

Four of the five teachers interviewed at McBride related that a modification had occurred in the leadership style of the Principal, Ruth Oliver. The remarks of the teachers were summarized when Margaret Wheat stated that the staff was encouraged, "...to speak out. Come up with ideas. Really discuss whatever our problems are and try to come up with a solution." This shift on the part of Mrs. Oliver from decision maker to facilitator produced leadership qualities that correspond with the attributes in the moderate quatrain on the right side of the continuum.

Table 2 depicts the change in the role of the principals from before the accelerated schools process (bracketed "1") and at the time of the site visit (bracketed "2"). The implementation of the accelerated schools process created a change in each of the four schools within the context of school leadership. In three of the schools--Forest, McBride, and Cedarcrest--the results of the interviews and the observations indicated a positive change in the leadership style of the principal. In the case of Cedarcrest, the change was dramatic--from extreme quatrain on the left side of the continuum to the extreme quatrain on the right side. In one of the schools--

Griswald--the change process produced a negative effect or deterioration in the relationship between the Principal and the school community.

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Factors that Influenced Change

There was evidence from the case studies that five factors combined to influence--facilitate or inhibit--change in the role of the principals in schools. Our summary analysis of these factors, presented below, is based on an in depth analysis of each of these factors (Davidson, 1992).

First, district offices had a minor influence on the restructuring. Two of the schools--McBride and Griswald--were in a large urban district that had not yet made a commitment to moving site-based management in 1990-1991. The Principal at McBride, who had been in her role for 11 years at the time of the site visit, used the accelerated schools process to distance her school from district policies. She used the process as an excuse for going her own way. In contrast, the Principal of Griswald had previously been curriculum specialist with the district office and was new to the school. He used the accelerated schools process as an opportunity to push many of his curricular ideas, which were consistent with district policies.

The other two schools--Forest and Cedarcrest--were in districts that had moved toward site-based management. Forest

decided to initiate the accelerated schools model as part of its site-based management process. At Cedarcrest, the school experienced little district resistance to the process, but received no district support.

Thus, district movement to site-based management policies can help foster the accelerated schools process. In contrast, the absence of this site-based management policy does not necessarily inhibit the process, if the district neglects the school and the principal ignores the district office.

Second, there is an apparent relationship between the role of the principal and the role of the teacher, at least in the accelerated schools process. The role of the principal, the role of the teachers, and teacher empowerment appeared to be a crucial aspect of school restructuring. These findings support the arguments by Levin (1987) that schools that are successful in empowering teachers also appear to have great potential for making curricular improvements.

The role of the teacher changed, in varying degrees, in three of the four schools due to the implementation of the accelerated schools process. At Forest, McBride, and Cedarcrest the change process had a positive effect. The role of the teacher did not change at Griswald.

The autocratic leadership style of the Principal, Gail Benjamin, and the absence of decision making opportunities, demoralized the teachers at Cedarcrest to the point that the faculty turn over was at an all time high. Through the

accelerated schools process and under the leadership of Allison Agnew, "...teacher empowerment was like automatic." Each interviewee noted that, "...being treated as professionals" had stimulated the faculty to assume leadership roles, to explore creative ways to improve the curriculum, and to utilize their talents to the fullest.

At Griswald the role of the teacher did not change. While teachers were doing different things in the classroom, their role in the school did not change. The teachers entered the process optimistic about being involved in decision making processes. William Brewer's inability to build an element of trust and mutual respect turned the enthusiasm into apathy. As one teacher explained, "And I don't think there's been much teacher empowerment. Not what I expected out of the program."

Third, a relationship between change in pedagogy and change in the role of the principals was also evident, although it was not a simple, one-directional relationship. At the time of the site visit, Griswald exhibited curricular changes. Teachers were using math manipulative and whole language approaches. However, it also appeared that these ideas had been promoted by the Principal, not the teachers.

Both Forest and McBride exhibited a slight changes in curriculum during the 1990-1991 school year. At McBride, teachers were actively involved in planning for curricular changes--a writers workshop and an Afro-centric curriculum--that were implemented in the 1991-1992 school year.

Team teaching was being utilized by several of the first and second grade teachers at Forest School. A number of the teachers interviewed mentioned "...going beyond the textbooks" and "...looking for real motivational activities."

At Cedarcrest, there was substantial evidence of curricular change. There was evidence of team teaching, thematic education, and a variety of other innovations that had already resulted in large test score gains. Thus, the three schools that had the most evidence of a change in the leadership style of the principal--Forest, McBride, and Cedarcrest--were best able to make meaningful changes in pedagogical processes.

There are three tentative conclusions about relationship between curricular changes and the role of the principal. First, it is possible to implement curricular changes even when the principal utilizes the top-down, authoritarian style of leadership. Second, when the principal assumes the role of facilitator, the teachers have more opportunity to become empowered. This emphasize on empowerment apparently changed the role of the teachers and meaningful curricular innovations were implemented. Curricular innovations implemented by teachers, as a result of their own inquiry processes, apparently have great potential for improving student learning.

Fourth, a relationship between the leadership style of the principal and parental involvement was also evident. The three schools that had evidence of change in the role of the principal also exhibited major changes in parental involvement. Parents at

McBride, Cedarcrest, and Forest were involved in cadres--and were actually part of the change process--as well as in more typical ways, such as attending, donating time, and so forth. These changes were not evident at Griswald, where there was also little evidence of change in the role of the principal. Thus, change in the role of parents seems closely related to change in the role of the principal in the accelerated schools process.

Finally, technical assistance from university faculty played a minor role in the change process in three of the schools. Cedarcrest initiated its accelerated schools process without assistance from university consultants. After its success with test score improvements, accelerated schools specialists at a local university learned about the school, visited the school, and this Cedarcrest illustrates that schools can restructure without outside help. Faculty at the other three schools were trained in a university-based program and were given technical assistance with the implementation of the process. In interviews, principals and teachers indicated this university support was helpful. However, the success of the schools was variable. And the university consultants had little influence on the predispositions of the principals. If they believed in empowerment, then they were open to coaching. However, the one principal who had a less open attitude toward teachers, was also reluctant to use coaching from the university. Therefore, technical assistance by university specialists can help with the

transition to the accelerated model, but it does not guarantee success.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This initial study of the implementation of the accelerated schools process in a select group of schools illustrates that:

- 1) There is a linkage between the leadership style of the principal and the school's success with the school restructuring process; and 2) the role of the principal appears to be a crucial aspect of school restructuring. However, the process of changing the leadership style of principals is a complex process that cannot be easily transported from one school to another, or from university trainers to schools. Instead it takes a great deal of dedicated effort. All four of the schools had principals who were committed to empowerment, at least at an espoused level.

The principals, and their capacity to change their leadership styles, was probably the most important single factor in the success of the accelerated schools process in four schools. Two of the schools had new principals who initiated the process. Griswald, the school that changed the least, had a principal with an authoritarian approach, who seemed unable to change his style, even with coaching from university faculty who provided technical assistance. Teachers consistently indicated that his controlling approach and his temper prevented them from taking risks. The communication problems that existed between the teachers and Mr. Brewer also existed with the parents. Cedarcrest also had a new principal who initiated the process.

However, Allison Agnew, seemed to have a deep personal commitment to the philosophy of accelerated schools. Her leadership style allowed the entire school community to become agents for change.

The other two schools had long-term principals who had previously functioned in authoritarian systems. Thus, both needed to change their styles. At Forest, Marilyn Hasie, found this a difficult transition and some of the teachers harbored doubts. However, she did make some changes during the year. In contrast, at McBride, Ruth Oliver, had been looking for an opportunity to change the school and readily embraced accelerated schools concepts.

Thus the style of the principal seems critical. But the assignment of a new principal to a school does not insure change, unless the new principal has an authentic orientation to empowerment. However, it is difficult to judge whether a principal is really willing, or just says s/he is willing to make a change. Griswald School was selected for the accelerated schools project because the Principal appeared to be very supportive of these principles. However, parents and teachers indicated he did not have an empowering approach to the project.

Teachers experiences help to judge whether principals really believe in empowerment. If they do not, teachers find out very quickly and do not take risks. However, if the principal's approach to empowerment is genuine, then teachers can begin to take the risks necessary to change their role in school.

District restructuring, especially the movement toward site-based management, also appears to be an important aspect of the change process. Districts that have site-based management have fewer obstacles to implementing the accelerated schools process. However, a district orientation toward site-based management, by itself, does not explain why one school changes and another does not.

Further, universities can provide training and technical assistance which help facilitate the empowerment process. However, other forces in schools can inhibit change, even if university assistance is provided. And there is no guarantee that university facilitators have the personal skills and knowledge that can actually help schools with this difficult change process. The craft of facilitating school restructuring needs to be refined, both by school leaders and outside facilitators, including university faculty. Thus, there is a clear need for continued inquiry into how change in leadership can best be fostered.

Table 1

Traditional Scale			Accelerated Scale	
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Extreme	Moderate	Neutral	Moderate	Extreme

Table 2

Assessing the Extent of Change in the Role of Principals

Top-down within school			Bottom up decisions	
Principal as authority			Principal as facilitator	
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Extreme	Moderate	Neutral	Moderate	Extreme
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Griswald (2)	Griswald (1)			
←-----				
Forest (1)	Forest (2)			
	-----→			
Cedarcrest (1)				Cedarcrest (2)
				-----→
		McBride (1)	McBride (2)	
			-----→	

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