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An Investigation of the Dimensions of School Change

by

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Abstract

The present study arose out of a need to describe more clearly the contextual and program dimensions of school change in an effort to yield a clearer understanding of the change phenomenon. The study was conducted at a secondary school in Alberta where the school staff worked at planning and implementing team-oriented and collaborative approaches to school policy development. An adapted case study approach using participant-observer research methodology was used in studying this change initiative.

Using Bolman and Deal's (1990) multi-frame theory of organizations as an analytical tool, a multiple-perspective description of each of four change dimensions (i.e., context, content, process, and outcomes) was constructed from the various data sources, including documents, interviews, and field observations. Qualitative analysis of the data yielded a description of the contextual landscape (the structural and cultural conditions at the school) in which change was attempted, together with a description of the process, content, and outcome dimensions of the change initiative. Using grounded theory research methodology, the study also examined the unique contexts created from the interaction of the properties of each of the change dimensions described. The result was the construction of a theoretical model of school change that places process, in the form of a combination of diverse leadership actions, at the heart of the change phenomenon, linking other dimensions into a coherent and dynamic whole.

The model illustrates the complex and dynamic nature of school change and the multiple leadership actions required to sustain such change. In the model, eight forms of leadership action were specified. These actions serve to link each of the change dimensions by determining the features of the context considered for change, possible outcomes, and the extent to which outcomes are integrated to form the school's new organizational context. The overall conclusion of the study was that the degree of success with change was dependent on the extent to which personnel at the school were willing and able to take responsibility for the leadership required to link each of the dimensions into a comprehensive change effort.

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Chapter One

The Nature of the Study

History of School Change

Demands for school change typically arise out of a need to address issues brought about by a perception that the present system is somehow not meeting expectations. These expectations reflect the values and standards held by members of a society or community at a particular point in time. As social, economic, and demographic conditions change, so does public opinion around educational issues (Cuban, 1990). The result has been that at various points in history the public has taken alternative positions around such issues as teacher-centered as opposed to student-centered instruction, academic versus practical curriculum, and centralized versus decentralized governance. As certain values are furthered by political forces, interest groups, and the media, schools are pressured to respond through the introduction of new instructional, curricular, and governance reforms.

Educational reform began taking on national proportions only after 1957, as the Soviet launch of Sputnik, combined with Japan's rapid economic recovery threatened the technological edge and global market superiority that had previously been enjoyed by countries of the Western world (Fullan 1993a; 1993b). The result was the introduction of numerous innovations (e.g., curricular reforms, open plan schools, individualized instruction) at national (US) and provincial (Canada) levels during the 1960s and early 1970s that were aimed at making education the tool for international, political, and economic competition.

The study of school change is likewise a relatively recent phenomenon. The first studies on school change were done to investigate the broad implementation efforts of the early reforms. The results were eye opening. They indicated that most attempts at

implementing reforms had failed to alter schools' practices or their results (Goodlad, 1970; Sarason, 1971). Simply delivering new curricula and pedagogical techniques to schools did not result in the incorporation of these into teaching practice. There arose, therefore, a need to explain why schools were unable or unwilling to change and a recognition that a better understanding of the change process itself was needed.

The effective schools studies of the 70s and early 80s, however, failed to shed light on the nature of school change. Although they described the internal environmental conditions present in successful schools, these studies did not contribute to an understanding of how those schools became that way (Purkey & Smith, 1983). The research failed to describe the organizational conditions that lead to an increase in the capacity and will of school-level personnel to become more effective. Furthermore, the generalizability of the results of this research was limited because it did not account for the diverse and complex contexts in which school personnel work. Therefore, attempts to recreate conditions found in effective schools were typically unsuccessful because no consideration was given to how the variety of external and internal conditions might interact at a particular site to constrain or enable successful change.

More recent school reform efforts have begun to focus more directly on the structural and cultural features of school contexts and their influence on the creation of conditions conducive to successful school improvement. Structurally based reforms primarily focus on replacing "top-down," bureaucratic organizational structures with more decentralized, collaborative forms of leadership and management. Using "restructuring" strategies to create new governance structures and relationships is done in an effort to increase decision-making authority at the school level. It was thought that doing so would provide an opportunity for administrators and teachers to work collaboratively at identifying problems, exploring possibilities, and designing their own change and improvement initiatives. Further, it was assumed that such

approaches, commonly referred to as "school-based management," "shared decision making," or "teacher empowerment," would increase the appropriateness of change initiatives and the chances for successful implementation (David, 1989; Brown, 1990).

Educational restructuring, represented by efforts to decentralize decision-making authority to the school level, began as a "second wave of reform" in the United States in the latter 1980s. This approach has continued to dominate as the favored school reform strategy of government bodies and school districts throughout the Western world over the past decade (David, 1989; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990; Cawelti, 1994). The exclusive focus on altering structural features has, however, largely failed to produce the sought-after improvements in practice (Taylor & Teddlie, 1992; Weiss, 1992; Brown, 1990; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990). In response, theorists proposed that successful change involves a process of "reculturing" as well as restructuring (Fullan, 1992). Within this view, maximally successful efforts aimed at improving educational practice are comprehensive in nature and systemic in their approach to implementation (Fullan, 1990; Fullan, 1993a; Fullan, 1993b; Smith & O'Day, 1991; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994).

Comprehensive change involves combining alterations in authority structures with efforts to redesign other organizational features, such as the beliefs and norms within the school's culture. It requires efforts aimed at altering established practices and beliefs that typically act as forces resisting reform (Sarason, 1990). Various scholars have suggested that such efforts require opportunities for teachers to interact with each other in ways that challenge traditional norms of isolation and individualism, increase the organizational knowledge base, and promote collaborative action (Lugg & Boyd, 1993; Conley & Bacharach, 1990; Louis, 1993; Hargreaves, 1995; Leithwood, 1994a).

Studies of school reform also suggest that successful change requires a systemic approach involving simultaneous changes to multiple organizational and educational functions at all levels of the system (O'Day, 1990; Fullan, 1990; Louis & Miles, 1990; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994). The forms that such change can take includes making alterations to educational standards, program delivery, student assessment, professional development, and information collection and distribution systems. The complexity of such approaches to change calls for active leadership, support, and pressure from all levels of the system, including district and legislative (Fullan, 1993a).

Unfortunately, research efforts have not yet provided us with a clear description of the complex nature of the contexts in which change must be implemented. Lacking are theoretical and research frameworks which adequately account for the complexity of factors influencing change and the types of strategies required in the variety of possible implementation contexts (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990). In keeping with new conceptions of how change might be implemented most successfully, recent studies have begun to focus on the nature of the change process itself (Louis and Miles, 1990). Educational researchers recommend that future research focus on descriptive studies of change efforts in progress in a variety of contexts, and particularly at the secondary school level where the size and complexity of schools has made them most impervious to change efforts of the past (Fullan, 1990; Leithwood, 1994a; Bryk, Lee, & Smith, 1990; Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993; Louis & Miles, 1990). Such research will potentially expand our understanding of the change process and serve as a guide to better change strategies.

Context of the Study

In Alberta, depressed economic conditions of the latter 1980s and early 1990s, along with increased pressure by the electorate to address the government's ever increasing budget deficit and accumulating debt, resulted in the introduction of an

educational restructuring plan announced by the Minister of Education in February, 1994. Referred to as the "Three Year Business Plan," the plan introduced major fiscal and governance reforms to education in this province.

Pressures for change had emanated from several sources. The business community, focused on international comparisons of educational outcomes, stressed the need for improvements in the system of education in order to better compete in global economic markets (Alberta Education & Alberta Chamber Resources, 1991). The private sector saw the big three public spenders, Health, Social Services, and Education as the major contributors to the depressed state of the economy and thus targeted these areas for fiscal reform (Alberta Education, 1993). As a result, a \$239 million or 12.4% reduction in educational funding over four years was initiated by the government as part of the educational restructuring plan. Included in the cost cutting measures were increased constraints on how districts may spend funds allocated to them and the reduction of the number of school districts from 140 to 60.

In addition, the plan also called for major changes to the relationships between the Ministry and School Boards, and between Boards and their schools (Alberta Ministry of Education, 1994a). Results of a government initiated public consultation process conducted in the fall of 1993 established that parent and community stakeholders wished to have a more meaningful role in the educational enterprise (Alberta Ministry of Education, 1993). Among the legislated changes contained in the "Three Year Business Plan," and followed up by subsequent changes to the provincial School Act, were the following: 1) the take over by Alberta Education, from local boards, of the responsibility for the appointment of superintendents, as well as for the collection and distribution of property taxes to fund education, and 2) the mandating of school-based management (effective September, 1996) including the specification of new roles in the school's decision-making process for participants at all levels of the educational system (Alberta

Ministry of Education, 1994b). A subsequent report outlined the roles and responsibilities of all educational stakeholders and specified areas of increased involvement for teachers, students, parents, and members of the community in school-based program and policy decisions (Alberta Education, 1995).

The general context that led to the conception of the present study, therefore, was a political, economic, and educational climate dominated by an emphasis on restructuring as the preferred mode of school reform. In other words, the broad contextual conditions existing at the time the present study was initiated were those created as a result of Alberta's restructuring plan, particularly the mandating of school-based management, and the effects of such changes to the roles and responsibilities of site-based personnel.

Statement of the Problem

Pettigrew (1985) argued that, if we are to recognize the complexity of organizational change, the methodological approaches taken in studying such change must reflect its multi-dimensional characteristics. He advocated that in addition to the change program being the unit of analysis, "analysis must incorporate antecedent conditions and processual dynamics" as they play themselves out "in present and emerging contexts"(p. 223). This implies that the study of organizational change requires a focus on both contextual (environmental conditions influencing organizational activity) and program (content, process, and outcome) features. Such a view influenced the framing of the problem in the present study.

Operating from this premise, the overall issue addressed in the present study was that of understanding school change as it is conceived and operationalized within the specific contextual conditions present within a particular site. This, therefore, was not a study of school-based management per se. Rather, the research problem was more broadly framed as a study of school change and an attempt to determine what factors influence school staff members' approaches to, and successes with, school change. The

government Alberta mandate for the implementation of school-based management was considered a pre-existent contextual condition or possible catalyst out of which individual school improvement efforts emerged. Thus the general problem statement on which this study was based, was stated as follows: What factors influence school-level efforts in the design and implementation of change?

Research Purpose and Questions

To address the problem statement above, a secondary school in Alberta was selected for the present study. The specific purpose of the study was to document, and submit to analysis, the way in which the staff of this secondary school went about initiating and implementing changes at their school and the conditions under which this was done. The study was both descriptive and explanatory in nature. It sought to describe the characteristics of the changes engaged in by school personnel and analyze the forces that shaped these changes. A summary of the literature in the area of school reform led this researcher to a consideration of four themes or dimensions as critical to the understanding of the phenomenon of school change. For the purpose of this study, these dimensions of school change are described as follows:

- 1) Context: The conditions in the school's external (e.g., socio-economic, cultural, organizational, community contexts) and internal (structural, cognitive, cultural) organizational environments influencing the motivation and response to change.
- 2) Content: The content of the change initiative in the form of adopted intents, goals, action plans, or policy statements, and how these are understood by organizational participants.
- 3) Process: The activities, events, and actions associated with the development and implementation of the school's intended changes.
- 4) Outcomes: The extent and quality of implementation of a school's change intents.

The intent of the study was to gain a better understanding of the change process by yielding data that would describe each of the above dimensions as well as explain the

relationship between them. To yield such data, the following five questions were articulated for the study:

- 1) What were the significant characteristics of the external and internal contextual environments associated with the selected school site?
- 2) What was the primary focus or content of the intended change and how was it interpreted or understood by organizational members?
- 3) What strategies were used as part of the development process in implementing the intended change?
- 4) What were the outcomes of the change effort?
- 5) What relationships existed between the contextual, content, process, and outcome dimensions of the change phenomenon?

Significance of the Study

Little is known about how organizational factors combine and interact to shape internal organizational responses to change (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1992). This research attempted to contribute to the knowledge needed to explain the complexity of the change process in secondary school settings. The study takes a holistic view of change considering its contextual, content, process, and outcome elements. It goes beyond a description of these elements and attempts to describe the interrelationships between them, considering each as both influences and outcomes of the dynamics of change. As such, the findings emerging from this study can potentially make significant contributions to policy and practice, as well as to theory, in areas outlined below.

Policy and Practice

In designing improvement initiatives, site participants must construct their own change plans, taking into account the conditions that make up their external and internal contexts. To assist in such a process, all stakeholders involved can benefit from contextualized descriptions of the experiences of other schools and districts as they

implement localized versions of school restructuring (Murphy & Hallinger, 1992). The description of the case in this study, although not intended to provide schools with a blueprint for change, can help guide the creation of conditions that involve school-based staff members in designing initiatives to enhance educational outcomes. It can also add to the existing body of knowledge to help school-level change leaders consider alternative realities and frames of reference, envision new courses of action, and anticipate issues that must be confronted and dealt with while engaged in the change process.

This research is equally important to policy makers, whether at the legislative or district levels of the educational system. It serves to inform them of the conditions impacting upon effective implementation of externally initiated reforms, the type of support required, and the differential contexts, and processes impacting upon efforts at making substantive changes to organizational and individual teacher practices.

Theory

This study also has implications for the development of theory in the areas of school change and leadership. Although there may be general agreement that effective school change requires broad participation and empowerment on the part of teachers, there still are no specific guidelines on how to go about changing organizations (Firestone & Corbett, 1988). Many forces combine to offset the impact of simply making changes to organizational structures, and little is known about the manner in which organizational factors combine and interact with elements of change programs to shape change responses and outcomes (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990).

Although there is a growing body of conceptual work in the area of school change, studies of efforts in progress conducted over an extended time period are difficult to find (Murphy, 1993). Murphy & Hallinger (1993) proposed that because redesigning the organizational features of schools as a strategy for school improvement is a relatively new phenomenon considerably more research is needed in this area. They claimed that

specially needed are “more rich descriptions of efforts in progress” that can lead to “grounded understandings” (pp. 251-252).

This study attempted to offer not only “thick” descriptions of the conditions in the implementation contexts, but also produce theory that is “conceptually dense ” and “grounded” in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Such theory consists of the identification of conceptual relationships represented by the interactional effects of conditions within and between each of the change dimensions being investigated. Specifically it sought to integrate analysis of 1) the content of a specific change program, 2) the context in which it is conceived and implemented, 3) the process engaged in by implementors, and 4) the outcomes that result from such efforts into a theoretical framework.

Delimitations and Limitations

The following conditions of delimitation and limitation apply in this study:

1. This research was delimited to the study of a single secondary school whose staff indicated they were in the early stages of implementing a team oriented approach to school leadership. The presence of a change phenomenon suitable for study was determined by the existence at the site of the involvement of a substantial portion of a school's staff in a school-wide change initiative.
2. It was assumed that staff members at the school would take on primary responsibility for leading the change initiative at the selected site. The study was therefore delimited to a consideration of the actions and perceptions of persons who worked within these schools, primarily teachers. It is recognized, however, that stakeholders outside the school may have held different perceptions of the school context, culture, and of the nature of the changes needed. This data might have assisted in the construction of a more comprehensive model of the dimensions of school change. The data obtained through interviews was further limited to those participants who agreed to be interviewed and to

the extent to which they were truthful and willing to share their responses.

3. The study may have been limited by the researcher's professional background and role played in the study. Although the researcher made efforts to be objective and to create checks to limit possible bias (see chapter 3), past professional experiences as a school administrator may have had an affect on both the course of the initiative being studied and the interpretation of results. Furthermore, it is recognized that the participant-observer role assumed by the researcher in this study may have influenced the course of the phenomenon being studied. More specifically, the researcher's presence at the school and feedback to change participants of his impressions of the process being studied may have created cognitive dissonance associated with perceived conflict among established practices, the suggestions arising out of the study, and participant's ability and willingness to act on those suggestions.

4. Data collection was conducted over a time period of eight months. The study therefore describes circumstances that existed "at a point in time." This limits the certainty with which findings can be applied at other points in time or to other schools at different stages of implementation.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were apparent at the beginning of the study and influenced the course of the investigation throughout:

Assumed by school participants:

1. The school made explicit their assumption that they expected a direct benefit to accrue to them as a result of their participation in this study. Therefore, as part of the negotiation for entry the researcher agreed to give participants regular feedback related to their efforts and design an evaluative instrument to assess outcomes at the end of the school year.

Assumed by the researcher:

1. When selecting the site for this study, the researcher assumed that the school would

be actively involved in implementing a team oriented approach to school leadership by facilitating groups of teachers working together toward school improvement thus making a study such as this warranted.

2. It was assumed that a participant-observer research approach using case study methodology was a valid means of acquiring a description of the reality of the change under study.

3. It was assumed that the participants who shared information with the researcher were reasonably aware of the phenomenon under study and adequately comprehended the questions asked by the interviewer.

Definition of Terms

Comprehensive organizational change: A direct and sustained attempt to alter a school's structural and cultural organizational features as a strategy for the establishment of conditions supporting school improvement.

Systemic change: Simultaneous changes at all levels of the educational system (legislative, district, school, classroom).

School structures: The term is used in a sociological sense, and includes a school's organizational arrangements, roles, and formal policies (Fullan, 1992)

School culture: The set of shared beliefs, attitudes, meanings and ways of behaving that influence the behaviours of organizational participants and their social structures.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in six chapters. This first chapter has introduced the study by presenting the overall context in which the study took place, the general problem statement addressed, a statement of purpose, and the five research questions that guided the inquiry. The second chapter presents a review of the literature on school change. It begins with a discussion of school reform efforts and the study of these from a

historical perspective. This is followed by a discussion of the contextual and program (content, process, and outcome) dimensions of school change. The chapter concludes with a presentation of a visual representation (Figure 2.1) of the key features of school change emerging from the review of the literature.

Chapter three describes the research design used in the study. It presents 1) the general theoretical orientation taken by the researcher, 2) the methodologies adopted for the study along with the rationale for using them, 3) the data collection methods and analysis used, and 4) a description of the adherence to evaluation criteria for qualitative research.

In response to the first four research questions, Chapter Four provides a description and theme analysis of the each of the change dimensions under study. The next chapter specifically addresses the fifth research question and provides the results of conceptual level analysis attempting to explain the nature of the relationships between change dimensions so as to contribute to a more integrated understanding of school change. The final chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations arising out of the study.

Chapter Two

Review of the literature

Introduction

This chapter serves two purposes: 1) to provide a brief historical account of approaches to the implementation and study of school change, and 2) to establish the conceptual framework for the present study. The historical account reviews the literature describing the early views of school change, critiques the more recent structural approaches to school reform, and then leads into a discussion of the outcomes of the most recent studies of successful improvement efforts. These latest studies point to a more complex view of schools and school change, recognizing the importance of multiple external and internal contextual features as they affect the work of schools. Together, these studies define the significance of the present study and provide the conceptual framework upon which it is based.

Historical Review of Approaches to and Study of School Change

Centralized Approaches to School Change

Approaches to school change in the 70s and 80s were primarily grounded in what Elmore (1978) called systems management and organizational development perspectives of change. Other scholars refer to the philosophical orientation of this approach as the “innovative management” frame, (Miles & Louis, 1987) or the structural-functional perspective (Skrtic, 1991). Such perspectives on school change considered the school as a hierarchically and bureaucratically structured system, and change as a goal directed, objective, and technical-rational process. Consisting of single innovations at a time, the implementation of change was viewed as a process of downloading externally generated innovations through the hierarchical structures. The resources brought to bear on the change process included the use of power coercive strategies to force adoption

and rational-empirical approaches to provide the associated skills and knowledge.

Taking the effectiveness of the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of the educational system for granted, the general assumption of legislators and policy makers was that the outcome of change efforts depended primarily on the quality of the change program designed for implementation.

Studies of these early centralized change efforts revealed, however, that change involved more than centrally developing and mandating innovations for adoption at the school level (Goodlad,1970; Sarason,1971). In the final analysis, the success of even the best planned and supported policy initiatives depended on how individuals at the school site interpreted and acted on such initiatives. Scholars recognized the need to consider other factors, in addition to content, when implementing change and identified four influencing factors: 1) characteristics of the macro environment, 2) characteristics of the environment adopting the innovation, 3) characteristics of the innovation itself, and 4) the strategies used in the implementation process (Fullan and Pomfret,1977).

By the time A Nation at Risk was released in 1983, reformers and scholars alike had come to the conclusion that the implementation of single innovations was largely ineffective in changing the complex contexts which characterize districts and schools. The first wave of reforms, following the release of this report, involved the intensification of centralized strategies and the introduction of large-scale centrally mandated reforms implemented through tightened top-down regulations. However, such strategies also proved to be largely unsuccessful because they failed to consider the effects of the overall, dynamic contextual realities of schools (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1990). During the latter 1980s and beginning 1990s, as an attempt to accommodate the effects of individual school contexts on school change, a second wave of reform promoting the decentralization of educational governance began replacing the top-down

regulatory approach.

Decentralized and Structural Approaches to School Change

Decentralized approaches to school change focus on altering organizational structural features (i.e., administrative arrangements, roles, and formal policies) and thereby expanding the scope of authority and participation to include organizational members at the school level. Labeled “restructuring,” “school-based management,” or “school-based decision making,” these structural approaches have become increasingly popular with schools and school districts throughout the Western world as a means of stimulating changes in the work of schools (Caldwell, Smilanich, & Spinks, 1988; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1992; Cawelti, 1995).

Structural approaches to school change emphasize the redesign of organizational structures and procedures as the primary means of influencing changes in practice. The school-based management literature describes two essential features common to most structurally focused reform strategies: 1) the decentralization of authority to the school level, and 2) the creation of structural mechanisms for promoting broad participation of internal and external stakeholders in the school’s decision-making process and for making schools more accountable (Wissler & Ortiz, 1986; Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; David, 1989; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990).

Structurally based approaches to school reform are advocated on the assumption that changing authority relationships, providing broader and increased participation in decision-making processes, and increasing accountability for results by school level personnel will lead to the promotion of other organizational characteristics typically linked to effectiveness. These include 1) improved planning 2) increased flexibility and innovativeness, 3) increased satisfaction on the part of staff, students, and parents alike, 4) increased sense of ownership and commitment, and 5) ultimately better teaching and learning (Chapman, 1990; Dimmock, 1993; David, 1989; Malen, Ogawa, &

Kranz, 1990; Brown, 1990; Ogawa & White, 1994; O'Neill, 1994).

Critics of decentralized and strictly structural approaches to school change have argued that the motivation for such strategies are primarily political in nature, launched in response to conflict and a sense of uncertainty within society. Seddon, Angus, & Poole (1990) argued that current school-based management proposals, with their focus on greater involvement and authority in educational decision making at the school site level, are largely motivated by the "politics of participation" rather than by expectations of real participation or change occurring. Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz (1990) pointed out that decentralization and democratization of decision making have been typical responses occurring during times of turbulence and uncertainty. They suggested that ambiguous reform responses of a structural nature are purposely selected to reduce environmental stress, not because there is evidence that they can solve the problems which led to the requirement for the change in the first place, but rather by virtue of their ambiguity they allow legislators and policy makers to cope with the pressure of competing and diverse interests and concerns. Such reforms operate as a political response to environmental pressures and a symbolic response to a "crisis of confidence." Since the objective is restoring confidence, emphasis is often on participation and accountability rather than on changing beliefs and practices.

Whether politically or educationally motivated, research on the relationship between changes in structure (i.e., school-based management) and changes in practice do not bear out the educational claims made in the promotion of this approach to school reform. Study results document the failures of structurally based approaches in three areas: 1) failure to change forms of control (Weiss,1992; Sackney & Dibski,1994; Malen, Ogawa & Kranz,1990), 2) failure to produce meaningful participation in school decision making (Malen, Ogawa & Kranz,1990; Brown,1990), and 3) failure to bring about improvements in teaching and learning (Malen, Ogawa & Kranz,1990; Taylor and Teddlie, 1992; Van Meter, 1994; Walberg & Niemiec, 1994; David,1989;

Weiss,1992).

Despite the reported evidence of the failures of strictly structural approaches to school change, however, such approaches remain popular. In his national study of high school restructuring efforts in over 3000 American schools, Cawelti (1994) reported that 33 percent of the schools indicated the presence of such management arrangements. Another third of the schools surveyed reported partial implementation of such a plan. The underlying reasons suggested for this popularity include the fact that these reforms are 1) ideologically compelling: appealing to such values as democratization, individualization, and decentralization/debureaucratization; 2) symbolically potent: restoring confidence by giving the impression that something is being done, even though specific evidence may be scant; 3) relatively easily implemented as compared to other alternatives aimed at changing practice; 4) economically appealing: adopted without additional funding or in combination with reductions in public expenditures; and 5) consistent with deeply held beliefs among reformers and practitioners about what people think is wrong with schools: that current structures are restricting and isolating and what is needed to improve results is a change in structures that would cause people to work harder (Elmore, 1995; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz,1990).

In conclusion, decentralized approaches to school change still view organizations largely from a structural-functional perspective. Approaches emphasizing the redesign of organizational work structures and procedures are but an expansion of the "innovation management" frame referred to earlier when describing centralized approaches (Miles & Louis,1987). The transformation of individual cognitive, behavioural, and value systems is still largely viewed as a rational process, involving regulatory strategies of a structural or normative type.

Structural approaches have, however, contributed to a shift in how educators view change. Rather than considering change as something needing to be planned from

the outside and introduced “into” the school for adoption and implementation, the focus is now toward changing the school in order that those who work within it might generate their own changes and commitment to them. Also changed is the belief that faulty implementation strategies are at the heart of failed attempts to improve schools (Fullan,1992). Efforts at changing schools through school-based management have focused on creating the conditions necessary for schools to design their own initiatives and strategies best suited to local contextualized environments.

The reported failure of structural approaches to stimulate hoped for changes in practice, however, point to the conclusion that change is a more complex and dynamic process than hitherto assumed. Thus, a new conception of change is needed, one where change is viewed not as an innovation to be added onto a school, but rather as an element that becomes an integral part of the definition and conditions of teacher workplaces. Thus conceived, change is a process of continual learning and improvement in practice (Fullan,1993a). Incorporating change into the very definition of the school requires change efforts beyond the implementation of single innovations at a time or approaches that focus on single organizational features (e.g., structural). More recently, scholars are advocating more comprehensive approaches to school change focused on changing multiple aspects of a school’s organizational features simultaneously and using a combination of strategies from outside and within schools (Smith & O’Day, 1991; Louis & Miles, 1990; Fullan,1993b; Marsh & Bowman, 1989).

Comprehensive Approaches to School Change

The term “comprehensive” is used here to describe a view of schools and school change that recognizes a multiplicity of interrelated and integrated factors influencing the work of schools in general and efforts to improve them. Two core conceptual assumptions are at the heart of such a view: 1) change is a contextually embedded phenomenon, and 2) change is a process of institutional re-design. As this way of

viewing school change underlies the central thesis of the present study, the literature supporting it is discussed more fully in the sections that follow. Only a brief philosophical background and general overview is therefore presented in this section.

The first premise upon which emerging views of change are being formed takes into consideration the effects of context on the nature of reality as interpreted by organizational members. This position contrasts with previously held views of the school which had been primarily influenced by the structural-functional paradigm. The structural-functional paradigm relies upon objective views of reality and technical-rational views of organizational activity (Skrtic, 1991). Currently emerging views are more subjectively and interpretively oriented, moving away from a conception of schools as formal organizations to schools as social organizations (Newmann, 1990; Lee, Derrick, & Smith, 1991). Such conceptions rely on the consideration of the multiple, socially-constructed contexts influencing the work of schools, and the reciprocal effects between school practices, school organizational factors, and teachers' perceptions of the reality of their workplace (Rozenholtz, 1989; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1990). This perspective allows us to gain an increased understanding of the actions and interactions that take place within schools, combining a consideration of the influence of the formal structural features of the school with the cultural beliefs and norms held by organizational members (Wallace & Hall, 1992).

The constructed realities that teachers hold of their internal and external contexts influences how they conceive of their work as they attempt to satisfy their need for external adaptation and internal integration. Rosenholtz (1989), for example, documented the complex interrelationships among various desirable teaching conditions (shared goals, teacher collaboration, teacher learning, teacher certainty, and teacher commitment) and between these conditions and the school's organizational features including belief systems and structural features. In a similar vein, McLaughlin and Talbert (1990) described secondary schools as embodying a complex interplay of

multiple and embedded contexts. These included societal, community, and external organizational contexts such as those at the district and legislative levels, and the internal contexts represented by the school's organizational arrangements and the dispositions of those who work within them. In short, there has been a growing recognition of the role of contextual variables in influencing the content and pace of organizational change (Pettigrew, 1985). And following from this is the recognition that effective school change must take the multiple, site-specific contexts of the school into consideration and focus on changing the numerous interrelated content and organizational features of the school simultaneously.

The second assumption incorporated in comprehensive views of school change is that such change must involve alterations to school organizational features and processes (Fullan, 1990). Studies of schools considered to be effectively improving reveal the following characteristics: 1) efforts are simultaneously focused on content (curriculum and instruction) and governance reforms (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992), 2) change is facilitated through broad-based participation and empowerment (Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994), 3) change involves alterations to the school's cultural as well as structural systems (Fullan, 1990; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Corcoran & Goertz, 1995), and 4) efforts combine centralized and decentralized strategies so as to coordinate content and provide pressure and support at all levels of the system (Smith & O'Day, 1991; Fullan, 1994). Rather than considering change as the adoption of reforms to be institutionalized, comprehensive conceptions view large-scale alteration of organizational or institutional features (structural and cultural) as the means to successful improvement to schools' core teaching and learning practices. As such, change is conceived of as a process of continual learning and improvement where the elements of the change program (i.e., its intents, processes, and outcomes) are recognized as being in a state of mutual interactive influence and continual refinement

(Louis & Miles, 1990).

In conclusion, a comprehensive view of school change takes in the notion that schools are complex organizations, embedded in complex and dynamic contextual environments, which require comprehensive, ongoing, and organizationally focused strategies to improve them. However, our knowledge of the complexity of schools and school change is still developing and needs to be built further through rich contextualized descriptions of local reform efforts in progress (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). The remainder of this chapter attempts to integrate the literature on school change by considering both the contextual and program dimensions of school change. The contextual dimension includes both the external and internal contexts impacting upon schools and their change efforts; the program aspects of change are discussed as three separate dimensions: content, process, and outcomes. This discussion of the dimensions of change leads to a presentation of the conceptual framework used in the design of the present study.

The Dimensions of School Change

The Contextual Dimension of School Change

An emerging line of research studying the contexts affecting teacher workplace conditions, and ultimately school outcomes, considers conditions in both external and internal school environments (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1990). The internal context includes the structural conditions of the school and the cultural norms that effect teacher thinking and feeling about their work. The external context consists of those conditions that extend beyond the classroom door and the school boundary to include the district, community, and social and political environment in society as a whole (Rosenholtz, 1989; Cuban, 1990). The discussion of the literature that follows supports the premise that conditions within both contexts independently and interactively act as factors influencing the work of schools and their capacity and motivation to change.

External contextual factors. Three external contextual factors have been identified, namely, factors that occur a) in society in general, b) in the organizational structure outside the school (legislative and district levels), and c) at the community level (parent influences).

a) General societal factors: The expectations that a society has of its institutions, including its educational institutions, are influenced by the values and perceived needs held by members of that society at a particular point in time and by the resources it can make available to those institutions to allow them to meet the expectations. Therefore, the social, cultural, and economic conditions present within our society as a whole act as factors influencing the demands made upon schools and the pressure for changing them (Cuban, 1990).

The literature on school reform identifies four sets of general societal conditions that represent current forces shaping the work of schools and their capacity to change. These conditions are characteristic of the historical developments in the world generally, but of Western industrial and post-industrial societies in particular. Influencing the educational system at all levels, from the legislature to the classroom, these forces represent the landscape out of which current reforms are emerging and onto which they will in turn be implemented (Louis, 1990).

First, social diversity, including an increasingly pluralistic and multi-ethnic society and increasing numbers of students whose social, economic, and psychological conditions place them at risk academically, is presenting new challenges for schools as they attempt to respond to the resulting diversity in values and needs (Alberta Ministry of Education, 1990). Increased diversity in the socio-economic, cultural, and academic backgrounds of school clientele has in turn resulted in a lack of agreement as to what the purposes of schooling should be and what responsibilities should and should not be assumed by our schools (Newmann, 1993). There are rising public expectations for

schools to address some of the serious socio-economic problems facing society today (e.g., racism, AIDS, violence) and to meet the needs of individuals and special interest groups, while at the same time meeting the broader interests of society and ensuring equity (Government of Newfoundland, 1992).

The second societal condition influencing present school reform is one characterized by an attitude of general societal agreement that schools should be improved. Although, there exists no consensus on what should be changed (Tanner, 1993) the importance of establishing consensus around purposes is considered critical for the development of coordinated and effective change efforts. As Schlechty (1990) claimed “until there is a general consensus regarding the purpose of schools and until that purpose is articulated in a way that is consistent with the conditions of an emerging information-based, post industrial society, substantial improvement in the performance of our schools is unlikely” (p. 15).

A third societal condition influencing the work of schools and school reform is the role of parents and other institutions in the education of youth. The traditional support which parents received from extended family members, the church, and the community as a whole has progressively diminished as a result of increased mobility (especially among low-income families), the absence of “functional” neighborhood communities, the diminishing influence of social and religious institutions on the lives of children, and the increase in immigrant and absent parent families (Holmes, 1992). This, combined with the phenomenon of large comprehensive schools, has reduced the involvement of parents and the community in the education of youth and limited parent’s understanding of the school system. The result has not only been an increase in society’s demands for schools to take over responsibilities formally assumed by parents and the community, but also a decrease in the level of “social” or “cultural” capital available to schools (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, Coleman, 1989, Vacha & McLaughlin, 1993). As social capital in the form of parental and community support diminishes and demands of schools

increase, more effort and financial capital is required by schools to produce the same educational outcomes (Coleman, 1992).

A fourth set of societal conditions result from the first three discussed above. As schools struggle with conditions of increased diversity, higher expectations, and diminished social resources, they are often perceived as being unable or unwilling to respond to these increasing pressures. This has led to increased public dissatisfaction with schools and decreased willingness to support the system financially (Alberta Education, 1991; Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1991; Coleman and Larocque, 1990). These attitudes have in turn resulted in increased political pressure to make schools more accountable, fiscally efficient, and responsive to local needs. Governments are therefore faced with the task of reconciling increasing public demands for quality and service with a decrease in the capacity or willingness of the public to support schools financially. A situation is thereby created where at the same time as expectations for our educational systems are increasing, a climate of economic restraint is forcing governments and school boards to reduce costs, further limiting the extent to which schools can meet these new expectations and demands. This tension is resulting in increased frustration on the part of educational professionals as they attempt to meet these demands within current budgetary and regulatory constraints (Elmore, 1995).

b) External organizational factors: The work of schools and their ability to change is further influenced by conditions present in their external organizational structures. Key influences are the nature of the political pressures and form of support available at the legislative and district levels to initiate and support productive school change (Smith & O'Day, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Scholars recognize that successful school change is beyond the ability of individual schools, or even school districts, to accomplish on their own. Fullan (1992) advocated that school change requires initial political action at all levels of the system to

force stakeholders to reexamine the purposes of schools and the value of current organizational structures and practices in achieving these purposes. However, it is also acknowledged that such political action must move beyond the symbolic form and adopt as its goal the creation of a broader social movement that might nourish educational and social change (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). This requires intense and continual public dialogue about the purposes of schooling and the means of achieving them, as well as the development of a new and shared definition of schools. The intents of the change process need to be clearly articulated at all levels and be specifically focused on the stimulation of changes on a number of fronts including curricular and instructional approaches, organizational delivery systems, and opportunities for stakeholder involvement in school decision making. In this way change is conceived of as a systemic activity coordinating efforts at all levels of the system (Smith & O'Day, 1990; Fullan & Miles, 1992).

Political strategies are least effective if they are primarily motivated by a desire to reduce conflict, such as that which occurs during periods of financial restraint, high unemployment, and increased international competition. The emphases of such reforms are primarily symbolic in nature and initiated in the most expeditious, and economically efficient manner possible. The result is often an inadequately conceived restructuring plan, delivered by mandate, in combination with financial cutbacks and prescribed timelines for implementation (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990). Such strategies are problematic because i) they are rarely preceded by any form of collective conceptualization of the types of changes needed and why, and ii) lead to the adoption of narrow structural responses in order to demonstrate compliance to mandates within the restrictions imposed by reduced financial resources and short timelines.

A second set of organizational conditions determined to be a critical influence on schools are those present at the district level. Case studies of highly effective school

districts and school improvement efforts have identified a number of specific district characteristics and practices associated with school success. Rosenholtz (1989) found that successful schools existed in districts that worked continuously with personnel on goal setting and monitoring, teacher and principal selection, and professional development. They also ensured greater dispersal of fiscal resources to instructional activities as opposed to administrative and maintenance activities. Studying British Columbia school districts, LaRocque & Coleman (1989) concluded that the high performing districts were those whose senior administrators were engaged in active monitoring activities with their schools, holding school administrators accountable for quality, but leaving responsibility and authority for the types and methodologies for change at the school level. Louis & Miles (1990), and Louis (1989) characterized effective district and school relationships as consisting of high engagement (i.e., shared goals, clear and frequent communication) and low bureaucracy (i.e., less reliance on rules and regulations).

With respect to district roles in the implementation of change, studies generally conclude that effective school change depends on a school and district relationship where coordinated top-down and bottom-up efforts rely on a combination of pressure and support at the district level (Fullan, 1993c; Fullan, 1994). Successful districts avoid excessive regulatory control, but at the same time are sufficiently engaged through continual interaction, communication, development of human resources, and mutual effort and coordination (Schlechty, 1990).

Districts also have an important role in setting the more global purposes for change and then supporting schools in their individual efforts to realize these purposes. Districts need to give schools a clear and consistent message as to the purposes of any changes embarked on by districts or schools. Fullan (1993c) stressed that the improvement of teaching and learning must be the ultimate goal for improvement efforts, and that this message needs to be communicated, supported, and authenticated

through actions. He suggested that rather than beginning school improvement with changes to structures, successful districts focused on conceptual and normative changes first. Once these had accumulated, changes in structures became a natural step to accomplishing visible and felt needs for improvement. Rapidly implementing new structures tended to create confusion, ambiguity, and conflict that eventually lead to retrenchment.

A growing body of social science theory and research, referred to as the “new institutionalism” has focused on the role of the deep-structure (societal perception of what school’s should look like) aspects of schools’ external contexts (Crowson, Boyd, & Mawhinney, 1996). These scholars have suggested that schools are so constrained by their institutional environments (i.e., deep-structure understandings of schooling present in societal and organizational environments within which schools are embedded) that conventional school reform efforts by individual schools or districts become impossible (Tyack & Tobin, 1994; Tye, 1987; Cibulka, 1996; Mawhinney, 1996).

The persistence of traditional beliefs about schooling has in turn conditioned the strategies deemed acceptable for improving schools. Metz, (1990) proposed that in maintaining traditional practices, schools are in effect simply lending legitimacy to organizational forms which conform to general public beliefs about what “real schools” should look like. Therefore, in the interests of ensuring their institutional legitimacy and public support, as well as maintaining internal stability, schools continue with traditional organizational structures and practices. This occurs more out of ceremonial than pedagogical motives and rationales, and serves as a means of achieving congruence between organizational forms and broad cultural beliefs.

Scholars supporting an institutionalism approach to school reform argue that effective change requires more than simple “tinkering” with features of the schools’ internal organizational environments and claim that what is needed is a “reinventing” of

the institution of public education, of which the school is but one part (Crowson, Boyd, & Mawhinney, 1996). This suggests that efforts at school reform need to be approached systemically, and requires the deliberate reexamination of the purposes of schooling and roles of those at all levels of the system (e.g., school, district, and legislative).

There is evidence of an attempt by some government bodies to alter traditional deep-structure understandings through the introduction of large-scale educational reform agenda. Fueled by economic, social, and technological pressures, provincial governments in Canada, for example, are reviewing their role in public institutions, including those providing Health, Social, and Educational services (Alberta Ministry of Education, 1994b; Alberta Education, 1995). In a climate where confidence in these institutions has declined while costs have risen, governments are pushing for fundamental reforms that have the potential of altering not only the way in which these institutions function, but also society's deep structure view of them. Legislation that encourages the privatization of services previously offered publicly is having the effect of enabling, and in some cases even forcing, a reexamination of how educational and other social services are delivered. In Alberta, new legislation has encouraged an increase in the number of charter schools, and inspired districts to experiment with alternative forms of delivery, including schools of choice and year-round schooling.

c) Community factors: The third source of external influence on schools, and the work that takes place within them, are conditions at the community level. While acknowledging that schools are affected by numerous community level constituents, (including parents, the corporate community, and other professional and social agencies), discussion here is limited to the more proximal variables (student and parent characteristics) since such influences are considered stronger than other more distal influences (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

The conditions present within a school's immediate community lends legitimacy

to the organizational forms adopted by school personnel in performing their tasks, and represent important factors in the motivation and capacity for successful improvement. Communities that are highly politicized, have little consensus about the main educational priorities, or are characterized by problematic physical qualities (highly mobile, violent, high unemployment) represent poor contexts for change (Louis & Miles, 1990). The level of support available from parents and the individual and aggregated characteristics of the students served by a school represent critical resources to the educational efforts of school personnel.

The resources represented by the parent and student body associated with individual schools have not typically been acknowledged in the school reform literature. Corcoran & Goertz (1995), for example, criticized current reform efforts for not considering the “other side of coproduction, the contributions of students and their families” and their responsibilities for their efforts and performance (p. 28). Rather, politics and special interests have shaped the problem of education as solely an institutional one.

Numerous studies have, however, linked conditions associated with parental involvement in the educational process and student characteristics (including type and number) as important community level factors in the operation of secondary schools. Lee, Bryk, & Smith (1993) identified student social class composition, student racial composition, and distribution of student ability as important compositional factors influencing the school’s internal organizational features and in turn the work of both teachers and students. Similarly, the degree and form of parental involvement have been identified as critical influencing factors. Among these factors are, (i) parental expectations for academic success, (ii) the presence of instructionally related resources in the home, (iii) the extent to which parents were involved in their children’s learning at home, including monitoring of attendance and homework completion, (iv) the presence

of strong community and home-school ties (i.e., social capital), including the attitudes displayed by parents, and (v) the degree to which parents are involved in the activities of the school, particularly the schools decision-making processes (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1990; Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993). In addition to the direct influence on their children's performance, the absence or presence of such parental involvement has the affect of either intensifying or diminishing the efforts of teachers at the school level (Coleman, 1989; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Vacha & McLaughlin, 1993).

Parents also have a direct influence on the motivation and efforts of schools to change. Ironically, while parents are the most immediate consumers of the educational efforts of schools, historically they have not been the leading advocates of change, nor are they in the forefront of the current round of restructuring demands (Conley, 1991). Polls in the United States have consistently demonstrated that although people tended to be critical of schools generally, there was not the same perception about the need for their local school to restructure (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1991). For the most part, parents expect schools to look and function like the schools they attended as students (Tye, 1987; Tyack & Tobin, 1994). These values and assumptions are slow to change, and represent a powerful force restraining the implementation of changes to fundamental structures and processes of schooling. This effectively allows teachers, school board members, and central and local administrators to resist implementation of any changes that might radically alter their own and the public conceptions of what schools should be. Duties can thus be carried out in a traditional, predictable fashion according to the expectations dictated by deep structure definitions schooling, while engaging in what Skrtic (1991) refers to as the "rhetoric of change."

Summary. Research has established that a variety of conditions in external school contexts affect schools and their work. These conditions are present at three distinct levels: (i) the general societal level in the form of the financial, social, and cultural conditions defining the expectations of schools, (ii) the institutional or

organizational conditions at the legislative and district levels of the system determining how changes are introduced, and (iii) the more proximal community level conditions that influence the motivation and capacity for change and frame the forms of school change deemed acceptable and possible. Finally, these conditions influence our definition of the school as an educational institution and shape its internal organizational features, thereby affecting the work of the school including its ability to improve (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989).

The present state of “flux” in Alberta’s social institutions and in society in general, along with accompanying reexamination of the roles at the various levels of the system from the legislature to the classroom, provides unprecedented opportunities for significant educational reform, and underscores the timeliness of the present study. However, conditions external to schools themselves are just one set of factors that enable or constrain the implementation of reforms aimed at increasing the effectiveness of school instructional efforts. A key determining factor is the “bottom-up” response to these external forces as represented by the extent and nature of local school improvement initiatives. Such responses are influenced by the conditions existing within the internal context of individual schools. These conditions can function as both the catalyst for school changes and the force for sustaining such change. The next section examines the characteristics of internal school contexts, as determined in the literature, that impact on the work of schools and their capacity to change.

Internal contextual factors. Schools’ organizational features influence and are a reflection of the work of schools. They also represent the critical set of internal contextual factors influencing school change. Generally two sets of organizational features are referred to in the literature on school reform, structural and cultural (Fullan, 1994; Raywid, 1994; Wohlstetter, Smyr, & Mohrman, 1994; Rosenholtz, 1989): A school’s structural features include its policies, staff roles, and formal

structural arrangements determining how management functions and work organization take place. A school's culture consists of the set of shared beliefs, attitudes, and meanings (and ways of behaving) that influence the behaviours of organizational participants and their social structures. The extent to which this culture is shared determines the extent to which it generates and sustains community, and promotes a sense of connectedness among students, and between students and teachers and school and home.

This section of the literature review presents evidence to support the view that these features combine to make up the socially constructed reality of the school as a workplace for teachers and students. As such they influence teachers' approaches to their work and its outcomes. In relation to attempts at improvement, a school's internal contextual features define its capacity for and commitment to change. Factors within each of these organizational features also influence school change programs to the extent that they represent critical contextual pre-conditions that must be assessed and considered as a school determines its need for change, the focus of the change initiative, and the process to be used in implementing the decided-on changes. Although in the dynamic of school interaction these organizational features overlap and are integrated, in the interest of clarity each will be discussed separately.

a) Structural factors: Structural factors consist of the formal organizational structures (work arrangements, policies, role definitions) that are designed to carry out the school's core functions, with respect to the following: i) governance, ii) organization of teacher work environments, iii) organization of instruction and student work environments, and iv) links to the external environment. A school's approach to these functions is determined by the tasks that participants see themselves having to perform and their view of organizations.

Traditionally, schools have adopted a rational-bureaucratic approach to

schooling. Secondary schools in particular, as a response to conditions of diversity in student populations and large size, are pressured to departmentalize their staff and differentiate their programs in order to offer an increasingly wide variety of services to meet an increasingly wider variety of interests, needs and ability levels. This has resulted in organizational structures that: i) emphasize specialization of tasks, ii) define teacher roles by subject matter and types of students taught, and iii) rely on rule governed social interactions and formal hierarchical and control based authority roles (Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993). Several negative consequences of rational-bureaucratic school structures have been documented in the literature. Emphasis on specialization and departmentalization is thought to contribute to the isolation of students and teachers, the fragmentation of school purposes, and a tendency to increase even further the need for bureaucratic organizational features of the school to aid with coordination of the diverse programs and services being offered (Johnson,1990). Conditions of isolationism are further advanced by strict regulation of time through rigid timetables, architectural structures that promote separation and “balkanization,” and an overload of curricular and extracurricular responsibilities on teachers (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991).

More recently, evidence is mounting against the long standing rational-bureaucratic models of effective school organization toward more “communal” models (Newmann,1990). Focused on structures that encourage commitment rather than control, such models are thought to be better suited to deal with the problems of diversity, social capital, and school cohesiveness around goals and purposes. In schools that adopt communal models of organization, bureaucratic (positional) and psychological authority are replaced with authority based on ability and the development of a set of values, beliefs, and sentiments which unite people, give meaning to their work, and guide their behaviour (Sergiovanni, 1994). Such work environments are characterized by structures that support norms of empowerment, collegiality, collective action, and

continuous improvement. The establishment of such conditions are not something that can be accomplished through policy, but rather result from the commitments and interdependence participants feel toward each other, fostered through increased opportunities to interact. Such opportunities are facilitated through arrangements for teachers to meet in subject, grade, or cross-role groups to plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials and strategies (Louis & Miles, 1990).

Several studies comparing successfully and unsuccessfully improving schools focused on the effects of the structural factors present in these schools. In studies conducted by Wohlstetter, Smyr, & Mohrman (1994) and Rosenholtz (1989), schools considered as successfully improving made use of technical and administrative structures that promoted collaborative teacher roles and shared decision making facilitated by authority relationships based on the person occupying that role not the role itself. Such schools had broad and overlapping communication and information sharing mechanisms and relations with the outside context characterized by substantial involvement and shared values and purposes. In contrast, schools characterized as static or stuck, differed on a number of structural dimensions. Leadership was typically focused on maintaining stability and protecting the internal organization from outside influence. They used rational, strategic approaches to planning, allocated limited resources to school-wide professional development, involved a small number of stakeholders in decision-making process, and had few mechanisms for sharing information.

Rosenholtz' (1989) study of elementary schools in Tennessee showed that school structures have a direct effect on the establishment of workplace conditions conducive to good teaching and learning practices. Key workplace conditions affecting school practices included the degree to which i) goals, beliefs, and values were shared, ii) teachers collaborated with each other about their work, and iii) teachers assumed responsibility

for their own and others' learning. These conditions in turn influenced four factors in the social organization of the schools: i) teacher socialization and initiation practices, ii) teacher evaluation practices, iii) the degree of teacher cohesiveness and shared responsibility for results, and iv) school goal setting activities, and collectively enforced standards of student behaviour.

In their study of urban secondary schools, Louis & Miles (1990) reported that effectively improving schools i) were designed around team concepts as opposed to a hierarchical concept of decision making, ii) were accountable for performance, not externally set procedures, rules, and standards, iii) were authoritatively autonomous, but linked to the district and other schools through communication, information, and cooperative task networks, iv) had individuals who were highly versatile and able to carry out a variety of functions and activities, v) incorporated decision-making structures that drew upon the best judgements of a wide variety of its members, and vi) had principals who were strong leaders and managers of change.

Louis and Miles also reported that certain structural features served as pre-conditions for effective improvement initiatives. These included i) well established and clear lines of authority, ii) a perceived sense of autonomy of the school in relation to the district, and iii) clearly established responsibility for the various functional aspects of the school. The absence of these conditions produced major implementation problems. Louis & Miles suggested that without the appropriate pre-conditions schools are better off not launching major school improvement efforts. Such schools need to begin with small-scale innovations guaranteed of success, while at the same time improving or negotiating the pre-conditions.

b) Cultural factors: Intricately connected to an organization's structural features, culture represents the set of basic assumptions and meanings shared by a group of people regarding the nature of reality, human relationships, and activities

(Schein,1981). Such assumptions and meanings arise out of (and act as a frame for interpreting) the experiences and interactions of people within organizations with conditions in their internal and external environments (Erickson, 1987). In this way, the shared meanings, beliefs, and norms of behaviour that make up the culture of a school are both the product of and motivation for action. As cultural characteristics influence interpretation of environmental conditions by those who work there, it also provides the rationale for future actions and interactions. In this way a school's culture is also in a reciprocally influencing relationship with other organizational sub-systems (e.g., structural), as it determines the types of structures that are considered essential in carrying out the tasks of the school.

Studying various organizations, Bolman and Deal (1990) developed a typology of organizational cultures. These were referred to as organizational frames and represented the various assumptions by which organizational members could interpret their work, experiences, and the actions of others. The four frames were referred to as the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. Members of an organizational culture where emphasis is on the formal structural and hierarchical roles, rules and policies are described as having a structural interpretive frame. Cultures that are predominantly focused on the conditions under which organizational tasks are performed and the fit between organizational and human needs are described as operating from a human resource interpretive frame. Political cultures focus on the self-interests of organizational members and engage in competition for scarce resources. In such cultures organizational members believe that goals emerge from conflict and a process of negotiation. Cultures aligned with Bolman and Deal's symbolic frame focus on the symbolic meanings of organizational structures and processes and hold social bonding and commitment to collective norms as primary values. Organizational members interpreting human action from structural and human resource frames seek rationality and predictability in organizational actions while political and

symbolic interpretations assume ambiguity, uncertainty, and unpredictability. Bolman and Deal advocated the need for using all four frames when approaching organizational reform because all perspectives are significant in matters to do with organizational change. This view is consistent with the view of educational scholars, such as Fullan (1990), in advocating for the need of comprehensive approaches to school change.

Other scholars have also highlighted the importance of the cultural norms present within school contexts in relation to our understanding of schools and school change. Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone (1988), in their study of secondary school cultures, found that norms within secondary schools not only varied from school to school, but also in the degree to which they were held in common within a school. Moreover, norms varied in the extent to which they were perceived as alterable by staff members. While certain norms were considered changeable, others were perceived as “sacred” and not open for negotiation. Louis & Miles (1990) referred to culture as the “deep history” of the school. This history is often shared in stories about the school reflecting the sense of cohesiveness or community that staff feel, the history of innovative efforts, and reminiscences about the past. Louis & Miles concluded that change efforts were effective in schools where the staff is cohesive, where there is an absence of failed school improvement efforts, and where staff does not dwell on reminiscing about an ideal past. Others described the cultural characteristics of successfully improving schools as (i) demonstrating a unity of vision, (ii) having a view of teaching as a non-routine task and learning as a continuous and developmental process involving both students and teachers in the role of learners, (iii) considering improvement in practice as a collective responsibility and a continuous process, (iv) being influenced by norms of involvement that include collaborative planning and decision making involving multiple stakeholders, (v) focusing on teaching-learning outcomes, and (vi) assuming shared responsibility and accountability for results

(Rosenholtz, 1989; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994).

Summary. This section discussed the internal conditions influencing the work of schools and their willingness and capacity to change. It was argued that schools' internal features (structural and cultural) interact to influence the social reality that the people who work within them have constructed. This constructed reality shapes their views of the purposes of the school, their approaches to teaching and learning, their norms of involvement, and norms of teacher learning and improvement. Unlike external contextual factors, which are essentially "givens" and unlikely to change through the reform efforts of any single institution, internal organizational features are potentially more amenable to alteration (Mortimore et al, 1988).

It should be noted that while the discussion of the internal contextual factors has been presented from a more global or organizational perspective, embedded within the overall school context are other more specific contexts which may differ considerably from each other (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1990; Little, 1990). These contexts may be bounded by the organizational structures within a school (i.e., grades, departments, tracks), the nature of the subjects taught (high and low status courses, academic-non-academic, high and low tracks), or the types of students and problems within individual classrooms. It is the interactions, problems, and experiences within these specific day-to-day contexts that form teacher workplace realities (Peterson, McCarthy, & Elmore, 1996). Therefore, an awareness of these contexts and the manner in which teacher beliefs, understandings, and actions are expressed within them, need to be considered in the study of school reform.

Program Dimensions of School Change

In describing the emerging comprehensive view of school change, reference was made to the need to understand four dimensions of school change: context, content, process, and outcomes. The discussion thus far has focused on the first of these

dimensions. This next section focuses on descriptions of critical elements within the program dimensions of school change.

As described earlier, reforms focused on the adoption of single innovations or on simply making adjustments to a school's governance features have proven ineffective in changing teacher practices and student outcomes. Rather, research has suggested that successful change requires large-scale redesign of school organizational features (Mohrman, 1994; Fullan, 1990). Although a full understanding of the large-scale redesign called for is not yet at hand, the cumulative literature suggests that such understanding must take into account the characteristics of and the dynamic and iterative relationships between (a) content, (b) process, and (c) outcome elements of change together with the context in which they are embedded (Pettigrew, 1985; Mohrman, 1994). We move therefore, from considering internal organizational features as the landscape onto which improvement efforts are to be implemented to a consideration of these features as the "object" of change and to a discussion of the characteristics of the elements of change efforts needed for organizational redesign. Each of these elements are discussed in light of salient themes emerging out of recent studies of school change.

Content Elements. Content elements of any change program refer to the specific practices, beliefs, or structural features within an organization that are the focus of change. School change can take a variety of forms and directions. Not all efforts at changing schools are associated with successful improvement. Studies have identified four common themes relating to the characteristics of the content of successful school improvement initiatives. Such efforts a) are instructionally focused, b) consider the multiple organizational features of the school, c) take into consideration the context in which the proposed change will be introduced and implemented, and d) are systemic in nature, linking reforms at all levels of the educational system (Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994; Fullan, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990). Each of these sets of

characteristics associated with successful school change are discussed below.

a) Instructionally focused change: The primary value of any reform derives from the extent to which it is focused on and results in alterations to instructional practices and beliefs about the teaching-learning process. The reason suggested for the failure of structural approaches to produce these intended effects is that such approaches are based on the false assumption that once the process and structures for change are specified, content (improvement of teaching and learning) will naturally follow (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990). In summarizing the effects of school-based management reform strategies, Conley & Bacharach (1990) concluded that the key consideration was not an expanded form of influence and participation, but rather the nature of the issues addressed under such arrangements.

Additionally, reformers studying organizational cultures and school change are generally in agreement that improvements in practice result when curricular, instructional, and teacher development reforms are combined with structural reforms to provide the focus and the conditions for change (Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994; Fullan, 1993a; Hargreaves, 1995; Hart & Murphy, 1990). The explicit structuring of teacher interactions around issues of teaching and learning are considered to be the critical element to successful school improvement (Hannaway, 1993). Such interactions then form the cultural basis of authority, motivation, and organizational learning.

b) Comprehensive change: Fullan (1990) described three categories of school improvement: i) single classroom innovations (e.g., a new reading or social studies curriculum), ii) single school-wide projects (e.g., school-wide student assessment initiative), and iii) comprehensive institutional change. He argued that school improvement efforts that focus on single innovations are “doomed to tinkering” because they ignore the powerful organizational factors that influence successful classroom and school-wide improvement. He concluded that to be successful, school change efforts

must focus on altering the multiple organizational or institutional factors themselves in combination with classroom instructional improvements and teacher development. In other words, implementation of large-scale institutional change involves a consideration of changes to schools' structural and cultural features, along with specific curricular and instructional reforms.

Thus conceived, sustained school change is a comprehensive and integrated rather than fragmented activity. According to Fullan (1993a), "reculturing" is at the heart of such school reform. Reculturing can be described as the larger construct that takes in changes in belief systems and behaviours stimulated through restructuring (changing policies, roles, programs, and structures) initiatives. However, although behavioural changes may be necessary in order to bring about cultural changes, the presence of new behaviours in and of themselves do not ensure cultural change. Cultural change involves "the internalization of new definitions of what is or ought to be", that are "socially constructed through collective interpretive processes" (Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988: p. 129). Therefore, a reculturing focus to school improvement requires a continuous examination and questioning of a school's practices, along with the underlying norms, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching and learning. Furthermore, it involves an explicit emphasis on new norms for collaborative approaches to leadership and work, continuous improvement, and the creation of conditions that support teacher learning (Leithwood, 1994a, 1994b: Fullan & Miles, 1992). Fullan (1993a) extended his assertion, advocating that "reculturing" is a necessary condition leading to restructuring, rather than the opposite directional effect. Changes in the beliefs and practices of some aspects of the teaching-learning process would lead to the need for changing structures. Such a strategy is thought to facilitate the development of the underlying norms of professional behaviours required for improved practice.

c) Context specific change: The case has already been made that a school's

capacity and motivation for change is dependent upon the degree to which its context supports change. Specific characteristics at individual school sites represent critical factors in determining readiness to undertake a major change initiative. It is more likely that change can be successfully implemented if the direction of change is consistent with the local school situation. Louis and Miles (1990) found that prior to embarking upon an ambitious redesign of its organizational features, a school needs to focus on the conditions within its current contexts and to determine the extent to which participants perceive both the need and possibilities for change. Such an approach requires a serious examination of existing structural, cognitive, and normative conditions and consideration of which will become the target of change, which need to be negotiated prior to beginning, and which can be negotiated later (Mohrman, 1994).

Roberts (1992) concluded that such factors as i) the level of clarity of the purpose and process of change, ii) the perceived needs and concerns of the staff, iii) the initial commitment of the staff to change initiatives in terms of time and effort, iv) leadership strength, v) staff cohesiveness, vi) level of perceived initial barriers to change, and vii) current norms of collegiality and collaboration needed to be considered and addressed before embarking on a more ambitious change plan. Further complicating the contextual conditions for change is the reality that individuals within organizations proceed through different stages of the change process at different times (Hall, Wallace, & Dossett, 1973; Mohrman, 1994). While some might still be coming to grips with the need for change, others will be actively participating in learning new ways of doing things and redesigning parts of the system. As individuals move through these stages at different speeds they require different forms of support and motivation (Tichy & Devana, 1986).

Moreover, any plan for change must take into consideration the continual interaction of change dynamics with contextual events and conditions (Fullan, 1992).

The ability of reform efforts at individual schools to remain focused on substantive and needed changes is influenced by conditions in the change environment, which themselves are in constant transition. These conditions can change in response to, i) the introduction of new legislative and district priorities, ii) the political actions of local boards and communities, iii) changes in local leadership, and iv) alterations to funding sources and levels (Louis and Miles, 1990). At the same time, internal contextual conditions change in response to the changes being implemented as part of any new initiatives, presenting themselves as both barriers and opportunities. This requires a change strategy consisting of a constant reevaluation of, the need for change, the intended purposes to be addressed by the proposed change agenda, and the means by which these changes are being implemented (Roberts, 1992).

d) Systemic change: One final characteristic related to the content element of comprehensive improvement efforts is the notion that school reform must be part of a systemic or system redesign. As has already been mentioned in the discussion of external influences on school change, the large-scale organizational changes identified earlier are beyond the ability of individual schools to implement on their own. Supporters of a broader view of school change advocate that successful change must integrate the content and efforts of reform at the provincial, district, and site levels (Odden & Marsh, 1988; Marsh & Bowman, 1989; Fullan, 1993a, 1993b). Moreover, the complexity of comprehensive and institutionally focused change efforts, combined with the need to give consideration to the specific context where change will be focused, requires consideration of both, centralized, top-down (federal, state, or district) and decentralized, bottom-up (school) strategies (Fullan, 1993a).

Top-down, centralized strategies need to combine pressure and support for schools to change (McLaughlin, 1987). Pressure, in the form of coherent policies and standards at the legislative and district levels, can provide the initial stimulus for change, serve to set high expectations for curriculum content and student performance,

and help schools focus attention on the reform objective (Smith & O'Day, 1990). Among the types of systemic resources schools require to support local reform efforts are the following: i) appropriate forms of performance assessment, ii) new and revised instructional materials, iii) expanded opportunities for professional staff development, iv) redefined authority relations between schools and districts, and v) increased social capital that schools need to function successfully (Wohlstetter and Odden, 1992; Cohen 1995). The power of systemic educational reform can be further enhanced if combined with other reforms essential for supporting learning such as improved social and health services for children from low income families or enhanced early childhood and summer school opportunities for disadvantaged children (Vinovslis, 1996).

Concomitantly, locally designed, bottom-up strategies are considered equally essential. When personnel at the local level work collaboratively with other stakeholders to meet demands for higher standards of student learning, the agreed upon strategies are more likely to take into account specific needs and conditions. Evidence indicates that, when designing improvement initiatives becomes the responsibility of those at the local level, the content and process of such initiatives are more likely to take into consideration the normative, cognitive, and structural realities of the individual school, thereby building ownership, expertise, and commitment for those changes (Marsh & Bowman, 1989). Research has identified the school principal as the "pivotal person in a position of power and leadership who acts to influence others in the school community" in determining what aspects of the context will be considered as legitimate priorities for change and then justifying, advocating, and endorsing the selected intents and strategies (Derkatz, 1996, p. 1).

Process elements. In dynamic relationship with context and content, the processes and strategies required for effective school improvement are equally complex. As our conception of school change has shifted from a view of top-down implementation

of single innovations to one of comprehensive institutional redesign involving top-down and bottom-up strategies, discussions of “individual roles and lists of factors” are inadequate in describing its complex processes (Fullan, 1991 p. 81). Rather, researchers have come to reconceptualize the change process by identifying key themes in successful change efforts. A number of the more recent studies provide clear descriptions of the main themes in such efforts. Five major interrelated themes of the change process are identified and described in the literature as working together toward successful school improvement: a) vision building, b) evolutionary planning, c) shared leadership and management, d) resource acquisition and support, and e) monitoring and problem coping.

a) Vision building: Most recent descriptions of the change process make reference to the importance of having a clear vision with respect to the direction and destination of the change being embarked upon. Fullan (1991) described vision as “a highly sophisticated dynamic process, which few organizations can sustain” (p. 82) and as “a constant process” that “feeds into and is fed by all other themes.... permeating the organization with values, purpose and integrity for both the what and the how of improvement” (pp. 81-82). Vision therefore, provides the focus or mobilizing force for the difficult task of change. In addition, by specifying a desired set of future conditions, organizational members become accountable to the vision for their actions while at the same time the vision provides them with a sense of security in the confusion typically surrounding active change efforts (Louis & Miles, 1990). In their analysis of the relationship between state-level and local-level reforms, Odden & Marsh (1988) found that in effective schools, the school’s vision fits with the demographic and local school environment, serving to transform and expand state and district level policies and activities so that they fit with the local conditions.

Although much of the literature describes the importance of having a vision and

identifies what should be part of such a vision, there is substantially less evidence reported on how such a vision for change is best developed. The studies that offer some direction in this regard describe vision as the outcome of change efforts as much as the focus of such actions. Rosenholtz (1989), for example, in a study of rural elementary schools, concluded that shared school visions (e.g., placing teaching and learning at the forefront of improvement) evolved through the dynamic interaction of organizational members and leaders. Such interactions centered around school goal setting activities, teacher socialization patterns, teacher evaluation practices, and policies of student behaviour. Further, Louis & Miles' (1990) analysis of urban secondary schools undertaking a change program led them to reach four conclusions as to how shared visions develop: First, visions develop over the course of the planning process and are not necessarily fully articulated at the beginning of the change process. Second, visions consist of a complex integration of evolving themes arising out of change efforts and activities in progress. These actions serve at once to develop, reinforce, and share the meaning of the evolving vision. Third, visions are not generated by principals or other individuals in formal leadership positions, but rather develop collectively through action and reflection. Consensus on vision is increased through wide involvement of staff in program planning and implementation in cross-role settings. And finally, although the principal does not develop the vision, he/she plays a significant role in helping people to connect themes and spread the evolving vision to a broader group in the school.

b) Evolutionary planning: Planning is an essential step in any attempt at introducing change. The form that such planning takes will of course depend in large part on the conditions present in a particular school's context at the time a change is being contemplated. These conditions will include many of the readiness factors already discussed as part of the context and content dimensions of change (i.e., consensus as to the nature, need, and practicality of a proposed change, as well as supportive

organizational conditions). Planning also needs to take into account i) the nature of the political environment within and outside the school at the time that change is being introduced, ii) the urgency and complexity of the problem(s) to be addressed, iii) the level of energy for change, and iv) the degree of flexibility or autonomy that a school has in designing and implementing the change (Roberts, 1992).

Beyond these contextual considerations, however, there are considerations arising out of organizational theory which must be taken into account during the planning process. Louis & Miles (1990) argued that planning models based on rational-bureaucratic views of schools, such as long-range and strategic planning, are inappropriate because schools are not rational organizations. Rather, schools are highly dynamic environments, with ambiguous goals, and characterized by tight control of administrative functions and loose control over core teaching and learning functions. Therefore, predetermined plans with fixed strategies and outcomes are inappropriate. Conversely, less prescriptive planning models, such as those focused upon making small incremental changes, are equally ineffective because they are not powerful enough to make the types of institutional changes required if substantive changes in practice are to occur.

In their study of urban schools, Louis & Miles (1990) found that successful change was more likely if it was allowed to evolve rather than being tightly pre-designed. They describe the planning process as follows:

This approach is evolutionary in the sense that, although the mission and image of the organization's ideal future may be based on a top-level analysis of the environment and its demands, strategies for achieving the mission are frequently reviewed and refined on the basis of internal scanning for opportunities and successes. Strategy is viewed as a flexible tool....evolutionary planning is more like taking a journey. There is a general destination, but many twists and turns as unexpected events occur along the way (p. 193).

Furthermore, most studies of successful improvement efforts emphasize the importance of cross-role teams in the planning, coordination and even management of implementation activities (Miles & Louis, 1990; Odden & Marsh, 1988). Such teams are identified as critical to both the long and short term success of change initiatives. Although administrator-dominated initially, the process incorporated in the use of teams as part of the planning efforts serves as a means of spreading the innovation. The leader's role is one of helping participants make connections between various change efforts and promoting the coordination of improvement efforts around themes. From these themes emerges the school's vision in the form of targeted areas for improvement. Furthermore, teams not only provide increased teacher-teacher collegiality, but also teacher-administrator collegiality and serve as the forum for reflecting upon and reaching consensus on the content and process of a school's improvement agenda. Again, studies describe principals of successfully improving schools as active leaders of the planning process (Miles & Louis, 1990). They help participants articulate the emerging school vision, communicate it to all affected participants, and model it in the daily activities of the school.

c) Empowerment and shared leadership and management: Studies of decentralization reforms, such as school-based management and shared decision making, provided evidence that in most cases increased involvement by teachers, parents, or the community in school decision making did not in itself translate into greater influence by these stakeholders (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990). In most reported cases, organizational participants did not engage in or influence genuine decision making on important issues relating to a school's critical functions. However, more recent studies of successful school improvement place decentralization of power as part of a broader focus on empowerment and shared leadership and management (Mohrman, Lawler, & Mohrman, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990). Such a perspective is more consistent with

comprehensive and complex view of schools and school change.

Empowerment refers to a more expanded form of involvement, beyond the simple devolution of power to lower levels and the participation of school-level personnel on organizational decision-making bodies (Lawler, 1986). The participatory management framework developed by Lawler was built on the premise that participation is positively associated with organizational effectiveness if it represents greater distribution of four essential elements: power, information, knowledge and skills, and rewards. Applying this framework to schools, other scholars have described successful schools as follows: i) power is dispersed throughout the school by means of active participative structures including a governing council, standing committees, and ad hoc committees, ii) staff members are engaged in increased professional development covering a wide range of areas, iii) multiple mechanisms are in place for accessing organizational information to facilitate informed decisions, and d) in place are reward systems that motivate and reinforce efforts based on performance (Mohrman, Lawler, & Mohrman, 1992; Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994). The goal in such an expanded view of participation is not simply to provide the “authority” for making decisions through specially designed mechanisms for increasing participation, but rather one of “empowering” participants so that they may effectively use the authority granted them toward improvement of the teaching-learning process.

However, empowerment is more than simply a restructuring phenomenon. Rather, it involves changes to the culture of the school as well. Willing and meaningful participation is dependent upon the beliefs and norms individual participants hold with respect to such concepts as participation, collegiality, and control (Little, 1982). These beliefs are embedded within the culture of the school and are not easily changed simply through legislative or regulatory policies and procedures. Changes in decision-making roles are dependent upon opportunities to interact in ways that challenge

traditional norms of isolation and individualism and promote collective and collaborative action (Hargreaves, 1995). Such changes can be facilitated through leadership actions such as the creation of teams, creative scheduling, and collaboration and consensus around purposes and principles (Lugg & Boyd, 1993; Conley & Bacharach, 1990).

Empowering a school staff has implications for the leadership and management roles of principals and staff members alike. Louis & Miles, (1990) make a distinction between leadership and management, stressing that both are essential. Leadership for change involves activities around the vision building and planning elements, whereas the management function is related to resource issues, monitoring, and problem coping. Although the principal must assume responsibility for leadership and management, Louis & Miles, (1990) describe that role as being “active” rather than “dominating.”

Principals must give up some of their singular “authority” within the school if they wish to have real influence over the innovation process. By expressing enthusiasm and confidence in the change program, but slowly promoting the assumption of genuine leadership roles by others, principals of secondary schools can build a network of influence that permits them to become “instructional leaders” in all departments (p. 236).

In addition to creating opportunities for increased involvement of others in activities surrounding school improvement, effective leadership includes the acquisition and allocation of resources and rewards, and actions that visibly support and communicate the vision and outcomes of the change program.

d) Resource acquisition and support: Fullan & Miles (1992) described change as “resource hungry,” requiring resources of several types (p. 750). Three sets of resources are typically referred to in the literature on effective schools and school change: i) physical or technical resources, ii) resources related to leadership and empowerment, and iii) resources to support individual and organizational learning (Louis & Miles, 1990; Corcoran, 1990; Cohen, 1995). The acquisition of these

resources can increase the school's capacity for improvement, while their absence often represents a barrier to implementation (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995).

Money is the master resource since it is used to purchase other resources, such as time, personnel, space, and equipment. In Louis' & Miles' (1990) survey of schools, money for change was typically in short supply. However, what was more critical than the amount of money available was where it was allocated. Generally, more change was associated with schools where money was used for assistance and ongoing coordinating efforts rather than on add-on personnel positions and stipends.

Of the physical resources required for effective implementation of change, time is the one most frequently mentioned (David, 1991; Fullan, 1992; Adelman & Panton Walking Eagle, 1997). Fullan and Miles (1992) stated that "every analysis of the problems of change efforts that we have seen in the last decade of research and practice, has concluded that time is the salient issue" (p. 750).

A second set of resources consist of those associated with effective leadership and management of the change initiative and the degree of influence and empowerment participants at the school feel they possess. The role of leadership, particularly that of the principal, has already been referred to with respect to development of a sustained vision and evolutionary planning. In addition, schools benefit from encouragement, enthusiasm, sympathy and other psychosocial resources from the district and school based leaders (Louis & Miles, 1990). Also already discussed was the importance of four essential resources for true empowerment; power, information, skills and knowledge, and rewards (Mohrman, Lawler, & Mohrman, 1992; Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994). Of particular importance in Louis & Miles' (1990) case study schools was control over direction and process of implementation by those affected by the change. Such control was typically distributed through cross-role groups. The creation of structural mechanisms, expanded staff roles and

responsibilities, as well as the actual ability to make important implementation decisions were considered strong resources for improvement. Finally, the conditions that support learning must be part and parcel of any change effort (Fullan & Miles, 1992). This involves provisions for professional development and assistance including training for leaders, opportunities for teachers to collaborate and conduct action research, opportunity for practice in non-threatening environments, and opportunity for sharing and joint problem-solving (Fullan & Miles 1992; Glickman 1990; Louis, 1993).

Furthermore, the complexity of the problems impacting schools require dialogue and collective action around common purposes. Such actions are dependent upon the establishment of contacts and collaborative relationships between school personnel and others outside the school. Schools need such contact to become more informed about their external environment and to be better able to take advantage of opportunities to join forces with others to help solve complex problems. Studies of actively changing schools show that they are part of a wider network that includes partnerships with other schools, other districts, secondary institutions, social agencies, corporate institutions, as well as links with the local business and parent communities (Calwelti, 1995; Fullan, 1994; Wohlstetter, Smyer & Mohrman, 1994). Principals of such schools were generally found to be entrepreneurial, serving as the liaison with the outside world and acting as primary information gathers and interpreters.

Finally, in addition to the types of resources available, also considered critical are the actions relative to the acquisition of resources. Principals of schools involved in active reform are described as being actively involved in i) scanning the environment to locate resources, ii) negotiating aggressively to acquire resources, iii) reworking existing resources to better fit with new vision, iv) developing effective structures like coordinating teams or steering committees, and v) establishing a network of

relationships outside the school (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990).

e) Ongoing monitoring and problem coping: Traditionally, evaluation of the results of change initiatives was something done after the implementation phase of the initiative (Fullan, 1992). An emerging theme arising out of studies of actively reforming schools is the presence of ongoing monitoring of the change program for problems and the use of a variety of problem coping strategies (Louis & Miles, 1990; Fullan, 1990). Louis and Miles noted that successfully improving schools were those who attended to the coordination and management aspect of implementation. Such activities consisted of active monitoring of implementation efforts, widely communicating information about progress, making links between the various efforts, scanning for problems and applying coping action. These tasks were typically carried out by an individual or steering group assigned this task and given the legitimate authority to make a difference.

All change efforts are "problem rich." Louis and Miles identified problems as arising from three general sources: i) the change program itself (its content and process), ii) the people involved (their feelings and attitudes as they struggle with new roles and practices), and iii) the organizational setting, including competing demands, unexpected crises or events, structures that constrain the availability of critical resources such as power and time, and the organization's relationship with its external environment.

Louis and Miles observed that in schools where change was being implemented, diverse coping strategies were present ranging from no coping to very complex forms involving strategies focused on the redesign of the organizational features of the school and elements of the change program itself. They concluded that the schools most successful with their change efforts were those that employed "deep coping strategies" described as involving: i) active scanning for problems, ii) building personal capacity

through opportunities for learning, iii) building system capacity (by establishing awareness of the change program and a clear vision, engaging in evolutionary planning, empowering groups to make decisions on change, and providing resources and assistance), and iv) redesigning the system involving the changing of structures, procedures, and role definitions.

Outcome elements. Outcomes represent the third program element of school change. Much has already been said about outcomes in this chapter since outcomes can be separated from neither the discussion of the influence of external and internal factors on school change, nor from the content and process elements of a change program. Outcomes are the result of a dynamic relationship of contextual and program factors (Pettigrew, 1985; Cummings, Mohrman, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1985, Fullan, 1991; Mohrman, 1994). These factors come together in the day-to-day interactions between administrators, teachers, and students as well as in the interactions between the school and outside interests (Sirotnik, 1987). As such, in addition to being a direct response to specific change strategies, implementation efforts and outcomes are susceptible to the influence of changes in the general organizational, social, and political context. Examples include changes in district and school level administration, staff changes, major shifts in government policies, economic trends, public opinion, and in community demographics (Fullan, 1991). Furthermore, outcomes of a structural or cultural nature, such as those that are the intent of large-scale organizational redesign, have the power to influence content and process aspects of future improvement activities and eventually teaching and learning practices.

The literature reviewed in this chapter points to a view of successful school change as a continual, dynamic process rather than a single event. Fullan (1991) claimed that major change efforts involving institutional redesign can be expected to take 5-10 years. That means that the evaluation of outcomes will need to take place throughout a school improvement process. Sustained efforts at organizational redesign

will have short, intermediate, and long term outcomes. They will consist of those which were intended, in the form of change goals and purposes, as well as those not intended (i.e., issues and problems arising from change efforts (Bolman & Deal, 1990).

Short-term outcomes result from early efforts at determining the need for change, setting the initial intents, and from early implementation actions. Outcomes at the early stages of a change process are in the form of increased clarity and consensus about the purposes and processes of change and a commitment or sense of ownership toward initial change efforts (Louis, & Miles, 1990). These outcomes are often themselves motivators for further action.

Continuation of an improvement initiative depends on the extent to which change i) gets embedded or built into the structures of the school (e.g., through budget, timetable, or policy), ii) generates a critical mass of committed followers, and iii) has established procedures for continued assistance and socialization/education of new members (Fullan, 1991, 1992). Monitoring for these types of early outcomes is an essential component of an ongoing implementation process.

Initial actions and early commitment by participants toward change intents lead to intermediate outcomes over time. Intermediate outcomes can be described as those that involve changes to internal organizational features (Wohlstetter & Mohrman, 1994). These may consist of improvements to a school's a) cognitive (contextual information, pedagogical knowledge, interaction skills), b) cultural (new views of effective practice and norms of collaboration and continuous improvement) and c) structural conditions (expanded roles and organizational mechanisms for facilitating new cultural and cognitive conditions). Successful changes to organizational conditions should in turn lead to improved interactions (teacher- teacher, teacher-administrator, and teacher and student), more effective communication, an improved leadership and decision-making process, and higher levels of organizational learning. Again, effective

change programs need to build in strategies for assessing these types of intermediate outcomes and the results used to inform continued vision building and evolutionary planning. Viewed in this way, change is an iterative process of diagnosis, action, assessment, learning, and further action guiding the design of changes and achievement of long term intents (Mohrman, 1994).

Because the improvement of teaching and learning is the ultimate, long term outcome toward which comprehensive change efforts must be directed, measurable outcome changes of this sort take a long time to emerge and are dependent on the short term and intermediate outcomes referred to above. According to Fullan (1991), successful change efforts consist of the institutionalization of the organizational capacity for continuous improvement. Improvement is reflected in the skills, attitudes, and knowledge of the adults within the school leading toward improved practice, and ultimately, changes to the behaviours, commitments, and achievements of students (Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993).

The Interactive Dimension of Change

The literature presented and discussed above portrays schools as complex and dynamic workplaces influenced by a variety of events and conditions in their external and internal environments. Likewise, efforts to make schools more responsive to the diverse needs of today's students are described as requiring equally complex and comprehensive approaches to change. Change efforts offering the greatest promise for successful school reform are those that take into consideration the school's contextual conditions and focus on the redesign of the school's organizational features so as to provide the cultural and structural conditions necessary for improvement of teaching and learning.

Features of the change elements and the contextual factors within the change environment represent two sets of dimensions of school change. As discussed above,

within each of these dimensions were numerous conditions found to have influence on school improvement. How each of these dimensions and the conditions within them work together represents still another dimension to our understanding of change. Within the active process of change, a dynamic interaction occurs as organizational members, interpret their external and internal contexts, engage in actions related to the content and process elements of a selected change initiative, and in turn respond to the outcomes of these actions. Fullan (1991) referred to this interactive dimension as forming “ a system of variables that interact to determine success or failure” and educational change as “a dynamic process involving interacting variables over time...”(p. 67). Unfortunately, there is limited reference in the literature as to the nature of these interrelational influences and synergetic effects of variables within and between the context in which change takes place and the characteristics of the program elements used in improvement efforts. Lacking is a clear understanding of how they affect school improvement efforts and how schools can accommodate or deal with their affects.

In conclusion, although scholars acknowledge the presence of interactive effects within change phenomena, this knowledge has not been integrated into a cohesive framework. The present study therefore sought not only to add to the description of the dimensions of school change (context, content, process, outcomes), but also to systematically examine the relationships between and within each of the dimensions. These general research objectives, as well as the themes and dimensions of school change discussed in the literature reviewed above, led to the development of the conceptual framework guiding this study.

Summary

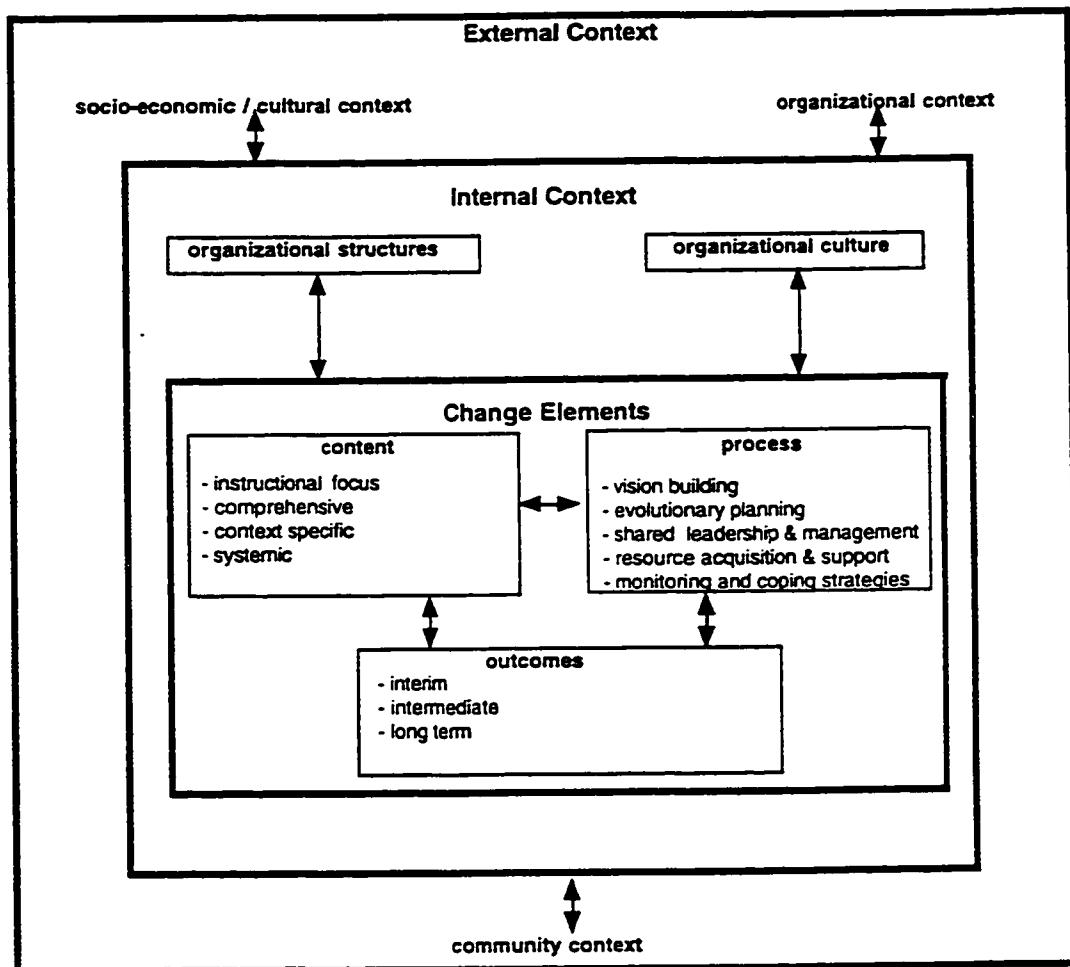
In Figure 2.1 a visual summary is presented of the key concepts or dimensions of school change discussed in this chapter. The figure consists of a series of three nested boxes labelled “external context,” “internal context,” and “change elements.” The outer dimension includes three sets of conditions in the environment external to the

school that influence the school's internal context. These are (a) the socio-economic and cultural conditions present in society in general, (b) the demands within the organizational context, specifically at the legislative and district levels, and (c) the expectations and conditions within a school's immediate community (e.g., socio-economic, political, and demographic). The literature reviewed in this chapter suggested that these conditions serve to influence the nature of the structures deemed appropriate for schools, the expectations of the outcomes to be produced, and the nature of the types of changes deemed appropriate in realizing expected outcomes.

Nested within this broader context is the school's internal context as defined by its unique structural and cultural organizational features. Both features are seen as influencing the actions of organizational members as they define and pursue organizational goals.

Bounded by the conditions present within the school's internal context, are the elements of the specific change program in which organizational members are engaged. These consist of the type of content selected for the change initiative, the processes associated with the change initiative, and the outcomes resulting from such processes. The literature cited suggested that in successful change efforts these elements exist in a relationship that is continuous, dynamic, and reciprocal. The purpose of the present study was to describe more clearly the contextual dimensions (i.e., the internal and external contexts) and elements of school change (i.e., content, process, and outcomes) and to articulate a framework for describing the complex interactions between and among them.

Figure 2.1

Dimensions of School Change

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

The research approach underlying this study is shaped by both the nature of the inquiry undertaken and the theoretical orientation the researcher brings to the study (Merriam, 1988). In this chapter the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study are outlined, followed by a discussion of the research methodology adopted for the study, and a description of the specific methods employed in the collection and analysis of the data.

Theoretical Orientation

All human beings perceive and act based on their explicit and implicit assumptions about the nature of reality (ontological assumptions), knowledge (epistemological assumptions), and ways of obtaining knowledge (methodological assumptions). The various assumptions that we can hold about the world are described as basic, metaphysical truths which cannot be tested against external norms, but must be accepted at face value (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These assumptions may vary across two dimensions, the subjective-objective dimension and the regulation-change dimension (Burrell and Morgan, 1988). The intersection of these dimensions results in four sets of possible basic beliefs or world views. Social scientists refer to these as social “paradigms” or interpretive frameworks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Theorists use paradigms to describe views of organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1990), models of learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978), and modes of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Guba & Lincoln (1994) described four paradigms or frames that guide the actions of researchers: positivist, post-positivist, critical, and interpretive or constructivist. Different demands are made of the researcher operating within each of these frames. The particular framework from which a researcher approaches his/her

study is important from two perspectives. First, it influences the way information is gathered and the interpretations that are brought to the inquiry, and secondly, knowledge of a researcher's orientation is critical to the understanding others gain from those research efforts.

The theoretical orientation of the present research can be described as grounded in assumptions of the interpretive paradigm. Those who work within such an orientation are described as taking a relativist ontological and subjective epistemological stance, and adopting naturalistic methodological procedures (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Using Guba and Lincoln's description, the assumptions guiding the current methodology (i.e., the design and strategies of inquiry) can be described as follows:

- 1) Assumptions as to the nature of reality: Realities exist in multiple forms as socially and experientially based mental constructions. Thus, inquiry must be approached wholistically leading to some level of understanding, but not necessarily prediction or control.
- 2) Assumptions as to the nature of knowledge: In the course of the investigative process, the inquirer and the subject interact and influence each other, thereby co-constructing the knowledge of reality. One data gathering strategy that allows such a co-construction of knowledge places the researcher in the role of participant-observer.
- 3) Assumptions as to methodology: Realities cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts and therefore must be studied in their natural settings and constructed as a result of the interactions between the investigator and subjects. Thus, research methodology is subjective (not objective) in nature, considering, at all phases, the total context in which the research is undertaken.

The research methodology grounded in the above assumptions of the interpretive paradigm is referred to as naturalistic or qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1988). The

intention of such inquiry is on the description and explanation of the phenomenon under study, using the insights and understandings of actors working within the context in which the phenomenon occurs. Marshall & Rossman (1995) claimed that qualitative methods are best suited for research that is descriptive or explanatory in nature, assumes the value of context, and searches for a deeper understanding of participant's lived experiences with a phenomenon.

The dynamic and disorderly nature of organizational change, along with the presence of strong normative influences, call for strategies that can consider a broad range of variables and permit researchers to be responsive to unexpected processes and results (Cummings, Mohrman, Mohrman, and Ledford, 1985). Therefore, Cummings et al (1985) asserted that an emphasis on qualitative methodology is particularly suited for the investigation of this form of change. Additionally, Merriam (1988) described this mode of inquiry as holding "the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p. 3).

For the reasons described above, qualitative methodology was determined to be best suited for the present investigation, both because of the intents of the study and the nature of the phenomenon under study. The intent was to study schools undergoing change so as to add to the descriptive knowledge of this phenomenon and to contribute to the explanatory knowledge gained from a study of the relationships among various contextual and program variables as they play themselves out in the change process. In fulfilling this purpose, the researcher sought to describe both the elements of school improvement programs and the contextual influences in and around the school. Furthermore, there was a desire to explain the interactive effects between various program and contextual factors and, through this process, generate "substantive theory" or theory that "evolves from the study of a phenomenon situated in one particular situational context" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990 p. 174).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the characteristics of a qualitative investigative approach as follows: conducted in natural settings, use of humans as primary data gathering instruments, use of tacit knowledge, qualitative methods, grounded theory, emergent design, negotiated outcomes, case study reporting mode, idiographic interpretation, tentative application of findings, and special criteria for trustworthiness (pp. 39-43). These characteristics describe the approach to data collection, analysis, and reporting used within the present study and are reported in the remainder of this chapter. In what follows immediately, the conceptual framework used to guide the researcher in the use of this methodology is discussed.

The Conceptual Framework

Researchers never begin with a clean slate, but rather enter a research project with preconceived theoretical notions gained from previous experiences, readings, prior theory, and general purposes of their study (Vaughn, 1992). As a result, prior to the actual study of a phenomenon, researchers can determine the likely categories of events, actions, or settings, and their interrelationships (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Such categories provide a global conceptual framework that serves to guide the inquiry approach. The framework helps the researcher make decisions as to which factors and relationships are likely to be most important, at least at the outset, and to determine what information should be collected and analyzed. This framework is typically revised as the researcher collects and analyzes data. Miles and Huberman offered the following description of a conceptual framework:

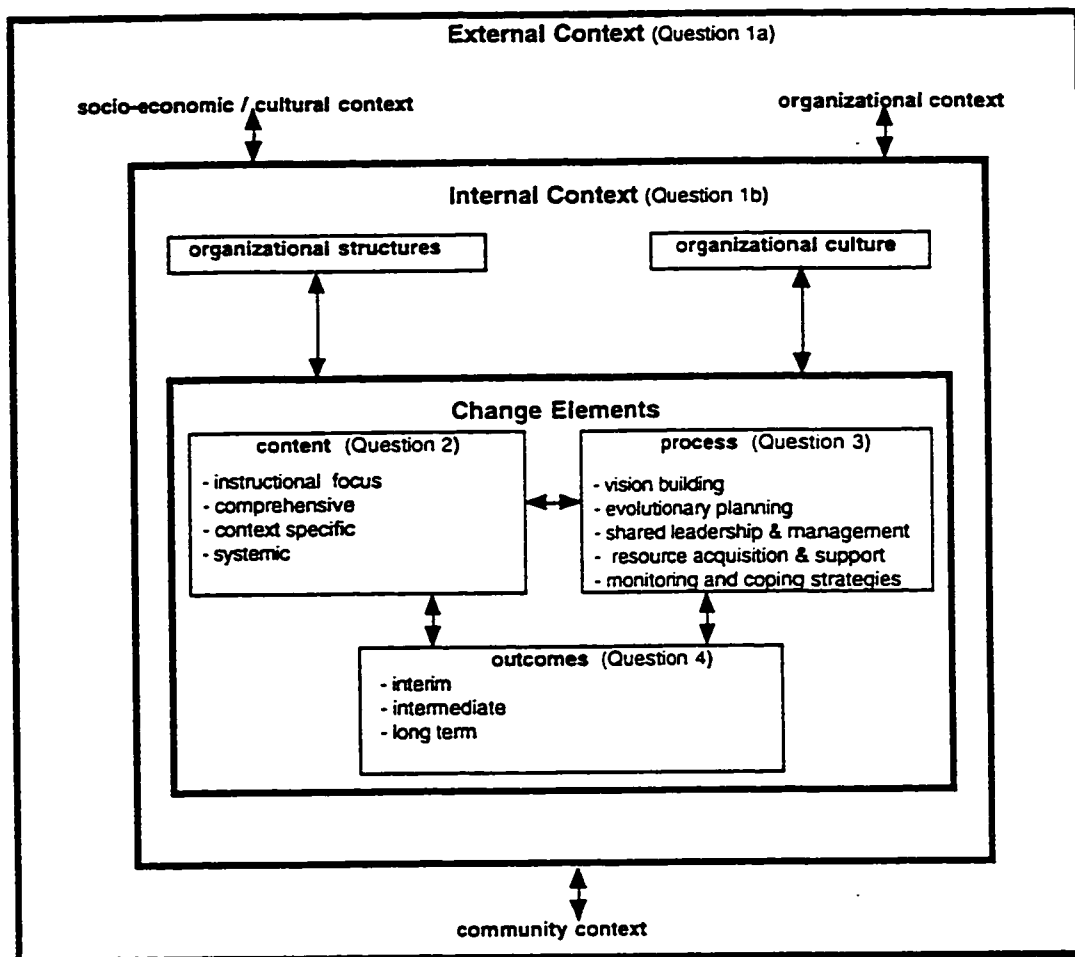
A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied-the key factors, constructs or variables- and the presumed relationships among them. Frameworks can be rudimentary or elaborate, theory driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal (p. 18). (It is) the current version of the researcher's map of the territory being investigated" (p. 20).

To elaborate, a conceptual framework is used to guide formulation of the research questions and at least the initial phases of data collection. It depicts the initial attempts at focusing and bounding the investigative process by drawing attention to the initial variables and their relationships thereby suggesting the types of questions to ask at the outset of the study (Huberman & Miles, 1994).

The conceptual framework developed for the current study (see Figure 3.1) represented the tentative working hypotheses of the variables associated with change and the nature of their relationships. This framework combines the critical themes and dimensions of school change discussed in the literature with the general objectives of the present study (i.e., to describe the change phenomenon and explain the nature of the interrelationships between context, content, process and outcome dimensions of school change). It incorporated the conceptual framework used by Louis and Miles' (1990) for studying secondary school change, as well as McLaughlin & Talbert's (1990) notion of multiple and embedded contexts of secondary schools.

The embedded features of the current framework, as shown in Figure 3.1, are illustrated as a series of three nested boxes labelled 1) external context, 2) internal context, and 3) change elements. Together these represent the dimensions of change investigated in this study (i.e., context, content, process, and outcomes). Arrows were used to depict the hypothesized influence relationships between context and the elements of change as well as the relationship between the change elements. The properties of the framework's dimensions and the interrelationships among the dimensions were interim constructs suggested from the review of the literature. Verification and elaboration of properties and relationships was ongoing, as the study progressed (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

Figure 3.1

The Conceptual Framework

As depicted in the conceptual framework, the content of a school's change program was conceived of as the product of its internal environment and the process used to set change intents. As described in the literature review, the content of school change programs can vary along at least four dimensions: 1) the degree to which intents are instructionally focused, 2) the comprehensiveness of the organizational features and conditions that are the objective of the change program, 3) the contextual factors taken into consideration, and 4) the degree to which change intents are reinforced and supported by other levels of the system.

The change process, in turn, is conceived as being influenced by the nature and complexity of the program intents, the outcomes of past and present efforts at change, as well as by conditions within the school's internal and external contexts. Successful change initiatives have been associated with change processes consisting of 1) vision building, 2) evolutionary planning, 3) shared leadership, 4) specific management activities to support and maintain efforts, and 5) ongoing monitoring and coping strategies (Louis & Miles, 1990).

Finally, as suggested by the review of the literature on school change, the outcomes of particular initiatives (interim, intermediate, and long term) are susceptible to the influence of contextual conditions and other program elements. Outcomes in turn have a reciprocal effect on the content of further change efforts, upon the internal organizational features of a school, and the perception those on the outside have of the school.

Specific research questions were developed to correspond with each dimension illustrated in the conceptual framework. Question 1 was designed to explore the nature of the contextual (external and internal) influences upon school change efforts. Questions 2-4 were intended to provide a description of the content, process and outcomes of specific school change efforts. Finally, the fifth question sought to explain

the interrelationships between contextual and program factors as well as between variables within these sets of factors. Initial interview questions, guidelines for observation activities, and initial sorting of data used the concepts contained within this conceptual framework.

The Research Design

Based on the above theoretical orientation and conceptual framework, and in order to “give the intricate details of phenomena and uncover the nature of persons’ experiences with a phenomenon” the design chosen as the most appropriate for the present investigation was a qualitative case study guided by the principles of grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This design and methodology are explained below.

Case Study Approach

Huberman & Miles (1994) described the case study as a methodological approach to the study of a “case.” A case is a “bounded system” consisting of a phenomenon (e.g., program, event, process, institution) occurring within a specific contextual setting that a researcher has selected for detailed study because of some need to understand the phenomenon more completely (Merriam, 1988). Although a variety of methods can be used in case study research, the primary instrument for data collection and analysis is the investigator (Merriam, 1988). The specific methods employed are determined primarily from the nature of the phenomenon identified for study, the researcher’s intents, and the particular theoretical orientation of the researcher. Case study methods associated with a qualitative research orientation typically include individual interviews, observation in formal and informal settings, and analysis of relevant documentation. The intended end product of such data collecting is a holistic description and explanation of the situation through the use of prose and literary techniques. The emphasis is on capturing and communicating to others the

characteristics of the phenomenon under study along with the dynamic processes and socially constructed meanings associated with it (Cummings, et al, 1985).

Case studies can vary not only according to the data collection methods used, but also in the nature of the relationship between the researcher and those being researched (Merriam, 1988; Wolcott, 1992; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). This relationship is a function of roles adopted by or assigned to researchers and participants. The roles that researchers adopt in the field with respect to their levels of involvement with the subjects and their activities can vary from that of a complete observer to one of complete participation (Gold, 1958). Case study researchers frequently adopt a role between the two extremes, commonly described as the observer as participant or participant-observation role (Merriam,1988). In participant observation, the researcher is active in the context of the group(s) involved, thereby gaining an insider perspective, but his or her participative role is secondary to the role of information gatherer. Such a role combines the need of researchers to understand the phenomenon being investigated (as an insider) and to describe it (to outsiders).

Furthermore, unlike more controlled research methods that focus on testing preestablished variables or hypotheses, case study methodologies allow the specification of some variables associated with the phenomenon at the beginning, while being adaptive and allowing for the discovery of new variables. In this way the approach offers a means of studying complex social phenomena consisting of multiple variables of potential importance to the understanding of those phenomena.

The present investigation was conducted according to the approaches and methodologies associated with case study research design. The study focused on the phenomenon of school change as it was approached in one secondary school setting. The particular dimensions focused upon were the context, content, process, and outcomes of change. The study was conducted from the perspective of those who inhabit the

workplaces that are at the center of change (teachers and administrators of schools undergoing change). The sources of data included the observed actions and interactions of participants in their setting, the responses of participants to specific questions asked by the researcher, and documents recording past and present accounts related to the change under study. This researcher was the primary instrument for the collection of the data from these sources using observation, interview, and document analysis techniques. Finally, the relationship between researcher and participants conformed to Merriam's (1988) description of the participant observation role.

Grounded Theory Methodology

Case studies vary according to the purposes of the study and the level of analysis to which the data are submitted. When the purpose of the study includes the development of theory, as was the case with the present study, the analysis must move beyond description to include a more conceptual and abstract level of analysis (Merriam, 1988). Grounded theory methodology, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990,1994), offers a general methodology for the development of theory that is "grounded in the data" (1994, p. 2). The process involves the systematic gathering and analysis of data and the constant comparison of conceptual and theoretical hypothesis against the data. The goal of this methodology is the creation of substantive theory, inductively derived from the data gathered about a phenomenon. Substantive theories are restricted to particular settings, times, or problems, are closely related to real-life situations, derive from practice, and are therefore considered suitable for practical situations particularly in applied fields such as education (Merriam, 1988).

Corbin and Strauss (1990) described specific grounded theory procedures, although they indicated that these can be used flexibly "within limits"(p. 6). They outlined a series of procedures and canons associated with this methodology. These are summarized below and grouped by researcher activity.

Sample selection:

- Sampling in grounded theory proceeds on theoretical grounds.

Data Collection:

- Data collection and analysis are interrelated processes.
- The process should be adaptive and change according to prevailing conditions.
- Broader structural conditions must be considered as part of the process (e.g., those within the organization as a whole, not only ones associated directly with the phenomenon being studied).

Data Analysis :

- Categories must be developed and related through a variety of coding procedures.
- Analysis makes use of constant comparison.
- Patterns and variations must be accounted for.
- Concepts are the basic units of analysis and theory is built from conceptualized data.
- Hypotheses about relationships among categories should be developed and verified as much as possible during the research process.
- Writing theoretical memos is an integral part of doing grounded theory.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Criteria evaluating the outcomes of grounded theory research must be redefined in terms of the procedures for the methodology.
- A grounded theorist uses the scrutiny of others to guard against bias.

The next section describes the procedures used in the present study for 1) selecting the sample, 2) collecting the data, 3) analyzing the data, and 4) establishing the criteria used for judging the research outcomes involved in the investigative methodology.

The Investigative Methodology

Sample Selection

In grounded theory, research site and participant selection does not require drawing representative samples, but rather, involves theoretical sampling. When using theoretical sampling, the objective is to select sites and participants that will contribute to rich descriptions and conceptually dense theory based on concepts associated with the phenomenon being studied, their properties, and variations (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Initially contacts with several potential sites were made on the basis of referrals by university professors and school administrators known to the researcher. Initial criteria for contacting schools was the potential that these sites had for the study of a school-wide change effort. Criteria applied by the researcher for selecting a school appropriate for the study included the following: 1) preference was given to secondary schools, 2) the school had to be presently engaged in a school-wide change effort as evidenced by the presence of some form of involvement by groups or teams on the school faculty in the design and implementation of an identified change initiative, and 3) the school had to be willing to engage in the methodology specified in the study (participant observation), over an extended period (6-8 months minimum).

Applying the above criteria, Prairie View High School, a small rural secondary school, was deemed appropriate for the study. However, negotiating entry to the school proved to be a difficult and prolonged process continuing over a period of six weeks. The researcher's concern regarding the final outcome of these negotiations, along with the fact that time for collecting data was being impacted, resulted in negotiation for entry at two alternative sites. Eventually all three sites indicated agreement to be part of the study. The uncertainty of any one site continuing participation in the study over the time period deemed essential to the collection and analyses of the required data, along with the unpredictable and tentative nature of the change efforts at all three sites,

resulted in a decision by the researcher to proceed with data collection at all three sites.

However, the opportunity to study change efforts over a longer period of time and the greater possibilities for theoretical sampling at Prairie View led to the ultimate decision to subject data at this site to the more detailed analysis required to generate theory. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, it was decided to report only on the data collected at this one location.

At Prairie View, all participants agreeing to be part of the study were interviewed (see Appendix A for letter of informed consent). All groups directly involved with the change initiative, who agreed to participate, were participants in the study. The extent of researcher involvement and observation varied from group to group and was dependent upon the extent of data being generated from such observations. Furthermore, individuals who had the most direct influence on and involvement in the change initiative at Prairie View contributed to the majority of the data collected. Included as participants were school administrators, original planning committee members, and current team members as they were able to provide the most information related to the initial and developing concepts surrounding the change being studied. The constitution of these groups is described more fully in chapter four.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected from three main sources: 1) interviews, 2) observations, and 3) document reviews. A total of 32 visits over a 9 month period (October-June) were made to the research site. Interview responses represented the bulk of the data obtained, while field notes taken at meetings was the second most used data collection technique. A total of 13 interviews were conducted, consisting of 3 administrators, 1 support staff member, and 9 teachers. A total of 22 formal meetings of various types were attended. Informal observations and documents were used as background, allowing the construction of more site-specific interview questions, as well providing a means of triangulation and confirmation.

Interviews. Interviews are considered an especially effective method of collecting information, particularly when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants toward certain phenomenon or events (Berg, 1992). A semi-structured interview schedule was used, which reflected the major categories of the conceptual framework and themes discussed in the literature. The interviews were guided by a list of questions, but the exact wording and order of the questions remained flexible so as to allow the researcher to better respond to individual respondents and to the phenomenon under study as it evolved (Merriam, 1988). Appendix B lists the general questions (intended to generate information related to each of the change dimensions being studied) along with additional question probes used by the researcher to generate fuller responses. Although the general questions remained the same throughout all interviews, question probes varied in relation to individual respondents and emerging conditions in the field. For example additional specific questions were often asked based on information generated from ongoing observational, document, and interview analysis. Similarly, as data saturation occurred in a specific area some questions were dropped from later interviews.

Interviews were requested of all teachers and support staff at the school. All those volunteering to participate were interviewed. Interviews were each of approximately 45 minutes in duration. All interviews were tape recorded and a transcript made of the recording. After the researcher reviewed the transcript and made corrections, participants were given a copy of their transcripts to verify them for accuracy. In addition, participants were asked to respond in writing a) if any changes in circumstances had occurred since the time of their interview, or b) in response to a request by the researcher for clarification or elaboration of specific parts of the interview text. Interviews were spread out over a 6 week period allowing the researcher to adapt questions for later interviews based upon knowledge obtained from

previous interviews as well as from knowledge gained from ongoing analysis of observational field notes, documents, and early interview transcriptions. Such a strategy allowed the researcher to become more focused in the data collection process based on emerging themes arising out of ongoing analysis of the data.

Field Observations. Observational data was collected throughout the period in which the researcher was actively engaged at the school. Observations were of two types, informal and formal. Informal observations included accounts of activities that took place in informal settings such as staffrooms, main offices, hallways, teacher's classrooms, and gymnasiums. Informal conversations held with teachers and other faculty members, as they were encountered in the setting, provided additional data. These observations helped the researcher generate data that could later be confirmed through other methods, as well as serving to confirm data already obtained by other means.

Formal observations were those that took place at official meetings of various types. Because change is essentially a group-level phenomenon (Cummings, Mohrman, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1985) meetings constituted a substantial portion of observational data. Various meetings were attended for different purposes. Whereas some were attended for the contextual data that observations there might provide (i.e., parent council and staff meetings), others represented opportunities to observe and participate in activities directly related to the school's change initiative (team and committee meetings). The researcher's level of involvement in these formal group encounters varied from group to group depending on the extent to which group members sought researcher participation. At some meetings (e.g., those of the central coordinating committee and at staff meetings where results of ongoing analysis was being reported) the researcher had an active participant role. His role at other meetings (e.g., some of the team meetings) was purely an observational one.

Observations of both types, formal and informal, were generally recorded as rough field notes, if appropriate, or recalled and recorded on audio tape. These rough notes and audio recordings, along with the researcher's commentaries and immediate impressions, were then used to write out full reports of school visits. Also noted in these reports were links with other data sources including interviews and documents.

Documents. Documentation designed to provide information on the school's change initiative, as well as the internal and external context in which it was taking place, was obtained both at the school level and from sources outside the school. In-school documents included, but were not limited to, school handbooks, official school plans, parent newsletters, staff bulletins, teacher timetables, supervision schedules, and minutes of meetings including those that took place prior to the involvement of the researcher. Relevant Alberta Education documents were reviewed as background to the study, as were memos and official Board minutes and policies at the district level. Longer documents were usually summarized while shorter documents had relevant data highlighted and the entire document filed with other data.

A key set of documents for the school reported in this dissertation was a collection of notes, diagrams, and meeting minutes kept by the principal. These documents were valuable in providing an historical account of the planning process that had taken place prior to the direct involvement of this researcher and as the basis for analysis of the change content and early planning strategies. The entire set of documents was summarized by this researcher into an 8 page document and then returned to the principal for review and discussion at a subsequent meeting between the two parties.

An additional source of document data consisted of the notes taken by various teams at their final meeting at the end of the year. Each team was required to engage in an informal assessment of the change initiative they had participated in over the year. The investigator was provided access to these notes as part of the negotiated relationship

between site participants and himself. The researcher suggested possible questions that teams could use to guide their informal assessment and agreed to provide feedback to site participants about their change initiative using team responses to those questions along with information gathered through other sources. The notes generated within each of the teams added to the richness of the data already collected through other means and confirmed many of the findings already made.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study was subjected to three levels of analysis, using a variety of techniques and tools, and was conducted to various extents during different time periods through the course of this study. Following Strauss and Corbin's (1990) description of each of the three types of analysis, each level of analysis fulfilled a different purpose within the present study. First level analysis was useful in providing first impressions of the change initiative under study for both researcher and participants. It led to the researcher grouping data around initial categories. Subsequent second level analysis was more abstract in nature and contained more researcher interpretation of the raw data. The results of these early analyses were shared with site level participants for reaction and feedback while the researcher was still in the field. Further second-level analysis was conducted only after the researcher exited the site and subjected the data to more sophisticated analysis using an existing framework for interpreting organizational phenomenon developed by Bolman & Deal (1990). This latter analysis was more conceptual in nature and aided in reducing the data to more manageable levels. Third level analyses, designed to generate theory, represents an even higher level of abstraction using a process referred to as selective coding (Strauss & Corbin,1990). This form of analyses consisted of specifying core and subsidiary categories indicated by the data and the nature of their relationship to each other. The procedures used as part of each of these forms of analysis is described below.

First level analysis. First level analysis consisted of subjecting the data to

analysis using a process which Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to as open coding. They describe such coding as a “process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (p. 61). Coded categories were used to organize the data that was collected early in the study. As suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994), a start list of provisional codes was used. These codes consisted of provisional subcategories under each of the general categories established as a result of the first four questions asked. These codes were constructed from the conceptual framework, outlined in Figure 3.1, and were designed to contribute to a descriptive account of each of the change dimensions. For example, some early codes used to categorize contextually related data included the following: 1) organization of work, 2) traditions, and 3) policies, procedures, and practices. Data related to the content of the change embarked upon had codes such as these: 1) structural variables, 2) normative variables, 3) clarity, 4) demand, and 5) practicality. These codes underwent substantial changes, especially during the first two months of data collection and analyses. As the amount of data increased questions were constantly asked about each category established and subsequent events, actions, and interactions constantly compared to previously established categories for fit. In this way initial categories were adapted, elaborated, or deleted. Eventually, as categories became more developed, the codes used for analyzing subsequent data became more stable.

The actual mechanical process involved in this form of open coding included several readings of raw interview, observational, and document data. During each reading abbreviated code labels were assigned and recorded in the left margins of the data being analyzed. The abbreviated code labels were contained in a master list of codes and their descriptions, thus allowing easy reference and the facilitation of quick identification of new categories if present codes did not fit the data being reviewed. Analytical interpretations and reflections about the data were entered in the right

margins. For example, a two sentence statement by one interview respondent led to the code PRB:TYP (problem type) being assigned to it in the left margin. In the right margin was written "trust issue". This interpretive label resulted in subsequent data being questioned as to the level of trust represented, eventually forming a new category. During second level analysis, this category was then grouped with other categories, culminating in the generation of a conceptual category called "staff differences".

Several days worth of field reports were written up as summary descriptions using the categories established to that point. When the categories became somewhat stable, the coded data (including interview transcripts, summarized field reports, and document data) were cut into separate pieces of paper and filed in individual files bearing the name of each general and subsidiary category as they emerged from the data. Descriptive analysis summaries were then written up for each major category established and shared with site participants on an ongoing basis. Participant feedback served to confirm the accuracy of the data collected, suggested new areas to explore, and generated additional information for categories already established.

Second level analysis. Second level analysis involved a set of procedures used to put data back together in new ways after it has been broken down using open coding. Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to such procedures as axial coding. This form of coding leads to theme analysis or concept development resulting from the researcher's interpretations of connections between categories. In other words, the researcher is still involved in formation of categories, however these new categories are created not from the properties and dimensions of the events, actions, and interactions observed, but rather from the relationships suggested when making connections between a category and its subsidiary categories. It involves a more abstract specification of a category in terms of the conditions that give rise to the phenomena embraced by the category.

Axial coding involves both inductive and deductive thinking about data.

Hypothesized relationships between categories and sub-categories arise from close examination of the conditions, context, strategies, and consequences associated with events and actions. Verification of the hypothesis is accomplished through further systematic analysis of the data to substantiate the relationship hypothesized. It is through this iterative process that themes and concepts were constructed.

The data collected at Prairie View were subjected to two forms of axial coding. The first form took place in the field and was interweaved with open coding. As data describing events, actions, and interactions related to the context, content, process, and outcomes categories were coded using open coding, and categories formed, the data in each of the categories was reviewed to generate new categories within these categories. Emerging categories were recorded in the form of researcher analytical notes and displayed in summarized form using charts. Insights into possible relationships were recorded in the form of "memos" trying to explain the information contained in the analytical notes and charts. These initial attempts at establishing themes and relationships were subjected to continual questioning by the researcher, comparison and testing against new data, and shared with the study participants (individually and in groups) to test for fit.

Although the above process yielded a variety of possible relationships it did not prove to be an efficient way of systematically testing these relationships against the massive amounts of data that had been collected. Thus a decision was made, after this researcher had left the field, to submit the data to further analysis using an established framework, and in so doing, submit the data to a more systematic interpretation and analysis. Bolman and Deal's (1990) interpretive framework for viewing organizations was selected as the analytic tool for this purpose. In what follows, a brief overview of Bolman and Deal's framework is provided.

The frames or perspectives (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) outlined by Bolman and Deal (1990) are based on the four major schools of

organizational theory and research in the social science areas (sociology, psychology, political science, and anthropology). Each view is based on different assumptions of reality and human action.

Viewing organizations from a structural perspective emphasizes rationality, clarity, and the accomplishment of organizational goals. Achievement of these goals is thought to be best accomplished through attention to the organizational context in which individuals must perform their tasks. Specialization and coordination and control are the dominant strategies to increase efficiency and order. More specifically, attention is given to the establishment of clearly articulated formal roles, relationships, rules, goals, and policies to guide organizational action. In this way personal preferences are constrained by rationality. Change conceived within this frame is used as a means of reducing structural tensions resulting from changes in external environmental conditions. The focus of change is on realigning and reshaping the organizational structures to increase predictability, uniformity, and reliability and in this way enhance outcomes. Those holding to this perspective use restructuring of the organization's formal structures as the most common strategy for change. The success of a change initiative is determined by the extent of conformity by organizational members to goals and procedures and to quantifiable outcomes.

The human resource frame also focuses on the way organizational structures develop in response to organizational tasks and environmental conditions, but adds another dimension - people and the fit between the human and organizational needs. The human resource frame is built around the assumptions that organizations and people need each other and when the fit between the two is good both benefit. When the fit is poor both suffer. The central task of managers, therefore, is to build organizations that produce harmony between the needs of the individual and the needs of the organization. When problems develop the focus of change is on reducing conflict and reestablishing

this harmony. Change processes and strategies within this frame include job enrichment, participative management, self-management teams, organizational democracy, and organizational development and learning. Among the hoped for outcomes from such strategies are feelings on the part of organizational members of security, belongingness, empowerment, and a commitment to organizational goals.

Bolman and Deal's political frame conceives of organizations as political arenas in which different individuals or groups compete for power in order to satisfy their own self-interests. The concepts of power, conflict, and allocation of scarce resources are central concepts within this frame. Political action is most visible under difficult times. The focus of change is the negotiation of organizational goals, policies, and structures to the satisfaction of the major interest groups. Such change relies on advocacy and coalition building strategies and the creation of arenas where organizational members can bargain and negotiate their differences. The ultimate outcomes within this perspective are clearly defined roles and goals that have been negotiated and where self-interests and organizational goals are interpreted as being balanced.

The assumptions of the symbolic frame are in direct contrast to those of the structural and human resource frames with their focus on rational and functional human action. Within the symbolic frame what is important about human actions and events are not the actions and events themselves but rather the meaning that these hold for people. Ambiguity and uncertainty in organizational interaction are assumed as givens. To deal with these conditions human beings create symbols in order to resolve confusion, increase predictability, and provide direction. What events portray symbolically is thought to be more important than what they produce. The language and actions organizational members display through such activities as symbolic rituals, story telling, and ceremonies helps people find order and meaning in their experience. The content of change within a symbolic interpretive frame is focused on the shared

meanings that organizational members hold of organizational goals, roles, and actions. The underlying assumption is that changing people's beliefs about what is important will influence behaviours and practices. Change strategies of symbolic leaders therefore involve framing experiences in such a way as to link change initiatives to important symbols and meanings in the culture of an organization or to reframe experiences and create new meanings. The outcomes of change are considered to be the shared meanings, values, and commitments that organizational members hold about what is important in the organization and how such goals can best be achieved.

The four frames described above served as templates against which open coded data, within each of the major categories, were compared and relationships formed. The framework offered a means of comparing the data along specified dimensions, and in this way yield a more conceptual description of the relationships between previously constructed categories. Through this process, new and more conceptually abstract labels were assigned to the data. The results of this application were recorded in memos documenting the emerging concepts and themes. The memos were then summarized and laid out in a four-by-four matrix. The matrix was used to organize the data according to the four main categories in the study (context, content, process, and outcomes) and the four interpretive frames (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic). Submitting the data to interpretation through each of the four frames resulted in an interpretive description of the change under study. This description forms the content of chapter 4 and addresses questions 1 to 4 posed in this investigation.

Third level analysis. The final level of analysis in this investigation involved the use of a process of analysis which Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to as selective coding. It was used specifically to answer the final question of this study, namely the determination of the nature of the relationship between the four dimensions of change.

Selective coding is a set of strategies aimed at generating theory by identifying

the central phenomenon or core category and relating it to all other categories. The basis of selective coding is developed from axial coding to the extent that individual categories have been described in terms of their properties, dimensions, and relationship to sub-categories. This final form of analysis identifies the central phenomenon of the study.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested a series of steps that must be undertaken as part of selective coding process. They include the following:

- explicating the story line
- relating subsidiary categories around the core category
- relating categories at the dimensional level (according to their properties)
- validating relationships against data
- filling in categories that need further refinement

These steps were generally adhered to in the development of the theory arising out of this study, although not necessarily in the linear fashion described above. The process began with the writing of a general descriptive overview of the “story” generated by the investigation. This took the form of a summarization of the descriptive account provided in chapter four. Next a more analytic story line, describing relationships between categories and identifying the core category and its dimensions, was constructed. Several versions of this story line were generated with the aid of numerous diagrams hypothesizing various relationships between categories. Each time a possible core category was identified and possible relationships to other categories established these were tested and validated against the data. In this way early conceptualizations were progressively refined until the story line and diagrammatic model developed could account for all instances of events, actions, and interactions recorded through the investigative process. The resulting theory could therefore be described as grounded in the data.

Adherence to Evaluation Criteria

Corbin and Strauss (1990) advocated that the evaluative criteria used to judge

research using grounded theory methodology should be adapted to fit the procedures associated with the method. They argued that the usual scientific canons associated with quantitative research (significance, theory-observation compatibility, generalizability, consistency, reproduceability, precision, and verification) either do not apply to qualitative research using grounded theory, or they apply in different ways. Corbin and Strauss stressed that what is important in judging the worth of grounded theory research is that standards for the research are made explicit along with the procedures used to achieve them. Three standards for judging grounded theory research are described by Corbin and Strauss: 1) theoretical sensitivity, 2) generalizability, and 3) reproduceability. Each of these is described below and an account provided as to how these standards were maintained in the present study.

Theoretical Sensitivity. Strauss and Corbin (1990) described theoretical sensitivity as “the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and the capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t” (p. 42). A researcher gains this sensitivity from the literature read, his/her professional and personal experiences, and the analytical process that is part of grounded theory research (i.e., the strategy of constant questioning and comparison of data). This continual interaction with the data, along with the maintenance of an attitude of skepticism toward categories or hypotheses arising from analysis, and the checking of these with others, aids the researcher in producing theory that is grounded in the data while simultaneously guarding against bias.

This researcher’s theoretical sensitivity was gained, first of all, from an extensive review of the literature related to school change. This review resulted in the development of a conceptual framework (see Figure 3.1). This framework served to guide theoretical sampling based on the change dimensions and properties identified in the literature as associated with the phenomenon of school change.

The researcher's background in the educational field further enhanced his sensitivity to the context and the data collected. More specifically, the researcher's long-term experience as a school administrator and his more recent experience as a secondary school administrator made him familiar with many of the day-to-day issues and concerns present within the context of secondary schools. This background also enhanced the researcher's credibility with school personnel in that they had the perception that he had a first hand knowledge of "the real world" in which teachers and administrators work. This fact proved to be particularly valuable when negotiating entry to research sites.

Although first hand knowledge of the field one is studying enhances sensitivity to the type and location of data to be collected, precautions must be taken to guard against researcher bias in the form of preconceived notions as to the meaning of what is observed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Two strategies were used to guard against researcher bias in the present study. First, the researcher remained faithful to the specified methodology established for grounded theory research. This involved the continual use of questioning, comparing data, and considering categories and concepts as tentative until all data were accounted for. Reflections and summaries written following observation and analysis sessions contained new questions to be asked and new areas for observation in subsequent visits to the research site. Contradictory data were explored through further, more specific, questions of participants in an attempt to clarify the contradictions. Following open coding of interview data, written questions were given to interviewees in an attempt to get further elaboration or clarification of meaning of statements made or to pose an important question that may have been missed in the original interview. Some participants responded to these follow-up requests in written form, while others responded orally and their responses recorded as observational notes.

A second strategy to guard against researcher bias was the reporting of preliminary findings to participants. The researcher's participant-observer role, especially as part of the general council (the coordinating committee of the change initiative), allowed him to continually check perceptions that were being formed. In addition, three formal sharing sessions were conducted during the course of the study. One sharing session took place with the principal, another with the general council, and a third with the school staff as a whole. These reports were given at different points in the study and the resultant feedback recorded and integrated with the rest of the data collected to be considered as part of the overall analysis. Further checks against bias were done through the regular discussion of emerging categories and the data upon which these were being formed with the researcher's supervisors.

Generalizability. Grounded theory research leads to the specification of the conditions giving rise to specific actions surrounding a particular phenomenon and the resulting consequences of those actions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Generalizability is therefore limited to the specific situation(s) in which the phenomenon is observed. However, generalizability can be enhanced through greater abstraction of the concepts used to describe the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The greater the abstractness of the concepts and categories used to describe the properties of categories and their relationships the greater the generalizability of the resultant theory.

As a result the theory generated by the present study has the most direct applicability to situations where similar conditions apply. However, the abstract nature of the theory could possibly make it useful across a range of conditions and situations as a guide to practitioners, policy makers, and other researchers as a framework or guide to their actions. Studies of change in other contexts are needed to further expand the generalizability of the theory developed in the present study.

Reproducibility. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), "no theory that deals with social psychological phenomena is actually reproduceable in the sense that the new

situations can be found whose conditions *exactly* match those of the original study, although major conditions may be similar” (p. 15). Therefore the present study is verifiable to the extent that given the same theoretical perspective as this researcher, and using similar methods of data collection and analysis under similar conditions, the general findings should be similar.

Chapter Four

Describing the Change Initiative

This chapter provides a descriptive account of the change engaged in by the staff at Prairie View High School. The chapter begins with a brief demographic and historical overview of the school so as to provide the reader with some background of the setting. This is followed by a more detailed description and analysis reported in four main sections reflecting the four dimensions of change being investigated (context, content, process, and outcomes). The analytical descriptions for each of the change dimensions were arrived at by using Bolman and Deal's (1990) organizational frames as a template against which the data were viewed. The results of this analysis are discussed as themes within the description of each of the dimensions.

The Demographic and Historical Context

The town of Prairie View, which has a history dating back to the early part of this century, is a rapidly growing community of over 7000 inhabitants. Located just 20 minutes from a major Alberta urban center, Prairie View is presently more of a suburban neighborhood than a rural town. Many of its residents commute daily to their white collar jobs in the city. The school was built on its present site fifteen years ago and is the only secondary school in the community. It draws its students not only from the town itself, but from a wide surrounding area as well. This includes children living on near-by farms and ranches, as well as those whose parents live on expensive acreages between Prairie View and the city. The school now has a population of just over 800 students in grades 9 to 12. The presence of grade 9 students was a recent phenomenon resulting from a decision by the district to introduce the middle school concept of instructional delivery.

With the introduction of grade 9 students six years ago, as well as rapid growth

in the community and surrounding areas, Prairie View High School has seen an increase in its student population and concurrently in the size of its staff. At the time of this study the school had a professional staff of 42, with 22 female and 20 male teachers. The administrative team consisted of a full time principal and two part time assistant principals, all male. No other formal leadership allocations, such as formal heads of departments, existed at Prairie View.

From a program perspective, the school operated a French Immersion Program as an alternative to the regular curriculum, was affiliated with an alternative “store-front” program for students at risk of dropping out, and most recently had introduced a Career Development Center within the school. Results on the most recent provincial achievement and diploma exams, written in the core subject areas by students in grades 9 and 12, showed that students at the school scored an average of 5% below all other students in the province in all subjects except Social Studies 30.

When asked to describe their school, teachers commented that the school generally had a good reputation in the community and district. As one teacher stated, “this is the place other teachers in the district want to be.” Reference was also often made to their successful sports teams and Fine Arts programs. Despite the standardized test results reported above, several of the respondents referred to having high academic standards as one descriptor of their school.

Organizationally, Prairie View High School was structured as a hierarchical and bureaucratic system with power exercised from the top down. According to comments made by some of the veterans at the school, this was especially true prior to Ed Parker becoming the principal eight years ago. During that time the principal was described as someone who made the policies and teachers and students followed them. Ed’s leadership style was described as more participatory and consultative. He still made most decisions on his own, but usually consulted with some of the staff, at least in an informal manner.

In the fall of 1994, a committee consisting of some teachers and administrators began planning a structural change initiative for the school. The intent was to redesign the school's decision-making structures and by so doing provide a mechanism for the broad-based involvement of teachers, support staff, students, and parents in the policy making task of the school. It was this change initiative that was the focus of the present study. Briefly, the initiative consisted of the creation of five decision-making teams responsible for dealing with policy issues in five broad areas (budget, communication, teacher welfare, student curricular, and student non-curricular). It was the hope of those involved in the design of the change initiative that structural changes, once introduced, would then lead to more comprehensive change for the school in the areas specified by the teams. During the 1995-96 school year, the new decision-making structure had been created and implementation of the initiative (i.e., putting the teams into operation) had just begun.

The Context for Change

The literature reviewed in chapter 2 indicated that context determines both what needs to be done as part of organizational change and what can be done. The first question of this study sought to examine "the school's external and internal contextual features." It was hypothesized that understanding the context in which change is planned and implemented would result in a better understanding of the other dimensions of change. Therefore, the first task of this researcher was to attempt to gain an understanding of the environmental conditions surrounding the change initiative at Prairie View.

In collecting data related to the school's context, interview questions, observational strategies, and document reviews focused on attempts to yield information related to conditions in the school's external and internal environments. These data collection strategies sought to determine what outside conditions participants perceived as influencing present changes at their school, including conditions at the provincial,

district, and local community level. Similarly, an attempt was made to collect data describing the school's internal structural and cultural features. Respondents were asked to describe the school's management and decision-making structures, as well as policies and decision-making practices related to such organizational activities as goal setting, communication, professional development, and teacher evaluation. To illuminate the cultural values present, the researcher's focus was on staff interaction patterns, school traditions, and teacher perceptions around such issues as collaboration, shared-leadership, professional development, and school purposes.

Because the initiative began with "bottom-up" generated activities of some key staff members, participants generally attributed internal contextual conditions as the primary motivation for change. Participant descriptions of the contextual environment influencing their present changes focused heavily on contextual conditions that existed within the school. Few direct references were made to conditions in the social, political, or organizational environment outside the school. The following comments by various respondents illustrate the point:

- a) (The)... reason for introducing the initiative...was a reaction to the specific situation at this school.
- b) It (the initiative) came from the school, not from central office.
- c) It wasn't (introduced) through administration, which I thought was interesting. It was through the steering committee.

Examination of the data related to the significant contextual features present at Prairie View required the use of all four of Bolman and Deal's interpretive frames, since no single frame was capable of capturing the complexity of the conditions present. Such an approach in analyzing organizational environments is supported by Bolman and Deal. They contended that unless we "can think flexibly about organizations and see them from multiple angles, (we) will be unable to deal with the full range of issues (we) will inevitably encounter" (p. 450). This multiple interpretive analysis resulted in the

generation of four contextual themes, each related to one of the four frames. The themes address the following areas:

- the decision-making structures and procedures present at the school
- the human resource conditions of greatest concern to staff members
- the political conditions present at the school and the forums available for dealing with these conditions
- the symbolic meanings attached to organizational events by staff members

What follows is a discussion of each of these themes.

Theme One: Evidence of Structural Misalignment

The first theme was the result of submitting the context related data at Prairie View to an analysis using the structural frame. The metaphor commonly associated with the structural view of organizations is that of “machine” (Mitchell, 1984; Bolman & Deal, 1990). When organizations are viewed as “machines” they are thought of as rational, predictable, and goal oriented phenomena. Managing such organizations focuses on the specialization and coordination of tasks, controlling the behaviour of organizational members with clearly articulated rules and policies set at the top, and administering the organization by the authority embodied in its structures. The presence of effective formal structures provide clarity, predictability, and security to those within the organization. Problems occur when changes in environmental conditions produces structural misalignment and consequently confusion and uncertainty with respect to organizational roles, goals, and relationships.

Analysis of data generated from participant responses to questions related to the school’s structural features, along with data from researcher observations and school documents, yielded this first, structurally related, contextual theme. The theme is discussed below in two parts, a description of the history of decision making at the school

and the presentation of evidence suggesting structural misalignment.

The history of decision making at Prairie View. Researcher observations, school documents, and respondent interviews suggested that in many ways Prairie View operated as a typical “machine bureaucracy.” Much of the power in the organization was situated at the top. Administrators determined teaching assignments, interviewed job candidates, developed the timetable, ran the staff meetings, and directly controlled the important programs at the school, like the recently initiated Career Program and Alternative School. They dealt with discipline problems, evaluated teachers, and centrally managed the budgets.

There were no formally designated department heads as such, however there did exist subject area coordinators who performed their duties of coordinating subject area programs on a voluntary basis. Decisions regarding school operations were primarily made at the top with consultation with individual teachers or the subject area coordinators. Meetings as department groups varied from one subject area to another, but judging by the evidence, appeared to occur on an infrequent basis. Meetings between the principal and a whole department were even rarer, according to respondent reports. One respondent summarized the history of decision making at the school in this way:

...what has traditionally been the nature of decision making at our school, it's been largely a consultative sort of model, of principal as the decision-maker. Depending on who that principal is, he more or less, in different ways, has some process of consulting and then makes the decision. As long as there is no mutiny, the process works.

Not everyone on staff agreed that the process was working well. In general terms, the interview data demonstrated that there was a fairly recent feeling among many staff that decisions were being made without much consultation and policies arising from such a decision-making process were not being applied or followed in a consistent or clear

manner. There was a feeling that the structures at the school were misaligned and not effectively responding to the conditions present at the school.

Structural misalignment. Structural misalignment occurs when the rules, policies, or goals of an organization are no longer clear to the members of that organization or are no longer relevant to new environmental conditions that may have arisen. At Prairie View, two structurally related issues were of concern to the staff. First, there were feelings of dissatisfaction and a lack of clarity with the way in which policies at the school were being created, administered, and put into practice. Second, there was dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the only public forum available to have input into policy decision making, the regular staff meetings.

There was a general feeling on staff that certain school-wide policies were not being consistently followed by teachers or administrators. One participant described the situation as one where “practice is being driven by reaction” rather than on a clear set of rules and “therefore individuals act according to their personal way of doing things, not one that is shared across the school.”

Staff members offered various reasons as to why the school was experiencing difficulties with the management and enforcement of school policies. An administrator suggested that perhaps some of the school's policies had become outdated.

Ed (the principal) inherited a bunch of policies seven years ago and those policies are still around... but we're having trouble managing some of them.

Others commented that it might be a communication problem, “either no one knows about them (policies) or they are not being followed by teachers or administrators.” The principal suggested that the school's recent rapid growth in student and staff populations made traditional communication and decision-making systems inadequate, as this comment indicates:

The school was increasing in size and staff were expressing concerns about having to abandon their more personal style of communication and operation to one that

involved increasingly more meetings.

Teachers and administrators did not always share the same view as to why policies were not being followed. Teachers interpreted it as a problem of a lack of their involvement in the development of policies and administrators not willing or unable to administer or enforce existing policies. They commented on the fact that they often did not have input into changes to the way things were to be done because administrators were making quick decisions in response to concerns of outside stakeholders. One teacher described it as “policy by phone call. Someone phones-we’d better change that.”

Administrators, on the other hand, generally felt that policy implementation was not simply a rational, predictable type of task. They argued that policies often had to take into consideration the “small ‘p’ political process” when applied to other stakeholders and that teachers often had difficulty in understanding this.

The second concern Prairie View staff had with the school’s policy process was with the ineffectiveness of the primary mechanism that was available to them for having input into that process, the 7 AM. monthly staff meetings. These meetings were described as “administrator run” and generally of an informational type rather than an opportunity to discuss issues at any length.

Staff members felt that the meetings were too large for any meaningful dialogue to take place and served little more than an information dispersal function. Most resented having meetings just for this purpose. All teacher and support staff respondents interviewed talked about the ineffectiveness of the staff meetings as a forum for any type of meaningful communication or input. One respondent described them in this way:

Staff meetings were futile...half of them were asleep, half were doodling or reading, or marking.

Another said:

...we showed up for the muffins and juice. We showed up for the jokes and to watch someone doze off. We used to hold up signs across the table about how boring this was.

Many agreed that, "No decisions came out of these meetings".

Therefore, as they were being currently run, staff meetings were not considered an effective structural mechanism conducive to problem solving and decision making. This condition further contributed to the sense of misalignment between policy and practice and to a general climate of uncertainty about what rules were guiding staff members' day-to-day work and interactions.

Although viewing the data using a structural frame revealed a dissatisfaction at Prairie View with the procedures and structures available to address school problems, it did not reveal the nature of the issues staff members expected to address by their change initiative. In other words, this perspective did not provide evidence that organizational outcomes were the prime motivation for desiring better decision-making procedures. The human resource frame, with its emphasis on the needs of the people within the organization, was better able to reveal the types of issues that were of greatest concern to the staff at Prairie View. Examination of the data using this frame led to the emergence of the second theme.

Theme Two: Human Resource Issues Dominated

When asked to discuss the most pressing issues at their school, teachers at Prairie View invariably discussed issues that related to the day-to-day conditions under which they had to work, rather than the nature of the work itself. Issues related to teaching and learning practices were noteworthy only by their absence in the data. When observing Prairie View through a human resource lens, with its focus on the people within the organizational environment, the researcher's emphasis in analysis shifts from looking at "school designed to produce outcomes" to one of "school as teacher

work-place.” The discussion which follows describes, first of all, some of the conditions that staff members at the school felt were problematic, and secondly their perception about what was within their power to change.

Problems. The primary source of many of the teacher’s concerns was related to the nature and quality of teacher-student interactions. The issues included teachers’ frustrations in dealing with student discipline, absenteeism, and lack of motivation. Teachers felt that dealing with these problems was contributing to increased teacher workloads and job-related stress.

There was a general feeling among many teachers that student discipline was one of the major challenges to their job. Dealing with discipline problems occupied a great deal of their teaching and non-teaching time. Observational data include many references of teacher staffroom and meeting conversations focused around specific disciplinary cases. The researcher’s notes, describing the activities within the school, made frequent references to students lined up at the front office waiting to see an administrator (sometimes with a parent in tow), thus suggesting that a lot of administrator time was being spent on discipline as well.

Dealing with student attendance matters also contributed to the workload of teachers and administrators. There was evidence that a considerable amount of school time and resources were being expended in monitoring and following up on attendance. Teachers took attendance in each class and sent reports to a support staff person whose job was almost exclusively in this area. An elaborate computer system was in place to print out daily attendance reports and an automatic phone dialer called all parents of students who missed classes on any given day. Students with chronic absences were dealt with by counselors and administrators. Despite these procedures, teachers still felt that in most cases the school had little control over student attendance.

Even when teachers spoke of student learning and motivation they generally did so

from the perspective of their own work. The greatest concentration of students who were being unsuccessful or unmotivated was in the lower track courses (i.e., 13, 23, 33 levels). It was classes of these students whom teachers disliked having on their schedules and where large class sizes were considered most problematic. It was also these students who created the most discipline problems, both in class and in the school in general, and whose attendance required the closest monitoring.

There was evidence that many teachers spent countless hours before and after school, and during lunch hours to give students extra help. But, for the most part, the students who benefitted from this extra effort were those registered in higher track courses. One teacher described why he was willing to help these students:

I don't mind giving of my time to the student when I see that student is going to be successful. I don't like to waste it. If I have a student who is willing to put that type of effort to be successful then I'll work with them. I'll take my own time. Usually lunch hours.

Approach to problems. Generally, the attitudes of respondents was that for the most part they were either powerless to deal with issues of discipline, attendance, and low motivation or the problem should not be part of their responsibility. They frequently referred to factors outside their classrooms and often outside the school as being responsible, factors which, they generally felt they had no control over. One teacher, referring to the problems they were having with smoking and violence at the school, exclaimed:

I don't know what I can do to shift these behaviours. Until there is a philosophical shift (in the community).

Another teacher complained about having to deal with too many non-teaching tasks which negatively affected teaching and learning.

Today teachers need to deal with a lot of social issues. We're not social workers. We're not surrogate parents. I think content has suffered.

Some teachers reminisced about a time when things were better, the days when they would “send students to the office, the principal would send them home, and the parents would straighten them out. All teachers had to do was teach.”

Overall, the perception was that the quality of students at the school was deteriorating thus making the work of teachers more difficult and less rewarding. Their powerlessness over the situation produced feelings of diminished morale, confidence, and commitment, as these teacher comments illustrate:

I can't believe some of the behaviours of grade 9s. At one point we used to think we were a little more academic. I think now they (students) have gotten a more laxidaysical attitude as to their achievement. We used to brag about having 60% of the kids going to university. Now that's sort of sunk a little bit.

Another teacher described the mood as follows:

...there's a change in morale. From people wanting to do extra things and being excited about getting to know kids outside the classroom, to just coming, teaching, and leaving. If I was 10 years younger I wouldn't be here.

Viewing the context at Prairie View from both the structural and human resource perspectives revealed conditions of unresolved human resource issues and the absence of structural processes to effectively deal with them. According to Bolman and Deal, during difficult times when systems are either too tightly or too loosely controlled, political action becomes more salient. Use of the political frame, which views organizations as political arenas, allowed the data to be tested for clues as to the extent that power, conflict, and politics were central to the relationships between groups and individuals at Prairie View. Such a perspective yielded the third contextual theme.

Theme Three: Differences between Groups

From a political perspective the key features of an organization are those which take into account the distribution of power, the differences between groups, and the

means available to deal with conflict and negotiate differences. The data at Prairie View were examined for each of these characteristics and the results led to the formation of three sub-themes:

- Administrators held formal power.
- Differences existed between groups.
- Legitimate forums for negotiating differences were lacking.

Each sub-theme is discussed below.

Formal power of administrators. As has already been discussed when describing the structural arrangements at the school, power within the organization was tightly controlled at the top. Administrators had exclusive control over important organizational tasks and programs. No other formal structures existed to share the power within the organization except department area leaders who performed their tasks on a voluntary basis.

Analysis of data indicated that the informally designated department leaders had very little real power and existed virtually in name only. They seemed to serve primarily a convenient information and supply distribution arrangement. Other responsibilities were rather vague. One department head described the position as "It's a title" and the responsibilities are "ones I make up."

Department leaders were neither paid for performing extra duties, nor given extra time in which to do them. This comment by an administrator suggested that subject area leaders were essentially status positions:

Prairie View department heads take the position for prestige not for extra allowance or extra time. One department head was complaining the other day that he couldn't do what he had to do because he didn't have time. I don't buy that. If he can't do it he should give up the prestige of the position and let someone else do it.

The power of teachers seemed to reside in the extent to which they were willing

to accept and participate in enforcing school-wide policies. An administrator commented that the difficulty with policy was that some teachers were not conforming to existent policies "because there are staff members out there who don't agree with them and benign neglect becomes their way of dealing with them."

Support staff had the least influence on school-wide decisions. They believed that many of their issues were related to teachers, that "teachers often made work harder for support staff" and that basically they "didn't care." They felt teachers used support staff as "a dumping ground for jobs that nobody wanted." As a group, they had begun to hold meetings with the principal to air some of their concerns, but did not feel that these meetings were leading to any improvements. As one support staff member exclaimed:

It was the same issues over and over and over. It was going nowhere. It was like beating a dead dog.

Group differences. From a political perspective organizations consist of groups of people divided by enduring hierarchical, philosophical, or life-style differences. Organizational groups are divided both vertically (between levels of the hierarchy) and horizontally (within the same level of a hierarchy).

a) Vertical divisions. The most obvious differences between vertical groups at Prairie View were those between teachers and administrators. Bolman and Deal (1990) contended that conflict between divisions typically occurs at the boundaries of roles and responsibilities. It was not surprising therefore, to find that the greatest disagreement between teachers and administrators centered around issues outside the classroom, where their roles and responsibilities generally overlapped.

For the most part, differences existed in relation to the behavior and supervision of students in the common areas of the school such as the hallways, lunch rooms, and just outside the school. Thirteen people shared in the student supervision duties each day. This included teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators. Teachers felt overwhelmed with the amount of time they had to spend in a task that was both time

consuming and stress inducing. Their position was that they were “not being paid to supervise.” They were putting pressure on administrators to make that part of the support staff (i.e., teacher assistant) job description.

Many teachers also believed that it was primarily the responsibility of administrators to enforce standards of student behaviour throughout the school through the consistent application of consequences for student mis-behaviour. One teacher described the attitude of some of his colleagues as follows:

What ends up happening is the teacher closes the door, stays there and says, ahhh! My world. Four walls. We don't have the time, the energy.

Administrators felt overwhelmed by the task of enforcing discipline policies on their own and were frustrated by teachers who were reluctant to make students accountable for not following established rules. Their position was that they did not wish to be part of enforcing policies if such policies were not supported by the rest of the staff. As one administrator put it, he did not want to be “the sole dirty man...the hard hitter,” enforcing policies for which teachers are not willing to share responsibility.

Two student behaviour issues seemed to be particularly contentious at Prairie View, student dress and smoking. Students at the school were not allowed to wear hats once they entered the school. Some staff members considered students wearing hats as a sign of a lack of respect and wanted administrators to continue enforcing the rule. However, enforcing the rule meant additional supervisory responsibility for teachers and many teachers thought it not worth the time to deal with students who chose not to abide by the rule. Administrators, seeing teachers not enforcing the rule also gave up dealing with the issue. Many teachers saw this as an abdication of administrator's responsibilities.

Similarly, a policy was enacted by administrators banning student smoking from the highly publicly visible front area of the school because of the negative image it

created. When the designated area for smoking was moved to the back of the school teachers who taught physical education classes complained that it had a detrimental effect on their classes and wanted smoking banned altogether. Students meanwhile, ended up smoking in both areas since most teachers were not sure what the policy was and refrained from enforcing any rule.

b) Horizontal divisions. Differences between teachers and administrators were further complicated by the fact that there were divisions among the teacher group itself. The horizontal divisions among teachers resulted from recent school growth. As the school had grown, a variety of teacher groups became visible, each with their own perspectives on and expectations of the school, their involvement, and the role of others, including administrators.

Some teacher groupings formed according to age. One veteran teacher described the social demographics as follows:

We have the old core and we have the young. They come from different perspectives. Because we're getting larger you tend to find more groups than you did before. It used to be the staff and now you find that there are more groups.

The "old core" consisted of the older teachers, mostly males, who had been at the school prior to the introduction of grade 9 students to the school. They usually arrived at the school early and were the most vocal at staff meetings. "The young" included males and females with young families. The time they could devote to the school, outside regular teaching time, differed from that of other teachers. One teacher described the situation in this way:

...people are at different stages in their lives. Some have children, some have children finished school, some have no children. Your social life and personal life are involved in the kinds of decisions you make, you know, from an interaction perspective.

Groups were also identifiable according to where they preferred to spend their non-teaching time. A teacher made this observation:

Everybody has different work ethics. Some people just go off and do their job and run into people when they run into them. Then there's the more, just oriented to the staff room and that's part of their kind of thing. They're the sorta, I don't know, the guys...the "guy group."

The "work in the classroom" group was rarely seen except to pick up their mail and at formal meetings. They included teachers from various departments. The "guy group" was made up almost exclusively of males and included teachers who taught Physical Education and Practical Arts. Most were coaches of one sport or another. They were usually distinguishable by the fact that they occupied the same corner of the staff room during the noon hour (sometimes joined by the males from the "old core") and sitting on the same side of the room during staff meetings. Their conversations primarily centered around sports, student discipline problems, and cars.

Differences between teachers meant that there was not a consensus as to how much involvement they wished to have in the decision-making process and how much they expected administrators to control. Some preferred the old days when the practice was "don't tell me how to teach and I won't tell you how to administrate." These teachers were mostly "old core," who were around when the original school policies were first formed.

Other staff members, mostly the more recent arrivals at the school, preferred less tightly controlled structures and welcomed opportunities to share in the decision-making process. One young male respondent questioned how administrators "who are far removed from what's going on in the classroom" could "make policy decisions when (they) don't have a clue what a classroom is like." This comment by Albert, who was the teacher association representative on staff and considered the "informal leader" by

other staff members, describes the position of teachers who wanted change:

My preference is to be in a school where decisions truly are shared decisions. It's too easy to sit in the staff room and say, 'this is just a stupid policy,' whereas if you really had meaningful opportunity to participate in making that policy, then you can come to see that that policy is made in recognition of the competing interest(s) within the school.

Members of the "guy group," saw the present problem as a management issue. They interpreted the situation as more a lack of enforcement of policy by administrators than faulty policies. From their perspective, power in the school was being too loosely controlled and the roles between teachers and administrators had become "too fuzzy, and nobody knows where we're headed."

Differences between teacher groups were also visible around the issue of staff meetings. The younger teachers felt that 7:00 AM meetings were not acceptable. Many of them were females with young children for whom alternative care was not easily available at that time of the morning. Many of the old core preferred early meetings since they were usually at the school at that time anyway. The "guys," mostly preferred not to have meetings at all and were the most vocal in complaining about the amount of time that was wasted at such meetings. However, since the meetings were considered mandatory, they reluctantly opted for morning meetings since their coaching duties usually took place after school.

Lack of negotiation forums. The political nature of all organizations requires the recognition of competing interests and "creating arenas with rules, roles, and referees to provide... an opportunity to air and negotiate differences" (Bolman and Deal, 1990, p. 401). Generally, staff at Prairie View did not perceive that an effective mechanism existed for dealing openly with differences and issues of a contentious nature. As has already been discussed as part of the structurally related theme, staff meetings at Prairie View were not considered productive in terms of the types of decisions that

resulted from them. They were not effective in seriously debating issues of concern to the majority of the staff, as this teacher comment indicated:

You've got fifty people sitting in the library, one person's got an issue. Forty-nine are eating donuts and reading magazines.

Neither did staff members see these meetings as effective political forums for negotiating goals, policies, and roles. They felt the meetings were totally under the influence of administrators, who set the agenda and controlled the time available to discuss issues of a decision-making nature.

Some teachers felt that staff meetings were not the proper forum for addressing concerns because they did not feel comfortable voicing their dissensions publicly at large meetings. The following comment reflects such a sentiment:

See the problem with the staff meeting, that people found, is that it's very hard for an individual to get up and say, ah, excuse me, I disagree with that issue. It takes a lot of guts to do that. Even with people that you've worked with for so many years.

Lacking an acceptable public forum to discuss and negotiate positions there was evidence at Prairie View that some participants chose more individually oriented political influence strategies. These included lobbying and negotiating with the administrators directly. One teacher described his strategy:

When I've got an issue, I'll go to the person who's the decision-maker. So attendance, that's Fred Green (assistant principal), that's his bailiwick.

Another teacher recounted how, in order to ensure she had sufficient students for her fine arts classes, she had to lobby the assistant principal to allow for more favourable times in the schedule and then engaged in the recruitment of students for her classes.

Still others, used the staff meetings as an opportunity to promote their own self-interests. According to one administrator, some staff members used it as an opportunity

for “grandstanding.” He commented that, “they say they speak for everybody, but they don’t.”

For the most part, staff frustrations and disagreements such as those related to student discipline, attendance, and smoking policies were being expressed in informal and private contexts. The staff room became the typical venue for such expression, since many of the comments were directed at “administration” and administrators rarely frequented the staff room. Dissatisfactions were voiced as sarcastic aside comments, jokes, or comments written on the staff room blackboard. These comments were most often in protest to the way in which a particular discipline matter had been handled by administrators. An exchange written on the staff room blackboard serves as an example:

Author 1: Gee, whiz, has the smoking policy changed? Why change it if you can’t police it? (unsigned, but written soon after smoking area was moved)

Author 2: I assume there is an issue here? I’d be pleased to discuss it. (signed by an administrator).

Indications were that administrators were well aware of the existence of this undercurrent of protest as this comment illustrates:

The ‘team’ that operates in the corner of the staff room...expect administrators to deal with all the problems and all they do is complain. Last week we had some thefts in the school and some staff were not pleased with how we handled it, but nobody came to tell us. We just get it second hand. I walk into the staff room and sit down and they all stop talking. What do you do in a situation like that?

Theme Four: Symbolic Confusion and Signals for Change

The final perspective by which organizations may be interpreted takes into account the symbolic nature of organizational events and human interactions. Using a symbolic frame, organizations are viewed as “theatre,” with actors playing different roles in an organizational drama focused on building understandings and meanings

(Bolman and Deal, 1990, p. 279). A key assumption within the symbolic frame is that words, actions, and events are only important for the meanings they represent to the people involved.

Two particular phenomena at Prairie View High School held special meaning and importance to the staff. They included the interpretations staff members had for the terms “policy” and “management,” and the meanings they associated with their staff meetings.

To the staff at Prairie View, “policy” was more than a set of written rules and directives. It included the understandings of the actions, roles, and responsibilities of the various “actors” on the “organizational stage” called Prairie View. Policy was expected to guide the daily behaviors and interactions of all stakeholders at the school. As one teacher described it “it’s the way we do things...it could be written down or just practice.” Policies were expected to be the agreed upon practices of the school. The problem at Prairie View, however, was that there was a lack of consensus as to exactly what their practices were to be.

“Policy” and “management” also implied organizational roles that various staff members were to assume. The staff at Prairie View frequently engaged in debates over the differences between policy development and policy management. Numerous references are made in this researcher’s accounts of such discussions. Disagreements often arose around the question of, when is a problem “a policy issue” (an issue with the policy itself) and when is it a “management issue” (the enforcement of policy). Generally, teachers felt that they would like more influence in the development of policies at the school, but thought it was primarily the task of administrators to see that these policies were consistently applied by all.

Administrators held a somewhat different view. They interpreted a policy as something “belonging to the school as a whole” and they wished that teachers would take more “ownership” and a more active role in implementing existing policies or make

recommendations for changes with which all could agree.

Much has already been said about the second phenomenon, the staff meetings. Aside from their ineffective practical function, these meetings had become a symbol of the need for serious change. It was a story that was told by many different people at the school. Mostly people joked about the meetings, like when they cautioned the researcher, prior to making a staff presentation, that he'd "better be funny or else no one would listen." But to some, the out-of-control staff meetings were symbolic of a school that was floundering without direction. One respondent, who became visibly emotional during his interview, referred to the present situation at the school, as being "organizationally lost:"

We're lost, Gerry. We don't know where to go. We're scared and we're lost. Pretty pathetic for a teaching profession to say, I know. But, that's what I feel. Look, you know, you don't have control of what's going to be on your schedule. And what if somebody doesn't like you? We've heard horror stories about, wow, this person got this type of schedule and he can't do anything about it. Do you see what I'm driving at?

To many staff members the staff meetings had become symbolic of organizational dysfunction. They represented a deep division on staff, uncertainty as to purposes and roles, and a lack of confidence in a system that some felt was too loosely and others too tightly controlled. This image of an organization "lost" was symbolically enshrined when some staff members decided to film one of the staff meetings and later show it to the staff. These meetings became part of the mythology of the school and a signal for change.

Summary

Examination of the environmental conditions at Prairie View, using all of Bolman and Deal's frames, generated four related themes. Together, these themes describe the

structural, human resource, political, and symbolic issues present in the school's organizational context. From a structural perspective, there was a general feeling by staff members that school policies were either out-dated or inadequately enforced. Of specific concern were human resource issues that impacted upon the working conditions of staff members. From a political perspective, different groups at the school had different perceptions of both the problem and the solutions. Most, however, felt that an improved decision-making process was needed. Symbolically, their staff meetings had become a meaningless ritual that served only to reinforce what most people were beginning to believe about their school; that the policy development and management processes were not effective in meeting organizational or individual goals. Better quality "policies" were what would help them in understanding and dealing with the day-to-day challenges they encountered within their work place and improved "management" would restore order and predictability.

The Change Content

All four sets of issues present in the organizational context at Prairie View produced a perception among staff members of organizational misalignment and a need for change. The second question of this study looked at the specific focus of that planned change, asking, "What was the primary focus or content of the intended change and how was it interpreted or understood by organizational members?"

Change content refers to the specific organizational features, practices, or beliefs that become the focus of school change initiatives. It represents the intents of those in charge of planning and initiating the direction of change, as well as the understandings of those expected to implement the changes.

An extensive set of documents, consisting of principal's notes and meeting minutes of the original planning or "steering committee," were obtained for the period of September 1994 to June 1995, a period preceding the researcher's involvement.

These data were used to determine the intents that the original planners had for the change initiative under study. Researcher observations and interviews with respondents during the period of implementation (October 1995 to June 1996) provided insight into the intents that participants understood as they began implementing the plan and their understanding of the process designed to make the intended changes.

Using the assumptions of each of Bolman and Deal's four frames as an interpretive framework, one would expect that if change participants at Prairie View adopted a political perspective the data would indicate a focus on attempts to deal directly and openly with conflict and group differences. A structural approach, on the other hand, would involve the development of new regulations with a view toward limiting conflict and increasing rationality and predictability. The use of symbols to change belief systems, and in that way the shared priorities of organizational members, would suggest a symbolic perspective. Finally, change goals aimed specifically at accommodating people's needs and feelings would represent a human resource focus to change.

Examination of the data collected at Prairie View showed little evidence that a perspective other than a human resource one was considered in determining the intents of this initiative. There was little evidence in the initial planning documents or in the understandings of participants of an intentional desire to provide a forum where sources of conflict might be brought out into the open and people have an opportunity to negotiate or bargain over differences. On the contrary there was a general feeling that as the new initiative was implemented members of committees should "try to keep personal agendas aside."

Similarly, while the creation of new structures was part of the design put forward by the steering committee, the primary intent of these structures was to ensure that a "fair" and "democratic" process was in place which "provide(d) the school staff a real opportunity to have meaningful input into how the school is run." The

achievement of specific organizational or educational goals was not a primary consideration of the planned change.

Although increased commitment to school “policy” and practices was an intent frequently referred to by planners and participants alike, there was little indication of what goals or beliefs were at the core of the decision-making process. The primary consideration in determining a “good” policy, from one that was not good, was the extent of support that there was for a particular policy based on the opinions of relevant stakeholders. Respondents referred to “public opinion” as the determining factor in deciding what issues would be dealt with and the “democratic” process to describe how issues would be addressed. The following excerpts from interview comments illustrate the point:

- a) ...you’re dealing with public opinion... and democracies deal with public opinion.
- b) You’ve got to read the signs and...be prepared to put the groundwork in to make sure your idea is going to fly. You’ve got to talk to people...and let them know. That’s the beauty of this whole thing is that it’s truly democratic.

The change participants at Prairie View displayed an overwhelming preference toward intents aimed at increasing people’s involvement and taking into consideration their feelings, attitudes, and opinions in order to create policies which the majority could support. As a result the human resource frame was considered the most appropriate frame to use in a more detailed analysis of the change content. This analysis generated three themes. The first two themes refer to process intents and the third to outcomes.

Theme one: Devising a process to improve fit between people and the organization

Theme two: Devising a process to increase stakeholder involvement and influence

Theme three: Intended outcomes were teacher and human resource focused

Theme One: Devising a Process to Improve Fit between People and the Organization

Within the human resource perspective, the ultimate goal of organizational activity and interaction is compliance to organizational policies by producing harmony between the needs of the individual and the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1990). The operative premise is that changing the conditions that motivate people will influence their behaviour. At Prairie View the outcome intended by the steering committee, comprised of the principal, an assistant principal, and eight teachers, was the development of a decision-making process that would motivate people toward the support of and compliance with school-wide policies.

From the very beginning the primary concern of planners was upon the creation of “a process” that would replace the staff meetings in making important decisions in the operation of the school. What “policies” would be focused on was not part of the planning committee’s mandate. It was assumed that the content focus or policy would “evolve as we go through the process.” The specific issues to be dealt with were therefore, left to the individual teams to decide once the process was operational. There was no attempt made by the planning committee to prioritize the level of issues that might be an appropriate focus for teams. The following response to a question related to the purpose of the school’s change initiative was typical among participants:

To focus on any policy. I don’t have a sense that there were particular policies... We tried to create a process that whatever flows through would be received.

Respondents often described the content of their change initiative in terms of the decision-making process that would be used in making changes. Respondents did not express an overwhelming need to specify the nature of the changes needed to be made. Of greater importance appeared to be the desire for improved interactions between various individuals and groups in the decision-making process. The following teacher excerpt

illustrates the emphasis on process over content:

They're looking at the process. They're not looking at the product. We've taken a process orientation. 'Let's go through the process and see what we come up with and how we finish up.' Basically what they're trying to do (is) get everybody to talk on the same wave length.

In planning the initiative the primary concern was that the process be deemed fair and democratic. Emphasis was on ensuring that decisions would be accepted by and match the dominant opinions of stakeholders. If they did not, then they must be "massaged until there is consensus." According to the planners, such a process required teams to respond to the concerns of stakeholders by surveying people's attitudes and feelings, designing policy based on these attitudes and feelings, and obtaining consensual support from affected stakeholders. As one administrator put it,

The ultimate goal is to get policies that at worst the people who aren't real big supporters can at least say, well I can live with it. The ultimate aim ...is to develop a policy that is acceptable or palatable to as many people as is humanly possible.

There was an expectation that what those policies would deal with would evolve out of the discovered needs of the organizational stakeholders as they engaged in the process. For some teachers, involvement in the process represented a new hope that doing so would result in some policy outcome and follow-up actions on the part of the administration, as this respondent described:

Teachers want to feel like, if I'm doing this, then I trust the process-that something will happen and policy will be implemented.

In addition to meeting the needs of stakeholders, the process was also intended to meet the needs of the organization. Administrators viewed the process as a means of making staff accountable for their actions. One administrator described the organizational intent in this way:

It was a vision of Ed Parker's (the principal). He would like to see his staff more accountable, because administration often takes the heat for a decision. We got some cynics and detractors who are always ready to take the cheap shot without being accountable for it. So what we're doing is putting some of the pressure back upon those who should be involved in making the decision, and that's the staff.

The principal used the term ownership to describe the same concept:

I had a vision... that you would get some more ownership, broader ownership for the policies that exist.

Similarly, the intent to involve parents and students in the process was done with organizational goals in mind. According to at least one administrator, the initiative was intended as a learning opportunity for staff members, fulfilling a "need to learn to consult with their clients."

Theme Two: Devising a Process to Increase Stakeholder Involvement and Influence

The primary mechanism created at Prairie View to increase stakeholder involvement was the five policy development teams or "Self-directed Policy Teams." The principal acknowledged to borrowing the term from Total Quality Management (TQM) literature.

They are self-directed policy teams...they are somewhat self-directed, because they can use a plan and they can develop their plan and deal with those issues and report back. The ideas, the theory, even the models come out of quality management. The idea that the people who are actually delivering the service and receiving the service are empowered to make decisions and policies regarding that. That's where my vision comes from.

Increasing participant involvement through the creation of self-management teams is a typical human resource management strategy (Bolman & Deal, 1990). The assumption is that if you give participants enough autonomy and resources (information,

power, training, and rewards) they can be held accountable for their output and the performance of the organization will in turn be enhanced (Lawler, 1986).

The initiative at Prairie View, however, went beyond involving internal organizational members. Their plan also included parents and students in arrangements that allowed for their direct involvement and influence in the decision-making process by their participation on the policy teams. The idea did not come from teacher members on the steering committee, but rather from the principal. Although his intent “was to empower teachers to the highest order” sharing this influence with other stakeholders was an arrangement that resulted from some insistence on his part. The concept was accepted by members of the planning team after some early opposition and much discussion. The following two excerpts from respondents illustrate this point:

1. What was surprising to them was my intent to enhance the role of all stakeholders. Teachers were kind of focusing around themselves and so I think it was a little surprising that we started talking about students and parents sitting on the group. (Principal)
2. My initial instinct would have been that we were looking for something that empowered teachers...but it made good sense politically and realistically to have parent and student involvement. (Albert, teacher on initial planning team)

Theme Three: Teacher/Human Resource Focused Intents

As described above, the intents of the change initiative at Prairie View were formed at two levels and at two different stages in the change process. Process intents were formed at the planning stage by steering committee members. Content intents were left to the implementation stage where individuals (when submitting issues for teams to work on) and the policy teams would decide on the types of issues that would be dealt with through the newly created process.

Most of the issues submitted to the policy teams were from individual teachers

who had concerns about an existing policy. Administrators were the only ones known to have submitted policy issues as a group. When asked by the investigator, during the early stages of the study, what types of policies were the primary focus of the new decision-making process, one teacher referred to them as “environmental policies.” His descriptions summarized the sentiments of many others, as later evidenced in group interactions and interviews:

...school policy probably that affects the every day life of a teacher. Everything from hats to smoking...whatever the perceptions of teachers are who feel stressed, pressured, put down by society. I think they ...want things to be comfortable in their working zone. And they feel that if they're involved in this process they'll probably have impact to make their life easier.

Asked if any issues regarding the betterment of education for students were coming up in discussion of policy, this same teacher responded in this way:

I haven't seen those kinds of policies coming up (instructionally related) as much as environmental policies. They're not coming up because teachers are stressed and they're dealing with their own survival. It's a survival technique.

During the eight months that this researcher spent at Prairie View, a total of nine issues were approached by policy teams. Of note was the fact that five were directly aimed at making teacher work easier. Another four dealt with student behavioural issues. None addressed issues of instruction. The issues examined included the following:

1. Reducing noon-hour supervision duties for teachers.
2. Reviewing timetable and teacher assignments and “seeing if we can devise some innovative ways of utilizing our time so that we can reduce staff burn out.”
3. Reviewing teacher assistant job descriptions in an effort “to make teacher's work easier.”

4. Reviewing the policy of exempting students from exams as a reward for good attendance.
5. Reviewing the policy forbidding students to wear hats in the hallways.
6. Reviewing the policy regarding students eating lunch in classrooms.
7. Reviewing the need for having a weekly staff news bulletin for all staff members.
8. Examining ways of making the school a more welcoming environment for students, teachers, and visitors.
9. Decentralizing the ordering and distribution of teacher supplies to departments in order to increase accountability and cost efficiency.

Summary

The focus for change at Prairie View was influenced by two sets of actors, the original planners and the members of the newly created change teams. Those in charge of planning focused primarily on the development of a process. Selecting the content for the process was left up to the self-directed teams to establish once the initiative went into the implementation stage. The members of the "Self-directed policy teams" were given the task of using the process in selecting the issues from those submitted and addressing them. In the absence of any agreed upon parameters limiting the types of issues that should be addressed, and because teachers were the primary change agents, human resource issues pertaining to teacher work conditions became the prime focus of the initiative.

The Change Process

The third question in this study focused on the process component of school change. Process refers to the leadership strategies and activities associated with a change effort. Specifically the question asked "What strategies were used as part of the development process in implementing the intended change?"

As indicated in the literature, leadership strategies for successful change include

such activities as vision building, planning, resource allocation, and problem coping. These activities are engaged in by groups as well as individuals. Therefore, the first task of the investigator was to search out likely locations for evidence of leadership.

Analysis of leadership strategies during the planning stage focused on the activities of the steering committee, responsible for planning the initiative, and on two of its most influential members; Ed, the principal and Albert, a teacher and one of the informal department heads. During the implementation phase the search for evidence of leadership focused on the activities of 1) the general council overseeing the process, 2) the five policy teams created, and 3) on the activities of three of the more prominent individuals at this stage, Ed, Albert, and Roger, another teacher elected to the general council by the staff.

In searching for evidence of leadership, the investigator's second task was deciding what to look for. This part of the task took place during analysis of the data, both in the field and after data collection was complete. Again Bolman and Deal's framework, especially as it relates to leadership was useful in such an analysis (Bolman & Deal, 1990, 1992). According to their descriptions of the four frames, a structural perspective would reveal a focus by leaders or groups on such actions as conducting analysis of the environment, goal setting, and structural redesign. A human resource perspective would point to evidence of attention to training, psychological support, and involvement as key strategies in promoting change. Strategies such as agenda setting, networking, and open bargaining and negotiation would become apparent by taking a political perspective to the analysis of the data. Finally, the symbolic frame would assist in identifying actions linking the change initiative to important symbols and meanings in the culture of the organization. Bolman and Deal argued that in successful change efforts leaders used all four frames.

Data collection and analysis revealed that the planning stage of the change

initiative at Prairie View was primarily characterized by the structural strategies of a steering committee formed to design the process to be used. Visible individual leadership from the principal and Albert influenced the design and staff acceptance of the proposed change model. The implementation stage of the initiative was strongly influenced by the human resource concept of "self-directed teams." As the discussion of the following themes will show, this led to an implementation approach that suffered from a lack of leadership, direction, and resources.

Two themes describe the change process at Prairie View; structurally focused planning strategies and self-directed implementation.

Theme One: Structurally Focused Planning Strategies

Since the researcher had entered the study site after the completion of the planning phase of the school's change effort, historical documents and interviews with three of the original planning committee members provided the data for the planning stage. Interviews focused on descriptions of the process engaged in when planning the types of changes that would be made and the design of the implementation model.

Planning of the initiative began in the fall of 1994 and continued throughout the 1994-1995 school year. As described earlier, this was essentially a "bottom-up" initiative, so determining who in particular was responsible for initiating the process was difficult to determine. This description by Albert, a teacher who was an active change proponent from the very beginning, perhaps comes closest to describing those early days:

(The change initiative began) I think, almost spontaneously. A group of people, just probably in conversation in the staff room, started talking about 'how can we set up...a better system. And to some of us that meant a more collegial, a more shared sort of decision making. I think (to) others, 'better' would have meant something a

little different. But definitely, what was there could be improved. Continuing, Albert described the establishment of a steering committee that took on the task of planning for improvement.

So we said, 'look who's interested in getting together?' And we started out with eleven or twelve people. We very quickly recognized this was nothing that could be done quickly and we spent a lot of time on team building and so actually (because of) that lost... three or four people. We met a lot and it took a lot of time and I think they weren't willing to put in that amount of time. We ended up with seven or eight people who pursued this right through the year. We ended up with a very strong group of people. It was pretty broad based. It included two administrators and five or six teachers. We worked through what we were trying to do and we produced the model.

Steering committee leadership activities. Evidence from document reviews and interview data supports the position that planning strategies of this initial group focused primarily on the structural aspects of the intended change, both in the way they approached their task and in the focus of their activities. Examination of the data related to the early planning phase of the initiative revealed that planners at Prairie View were engaged, to various extents, in four types of activities: 1) task clarification, 2) environmental assessment, (including people and resources), 3) role, relationship and task clarification, and 4) standard setting for accomplishing the specified tasks. The extent to which each of these tasks were engaged in provides a more complete description of the leadership process at this stage of implementation.

According to meeting minutes, there was a deliberate effort at the beginning to establish clear ground rules for steering committee meetings and clarify tasks. The group held formal weekly meetings, where agenda were set, minutes kept, and responsibilities of group facilitator and secretary were shared on a rotating basis.

Agreement was reached that decisions in the group would be made by consensus, defined as a process where decisions will be carried forward only if “all members show a willingness to accept new ideas and compromise when necessary.” A clear statement of intent was developed early in the process indicating that, “our task is to design a quality decision-making process and management framework for the community.” The principal made it clear to the group that its mandate was to “establish a vision and an action plan” after which time the task of this particular group would be complete.”

There is no indication in the data to suggest that the group went through any formal or informal scan of the environment to identify concerns that needed to be dealt with. Dissatisfaction with staff meetings and the desire for better policy process were the only environmental issues and rationale referred to in the early planning meeting minutes. As reported in the previous section, the focus of planners was essentially on developing a process for enhancing the involvement of organizational participants in policy decision making.

Roles, responsibilities and make-up of the different groups or teams of the new decision-making model were clarified through the creation of an organizational model. The relationship between groups within the new structure were specified, as were the procedures for inputting policy concerns to be dealt with by this process. After several drafts a final model was agreed to by the committee and presented to the rest of the staff at the end of that school year.

The new model consisted of five policy teams that were to deal with issues within specified areas (staff wellness, student curricular, student extra-curricular, budget and facilities, and communication). The composition of each team was carefully determined to include a designated number of teachers, support staff, students, parents, and community representatives. Administrators were intentionally not made part of any of the policy teams, reportedly so as not to give teams the feeling of being encumbered by their influence.

A general council, made up of the principal and four teachers to be selected by the staff, was also part of the design of the new model. There was no written evidence uncovered that specified the role of this council, however the organizational chart depicting the flow of the policy decision-making process implied that they were to act as a clearing house. After receiving suggestions for policy review, they were to direct these concerns to appropriate teams for action, receive the team's recommendation, and then send the recommendation to relevant stakeholder(s) for ratification and acceptance as "official" policy. The principal, in response to a direct question as to the council's role, confirmed the tasks of the proposed council:

To manage the policy development process. They manage it. They take the input in. Decide where it goes. Take the input back. Decide where that goes for ratification, where it needs to be presented and then turn it over to the management (administration) to do it.

The standards selected to guide the process consisted of giving the general council the power to determine the merit of new policy according to the extent to which proper procedures had been followed in the creation of new policy. Standards were not specified in terms of the level of concern that must exist prior to an issue being subjected to this decision-making process (i.e., the concern of a single person was valued as much as that of a group). Nor were standards set to assist team members or the general council in judging the merit of new policies based on the extent to which they meet with certain basic organizational principles or values.

The committee began regular meetings (usually on a weekly basis) in late October and continued on until mid-June when a proposed decision-making model was presented to and adopted by the staff. Implementation on "a pilot basis" was set for the following September. There was no indication in any of the data collected of the involvement of the rest of the staff in the establishment of the new decision-making

model prior to the June 1995 meeting to vote on acceptance.

Individual leadership actions. From an individual perspective, two individuals within the steering committee stand out as having particular influence during the planning phase. The principal, Ed Parker, and teacher Albert Bains. Their individual backgrounds and perspectives were quite different from the structural perspective adopted by the steering committee as a whole. Each had his own idea as to the purposes that the newly formed structures might serve.

Ed Parker was in his eighth year at Prairie View and had 32 years of experience in education. Ed's personal leadership style could be described as most closely related to the human resource perspective. He had a master's degree in educational administration where his special interest of study was participatory management. He had recently developed an interest in the area of Total Quality Management (TQM), had a familiarity with that literature, and frequently used TQM terms like "clients," "service," "quality decisions," and "empowerment." He believed that the best way of approaching problems was by having "an open-door policy" where individuals with concerns are always welcome to discuss issues with him personally. His office had a full windowed wall that offered a clear view of the front office/reception area and main corridor of the school. He was rarely alone in his office.

The data suggest that Ed's interest and knowledge in TQM techniques had considerable influence on the change initiative at the planning stage. One of the first activities Ed arranged was for the steering committee to attend three, half day training workshops on team building and using TQM techniques. He also provided the group with the original diagram of his vision of what he referred to as a TQM model for the school. This became the group's working model and although specific details were changed, the essence of the original model was preserved. To Ed the new structure represented a mechanism that could facilitate broader involvement of stakeholders in the policy

decision-making process which would lead to better policies and greater commitment. He was therefore recognized by several respondents as the person responsible for presenting the "vision" for the present initiative.

All data pertaining to the planning stage indicated that Ed was an active participant, enthusiastic supporter, and influential designer of the planned change initiative. It was on his insistence that non-teachers also became part of the policy teams. To secure the commitment of teachers he offered a symbolic gesture of his support to the initiative by declaring publicly, prior to the staff vote, that the number of staff meetings would be decreased to "three business meetings" and that twenty substitute teacher days would be made available for implementing the initiative.

Albert, a subject area department head, was in his twenty-fifth year of teaching and the eleventh at this school. Albert's personal leadership style was more closely associated to that of the political perspective. He was the school's teacher association representative and had served as a member of the district's Teacher Negotiating Committee in recent contract negotiations with the Board. During the 1995-1996 school year he had been sent by his association to attend a two week session on resolving conflict and negotiating for "mutual gains."

Like Ed, the new process also represented a hope for Albert that better policies and implementation would result. His hope rested on the possibility that the process would provide an opportunity for open discussion and negotiation of teacher concerns and roles.

Albert's specific leadership role as part of the steering committee does not come through in the documents reviewed except in a few cases where reference is made to the fact that "Albert and Ed debated" a particular issue. Albert's influence rested on the respect which he seemed to carry with most of the teachers on staff. They referred to him as "the unofficial leader" and someone "who takes a vested interest in making this a better place." Even administrators conceded that "if you get Albert's support, you'll get

the support of the rest of the staff.” It was therefore not surprising that the steering committee decided that Albert would present the proposed model of change to the staff at the June 1996 adoption meeting.

Theme Two: Self-Directed Implementation

Implementation of the change initiative began shortly after teachers returned to the school in the fall of 1996. Group activities directly associated with the implementation phase occurred in two separate venues, the general council meetings and meetings of the individual policy teams themselves. The perspectives on leadership by three individuals is also reported in this section of the discussion. Again the data referring to these types of activities were subjected to analysis using the four frames for clues to the types of leadership activities present and the types of tasks with which people occupied themselves. Analysis indicated that group level interpretation of leadership was heavily influenced by such human resource values as self-directedness, participation, consideration of public opinions and feelings, and decision by consensus. Individual perspectives showed more signs of political influence strategies. The description of the activities of groups and individuals follows below.

The General Council. The general council was formed shortly after the staff vote, endorsing the proposed model, was taken. Ed was part of the council because of his position and Albert was the only elected teacher member of the general council who had also been on the steering committee.

No records were ever found of the “official” role of the general council. However, members took the position that their responsibility was to “manage the process” by means of an “arms length” relationship with the policy teams. Observational and interview data indicate that the common understanding of council members was that the policy teams, once established and provided with policy issues, were to be “self-directed.” To them this meant that their task was basically one of

assigning members to teams, soliciting issues for processing through the newly developed system, and dealing with the technical aspects of the functioning of that system. In effect they became a “quasi-administrative body” focused only on the initial structural and procedural aspects of implementation.

Evidence suggested that the council adopted a structural perspective during the early period of implementation. They had a flurry of meetings at the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year. They extended invitations to the staff, students, and parents to volunteer for the available positions on each of the five policy teams. They made an effort to create teams that were balanced and could work effectively. They persuaded original steering committee members to join teams and assigned them in such a way as to ensure that there was at least one original steering committee member on each policy team. A general council member was assigned as a contact person to each of the teams.

Once the teams were established a staff professional development day in late September was used for a quick orientation (AM session) and an opportunity for teams to have their initial meeting (PM). Invitations were then sent out by written memo to students, parents and the staff requesting issues for input into the process, and as they were received by the general council they were redirected to appropriate teams for action and recommendation. This done, the initiative was in full implementation by the beginning of October. Teams were given December 15 as a deadline for submitting recommendations for action on policies on which they were working.

The process that the council thought was explicitly structured to provide teams with sufficient direction and opportunity for participating in school-wide decision making, ran into early difficulty, however. A general council meeting on October 18 revealed that teams were already experiencing problems. Members reported that teachers were complaining about the time involved in meeting, others were having difficulties getting started, and some teams reported that their student and parent

representatives were not showing up.

However, the perception of most members of the general council was that their role did not include monitoring or assisting teams with problem coping. The general attitude was that the policy teams “need(ed) to experience success” and that “it should get easier as people begin to work smarter.” One council member suggested that the teams needed to understand that in this early stage “process is more important than substance.” One of the assistant principal’s described this leadership approach as typical in education:

... you give the groups the chance to do it and you do it from a laid back, ‘let’s keep our hands off,’ let’s let the groups do it process, which tends to be the educational process.

Therefore, believing that teams would eventually work out their own problems once they got familiar with the process, no further meetings of the council were held until January 10.

By January 10, Ed realized that a meeting was necessary “to get reorganized and recommitted to this process of quality management.” At this meeting the researcher shared with the group some preliminary impressions of the change initiative based on observations in policy team meetings and participant interviews. He indicated that teams were experiencing difficulties in three areas: 1) clarity as to purpose and process, 2) leadership, and 3) communication.

Expanding on these areas, the investigator reported that after three months into the initiative many team members were still asking questions such as “What is our task?”, “What decisions should be our focus?”, and “Are we dealing with things that really matter?” Members were also still unclear as to “Who will make the decision in the end?” and “Who will be responsible for implementing any new policies that get ratified by the process?” In addition, there was a noted hesitancy by individuals on

teams to take on any leadership responsibilities, thus leading to a situation where many members were complaining of “inefficient meetings (being) a waste of time” and a detraction from their “real, more important work” of teaching. There was also an indication from some team participants that they were experiencing a feeling of disconnectedness from other teams and from the general council.

The response of the council to these obvious difficulties with the change process was mixed. The newly elected members preferred a strategy of non-interference. They felt that any action by the council in the activities of individual teams “should be informal, so as not to be interpreted as interference.” Albert, having invested more time in the initiative to this point and therefore perhaps having more at stake, suggested that “we need to keep up the pressure, keep on top of it.” Ed commented that the planning committee’s “initial decision was for minimal interference. Now maybe we need to revisit that.” He made a suggestion that each member contact their groups to “check out feelings and ask how we can assist.”

Council members interpreted the problems experienced by the teams as primarily human resource related. The situation was seen as a problem of people adapting to the design of the initiative, rather than as a problem with the design itself. As a result, suggestions for solving the problems were also human resource based. Ed suggested that dealing with the problem required providing motivational support to members of the teams by convincing them that this process was going to be good for them. He recommended that the change initiative be talked about at the next staff (business) meeting. He described the planned strategy for that meeting as follows:

It needs to be a motivational meeting- a recognition that this is a difficult process, but a necessary one. (Policy team members) need to consider what we have learned in the process. They need to see this as a learning experience and then they will do it differently next time.

No other suggestions came forth from the council regarding how to respond to the

problems teams were experiencing. Members decided that someone other than Ed needed to do the presentation because "It shouldn't come from Ed, since it will be viewed as coming from administration." Albert was suggested, but could not be at the meeting on the planned date. Roger, one of the recently elected council members was selected.

In actuality, both Roger and Ed spoke at the staff meeting, each extolling the value of the process engaged in thus far and praising team members for their involvement. Roger cautioned the staff that, "teams replaced principal oligarchy, but teams cannot act as the new oligarchy. They must involve other stakeholders." As had been planned at the council meeting, he went on to give his personal endorsement, emphasizing the value of the process:

The hat issue was a non-issue, but the process was good, it's a learning experience and we are just beginning.

Ed spoke next and again praised team members for their efforts and tried to point out the successes that had already arisen out of the process, specifically the work of one team that involved reviewing the school's "hat policy." After several meetings by the team dealing with this issue, including a meeting with teachers, students and parents, the original policy was upheld. Ed explained how he felt about the process and offered his continued support:

What you've done for admin. is you've done the research and leg work and we've dealt with this issue (hats). So I'm very comfortable and very proud of what we have here. It's given me direction. Now you own the process, because you made the decision. We've spent a lot of man hours on this. So I hope everyone enforces it 100% now. I don't know what enforcements are in place if people don't. If you need any help, any assistance...to help energize you, feel free to ask.

No mention was made by Ed or Roger acknowledging the presence of problems on teams and no team members expressed any difficulties they were experiencing.

Obviously feeling that their task had been accomplished, the next meeting of the council did not take place until a month later. That meeting and the five following it did not indicate any direct efforts at facilitating the work of teams. Only minor technical problems were addressed, such as naming replacements for team members who had left the school or had dropped out.

Meanwhile, the problems within the teams grew. Teams were reporting to their council contacts that either members had left, were not coming to meetings, or simply were not being involved when they did attend. People were becoming increasingly frustrated because of the amounts of time that the process required and with the lack of any substantive results. Very few of the issues initially received by the teams had reached the stage where a policy recommendation had been forthcoming. By the middle of March many of the teams had stopped meeting altogether.

At the same time however, issues were still being submitted by teachers. They had new concerns they wanted addressed and were still expecting that the teams could deal with them. Council members, realizing the backlog that was developing, eventually began directing issues to administrators.

The general council meetings themselves became more and more casual. No agenda was used to give these meetings direction and often no minutes were kept so people had difficulty remembering what had been dealt with at the previous meeting. Members began arriving late or missing meetings and there were signs of increasing teacher-administrator tension, especially evident at meetings when Ed could not be there. Often there was confusion as to what time had been agreed on for starting and who was to be the chairperson and recorder. This led to Roger exclaiming in exasperation at the end of one of the meetings, to no one in particular:

Our council is disoriented. We're just trying to catch up with what people are doing and what we've done. We're not doing anything else. We shouldn't be doing that at

this level.

Another member described the situation as one of “we’re just in the process of reacting again.”

By the end of May, the general council had ceased to make any decisions at their meetings and there was little evidence of any attempt at solutions to any of the problems. Two subsequent meetings were held as part of the researcher’s negotiated agreement to participate in a formal evaluation of the change process and to present the findings to the council. The council deferred all decisions regarding construction of the instrument and analysis of the results to the researcher, being involved only to the extent of approving the instrument, distributing it to policy teams, and collecting the responses.

Policy teams. Each of the five policy teams were given policy issues that had been submitted by administrators or individual teachers on staff. To the researcher’s knowledge no issues were submitted by students or parents. Teams were instructed to meet and select an issue, solicit broad stakeholder opinions on the issue, and then make a recommendation to the general council based on such information. Most teams met shortly after implementation began (October), had two or three more meetings in the period November-December, and one in February. All teams stopped having meetings by the end of March except to complete the assessment instrument evaluating the change initiative.

At the beginning of the initiative many of the teams attempted to include in their deliberations the opinions of relevant stakeholders. Surveys were prepared by several of the teams to get stakeholder input. These were reviewed by the team and discussions held around results. In one case a special forum for teachers, students and parents was called by a team to provide them with feedback on a proposed policy recommendation they had decided upon. An open meeting was held after school, however it was poorly attended. No students or parents were present, and only a hand full of teachers, those with a vested interest in the outcome, came to the meeting. Eventually, as teams realized the amount

of work entailed, the use of surveys diminished.

Initial team meetings were used to discuss some ground rules and try to determine the direction the group would be taking. Eventually most teams went directly into dealing with issues even though their roles and purpose were not altogether clear. The meetings discussing issues can best be described as informal occasions for involvement consisting of exchanging information and sharing feelings and opinions. Researcher journal entries describing such meetings frequently make reference to a lack of focused discussion, an absence of an agenda or minutes, casual “off-the cuff” type suggestions and solutions to complex problems, and a reluctance on the part of members to challenge suggestions they might not agree with. Meetings rarely ended with clear decisions being made. Upholding individual rights of participation and personal opinion were valued above research derived information or the need to reach a “right” decision. Many teams showed a limited understanding of the process of reaching consensus except in trying to reach a decision that could somehow integrate all expressed views, or as one member described it “aim for the best possible compromise.”

Analysis using each of the four frames failed to identify any evidence of sustained leadership on the policy teams themselves. Administrators indicated that they thought leadership would “evolve” once the groups began going through the process. Many team members were under the impression that they “weren’t supposed to” have leaders, “we’re supposed to share it, that was one of the ground rules.”

In addition to the lack of a plan to provide for designated leadership positions, there was also no provision for leadership training. When asked by the researcher about training, one of the general council members indicated that “training was left up to the teams, but people didn’t respond.” When he was asked why he thought this was the case he added that “...teams view training as a make work project: ‘If I take the training I’ll become the designated leader (and) all I get for it is extra work.’”

Most teams preferred a system of rotating the chairperson position. One team offered this rationale for favouring rotation rather than having one individual in the position:

This promotes equality among the group. ...(there is) no tendency to defer to the 'trained leader'.

An individual member reported that rotating chairpersons at meetings was perhaps "not very efficient because we lack direction, but it is a fair system." These comments suggest that issues of "equity" and "balance of power" may have been considered more important than the outcomes that might result from more structured arrangements.

However, individuals' comments offered on the year-end assessment document, highlighted the dearth of leadership and the problems and needed solutions associated with it:

- a) Nobody took the bull by the horns...they went around in circles.
- b) Each team needs to select a leader and those team leaders need to go through some kind of process where they learn to develop consensus and learn how to chair a meeting, how to develop some strategies to bring focus and conclusions.
- c) Need leaders who allow open discussion yet at the same time make sure that discussion is productive.

Individual leadership. From an individual perspective, there was evidence that leadership activity, outside of that which existed within the general council, was also minimal. The individuals who had influence on staff generally supported a "hands-off" approach to the change initiative with the rationale of not wanting to be seen as interfering or directing a process that was designed to increase participation and empowerment of a broader sector of the school community.

Albert was recognized by other council members as being "a very strong spokesperson" for the changes occurring and fulfilling his responsibility of "going to

those committees (policy teams) and meeting with them.” His participation in the general council meetings indicated a more thorough knowledge of the feelings and concerns, not only of the members he was responsible for keeping in contact with, but also of the feelings and concerns of the members of other teams and the staff in general. This was attributed to the fact that “he talks to more people about the process.” He made suggestions to the council for having more contact with their teams and personally took on the responsibility of communicating team activities and meeting times in the weekly staff bulletin, the “Tuesday Blues.” After one of the researcher’s sharing sessions near the end of the year, he actively encouraged other council members to “...show some of the leadership that Gerry referred to and come to the staff with some proposals.”

Near the end of the year, when most other members on the council were showing signs of being discouraged by the process, Albert still persisted. He led the final council meetings as well as the year-end staff meeting to decide on the direction of the initiative for the next year. He began taking a more political view of the change process, recommending to the council and the staff the need for a conflict resolution team to deal directly with the contentious staff issues that had clogged the process of the present initiative. This was being done despite Ed’s position “that the best remedy for dealing with conflict is to have an open door policy with staff.” Ed felt his door was always open and “any staff member who has a concern should feel free to come to (me) directly.”

In contrast to Albert, the three rookie members of the council were considerably more ambivalent as to their role and commitment. They frequently arrived at meetings without paper or pencil, were often late or missed meetings because they forgot, and two of the three usually sat leaning back in their chairs and participated in discussions only minimally.

The following comments by Roger illustrate the views and positions of the three new teacher representatives on the general council. First of all, Roger was not clear as to his role:

You have to be a spokesperson for the general council. You have to be a proponent of the process. I think that's good. I don't think Carol, myself, or Bill...envisioned at the beginning that we'd have to do that, but that's part of being on the general council. Our committee hasn't had enough time to just sit down and discuss, 'what do you think our role is?'

Secondly, his extent of commitment to the process was also not always clear:

I personally don't want to be involved with any more time. I think, if we're going to be on the general council, we're going to have to commit ourselves to more time. I don't want to personally.

Thirdly, in spite of his reluctance, Roger felt he needed to continue being part of the council.

I have my frustrations, but I don't want to sabotage the process. I want to support the process as long as it looks like it's going to work.

This final statement would suggest that he was prepared to accept the role of appearing to support the change process, as a strategy in motivating others to participate in the process, but did not accept the responsibility for making it work.

Ed saw his leadership role as primarily a human relations one, consisting of providing moral support for the initiative and not exercising any greater power in the decision-making process than any other member. The following comment illustrates his position:

I've got to be seen to trust that the system will work. My biggest role is to ensure that I am receptive to policy that comes out of this..I can't be seen to be manipulating, controlling what the results are. I am a member of the general council. Not "the" member, "a" member. And I think they've got to see that I just speak in my turn and listen in my turn.

When asked what he saw as his role in providing other forms of support to the teams, he

made reference to the budget allocated to provide twenty teacher substitute days to allow teams to have at least one day for meeting on school time as well as to “respond if they want you there at a meeting, if they want to ask questions you have to provide time for them-that would be a visible way in which you could support them.”

Whether it was a growing weariness with the initiative and disappointment that more substantive outcomes had not materialized or competing demands of other administrative duties, but toward the end of the school year Ed appeared to lose interest in the initiative. He did not attend a key council meeting on May 29 when the council did an official assessment of the initiative and he “forgot” about the year-end staff meeting where staff members were discussing the direction the initiative should take for next year. He also missed the final council meeting on June 26 when formal recommendations were being made for next year.

At the end, Ed too resorted to a political strategy to solve a problem that the new change initiative perhaps could not address. When the school was allocated additional administrative time, he named Albert to a new assistant principalship position for next fall.

Summary

The above description of the leadership strategies indicate that both group level and individual level leadership strategies were evident during the initiative’s planning phase. These strategies included primarily structural strategies at the group level and human resource and political strategies at the individual level. Leadership strategies during the implementation stage were primarily evident by their absence. It appeared that a philosophy of self-direction and participation resulted in an abdication of responsibility by virtually all groups and individuals for the initiative. The thinking was that “the process” would carry individuals along, rather than the other way around. As the initiative neared the end of the year, indications were that politics began to play a

greater role. Some staff members were proposing a forum specifically set up to deal with conflict or misunderstandings between staff and administrators. The principal on the other hand took advantage of an opportunity to make a key appointment and in that way form a closer coalition between administrators and staff.

Change Outcomes

The fourth question in this investigation sought to document the outcomes resulting from the school's change efforts. Determining outcomes required the consideration of both planned and unplanned outcomes. Data sources included interviews, survey responses, and observational records and notations. These were considered in light of Bolman and Deal's interpretive frames. Applying the interpretive framework to the data allowed them to be grouped according to each of the four frames. Themes emerged within each of these groupings. Each of these themes, as they apply to the various interpretive frames, are listed below and discussed in order:

Structural outcome themes: Theme one: Lack in clarity as to purposes and processes associated with the change; Theme two: Limited change in organizational roles, goals, and policies.

Human resource outcome theme: Theme three: Participation did not result in feelings of empowerment, commitment, or accountability.

Political outcome themes: Theme four: Teachers gained power in limiting change; Theme five: Teacher-administration tensions persisted.

Symbolic Outcome Theme: Theme six: Change served a symbolic function.

Theme One: Lack of Clarity as to Purposes and Processes Associated with the Change.

According to Louis & Miles (1990), one of the short term outcomes of successful change is the clarity, on the part of those involved in the change initiative, as to the purposes and processes involved. The clarity that staff members at Prairie View had of

their initiative is described in two parts; clarity of purpose and clarity as to process.

Clarity of purposes. As described in the content and process sections of this chapter, the change planners at Prairie View had a clearly articulated short term goal, namely to create a process that would increase the involvement of people in reviewing and developing school policy. The intermediate outcome was not as clearly stated in any official documentation, but came across, in interviews with change planners, more as assumptions. Respondents hoped that once teachers and other stakeholder participants began using the process to review school policies there would be a greater commitment to and sense of ownership of such policies. This, they believed, would solve a management problem for administrators, improve working conditions for teachers, and result in a better learning environment because of improved relations between students, teachers, administrators, and the community. There was, however, no evidence in any of the data collected that these short-term and intermediate intents were linked to any intended long-term outcomes such as improved teaching practices or student achievement.

Data collected near the end of the year indicated that most team members understood that the purpose of teams was to increase participation in the development of school policies. However, observational, interview, and document data indicated that clarity as to the content of such a process was problematic for most teams throughout the year. Comments such as the following are a sample of many similar comments made by team participants:

- a) I'm frustrated in the direction we're taking. Everyone having their own little opinion (as to) what exactly we have to deal with.
- b) I don't think anybody said, Okay. What is our purpose? What are we here to do? What's our goal here?
- c) These committees are great, but nobody seems to know what they're working on. I think it should be more toward the academic.

d) We haven't got a policy through. We don't know where we are going.

By year-end, questions such as "What is the purpose of this whole process? What are we doing and why?" were still being raised. An assistant administrator attributed the lack of purpose as both a design error and a human resource problem:

The steering committee that set up the whole process came up with the individual committee titles and what they thought their mandate would be. It was all in theory and now we're into practice. It's too bad the steering committee didn't take a little stronger stand, but then when you try something new with a bunch of diverse people in a high school, that some don't even want to do anyway...there's no accountability if they do it or not.

Clarity of process. Written comments assessing the initiative at the end of the year indicated that the majority of teacher team members were only somewhat clear about the process. Two issues persisted: 1) where the responsibilities for policy development and policy management began and ended, and 2) how the ratification stage of the process should work.

There was a lack of consensus between administrators and staff members as to what was entailed in "policy development" and who had responsibility for implementation. Administrators generally interpreted the policy development process as consisting of making recommendations and guidelines for implementing a policy and taking "ownership" for its implementation. Team members, on the other hand saw their task as one of making a recommendation for a "rule." They saw the task of determining how a policy would be implemented and following through with implementation as someone else's responsibility.

Ratification of team policy recommendations was another contentious issue for some teams. They did not agree with the possibility that after a committee had spent considerable time collecting information, debating it, and making a recommendation, that

the ratification process gave other groups the power to vote the recommendation down. One team member said that if that happens, "I'm no longer interested in being part of the process." Records indicated that the issue was raised prior to the adoption of the model as well as at team and general staff meetings throughout the implementation period. The issue was never really addressed by the administration or the general council except to reassure the concerned parties that "there is likely to be a minimum amount of resistance (during ratification) because so many people will be involved in the process and because people have worked through the process thoroughly" (written response by steering committee to staff). In reality, no new policies were recommended and therefore none went as far as the ratification stage.

A lack of clarity as to the purposes and processes associated with the initiative was attributable to problems of communication. Reference was made in the group feedback to a perceived lack of a sense of direction, clear guidelines and expectations from the general council to teams. As one team described it, "this committee feels like it's been left to flounder." Teams expressed a feeling that they were often unclear about the meaning, background, or nature of the issues sent to them by the general council and would prefer some form of clarification or information to accompany these policy input statements. There was also a feeling that once a policy recommendation was made by a team there was no follow through on this recommendation by the general council or administration. This was particularly true near the end of the year when hastily formed recommendations were made by some teams. These were not acted on by the general council due to a lack of clarity as to how they could be implemented and by whom. The process usually stalled at that point with no decision being made and little communication given to teams as to what the next step should be.

Another common complaint by team members was a lack of awareness as to what other teams were doing. They felt that if they had this information they might at least

get some ideas as to how they could improve the process within their own team.

Interview comments by a staff member not part of the team process suggested that the staff as a whole was also “totally unaware of what is taking place in teams.”

Theme two: Limited Change in Organizational Roles, Goals, and Policies.

From a structural perspective, typical school reform outcomes are those associated with organizational roles, goals, and policies. In assessing what exactly was the result of the change initiative, the investigator looked at what types of decisions were still being made by administrators and what types of decisions were taken on by the teams as part of the initiative.

Role of administrators. Analysis of the data revealed no indication that any significant changes had resulted in the decision-making role of administrators. It appeared that all decisions were being made as they had always been made, by administrators. Administrators still made budget, timetabling, and staffing decisions with little teacher involvement. In fact, because the number of staff meetings had been reduced, administrators had even less opportunity to receive input on school-wide issues. Ed used to rely on these meetings to glean the feelings of staff on various issues. He reported that he was “missing the staff meetings.” because he had in the past found such meetings helpful “just as a communication device. You were never sure that you’re getting the pulse of the way things are going, but you could always go to a staff meeting.”

Another indication that nothing within the organizational structure had changed was when the school was allocated additional administrative time. One option could have been to distribute this time to department heads, giving them additional leadership responsibilities and released time. However, no alternatives other than appointing another assistant principal were entertained.

Role of teams. In examining the issues dealt with by all teams, none resulted in substantive changes to organizational roles, goals, or policies. By the end of the first year, the five teams had addressed a total of ten issues. Five of the issues were directly

related to making teacher work easier and three dealt with student behaviour issues. Only three of the issues reached the stage where a policy recommendation was made by the policy team. In each case the recommendation was to maintain existing policy.

Administrators, general council members, and team members all expressed disappointment, and in some cases frustration, with the types of issues with which teams ended up dealing. The principal expressed his disappointment with the outcomes in this way:

We made a tactical error at the very beginning. What we did as far as not identifying the types of issues teams would work on and giving direction to the teams, we did purposely. We discussed it a lot and decided we wanted to give teams the freedom to choose whatever issues they wanted to deal with. We assumed they would choose issues that would be of critical importance to them and the school, but it didn't work out that way. I think also, people weren't sure how to handle self-direction.

A council member expressed the same sentiment in this way:

I'm disappointed with the triviality of the issues. Not suggesting that the group's efforts have been trivial. When we designed this last year, we thought teachers would choose more substantive issues.

One of the assistant principals described why, in his opinion, the teams had not dealt with more substantive issues:

My observation is that all policies are tinkering with the management of the school. The real purpose of this school is the learning of kids and not one committee has addressed curriculum change or how we can enhance our results in our achievement and diploma exams. They've only tinkered with the peripheral and not the bottom line, 'how are our kids doing and how are they achieving'. I think those are scary areas for people to address, because they come right down to the heart of what they are all about.

Whether due to a structural design or a human resource problem, teams ended up dealing with problems generated by individuals and not necessarily seen as significant by the staff as a whole. Thus, although teams were expected to reach a solution by consensus, the process did not allow the team to deal with issues on which consensus had already been reached relative to level of importance. Many team members saw the issues as trivial, as the following comment illustrates: "We spend a lot of time on simple things, where one person is making us do the work because they're unhappy."

Teachers on teams also became frustrated with the process itself and the lack of significance in the role they were playing, as these comments suggest:

(a) What I have a problem with is that this is more bureaucratic than the old system was. I feel like we're spinning.

(b) We're questioning, is what we're doing really worth it.

Some team members suggested that giving teachers a mostly symbolic role in the policy decision-making process was part of an intentional administrative strategy to continue making the important decisions themselves while teacher time was occupied with trivial matters. One team member stated:

Feeling I get is it's a make work (project)...and feeling of some of the others...keep you busy and make you look like you're going to have a say.

Meanwhile, a teacher not involved on a team, assessed the situation as follows:

This committee stuff, it's all frivolous crap. The real important stuff, we don't need committees for that crap. People have got to do it. That's it. What do we need? Go to Ed, say 'this is what we need', and it's done.

Theme Three: Participation Did Not Result in Feelings of Empowerment, Commitment, and Accountability.

Using enhanced opportunities for involvement in the policy development process to increase empowerment, commitment, and accountability were the primary intents of

the school's change initiative. The extent to which each were realized are discussed below.

Empowerment. According to Lawler (1986), empowerment results when participants feel they have the power and resources to make decisions and find such work rewarding. There was little evidence to suggest that team members felt empowered by the opportunity to be involved on policy teams. The discussion in theme two is equally applicable here. In many cases members felt they were not dealing with issues that really mattered to anyone except the individual making the submission. Others felt that the process was so designed that teams did all the work and others made the decision at the "ratification" stage. Still others, felt disillusioned and frustrated by the process as these teacher participants indicated:

Frustration is, if we're spending all these hours, when are we going to see some action.

I'm struggling with the problem that it takes three months to come up with a response to an issue.

Some of the parent members also indicated frustration and a lack of empowerment, as this comment by a parent who submitted an individual response to the group feedback survey at the end of the year suggested:

I was to three meetings before Christmas. We were unclear as to what we could make decisions on. Subsequent meeting were held at 3:30, I couldn't attend. No minutes were ever sent to me. In fact I was a member in name only. Maybe the way to go, if parents aren't wanted on the councils then don't have them.

Commitment. Reviews of the initiative at the end of the year indicated that change participants still had a strong sense of commitment to the general idea of participatory governance. Several of the groups indicated strong support for the general notion of involving diverse stakeholders in discussion of issues affecting teachers, support staff,

students, and parents even if the purpose for such interactions are not altogether clear at the present time. They also felt that the principal and general council were committed to the philosophy of the initiative.

Notwithstanding these feelings of commitment to the idea of extended participation, the lack of visible outcomes affected the degree of commitment that respondents felt as a result of the team process. As one respondent indicated "ownership is limited because we cannot see it (through) to implementation and (we) would feel more satisfied if we could see an outcome." Another group indicated that they felt a lack of commitment to the process because issues of any importance "are still taken to administration."

Observational data, describing team meetings, suggested that individual members of teams did not typically have equal degrees of interest in issues assigned to them, resulting in varying levels of commitment. This was particularly true of non-teacher members who often displayed limited involvement in the discussion of issues of relevance to teachers only.

Similarly, the conduct of many team members at meetings suggested a limited sense of ownership and responsibility for the process. Members often arrived late to meetings, adopted a passive posture, and made little attempt to take notes or carry discussion toward some specific objective. In describing such behaviours in her group, one team member said: "I sometimes question why they're on it, because they don't seem to be into it." As time went on the established procedures of the change process were no longer adhered to even by the general council (e.g., issues were sent directly to administrators and not to teams).

In addition, most team members felt that there was a lack of commitment of resources to the initiative, particularly the time, to deal with issues in the way outlined by the process. This was further complicated by the fact that it was difficult to accommodate parents and students when determining meeting times that would be

convenient for all. This contributed to the infrequent scheduling of meetings which in turn resulted in a lack of momentum and continuity in dealing with issues. The lack of time also contributed to some teams generating numerous possible solutions to policy issues, but not taking the responsibility to go beyond the brainstorming stage to explore the feasibility of these solutions to any great depth. In their assessment of the worth of the outcomes achieved some members even indicated that their involvement on teams interfered with other commitments and “detracted from the purposes of the school, to work with kids in the classroom.”

Accountability. Increasing stakeholder accountability for the decisions made, was another intended outcome for the change initiative. It had been assumed that increased participation would lead to better quality policies and in turn to more willingness on the part of all stakeholders to consent to the authority of these policies. However, information collected at team meetings indicated that there was little sense of accountability for the impact team-level decisions might have on the school as a whole. Suggestions for dealing with problems were often made with little or no reflection or discussion of the possible ramifications. An example was one individual’s suggestion that football players be used as supervisors in the classrooms at lunch time to free teachers from lunch supervision. No one on the team challenged the suggestion at the meeting or outlined its ramifications even though some disagreed with it privately. The suggestion went forward to the principal. There was a general attitude that once a recommendation was made, it was the responsibility of someone else down the line in the process (administration or general council) to carry it forward or even discard it.

Theme Four: Teachers Gained Power in Limiting Change

Although the change initiative at Prairie View had no specified political intents the data were searched for evidence of political outcomes and issues resulting from the change activities. According to Bolman and Deal, from a political perspective change is

about power and who gains it and who loses it. The group that gained power through this initiative were teachers. The process allowed them to gain power in two ways: 1) it limited administrators' abilities to initiate new changes, and 2) it allowed teachers to set the agenda as to what issues would be dealt with by the process.

There was evidence that the initiative represented a gain in power for teachers by providing a mechanism for limiting changes at the school. This observation by Albert alludes to that possibility.

...(changes) use to be driven by administration at staff meetings and because of these teams we've had no significant new innovation. It's made it more difficult for administrators to bring in new policies. And maybe that's not a bad thing. I know that admin. wants to bring in this Teacher Advisor Program. But they're going to have a hard time doing it. It could put the legitimacy of the teams into question if they try to just put it through.

Although the teams had broad representation from a variety of stakeholders, teachers held power by controlling the agenda. All issues dealt with during the course of the initiative stemmed from concerns expressed by teacher members. As other, non-teacher members, stopped attending meetings, teachers were clearly in control of the process. The principal made the following reference to this development:

The majority of teachers sitting on these groups, they're not quite understanding this whole empowerment thing. They seem to be viewing it from their own peak, like what's being done to me is what I want to change.

Theme Five: Teacher-Administration Tensions Persisted.

There was some evidence that, early in the process, policy teams provided a needed forum for negotiating differences and reducing conflict between groups. One teacher member of a policy team indicated that the present change represented improvement over the way issues were previously handled.

We were just sweeping things under the carpet before. Teams are at least identifying issues and talking about them.

Albert thought that the initiative was acting as a stabilizing mechanism. He indicated that "it's had a calming effect, not as much complaining and admin. has had to be more sensitive as to their decision making."

However, in the final month there were indications of renewed teacher-administration tension. Comments were again being made that the problem was not so much the nature of the policies, but their lack of enforcement by administrators. Remarks such as the following surfaced at meetings and in conversation with the investigator:

- a) Frustration is the management of policy once it is created. In many cases we have the policy, but not the management of the policy. (comment made by a general council member)
- b) Why have a policy if it's not going to be managed properly? (made by a teacher at final staff meeting)
- c) The problem is communication. To communicate we need to have trust between staff and administration and we don't have that. (comment at final council meeting)

Some staff members questioned the sincerity of the principal's "open-door policy" as a means of dealing with staff concerns. At one meeting a teacher commented that "many staff are apprehensive about approaching the principal" to which another added, "one person told me that when she went to express a concern he yelled at her." One of the proposals at the year-end staff meeting was the creation of a special forum ("hot team") specifically for dealing with issues resulting from differences between staff and the administration.

Theme Six: Change Served a Symbolic Function.

From a symbolic perspective, organizational interactions and processes are looked upon as drama or theatre symbolically expressing meaning to internal and

external audiences. According to Bolman and Deal (1990), processes that produce no significant measurable results may still play a vital role in the organizational drama. They suggested that change can be viewed as a “pageant,” purposely enacted by people who may be “restless, frustrated, or feel the need to renew faith in the organization. At the end of the pageant we can ask three questions: What was expressed? What was attracted? What was legitimized?” (Bolman and Deal, 1990 p. 288). The data for Prairie View’s change initiative was searched for answers to each of these questions in an attempt to uncover possible symbolic outcomes.

What was expressed? The data suggest that the school’s change effort served a symbolic function, at least temporarily, for stakeholders within and outside the school. Internally, the initiative provided a hopeful alternative to what was viewed as a problematic exchange forum, the staff meetings. Team meetings, with the promise that the members themselves could determine what issues they would deal with, offered hope that issues of concern to staff members could be dealt with in a fair and democratic manner. Because these issues were marked as a priority and given status via the “process,” participants were more willing to make time to deal with issues with the hope that “better quality policies” and more effective and consistent implementation would be the outcome. The principal’s willingness and active support of the initiative, especially in its early stages, gave staff members a renewed faith in their school. A special education teacher, who indicated that the nature of her assignment often isolated her from the rest of the staff, expressed enthusiasm for the initiative:

I’m enjoying it. It’s refreshing. Just the fact that we’re able to explore. It’s given me a bit of a spark too...I can get out of my fish bowl and swim with the rest of the guppies.

Internal theatre also “signals to the outside world that all is well” (Bolman and Deal, 1990 p. 274). The changes at Prairie View took place within a political

environment where government reforms were empowering parents and community members to have greater involvement in educational decision making at the local school level. Districts were expected to hand schools greater responsibility for self-renewal and schools were expected to show greater responsiveness to the wishes of teachers, students, parents, and the community in general. The changes at Prairie View accommodated all of these external expectations and thereby served to convey to its external audiences a “modern appearance.”

There was a clear expression of a willingness to receive problems, work on them through broad involvement of stakeholders, and introduce changes that “all could live by.” Parents, students, and members of the community were given opportunities for direct involvement on policy teams. Some team meetings were even held at local corporate offices.

To the district, Prairie View’s initiative represented a progressive initiative for the implementation of shared decision making. Members of the staff were asked to speak about their initiative on the district professional development day. At the “motivational” staff meeting in January, the assistant principal proudly announced to the staff, “I’d like to let you know that we’re becoming known for this process. People out there are keeping tabs on what’s shaking at Prairie View High.”

What was attracted? Prairie View’s change initiative attracted problems that needed to be addressed and for which no other effective forum had previously existed. Policy meetings provided what March and Olsen (1976) described as a “garbage can” function where problems of an ambiguous and highly emotional, but symbolically powerful nature, were dumped. As one teacher described them, meetings were “a place to express concerns about certain issues.” As described earlier, these were focused primarily around issues of student respect and behaviour, supervision of students, and other issues associated with making teachers’ work easier and less stressful. The

meetings effectively silenced the debate on these “hot issues” at the staff meetings (or “business meetings” as the principal now referred to them) and out of administrators’ offices and moved it to a new location in the organization.

“Garbage can” meetings do not necessarily produce rational discussion or represent effective problem solving (Bolman and Deal, 1990). Rather, they serve more of a symbolic function, clarifying meanings and roles and restoring faith in the organization.

Observations were made at six policy team meetings. As described earlier, from a structural perspective these meetings were unfocused, leaderless, and in most cases did not result in the generation of formal solutions to problems. However, from a symbolic perspective they offered members an opportunity to discuss and clarify other issues. They provided a forum for staff members to clarify the meaning of policies, exploring when and why they had been introduced, and getting a broad perspective of opinions on such policies.

The meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss organizational roles. The “policy development” and “policy management” roles were frequently raised issues. The role of support staff was also questioned and debated. Having parents and students on the teams also influenced the variety of perspectives on certain issues. As one teacher commented, “It’s healthy to have outsiders part of the process. It helps to give us a different perspective.” A support staff member, who was especially negative about the quality of outcomes that arose out of meetings also saw a positive result:

It provides for an opportunity...that other people are recognizing sometimes what I have to say. I’ve learned a lot from them from their perspective. I’ve had the opportunity now to work with teachers, getting to know some of the people that I maybe see four to five times a year.

What was legitimized? Allowing individuals to submit issues of self-interest to

the newly initiated process signalled their legitimacy. It offered hope that some resolutions to old problems may be forthcoming and new changes promoted solely by administrators could be controlled. The initiative also led staff members to a realization that issues of a highly emotional nature are not always susceptible to rational decision-making processes. They were beginning to understand that no amount of rational evidence could convince people to change their behaviours if they were philosophically opposed to a policy. For example teachers, who interpreted the “no hat rule” as representing an increase to their supervision duties, were not convinced to take responsibility for enforcing the policy even after the policy had gone through a full review by one of the teams. Some staff members supported the recommendation to create a committee specifically aimed at dealing with conflict, referred to by one teacher as the SBRT (Staffroom Bitching Replacement Team). This, they felt, would allow policy teams to deal with matters of a more significant and innovative nature.

Data indicated that the process also served to legitimize the need for a variety of opportunities for staff involvement in the decision-making process, not just through the teams. The need for staff meetings and the principal’s right to call such meetings was legitimized. Several staff members acknowledged the need for such meetings in order to “offer us some better communication.” One teacher’s comments summarize those made by many others:

We learned a hard lesson this year—we need staff meetings, but smart meetings, with definite agendas, information distributed before hand, and if decisions are going to be made these be communicated in the form of motions.

Others suggested the possibility of the need for a combination of groups for different functions:

This (policy teams) only addresses part of the problem. There are different types of issues, individual, department, and whole staff. Therefore we need a combination of groups and strategies.

Besides legitimizing some existing structures and procedures and opening up the possibility of other forms of decision making, the change initiative at Prairie View also served to legitimize the involvement of non-teacher members in such processes. Although most of the issues being dealt with were teacher related, several members of the school staff commented on the process being a learning experience in the legitimacy of the involvement of a broad spectrum of the school community in the school's decision-making process. Generally, in response to the question of how they felt about having parents and students on their teams, most teachers said they thought "it was a good idea" despite problems associated with getting everyone together at a convenient time. An assistant principal made this statement summarizing the initiative's outcomes:

To me this is more of an opportunity to meet with some of the people in our community, to find out what their beliefs are about how we run the school. Hopefully, it will make us a better place.

Overall Summary

Prairie View's efforts to improve its decision-making process was a bottom-up initiative arising from a complex array of contextual issues of a structural, human resource, political and symbolic nature. Their staff meetings and the principal's strategy of consulting individuals when making decisions was not deemed satisfactory to some staff members. They wanted a process that would create broader involvement in the development of policies. The hoped for outcome was greater commitment on the part of all stakeholders to "the way we do things."

The steering committee in charge of planning the change initiative focused on designing the process that teams would use in dealing with policy issues. What types of issues were to be the proper domain of the overall initiative was however, not specified. A "self-directed" strategy of non-interference was adopted as the form of relationship the teams would have with administrators and the general council. The strategies adopted

during the implementation phase assumed that self-direction, participation, and consensus would replace the need for leadership.

At the end of the first year, the structural outcomes of the initiative showed a lack of clarity on the part of the change participants toward the purposes and process of the initiative. Teams became mechanisms for dealing with the dissatisfactions of a limited number of individuals and left other types of decisions largely the responsibility of the traditional decision-makers. The process to increase participation did not lead to the attainment of such human resource goals as increased commitment, accountability or empowerment. The process did however, serve as a political mechanism for teachers, bringing issues related to their working conditions to the forefront for discussion and limiting the power of administrators to initiate changes within the school. More importantly, the symbolic frame revealed that the initiative's most positive outcome was what it signalled to internal and external stakeholders. To the staff it provided a forum for dealing with ambiguous and emotionally laden problems and at least a temporarily offered hope of better things to come. To external members it gave the school a modern appearance, consistent with the prevailing norms within the broader social and political context and the emphasis on participation, empowerment, and accountability. At the end of the first year's experience, the process served to help staff members generate other possibilities for greater involvement of teachers and legitimized the involvement of other school community members in dealing with school-wide issues.

Chapter Five

Relationships Between Change Dimensions

The previous chapter addressed the first four questions of the study by describing each of the four dimensions of change - context, content, process, and outcomes. Analyses of the data collected at the study site was accomplished using Bolman and Deal's (1990) interpretive framework to generate themes describing each of these dimensions as they existed at Prairie View High School. This chapter describes the results of further analysis of the data at a more abstract level. Such analysis was necessary in order to answer the final question of this investigation: What relationships exist between the contextual, content, process, and outcome dimensions of the change phenomenon? The question was aimed at conceptual level factors that may manifest themselves between change dimensions, thus revealing the actions required by change agents as they deal with each of these dimensions in initiating and implementing change within secondary schools.

The analysis reported in the present chapter involves selecting the core category arising from analysis of the data and relating it to subsidiary categories. The themes resulting from such analysis contributed to the generation of the substantive theory describing the central phenomenon under study, namely school change (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The outcome of this integrative analysis was the construction, by this researcher, of the theoretical model displayed in Figure 5.1. The discussion that follows is a detailed presentation of that model. It is divided into two sections. The first section briefly describes each of the change dimensions as categories within the model. The second, and much longer section, articulates the interrelational properties between categories.

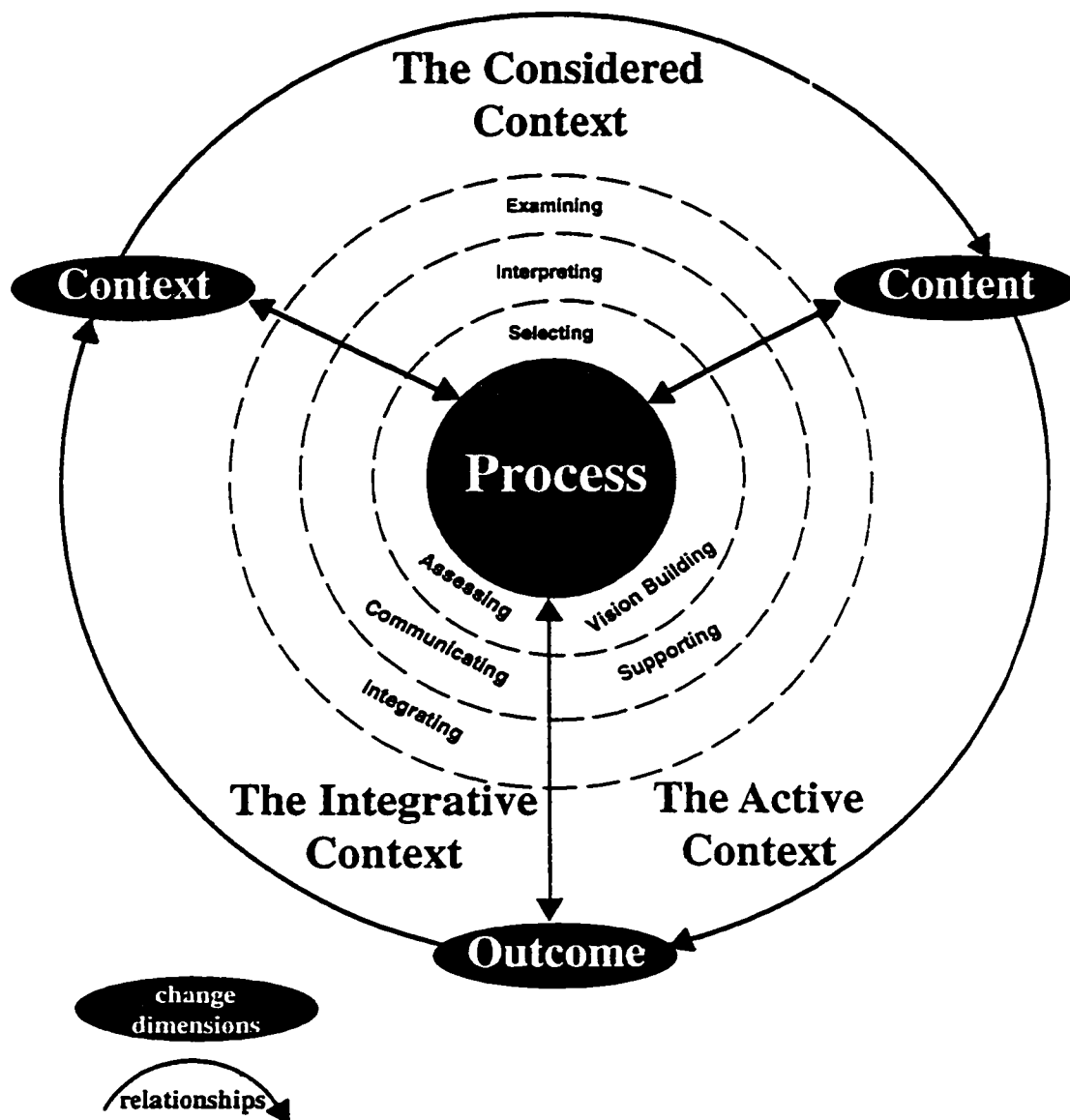
Describing the Change Dimensions

Analysis revealed that of the four change dimensions investigated, process, or the actions related to the change initiative, was the core category or integrating phenomenon in describing the change which took place at the study site. The other dimensions (context, content, and outcomes) existed in a subsidiary relationship to the core category. The model displayed in Figure 5-1 visually depicts the relationship between the core and subsidiary categories. A brief description of each of these categories follows. It is intended to assist the reader in better understanding the relational properties of the core and sub-categories and in understanding the model developed.

Context, refers explicitly to the environmental context influencing what happens in schools. It consists of the conditions present in the external and internal environments of the school. As described in the literature, the external environment consists of the larger socio-economic and cultural conditions in society as well as the more proximal context of the district and community in which the school is situated. Internal contexts consist of the structural arrangements and cultural characteristics within the school itself. A school's cultural characteristics are defined by the interpretations that organizational members bring to bear on conditions and interactions in their contexts and by which they in turn determine their own actions. First level analysis of the data collected at Prairie View High School, using Bolman & Deal's interpretive frameworks, revealed the presence of structural, human resource, political, and symbolic contextual issues associated with the change initiative under investigation.

Content, the second subsidiary dimension, refers to the focus or intents that change actors select as the object of their change efforts. Selection of the content for change at Prairie View was influenced by the extent to which conditions in the school's environments were considered in the design of the initiative and the influence of the

Figure 5.1

A Theoretical Model of Change Dimensions and Their Interaction

school's cultural norms (shared beliefs and organizational purposes) in determining what would be focused on as part of the change initiative.

The model depicts outcomes as the third subsidiary dimension of change. Two types of change outcomes typically result from change efforts, intended and unintended (Bolman & Deal, 1990). Intended outcomes are those that are explicitly stated as part of a change initiative. Uncovered through planned assessment strategies, these outcomes may or may not be realized as a result of the actions engaged in while implementing change. Unintended outcomes refer to the problems, insights, or new issues that emerge from the actions and interactions that are part of the change process. Both sets of outcomes impact on the context of the school in that they suggest to organizational members the need to adapt organizational features and actions in response to the changes occurring and perhaps to reconsider the content and process dimensions of their change efforts. The limited degree to which the staff at Prairie View articulated their intended outcomes impacted on the extent to which planned outcomes were the product of their change process. However, first level analysis revealed the presence of a number of intents that had been unintended or unvoiced when the initiative was planned. These included outcomes of a structural, human resource, political and symbolic nature.

Within the process dimension of change are incorporated the actions of change leaders in the course of a change effort. Process is depicted as the core category in the theoretical model because actions associated with the process worked in a dynamic relationship with context, content, and outcome dimensions and functioned as the integrative link between them. Conceptual analysis aimed at describing the properties of these relationships revealed the presence of three sets of actions creating three forms of change contexts. As described in Figure 5-1, the first set of actions involve examining, interpreting, and selecting conditions in the school's context for consideration as the

content for change. The set of conditions created by such actions is referred to as the “considered context” for change. The second set of actions associated with the process of change include building vision and supporting the change efforts with resources. These labels are used to describe the efforts of change leaders to transform change content into outcomes. The conditions created by these actions are described as the “active context” of change. The third set of actions depicted in the model include the assessment and communication of emerging outcomes and their integration into the overall context of the school. The conditions created by these actions are referred to as the “integrative context” of change.

In summary, the model presented in Figure 5-1 and the explanatory description above describe the relational nature of each of the change dimensions studied and their properties. The relationships between dimensions are specified as sets of actions which serve to create three distinct change contexts labelled the considered, active, and integrative contexts. The actions associated with each of the contexts, as well as of the relationships between various contexts and dimensions of change, are explained more fully in the next section.

Describing Interrelationships among Dimensions

The Considered Context

In the model illustrated above, the considered context represents the relationship between context and content. A relationship between the two dimensions is established by the actions of change leaders and facilitators who create a specific context for the need for change. Three forms of action influenced the relationship between these two dimensions at Prairie View: 1) examining conditions in the environment, 2) interpreting these conditions, and 3) selecting those that will be acted upon. These activities are discussed below by first providing a definition of each type of action, then describing how these actions were revealed at Prairie View, and finally explaining what

relationships were made visible through such actions.

Examining conditions in the environment. As described in chapter two, context refers to a diverse set of conditions existing outside as well as inside the school. These conditions not only specify what purposes are seen as being legitimate for the school, but also influence the extent to which these purposes can be achieved. Effective change requires some form of consensus on the part of stakeholders as to the purposes of the school and knowledge of the extent to which specific contextual conditions promote or detract from those purposes (Tanner, 1993; Schlechty, 1990). Such consensus and knowledge is typically the result of specific efforts at examining the contextual environment of the school and engaging in dialogue about purposes (Tichy & Devana, 1986; Tyack & Tobin, 1994). Effective initial assessment of environmental conditions requires multiple perspectives on the need for change through the provision of opportunities for input from diverse voices within a broad spectrum of stakeholders (Shields and LaRocque, 1997). This initial scanning and analysis of environmental conditions can lead to an articulation of the school's preferred future. Meanwhile, engaging in ongoing internal scanning can reveal opportunities and successes toward achieving that future (Louis & Miles, 1990).

In general, the analysis of the initiative at Prairie View revealed only minimal attempts to uncover the scope of environmental conditions present in the context that could point to the nature of changes needed. Moreover, there seemed to have been no effort at making explicit or considering the purposes and core beliefs of the school and in so doing to make it possible to link the change initiative to these.

Although the change initiative at Prairie View had, as part of its design, representation from various stakeholder groups at the implementation stage, there was no attempt to solicit input from parents, students, or the staff at large during the initial planning stage. Therefore, these groups did not have an opportunity to interpret

conditions at the school or have input into the types of changes needed. Rather, as Albert had described, the decision to proceed in the direction of change came about more as a “spontaneous,” “bottom-up” reaction to specific organizational concerns of some teachers. The need for change arose primarily out of teachers’ dissatisfaction with the staff meetings and with the lack of collective enforcement of school-wide policies, particularly those associated with student behaviour. Beyond taking a vote at a staff meeting at the beginning of the year to receive agreement for the steering committee to proceed “in the direction of change,” and another meeting at the end of the year to vote on the process model, there was no other form of participation in the planning phase of the initiative by persons other than those on the steering committee.

Insufficient examination of conditions within the school’s general context (external and internal) resulted in a narrowly defined “considered context” for change at Prairie View. Limited consideration of the school’s contextual conditions resulted in a limited identification of what the content for change was to be. Teachers on teams were not clear as to the purposes of the initiative because they had not been involved in the process of translating the need for better staff meetings and student behaviour policies into a full blown change initiative involving teams of teachers working together along with representatives from other stakeholder groups. Nor was time provided for making such connections prior to full implementation and a focus on specific issues. Parents, students, and teachers not on teams were equally unclear as to the purposes.

Interpreting environmental conditions. Conditions within the considered context of change were also influenced by the extent to which change planners and participants used different perspectives in interpreting the various organizational and environmental conditions present within the school’s context. Interpreting refers to the act of lending meaning to conditions in the context so as to determine the possible needs for and nature of change. Analysis of the change initiative at Prairie View suggested that change efforts there did not utilize multiple perspectives and as a result certain critical contextual

conditions were not apparent to those in charge of planning the school's change initiative. Teacher interpretations of their context were limited to the norms of their dominant culture, which defined their work and set limits on both the types of issues they considered as legitimate for the process, and the approach that they could use in interpreting and dealing with those issues.

At Prairie View teachers narrowly defined their roles as consisting solely of their interaction with students in the classroom around subject area matters. They saw all other roles as "extras" to be taken on by choice or as being the responsibility of others. They expected administrators to do something about students who were unmotivated or presented behaviour problems. They blamed administrators and each other for not enforcing student behaviour policies which, they believed, would leave them free to teach in their classrooms. In the absence of any other specified purposes for change or efforts to take a broad perspective in interpreting change needs, teachers chose to focus on changes that would make their work easier. The focus specified for the change initiative did not force staff members or others involved in the change to examine the underlying belief systems responsible for differences in how policies were being enforced or followed.

The use of alternate perspectives in determining the need for change could have drawn attention to additional critical issues that existed in the school's context. For example, focusing on structural issues may have drawn people's attention to the need for changes that would improve student academic performance and focus efforts on the core purposes of teaching and learning. Interpretation using a political perspective could have revealed more clearly the divisions and differences among staff members and might have resulted in accommodation of these differences within a forum especially designed for this purpose. Using a symbolic perspective and providing stakeholders with an opportunity for dialogue around beliefs and purposes may have led to a consensus on the

core purposes of the school and in turn provided a framework that would serve as a guide to all decision-making processes. Viewing the context from multiple perspectives, then, could have revealed a more complete picture of the context of the school, resulted in clearer overall purposes for change, drawn attention to the need for dealing with some issues prior to embarking on the change program, and perhaps led to the use of more diverse and powerful strategies.

Operating from a considered context where a single perspective (human resource) was used in specifying the need for change, the content of the school's change initiative was similarly narrowly focused. Focus for the initiative was limited to creating a better process to deal with the most obvious teacher human resource issues related to making their work easier.

Selecting conditions that need to be changed. The third form of action associated with relating contextual conditions to content intents is referred to in the model as "selecting." Working together with interpretive activities, selection activities involve choosing the conditions from the organizational context that would become the content or focus for change. Combining the specific contextual conditions with the purposes of the school, content defines the purposes for change and the organizational features to be targeted for change.

Using narrow interpretation strategies, change planners at Prairie View focused on the lack of accountability and commitment some staff members displayed in conforming to school policies. They attributed the problem to a lack of confidence on the part of the faculty in the school's policy development and management system. Relying primarily on a human resource perspective of leadership, they concluded that what was needed was a new structural model and process to deal specifically with the problem of policy development. They focused on constructing the structural model and procedures, and spent little time in reflecting upon the content that would be the focus of the process.

They neglected to define clearly the types of policies that the new process would focus on or to provide collectively agreed upon outcome intents that might act as standards as to the types of matters teams would engage in. As a rationale for such an approach, they used the argument that they did not wish to be prescriptive as to the types of issues teams could deal with.

Two possible explanations can account for why change planners at Prairie View chose, in the design of their change initiative, to focus on changing structures rather than on what organizational conditions and practices might be the target of change actions. One possibility is that content was never intended to be part of the considered context and the second is that planners mistakenly assumed that once empowered by the structure and process, teams would become self-directed toward choosing the appropriate focus for their own actions.

As the literature reviewed in chapter two suggested, it is not uncommon for reformers to adopt change programs focused primarily on changing structures (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990). Introducing new structures can have strong symbolic and political appeal. Such approaches have the effect of increasing confidence and reducing conflict while at the same time being relatively easy to put in place. By introducing new structures at Prairie View, the principal symbolized his willingness to empower groups and have them share in a more democratic decision-making process. Accommodating non-teacher stakeholders as part of the process had strong political appeal as well. It gave the impression that the school was being responsive and accountable to its "clients" and in alignment with the social and political climate of the time. At the same time, the change did not disrupt existing practices and activities. Focusing on low impact issues left the existing organizational structures and roles virtually intact. By limiting their involvement to issues not considered threatening to the overall operation of the school, teams used the process to limit change and maintain organizational stability.

A second possible reason why change planners did not specify the content of their

change initiative was their belief that increased participation would lead to empowerment and self-direction. It was assumed that if they created a process that allowed teams to deal with any and all issues, teams themselves would select issues of importance to the whole school once they felt comfortable with the process. However, once teams became operational, they experienced a lack of direction and clarity as to what, specifically, their overall purpose was. In the absence of clear collective purposes, faculty members began relying on personal interpretations of what needed to be changed. Because the culture of the school already placed great value on human resource conditions, and the fact that this was a bottom-up initiative, not influenced by perspectives from outsiders, it was exclusively from this perspective that faculty members approached their change initiative.

Minimal efforts at examining contextual conditions, along with a narrow interpretive view as to what needed to be changed, resulted in change planners creating a considered context that placed greater value on the design of a process than on selection of the issues that needed to be considered in determining the content for the process. Without a process that forced participants to expand their considered context, the faculty at Prairie View became "stuck" within narrow perceptions of both, what could be changed and how it could be changed. Focusing exclusively on a human resource interpretation of their context, teams focused solely on issues related to teacher working conditions. Because the new structure and process were put into place, all such issues were forced to become part of that process with no opportunity for participants to discuss whether teams were in fact the best venue for dealing with such issues. As the staff seemed to realize at the end of the year, there were perhaps other, more expedient ways of dealing with some of the issues that were a frustration to some people. For example, if developing better policies around such issues as students wearing hats, student smoking, or attendance were the issues most in need of being addressed, the focus

and efforts may have been better aimed at forming specific ad hoc groups around these particular issues. Similarly, if staff meetings were a problem, then specific efforts might have been directed at improving staff meetings. This would have left teams to deal with other, more substantive issues. At Prairie View, however, other areas of focus were never part of the “considered context” for change.

Conclusions. The examining, interpreting, and selecting actions engaged in by change agents and participants at Prairie View created conditions within the “considered context” which had influence on the type of relationship that existed between the context and content dimensions of change. Inadequate examination of the context and narrow attempts at interpretation of contextual conditions resulted in an insufficient collective understanding as to what changes needed to be focused on. This resulted in a failure of the school’s initiative to adequately translate conditions in the school’s context to specific needs for change. Meanwhile, a reverse influence was also evident in that conditions in the school’s context, particularly the perspective teachers had as to their roles, directly influenced the type of process selected for their change initiative and ultimately the types of issues with which they ultimately dealt. A predominant human resource culture at the school predisposed organizational members to choose human resource content and strategies. Together these factors yielded a narrowly conceived change initiative with strategies not aligned with any identified collective school purposes or sense of underlying belief systems.

The Active Context

The active context describes the conditions created through actions focused on relating the content and outcome dimensions of change. More specifically, this context consists of the actions intended to transform intents, as specified in the content for change, into outcomes. At Prairie View the relationship between these dimensions was influenced by the extent to which planners and change leaders engaged in the following

activities: 1) building vision, and 2) supporting the initiative.

Building the vision. In the analysis of the data, "vision building" was the label assigned to activities related to attempts at specifying a set of future conditions that organizational members wished to emerge out of their change efforts. When clearly specified, such conditions can have the effect of making organizational members accountable to the vision for their actions and at the same time offer them a sense of security and direction (Louis & Miles, 1990).

The vision articulated at Prairie View was one of increased involvement of teachers, support staff, students, and parents in the development of school policies. The future set of conditions envisioned was a school environment where policies would be collectively enforced by teachers and administrators and supported by students and parents. Such a collective response to policies was the intended outcome expected to arise out of the creation of a process that provided an opportunity for a selected number of representative members from each of the stakeholder groups to participate directly in the formation of these policies and for all other members to have input into the process.

This interpretation of the vision appeared to be well understood by the majority of respondents of this study. It was a version that was frequently repeated at meetings and in individual conversations. It was recorded in the minutes of the steering committee meetings, used by the principal and general council in the team orientation session, and again mid-year when the process was discussed in a staff meeting. However, it could not be said that knowledge of this vision made participants accountable for their actions or provided them with direction and sense of security.

Recent studies of successful change efforts at schools indicated that vision evolves out of a variety of interactions associated with change processes. These include such activities as goal setting, policy development, professional development, and reflection on and discussion of beliefs, purposes, and practices (Rosenholtz, 1989). While parts

of the vision may become obvious through planning activities, vision is as much an outcome of the various opportunities members have to interact as it is the focus of such actions. However, these outcomes depend on strategies specifically intended to link evolving themes arising out of the various efforts and activities associated with change. The principal is frequently named as having a significant role in building and sustaining the vision around which change efforts are collectively focused (Leithwood, 1994a).

Analysis of the change initiative at Prairie View indicated that the vision lacked the sufficient depth needed for it to be of assistance to team members. Lacking was a consensus as to the overall purposes and future goals of the school. No opportunity was provided for groups to discuss these matters during the planning or implementation stage. All efforts during the planning stage were focused on creating a process and then using the process to deal with individual issues. When the process was created, the initiative went directly into the implementation stage without giving team members time to reflect on and discuss the overall purpose of their activities. Without a collective and clear vision of the desired conditions they wished to see at the school, team members had little to guide their deliberations and as a result largely failed in reaching consensus in their small groups around specific issues. Scholars such as Tanner (1993) and Schlechty (1990) have described similar outcomes when reforms do not make the desired state of the organization clear.

Having a limited vision of the desired state, participants of the change initiative were equally unclear about the specific actions required to accomplish their stated vision. It was never made clear what form policy recommendations should take. Did the teams' responsibility consist simply of making a recommendation declaring that something was now "policy" or did their responsibility extend to outlining how the policy should be implemented, who should be responsible for various parts of it, and how accountability might be assured? These were questions that all teams wrestled with, yet they were never discussed specifically with the intent of clarifying this ambiguity.

Teams became preoccupied with reaching decisions on the individual issues and failed to consider the overall purpose. Because there were no links among teams and no consistent communication between teams and the general council, teams became isolated. They did not have a forum to share their frustrations, questions, or successes. This resulted in even further removing the possibility of a collective effort in pursuit of a common vision.

Efforts at building vision at Prairie View fell short of establishing a clear relationship between content and outcomes. The active context of the change effort at Prairie View consisted of an exclusive focus at designing the structures to deal with policies. By doing so, change planners failed to articulate structures and processes that would support the creation and evolution of the vision for change. The result was a feeling of a lack of direction. Change participants were unclear as to the outcomes their participation in the process was intended to accomplish.

Supporting change. At Prairie View, conditions in the school's active change context were also influenced by the extent to which people accepted a leadership role and made an effort at supporting the change initiative itself. Three types of activities associated with this support were identified as having a fundamental influence on the outcome of change efforts at Prairie View. They included a) the presence of leadership, b) provision of resources, and c) assistance in coping with problems.

As described in chapter four, leadership was severely lacking in Prairie View's attempt at implementing change. Because teams were declared to be "self-directed," in order to "empower" them, critical leadership resources were effectively denied to teams.

Fearing that administrative involvement on the teams would represent interference, the steering committee decided that administrators would not be involved on any teams. This decision left the school's two assistant principals completely

uninvolved with the process except as spectators on the sidelines, despite the fact that they had leadership training and one of them had been involved at the steering committee level of the project. The principal interpreted his role in much the same way. He was reluctant to assume individual leadership apart from his role on the general council. He considered himself an equal among council members and was purposely careful not to impose his ideas even when he began to realize that teams were experiencing difficulties. He perceived himself as a source of information that teams could turn to if they so desired. He did not interpret his role as one of initiating support to teams.

In articulating the role of the general council, providing leadership to teams was not specified. When they were selected for their positions on the council, teacher members did not have the perception that they had a responsibility to assist teams in coping with the transition toward self-directed management and decision making using consensus. Nor did they themselves have a clear conception of such strategies. Although contact persons were appointed from the council as a communication link between teams and the council, communication was very informal and infrequent. The communication contacts that did occur did not prove conducive to genuine problem identification or assistance.

Conditions within the active context were further affected by a lack of leadership at the individual team level. No formal arrangements were put in place to facilitate individuals assuming responsibility for leading teams toward achieving specific outcomes. The principal hoped that as teams began working through the process, leadership would evolve out of the group. However, when faced with the uncertainty and frustration associated with their early efforts and a narrowly defined conception of what their overall role in the school should consist of, individual team members were reluctant to take on responsibility for leading their teams. Therefore, leadership on teams failed to evolve. Leadership assignment was reduced to naming someone at the

meeting to attempt to guide discussion and to inform members of upcoming meetings.

The literature referred to in chapter two emphasized the importance of active leadership as part of a change initiative. To achieve the intended outcomes of change someone needs to assume responsibility for maintaining the vision and the process (Schlechty, 1990). In so doing, such a person or group needs to find “a delicate balance between offering adequate guidance and support and acting in a laissez-faire fashion” (Shields & LaRocque, 1997, p. 7). Staff at Prairie View, however, did not build leadership into their change design and failed to resolve the balance between providing support and interfering. Those in formal leadership positions could not resolve the dilemma of exercising leadership that would not be experienced as controlling, prescriptive, and constraining while still providing direction, guidelines, information and expecting accountability. The result was an initiative that failed to assign responsibilities and build in accountability. Deeming that teams would be “self-directed” absolved the principal and general council of their responsibilities for actively promoting the initiative through allocation of resources and problem coping. Actions became entirely focused on the individual issues being dealt with by each team and the extent to which the prescribed processes were being followed rather than on supporting and dealing with change conditions.

Because leadership was virtually absent, once implementation of the change initiative began, other resources essential to success were also not made available to teams. Other than indicating that each team had the equivalent of one full day of substitute supported time to use for professional development or planning as they saw fit, virtually no other resources were allocated to the initiative. Even though the steering committee had taken a whole year to discuss and reflect upon the type of model they wished to introduce in order to increase stakeholder participation, no opportunity to engage in a similar reflective process was provided to new team members. Nor were they given time prior to full implementation to engage in any dialogue around issues of

purpose, process, and outcomes or to obtain a clear understanding of such concepts as consensus and shared leadership. Their learning consisted of a half day orientation describing the model, specifying how issues would be assigned to them, and explaining what they needed to do with their assigned issue.

As teams began experiencing difficulties and as problems became apparent, no problem coping assistance was available. No one assumed responsibility for addressing these problems, other than some minimal attempts by the principal and the general council to provide psychological support. No attempt was made to build meeting times into the schedule or compensate teachers for extra time. No provisions were made for professional development for all team members. Neither were arrangements made to allow teams to share their experiences with each other and the general council so as to reflect upon the process they were engaged in separate from the specific issues with which each team was dealing.

The lack of leadership and resource support seriously limited the conditions within the active context of the change conducive to promoting the achievement of any substantive outcomes. The lack of support created conditions exacerbating the existing human resource issues teachers felt were of concern at the school. They began to see the initiative as only creating more work for them because of the extra time involved in attending meetings. At the same time they were reluctant to expand the perception of their role as teachers to include taking responsibility for the process and creating conditions that would promote achievement of outcomes.

Conclusions. The nature of the vision building and supporting actions at Prairie View created change conditions within the "active context" influencing the type of relationships that resulted between content and outcome change dimensions. Vision building activities failed to result in the evolution of more clearly articulated properties of the content for change. Without vision, efforts lacked purpose and commitment since

team members could not link their efforts to the larger purposes of the school or to a collectively interpreted future state. Because there was no process in place to allow for the construction of a clear vision, substantive outcomes failed to materialize.

Conditions in the active context were characterized by limited efforts by any party to exhibit a leadership role, a lack of technical and learning resources, and little effort at coping with change problems other than ignoring them. Leadership of the change initiative at Prairie View was abandoned under the assumption that empowerment would result from giving teams control of their own destiny. However, team members lacked the knowledge, resources, and commitment to take on such responsibility. Although some administrators attempted to justify the process as a learning experience in what it takes to develop and run a policy, the psychological and social costs associated with such learning make such strategies questionable.

The Integrative Context

The integrative context describes the context created through actions linking outcome and context dimensions of change. The label "integrative context" is used to describe the relationship between outcomes arising out of change efforts and the influence that these have on the general context of the school. This relationship at Prairie View was determined by the way in which participants engaged in three types of actions: assessing, communicating, and integrating.

Assessing outcomes. As it is presented in the theoretical model (see Figure 5.1), assessment is that part of the process focused on determining the effect that change outcomes have on the general context of the school. Effective assessment consists of ongoing monitoring efforts as well as less frequent summative assessment (Louis & Miles, 1990). It requires attention to the intended and unintended outcomes of change. Unintended outcomes consist of the kinds of issues that are generated as a consequence of organizational change (Bolman and Deal, 1990).

As was described in the previous chapter, there was some effort at Prairie View to assess the integrative context through monitoring of team activities. Members on the general council were assigned as contacts to specific teams. Unfortunately, their role was not clearly specified and there was no accountability for maintaining such contacts. Most members did not attend team meetings and teams did not interpret the role of the general council as one of providing assistance in dealing with the problems associated with the initiative. However, even with the limited contact council members had with teams, there was an awareness of many of the problems that teams were experiencing. These were made apparent through informal conversations between council and team members and through regular reporting to the principal and the general council by the investigator when sharing his preliminary findings. The fact that no action was taken as a result of this information points to inadequate coping strategies (i.e., part of the active context related to providing support) rather than insufficient monitoring strategies.

As reported earlier, the general council engaged the investigator in designing a summative assessment instrument to provide the school with an assessment of the initiative at the end of the school year. The responses were summarized and shared with the general council and the staff as a whole. The results generated discussion as to alternate means of addressing the diverse issues that were of concern to the staff.

However, while the year-end assessment was helpful in identifying the structural and human resource conditions impacted by the change initiative, it was less helpful in identifying political and symbolic conditions. These were identified primarily through the interviews and observations of the investigator. This perhaps lends support for the need to engage outsiders in assessment activities aimed at generating this form of feedback.

Communicating outcomes. As depicted in the model, communicating outcomes represents the second form of action influencing conditions within the “integrative

context” of change. Analysis of the data at Prairie View suggested that the extent to which outcomes were shared influenced the effect these outcomes had on the overall organizational context of the school and on the entire change initiative itself.

Conditions at Prairie View were such that there were no mechanisms in place to share, on a frequent basis, the issues and outcomes arising out of team efforts. Teams did not have an opportunity to meet with each other to assess progress and discuss issues they may have had in common. This led to the perception on the part of many team members that all teams, except theirs, were doing fine. This in turn resulted in a reluctance to admit to difficulties, a tendency to minimize them in their reports to general council contacts, and a reluctance to seek assistance. As a result, an opportunity was lost that might have been used to understand the outcomes resulting from the change efforts.

Other stakeholders were equally unaware of what was happening as part of the change initiative. Discussion of the initiative was given minimum time at the single staff meeting held between the time the initiative was launched and the discussion of the results obtained from the final assessment at the end of the year. As a result, staff members not on teams were unaware of the intentions of the change process under way or how outcomes might impact them in the future. The work of teams was seldom reported in the weekly staff bulletin except to remind people of meetings. Other than a notice at the beginning of the year soliciting issues for input from students and parents, there were no formal communication links between the change initiative and parent or student groups.

Failure to consider how the outcomes of the change initiative would be shared and who had that responsibility, resulted in a failure to establish the essential link between the change initiative and the day-to-day life of the school (i.e., conditions in the general context of the school). Failing to see such a relationship team members became increasingly frustrated with the time and energy they were expending on the initiative.

Failure to act on the issues and problems arising out of the change efforts meant that even unintended outcomes were not helpful in guiding and informing change participants toward more effective and efficient strategies. Meanwhile, for staff members not involved in the change it was business as usual.

The outcomes resulting from the early efforts at change were primarily of the unintended variety. Failure to specify the content and build a vision for change limited the intended outcomes that could emerge from the change process. Meanwhile, failure to discuss openly the unintended outcomes on an ongoing basis resulted in limited learning regarding how some of the issues emerging from the change initiative could be addressed. As described in the previous chapter, the extent of change was limited and served primarily as a symbolic signal of change to outsiders. The political outcomes that emerged served only to reinforce the existing contextual conditions and entrench people in their traditional roles and actions.

Integrating changes into the school's organizational context. The final type of action found to be critical in relating change efforts to the general context of the school, once outcomes and issues are evident, was the response to such outcomes. Responding to change outcomes involves integrating them into the general context of the school. Such integration might consist, for example, in the incorporation of new practices or organizational structures in order to promote the vision articulated for the change initiative. Schools successful with change efforts use the results of their monitoring and assessment activities to guide them in making changes to their structural and cultural conditions (Rosenholtz, 1989). Principals of such schools are described as being actively involved in acquiring additional resources, reworking existing resources to better fit with the new vision, adjusting structures, and forming networks of relationships outside the school (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990).

Much has already been said about the failure of those at Prairie View to use

feedback from monitoring efforts to make adjustments to their change design or process despite clear evidence that it wasn't working. Lacking the knowledge and resources to deal with many of the problems, no one took on the responsibility of acquiring the resources that may have at least helped them deal with some of the problems. Rather, issues arising out of the change efforts were simply ignored until the end of the year when a decision had to be made whether to continue with the initiative or to abandon it. Because the effort was designated as a one year pilot project, it appeared that change participants had decided, long before the final meeting in June, that their initiative had failed and there was little they could, or wanted to do about it. As a result, there were no substantive outcomes that impacted on improvements to the overall school context or the change initiative itself.

Conclusions. Conditions within the "integrative context" of change were created by the presence or absence of three types of actions 1) assessing outcomes, 2) communicating outcomes, and 3) integrating the change outcomes into the context of the school. The results of analysis of the data at Prairie View indicated that, although some mechanisms were employed to assess efforts, the results of such efforts were not acted upon. Insufficient leadership again failed to establish the conditions within this context to adequately link change outcomes to the organization as a whole or to provide feedback so as to make adaptations to the content or processes associated with the initiative.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to respond to the final question of the study, namely, to describe the interrelationships between the various dimensions of change. Using grounded theory methodology to generate theoretical concepts, analysis of the data resulted in the construction of a theoretical model to account for the data collected at the study site. The chapter consisted of an explanation of this model by describing the links between each of the subsidiary categories and the core category, grounding each category to the data by describing the properties of each, as well as establishing links to the

literature.

Results of the analysis indicated that the relationships between dimensions are influenced by the actions of leaders as part of the process dimension of change. The nature of these actions contribute to the creation of conditions within three distinct change contexts. These contexts were referred to as the considered, active, and integrative contexts of change. Three specific actions were determined to be central in establishing the “considered context” integrating conditions in the context of the school with the specified content for change: 1) examining the environment, 2) interpreting conditions, and 3) selecting conditions for change. Two types of activities taken on by personnel willing to assume a leadership role were determined to be fundamental in creating the “active context,” linking content and outcome dimensions: 1) building vision, and 2) supporting the change. Conditions within the “integrative context” influence the relationship between outcomes associated with change efforts and conditions in the general context of the school. Three types of leadership actions were deemed critical to this change context: 1) assessing, 2) communicating, and 3) integrating. Failure of the initiative at Prairie View was explained by making reference to the extent that people were willing to assume leadership responsibilities, thereby creating the conditions integrating the dimensions of change within each of the three change contexts.

This next and final chapter considers the descriptive and conceptual analyses presented in the previous and present chapters and brings them together in the form of summary, conclusions and implications.

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

Summary and Conclusions

The overall purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of school change by examining the change efforts at one secondary school in Alberta. Four dimensions of school change identified in the literature were examined: 1) context, 2) content, 3) process, and 4) outcomes. The first four research questions articulated in the study sought to provide a description of each of these dimensions as they occurred at the selected site. A fifth question was aimed at explaining relationships between dimensions. The site selected for this investigation was a small secondary school whose staff was embarking upon a change effort aimed at altering the school's decision making process in the area of school policy development. A summary of findings for each of the stated research questions, and the conclusions resulting from those findings, are presented below.

The Change Context at Prairie View High School

The literature identifies both external and internal contextual conditions as influencing factors associated with school change. The extent to which external factors impacted upon Prairie View's efforts at change was not directly determinable. When asked, study participants typically described the state of conditions within the school as the motivation for change. There was little evidence of any district level expectations for changes to be made at the school despite the political environment existing within the province at the time, and demands for increased achievement and accountability. Nor was there evidence to suggest that parents of the school community were specifically making demands for changes with respect to how the school operated. However, as reported in the outcomes section of chapter five, the change efforts at Prairie View could

be described as being symbolically and politically in line with the prevailing social and political environment within the province. Consistent with the provincial restructuring focus, their change initiative involved the creation of new structures aimed at providing opportunities for the involvement of a variety of stakeholders in some aspect of the school's operation. Therefore, by simply by announcing such intentions and creating the new structures gave the school an appearance of conforming to the general demands of the time and of being progressive.

Most of the staff and administration at Prairie View interpreted their change effort as strictly a "bottom-up" phenomenon with no links to change efforts occurring at other levels of the system. The form that the initiative took was therefore predominantly influenced by the school's internal structural and cultural characteristics.

The structural organization at Prairie View was described in chapter four as a typical "machine bureaucracy." Power was formally situated at the top of the organizational hierarchy with the principal and assistant principals having exclusive control of all important functions at the school. Power was even more centrally situated than in many other high schools due to the fact that Prairie View did not have formal department heads and the voluntary heads appeared to have limited decision-making power. The principal did, however, practice an informal style of participative management through efforts at consulting various stakeholder representatives prior to making administrative decisions. However, this informal consultation process did not always take into consideration the political differences within the staff or between the staff and other stakeholder groups (i.e., parents and students). This caused dissatisfaction on the part of some staff members who believed that their needs were not being considered when decisions were made.

The overall culture of the school (i.e., the beliefs, values, and perspectives that

guided staff member actions and practices) was consistent with the characteristics of Bolman and Deal's human resource frame. Staff members valued clearly separated hierarchical roles. However, teachers generally held narrowly defined roles for administrators, as well as for themselves. The role of administrators was essentially limited to that of management and an expectation that their legitimate role consisted of maintaining order (especially in relation to uncooperative students), scheduling activities, and dealing with outside influences on the school (e.g., parents and district office personnel). Teachers, meanwhile, narrowly defined their role as consisting of the interactions engaged in during the act of instructing students within their classrooms. For the most part they believed that teaching was a solitary act engaged in by individuals, who by the nature of their positions, were professionals. Teaching and learning were considered personal and individual matters not appropriate for questioning or discussion at a school-wide level. To illustrate, accountability for low student achievement in the sciences was considered by other staff members as a problem only for the individual teachers whose students scored poorly and the responsibility of the principal (as part of his formal role) to address with the teachers and students involved. Furthermore, even teachers within classrooms where achievement was low tended not to assume responsibility for those results. Instead of reflecting on student learning difficulties in relation to instructional practices, teachers tended to view the problem as residing elsewhere. Some suggested that the calibre of students who appeared in their classes was below standard. Others had the perception that parents at home and administrators at the school were not satisfactorily exercising their roles in dealing with students who come to their classes unprepared, unmotivated, and unwilling to learn.

Narrowly defining their roles and responsibilities, teachers became increasingly dissatisfied with existing conditions at the school that they saw as interfering with their

perceived roles. They focused their dissatisfactions on inadequately developed or enforced school policies. During the course of the study, and in the months leading up to it, there was a perception that conditions in the school were deteriorating. Staff members felt that many of the school's policies were being ignored by both teachers and students, thus creating less than ideal conditions for teachers. There was an underlying perception that their jobs were becoming more difficult because teachers and students were either unaware of policies or administrators were not consistent in challenging individual students and teachers who were ignoring established policies and rules.

However, the political conditions at the school were such that there was no consensus as to what specifically the role of teachers and administrators should be with respect to policy decision making. Teachers holding more traditional views of organizational roles believed that the present problems were essentially a "management" issue and therefore should be dealt with by the administration. Other teachers, holding more progressive human resource interpretations of organizational roles believed that if they had more of an opportunity to participate in forming school policies, these policies would be more in line with how teacher's interpreted the problem. Administrators supported this latter view because they saw teacher participation in certain decision-making activities as a means of generating commitment to and accountability for school-wide policies and practices.

However, existing structural mechanisms at the school did not permit effective participation in the discussion of or input into matters of school policy. The monthly staff meetings had deteriorated to the point that they had become a meaningless ritual acting as a symbolic representation of organizational misalignment, lack of direction, and a loss of control by the administration. These staff meetings, and the stories that they generated, represented the single most powerful signal for a need for change at Prairie View.

Conclusion: The perception of the need for change arises out of the consideration

and interpretation of conditions existing in a school's external and internal contexts. Analysis of the contextual dimension of the change effort at Prairie View indicated that external considerations for the need for change were limited to that of portraying an image of conforming to the prevailing political environment with emphasis on reforms that would be structurally visible and providing an opportunity for the participation in a decision-making process by an increased number of member stakeholders. However, no specific demands or direction for change existed at the district or community levels. As a result, the school's internal culture acted as the primary force suggesting both the need for change and the direction that such change should take. The dominant human resource culture at Prairie View resulted in the interpretation of organizational actions in terms of the formal roles which people within the organization were expected to perform. However, cultural conditions were such that many of the staff members at Prairie View held narrow definitions of their roles and as a result tended to attribute responsibility for problems within the organization to other groups (e.g., administrators, students, parents, or teachers who fail to enforce policies). Such interpretation of internal and external contextual conditions by staff members influenced the considered context of the school's change effort and thereby the relationship existing between the school's context and the content selected for change.

Change Content at Prairie View High School

Establishing the content for change was influenced by the extent of the interpretations given to the contextual conditions present at the school, as well as the extent of involvement by the stakeholders at large in the determination of the focus and design for change.

When selecting what would be part of the change effort at Prairie View, the lack of outside influences resulted in a considered context for change predominantly influenced by the school's internal human resource focused culture. This resulted in a

narrow interpretation (by both the planners and later by teams) of the school's context and in the determination of what changes should be made. The structural, political, and symbolic aspects of the organization were considered important only to the extent that they impacted upon human resource conditions at the school.

Establishing the content of the change initiative was further constrained by the limited involvement of staff members or other stakeholders in the design of the initiative. This task was limited to a steering committee that consisted of the principal, an assistant principal, and four teachers. The approach taken in designing the change initiative was highly influenced by the human resource perspective adopted by the school's principal, a perspective that was in turn adopted by the steering committee as a whole.

In creating the design for the change initiative, content was further limited. First of all, the mandated structures and processes created by the steering committee limited decision making participation to the area of policy development, thereby limiting the likelihood of changes occurring in other areas of the organization (i.e., existing organizational structures or cultural norms).

Secondly, the content of the change initiative was limited by the intentional efforts of the steering committee to create a decision-making structure and process without specifying the particular issues or policies that would be given priority consideration. Specifying the types of policies to be focused on was considered too prescriptive and not in keeping with the overall philosophical approach of self-directedness and empowerment that the principal and steering committee were attempting to promote. Therefore, instead of specified and agreed upon purposes defining the change content, emphasis was on the structural mechanism and process that the committee "hoped" would lead to teams defining and prioritizing their own content and would allow for a level of participation and empowerment necessary to make "quality"

policy decisions.

The hope failed to become a reality, however, because the process, as it was designed by the steering committee and later promoted by the general council, resulted in teams struggling to gain clarity as to the intended focus of the newly created decision-making mechanism. Teams were not provided with the time to reflect on what issues and content would be the most appropriate or worthwhile focus to their activities. The mandated structures and procedures required them to deal with issues generated by individual stakeholders. There were no provisions in the process to assist teams in prioritizing issues based on collectively perceived needs. Furthermore, without conditions forcing participants to take alternative views of their organizational context the school's human resource culture influenced both, the types of issues individuals considered appropriate for the process and the way in which these issues could be addressed. The focus for many of the decision-making teams became those issues generated by teachers who were unhappy with specific human resource conditions within the school. Therefore, lacking a clear consensus of the content for change, the emergent content became one dominated by a desire to create policies aimed at making the work of individual teachers easier. Content focused on the improvement of teaching practices or student learning issues were never part of the considered context of the change effort described in this study.

Conclusion: The content of the change initiative in the present study showed that it was narrowly focused and suffered from a lack of specificity. The narrow focus was the result of several factors including the following: 1) the need for and direction of change was situated exclusively within the internal school context, 2) the selection of the content was made by a small group of stakeholders, and 3) the predominance of a single perspective (human resource) in the design of the change. Furthermore, the belief held by the change planners that specifying the content of change would infringe upon the decision-making powers of teams caused them to assume that the teams

themselves would select content that would lead to changes of importance to the school as a whole. In reality, the result was a lack of clarity on the part of stakeholders as to the purposes for the newly created process and a focus on low impact, single stakeholder (teacher), human resource issues.

The Change Process at Prairie View High School

The process associated with the implementation of the change initiative at Prairie View was mostly confined to activities occurring during the initial planning stages. These actions, carried out by the steering committee, were primarily focused on the creation of a new policy decision-making structure. Once teams were created and the initiative officially approved by a teacher vote, the designated structures and procedures created by the planning team remained unchanged and unquestioned throughout the first year of implementation. Once decision-making teams were established, the members of these teams were not given time to develop their own ideas, strategies, and knowledge before being expected to use the process in dealing with specific policy issues submitted to them.

The most prominent condition characterizing the implementation stage of the initiative was the lack of leadership for facilitating the change. A philosophy of self-direction, participation, and consideration of personal opinions replaced active leadership. The principal and general council adopted a position of non-interference with teams. They viewed their role as simply ensuring that the teams had the specified number of members, that issues generated from stakeholders at large were directed to appropriate teams, and that they received policy recommendations from the teams. They did not see their role as offering assistance to teams in determining what their focus should be, providing support in the form of knowledge, skills, or information, or being responsible to assist teams in coping with the problems they encountered. To them, the term "self-directed" meant that teams were responsible for determining their own

directions, finding their own resources, and solving their own problems.

However, within the teams there was a similar reluctance by individuals to take on any leadership responsibilities. Guided by a human resource perspective, the primary concern of teachers was on making their work easier. Therefore, they resisted taking on responsibilities of leadership (which many considered to be a formal role) or dealing with issues that would serve to increase their workload. Instead, most teams used a strategy whereby they shared some responsibilities for leading meetings and recording minutes. In this way, everyone shared the tasks and no one person was overburdened. Although the strategy proved to be inefficient for most teams, its use persisted because it was seen as the fairest way of dealing with conditions that called for increased teacher involvement in roles that were not uniformly seen as being part of teachers' responsibilities.

Like members of the general council, team members also struggled with the dilemma of allowing expression of individual opinions on issues and then attempting to reach a decision without creating winners and losers. They lacked the personal knowledge and skills required for reaching consensus. This situation was further negatively affected by the lack of a set of overall purposes or criteria. The presence of clearly defined purposes and agreed upon principles could have served as standards against which diverse opinions on specific issues might be judged and agreed upon.

Conclusion: The predominant feature of the change process at Prairie View was the the failure to consider the need for leadership to support and facilitate change. It was incorrectly assumed that once planning was complete and a structural design adopted, the initiative would survive on the strength of members feeling empowered by virtue of their expanded decision-making role. However, no consensus was reached as to the issues that would be the legitimate domain of this expanded role. Nor were provisions made to provide the training necessary for teams to successfully take on a "self-

directed" role (e.g., select appropriate content for decision making, reach consensus on issues, obtain the required resources, or solve problems they might encounter). Nor were opportunities made available to promote and encourage leadership skills or to provide the time to reflect upon the overall vision of the initiative.

Change Outcomes at Prairie View High School

Much of the change effort at Prairie View was guided by loosely linked hopes held by a variety of individuals rather than by a set of clearly stated collective intents and purposes. There was an underlying, but non-articulated hope that increased participation by a variety of stakeholders in the policy development process would lead to better policies, increased commitment to policies, and improved relationships between various stakeholder groups. Teachers had hoped that their involvement would lead to better working conditions, while administrators hoped that teacher involvement would lead to greater accountability and serve as a learning experience in the difficulties inherent in policy development and management. Although the administration understood that providing individuals with a mechanism to deal with any and all matters might initially cause teams to focus on issues of concern to a limited number of individuals, they hoped that it would eventually lead to dealing with matters more directly related to improvement in teaching and learning. However, because individual intents were never linked to a collective vision or purpose for change, one of the unintended outcomes resulting from the change efforts was a lack of clarity on the part of participants as to the purposes for the designed change process.

Analysis of outcomes using all four of Bolman and Deal's frames revealed limited alteration to existing structural and cultural characteristics at Prairie View school. By the end of the first year the initiative did not result in changes to any school policies and it made no impact to the school's organizational structures, administrators' approach to management, or teachers' approach to student management or instruction.

Furthermore, the new structures prevented top-down introduction of larger scale changes (e.g., a school-wide teacher advisory program) because the process was designed for dealing only with bottom-up generated issues.

Neither did the initiative result in feelings of empowerment, commitment, or accountability as the steering committee had hoped. Approaching the change initiative from a perspective of making their work easier, teachers began to realize that their participation on teams was in fact expanding their role and increasing their work load. Meanwhile, a failure to deal with any issues of a substantive nature resulted in no changes to conditions originally considered to be negatively impacting their work lives. As time progressed team members became frustrated with the process because of a lack of clarity regarding what the purposes of the change process were, the large amounts of time involved in meetings, and the lack of outcomes in the improvement of their work conditions. The change initiative in this way exacerbated original human resource conditions because of the demand for time and the need for expanded roles of teachers to include leadership and management functions that they were not prepared to assume.

The only outcomes that resulted from the efforts for change at Prairie View were of a short term symbolic nature. The activities associated with the initiative helped restore confidence in the school's organizational arrangement for a short time. It provided a hope that human resource concerns would finally be addressed, temporarily offered a more attractive alternative to the staff meetings of the past, and provided a forum for teachers to associate with each other. The experience also contributed to a realization by many participants of the need to involve other stakeholders in school decision making and for having a variety of group decision-making mechanisms (e.g., staff meetings, department meetings, and conflict resolution teams) to deal with different types of issues. Furthermore, there was some evidence that the initiative served to raise the profile of the school because of the interest and response it was receiving from outsiders. Not familiar with the precise nature of the changes taking

place, members of the community and district seemed satisfied that the school was working in a direction consistent with the current political and social climate.

Conclusions: A lack of clarity as to purpose, a narrowly conceived and inadequately specified plan, and a lack of sustained leadership and support led to the failure of the change initiative at Prairie View. Without an opportunity to reinterpret the change process from a perspective other than a human resource one, participants became frustrated with a process that seemed only to add to their workload rather than make it easier as they had intended. Still operating from a perspective of narrowly defined roles with no processes in place to reflect upon or challenge such perceptions, the process put in place actually served to constrain change rather than promote it. The initiative, therefore, failed to alter existing structural or cultural features or to improve the human resource conditions of the school.

The Interrelational Properties of Change Dimensions

An analysis of the interrelational characteristics of the change dimensions revealed the presence of three distinct contexts associated with the overall change process. Each context was created from the leadership actions used as part of the process dimension of change and the effects of these actions on the relationship that existed between other change dimensions. These created change contexts were labelled the considered, active, and integrative contexts.

The considered context described the conditions for change that existed from the relationship between three forms of leadership action and the context and content dimensions of change. Specifically, actions consisting of the examination and interpretation of contextual conditions, which in turn facilitated the selection of the content dimensions of the planned change, served to link the context and content dimensions of change. At Prairie View the link between context and content was weak and therefore the considered context was incomplete. The general environmental conditions

of the school were inadequately examined and interpretation of these conditions narrowly focused only on human resource issues. The limited number of people involved in the planning process, especially any group or level of organization outside the school, resulted in the absence of an external check that might have forced internal participants to consider a broader perspective on change.

The active context described the conditions for change that existed from the relationship between content and outcome dimensions of change. This relationship was influenced by the extent to which leadership strategies focused upon building a vision for change and providing the resources to assist participants in dealing with change. At Prairie View, no groups or individuals were willing to take on the responsibility for the leadership required to develop this change context. Adopting a philosophy of "self-directedness" the formal leaders of the school (administrators) believed that providing guidance to teams without their explicit request for assistance represented interference. The general council, created to oversee the process, adopted a similar stance and failed to provide the necessary leadership and resources teams needed to understand the purposes and execute the processes associated with the change initiative. Lacking the vision and resources needed to implement change, team members were reluctant to take on the leadership roles planners had expected they would be eager to assume because of the incentive of empowerment and opportunity for participation. Rather, team members saw their involvement in leadership as an expansion of their defined role as teachers and an increase to their already heavy work load. These conditions within the active context, combined with an already impoverished considered context, greatly limited the possibility of substantial outcomes occurring from the change initiative at Prairie View.

The integrative context described the conditions that might integrate change outcomes into the general context and practices of the school. Such conditions were influenced by leadership strategies consisting of the assessment and communication of

results and the integration of these into the structural and cultural context of the school. To a large extent, the effects of conditions in the other two contexts were cumulative. An inadequately specified considered context, combined with a reluctance of any groups or individuals to assume responsibility within the active context, limited the extent of integration possible. The only possibility that existed at Prairie View was that results of assessment would be interpreted and communicated in such a way as to cause changes to the conditions within these other contexts. Unfortunately, by the end of the present study it did not appear that anyone was prepared to take on the responsibility and necessary leadership to promote such changes.

Conclusions: The individual dimensions of change exist in a dynamic influencing relationship. The specific conditions defining these relationships are the consequence of the leadership strategies employed as part of the process dimension. Three different sets of strategies are required to support three different contexts for change. These contexts link the conditions in the general context to the selected content for change, which in turn are linked to outcomes. The relationship is completed when leadership actions are aimed at integrating the outcomes of the change initiative into the school's structural and cultural context and in further adaptations to the change initiative.

Implications of the Research

Implications for Policy and Practice

The change effort examined in the present study was not intended to generate a specific lists of procedures to follow in implementing school change. Rather, the intent was to provide a contextualized description of change efforts in progress and, through this description, reveal the contexts to which attention must be given, the issues that must be confronted, and the actions to that are needed to support change. The contextualized description of change in progress, undertaken in the present study, was achieved through an examination and description of each of the four dimensions associated with change (context, content, process, and outcomes). As such, it has the

potential of better informing practice than would simply focusing on change outcomes (Murphy & Hallinger, 1992). In the next two sections of this chapter, some of the major implications for policy makers and school-level personnel resulting from the present study are discussed.

Implications for Policy Makers. For policy makers the present study points to the need for both top-down and bottom-up approaches to change. In other words, it suggests that successful change initiatives require impetus from a variety of external forces (e.g., the district and the local community), in addition to internal forces. Existing school cultures are too pervasive and deeply embedded to be altered by change designs exclusively created and implemented internally by people who hold fast to the ethnocentric beliefs of their dominant organizational culture. Needed are supports, guidelines, and demands for accountability from other levels in the organization. It therefore becomes incumbent on policy makers to arrange for such a combination of pressures and supports. The goal of this form of systemic action is to promote greater involvement and responsibility on the part of school staff and administration for considering a broader change context, assuming more active leadership, and increasing accountability for producing change outcomes directly impacting teaching and learning.

Systemic resources to support the assumption of leadership roles by both administrators and teachers are also a necessity. To illustrate, principals must be offered training in providing the complex and extensive leadership required for effective change initiatives. They also must be offered support in developing the skills to lead change, in an active way, without being prescriptive or interfering. Additionally, principals require training in promoting the assumption of leadership roles by others. Teachers need time and support to reflect on expanded conceptions of their roles and to gain the knowledge and confidence needed to take on leadership responsibilities for teaching and learning, broadly conceived. Such knowledge comes through genuine

opportunities for involvement on substantive issues affecting students and their learning and a consensus as to the overall purposes of schools. Creating such opportunities and conditions are responsibilities that need to be shared by policy makers and leaders at all levels of the system. The present study suggests that the promise of empowerment and participation in decision making is an insufficient incentive for teachers and other stakeholders to take on leadership roles, accept responsibility for directing change, or engage in learning. Self-directedness and increased participation cannot replace active leadership from policy makers and administrators at all levels.

Implications for Practice at the School Level. At the school level, the implications for practice emerging from the present study point to the need for the consideration of three distinct change contexts: the considered context, the active context, and the integrative context. Inadequate attention to any one of these has limiting consequences on other contexts and the overall success with change efforts.

Prior to the beginning of a change initiative, thought must be given to developing a clear understanding of the possible perspectives from which organizational conditions and human actions can be interpreted and identifying the perspective by which one's own school operates. Broadly examined and interpreted contextual conditions create the necessary preconditions for selecting the appropriate content for change and building the vision that will guide change and improvements. Such understanding can result in change efforts that purposely account for perspectives not represented within the existing school culture, thus expanding the considered context.

As changes are introduced and implemented, the focus is on the active context. As long as principals are the designated formal leaders of the school, they are in the best position to offer ongoing support to change participants. Thus positioned, the principal's role changes from one of decision-maker to that of the creator of conditions that allow others to share in the process. This does not mean, however, that he/she can abdicate the

leadership role in exchange for increased involvement of others in shared decision-making roles (as was the case at Prairie View). The responsibility for interpreting and communicating the vision for change, and acquiring the necessary resources must still largely be that of the principal. Simply creating the structures for increased decision making is insufficient. Along with the structures must be a clear sense of the vision toward which change efforts are directed and a sense of the actions required on the part of various stakeholders in order to achieve such a vision. People are not empowered by participating in a process, but rather through achievement of clearly articulated and substantive goals and purposes.

Attention to the integrative context of change requires strategies aimed at continuous monitoring of problems and conditions associated with change. Making problem identification and coping integral parts of a change initiative ensures that the vision is clear and that the necessary resources are in place to facilitate changes in practice. Such strategies can also alert change planners to the need for adapting structural and cultural features of the organization so as to facilitate the realization of intended change outcomes and to integrate these outcomes into the cultural context of the school. Equally important is communication of the ongoing and emerging outcomes associated with the change efforts. Change increases the need for communication because it demands that progress is continually assessed, the vision reinterpreted, and all stakeholders informed of outcomes. Therefore, the establishment of new communication mechanisms becomes an essential part of a school's change initiative.

Although each of the change contexts is important in its own right, their consideration is made more essential by the interaction effect (i.e., of each on the others) on the overall quality of the change processes and outcomes. When considered together, the three contexts bridge conditions that exist in the general school culture, the change focus, and outcomes. Thus, they must be considered in an integrated and

iterative fashion if change efforts are to be maintained.

Implications for Theory and Research

The implications for theory emerging from the present study are suggested by the theoretical model of change presented in Figure 5-1 and described in chapter five. The model describes process, comprised of the actions taken by change leaders and participants, as the core dimension of change. The present study suggested that the nature of the actions comprising the process component of change influences the conditions present within three distinct change contexts: considered, active, and integrative. Understanding the conditions created within each of these contexts in turn led to a deeper understanding of the relationship between the other dimensions of change (context, content, and outcomes).

The properties of each of the change contexts described in this study, their relationship to actions existing in the process dimension of change, and the bridging function they serve between the other change dimensions support the conclusions of other researchers (e.g., Fullan, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990) relative to the complexity of secondary school change. The outcomes of the present study suggest that not only must change initiatives consider the pre-change context of the school, but also the contexts created as the change process itself emerges and evolves. While unique change contexts will undoubtedly emerge from each change initiative (depending on the interaction of process with the context, content, and outcomes), their role and function as the “grease” and “glue” of the change initiative will be maintained. Thus, it will be important to examine these constructs through further research and to document their commonality and uniqueness as they exist in other schools with different structural arrangements and cultural contexts. By so doing, richer descriptions of the critical change contexts identified in the present study will be provided, along with a fuller understanding of the interaction among change dimensions.

The present study also revealed the conceptual and methodological utility of

Bolman and Deal's interpretive frameworks in the investigation of school change. The frameworks proved to be useful both in terms of describing specific school change efforts and in analyzing the relationships between various dimensions of the change process. Bolman and Deal's emphasis on integrating multiple perspectives offers a model for the development of flexible management strategies. In the present study, their framework provided a valuable tool for interpreting the multiple contexts present throughout the course of change. The interpretation, in turn, led to the construction of categories by which data could be grouped and interpreted. As a result of this undertaking, the relationships between the categories were revealed and a fuller description of the change process offered.

Concluding Comment

Perhaps more than anything, this study has added to the conclusions of others (e.g., Fullan, 1993a) regarding the complexity of school change. In the final analysis the impact that such change will have on teaching and learning practices will depend on the willingness and ability of those at the school level to take an active part in creating the contexts that will support such changes. Expecting that schools can create such contexts on their own, however, is being unrealistically optimistic. School staffs, especially principals, need the resources and incentives from other parts of the system to provide the direction, skills, and motivation for such changes.

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Appendix A
Consent for Participation in Research

This document confirms the consent of _____ to participate in the research project titled: Implementing Secondary School Organizational Change. The researcher is Gerry Kresowaty, a Ph.D student at the University of Calgary, Department of Educational Policy and Administrative Studies.

Purpose of Research:

To describe and analyze a school's organizational change efforts and the conditions influencing the process and outcomes of such efforts.

As a potential participant, I have been informed, to an appropriate level of understanding, about the purpose and methodology of this research project, and the nature of my involvement.

I agree to participate in this project by doing the following:

- * ____ Participate in one or more interviews.
- * _____ Fill out a questionnaire.
- * _____ Allow any comments made by me in formal and/or informal settings to become part of the research data, (without use of names).

I understand and agree that:

My participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time without penalty. The researcher has a corresponding right to terminate my participation in this research at any time. Participation or non-participation will have no effect on my position within the school jurisdiction.

All data will be kept in a secure place, off the school site, and be inaccessible to others. Confidentiality will be assured by the use of aliases throughout and any information given in confidence or subsequently asked to be taken "off the record" will

be deleted. In addition to using aliases, anonymity will be assured by disguising recognizable characteristics in any written or verbal documentation and using only aggregate data when reporting results of questionnaires or interviews. All raw data, including interview transcripts and the index which provides the only record linking aliases to real names will be destroyed upon completion of data analysis. Data will be presented in the form of aggregate summaries, formal minutes of meetings, research reports, and a doctoral thesis.

I will be able to read or obtain the research reports or other "write-up" in the following manner: 1) I can review a transcript of my interview and ask to have statements deleted or kept "off the record", and 2) aggregate results will be regularly available to staff through department or committee meetings, using the above measures to ensure confidentiality and anonymity as appropriate.

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM AND I UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF MY INVOLVEMENT IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE WITHIN THE ABOVE STATED PARAMETERS.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

RESEARCHER: _____

Please sign this copy and return it to the researcher. A duplicate copy will be returned to you for your records. For further information, please contact the researcher at 220-3187 (university); 254-8764 (home); 282-3005 (Fax); or Dr. Veronika Bohac Clarke (220-3363), the research supervisor. Questions on research ethics may be addressed to Dr. Micheal Pyryt, Chair of the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee (220-7797) or Dr. Cooper Langford, Vice-President Research (220-5465).

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Preamble:

- Thank participant for his/her involvement in the research project.
- Check that participant has received and returned consent form, if not provide and get signed.
- Review the purposes and methods of the study and the interview specifically.
- Give assurances of confidentiality and anonymity (assign alias).
- Remind the participant that he/she may review transcripts.

I Warm-up: Background Information

- 1) Educational background? What do you teach? Position?
- 2) Previous Experiences: How long have you taught? at this school?

II Perception of internal context:

1. Tell me about this school, the people in it, and how you do things around here. Tell me about things like how goals are determined, teacher orientation practices, professional development, evaluation practices (student, teacher, program), staff relationships, history of change, and leadership at the school.
2. How did events, beliefs, attitudes, policies in the environment within the school influence this school's change effort?
3. What are some of your personal beliefs and values about teaching and learning? teacher's roles and responsibilities?

III Perception of the external context:

- A. General Question: What are the outside influences (past and present) relative to the changes in question? How did events, beliefs, attitudes, or policies in the environment outside the school influence this school's change effort?

B. Question Probes:

- 1) How would you describe the current educational climate in the province? in this district? How do you feel this climate has affected you personally/ or this school/or teachers collectively?
- 2) Describe the district you work in?
- 3) Describe the community served by your school and the school's relationship with it?
- 4) What factors, if any, outside the school are impinging on this school's current change efforts?
- 5) What is the history of change in this school district?

IV Content of current change effort:

A. General Question: What is your understanding regarding the nature and intents of your school's change efforts?

B. Question Probes:

- 1) Clarity:
 - a) What is your understanding of the content of your school's current change efforts?
 - b) What's your understanding of how the school plans on achieving its change intents?
- 2) Relevance: Is this a change that people at the school feel is needed? Why?

V. The Change Process:

A. General Question: What are the activities, events, and processes that have occurred or are occurring as part of this change effort?

B. Question Probes:

- 1) Describe how the change initiative was initiated and adopted. What events, beliefs, attitudes, policies within the school led to the adoption of this particular change initiative? Were you part of that process? Were you supportive of the change? Are you still?
- 2) Describe the planning process involved.

- 3) Describe the activities/strategies currently in progress. Why were these strategies used?
- 4) What types of resources (material, knowledge, time, human) are being brought in to support these changes? How were these resources obtained?
- 5) What strategies are being used to coordinate the change process, monitor progress, identify problems? Who has this responsibility?
- 6) What are the sources and types of implementation problems being faced at the present time and how are these being dealt with? By whom?
- 7) How are solutions to implementation problems being generated and applied? Who does this?
- 8) What knowledge or skills do you feel you need to meet the goals set by the change initiative? What other resources or conditions are necessary?

VI. Outcomes:

General Question: What do you feel have been the outcomes of the school's change efforts? (extent and quality of implementation, organizational changes, individual changes)

B. Question Probes:

- 1) What has been the extent of your involvement in the school's change efforts? How do you feel about your involvement? Rewarding or distracting? How would you describe your commitment to the goals and process of this change effort?
- 2) What changes in practice (new ways of doing things) have resulted from the changes introduced thus far?

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

