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## Developmental Experiences and Critical Competencies of School Restructuring Leaders

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Developmental Experiences and Critical Competencies  
of School Restructuring Leaders

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Abstract: This report describes a study commissioned by the University Council on Teacher Education, College of Education and Psychology, North Carolina State University. Support for the study was provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The purpose of the research was to investigate changes that had occurred in three school systems in response to recent state legislation mandating site-based management. Specifically, the researchers sought to identify significant developmental experiences encountered by local restructuring leaders and the critical lessons they learned from those experiences. Using a qualitative approach, investigators interviewed 38 restructuring leaders in three school systems located in central North Carolina. Resultant findings have implications for teacher and administrator preparation programs in institutions of higher education.

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### Background of the Study

The University Council on Teacher Education, an advisory body to the College of Education and Psychology at North Carolina State University, commissioned a study of site-based management (SBM) in the public schools for the purpose of identifying significant implications for the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers and administrators. The general intent was to examine the changes in the organization and operation of schools in response to the adoption of Senate Bill 2 (SB2), the School Improvement and Accountability Act, in 1989 and the Performance-Based Accountability Program (PBAP) in 1992 by the North Carolina Legislature. The overarching goal was to assess the impact of those changes on teacher and administrator preparation programs within the College of Education and Psychology. Council members were asked to recommend individuals to serve on a Study Group which would develop specific research questions to be addressed and provide guidance to the project. Subsequently, interest in the study was expressed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) which provided funding to support the research.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the proposed study was to investigate the changes that had taken place in area schools and school systems in response to state legislation concerning site-based management. Research questions developed by the Study Group, listed below, were used to provide specific direction to the investigation. Implicit in each of the questions was the concern for identifying the implications for teacher and administrator preparation programs in

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institutions of higher education. The target group of individuals to whom the questions would be directed were teachers and administrators in Granville, Johnston, and Wake Counties who had substantial experience with efforts to implement site-based management in their schools or school systems, both positive as well as negative, and who were perceived by their peers as leaders in restructuring efforts. The theoretical framework which supported the design of the study was the philosophy and research associated with experiential learning and the concept that educational leaders can be developed by providing meaningful learning experiences at strategic points in their preparation.

1. What were the most significant experiences with site-based management encountered by leaders in school restructuring during their development as leaders?
2. What were the most critical lessons learned by restructuring leaders from each of the significant experiences they encountered with site-based management?

#### Methodology

Due to the tremendous variation associated with the problem being investigated and the inherent nature of the research questions, the study utilized a qualitative approach and methodologies commonly associated with that type of research. Essentially, the study involved the use of open-ended interviews with carefully selected individuals in area schools and school systems to gather data relevant to the stated research questions. The investigation was directed by the Study Group appointed by the Council, and Study Group members were integrally involved in all major aspects of the research.

### Participants

Participants interviewed during the study consisted of 38 educational leaders selected from school systems involved substantively in site-based management and represented on the University Council: Granville, Johnston, and Wake County Public School Systems. The group was well-balanced with 20 teachers and 18 administrators, although no attempt was made to stratify on this variable as one might do in a quantitative study, and their experience in working with site-based management ranged from one to nine years. All specific individuals invited to participate in the interviews were carefully identified and approved by the Study Group. In the selection process, the Study Group focused on identifying individuals who were or had been true “leading influential” in substantive site-based management efforts. In context of the purpose of the study, the research questions posed, and the intended application of the findings, it was determined that only genuine restructuring leaders would be included in the study. Interview candidates identified by the Study Group were then approached personally by members of the Study Group and invited to participate in the interviews.

As is common in qualitative research, the size of the sample was not determined a priori. Rather, the following criteria were used to determine when the data collection process would be terminated:

1. Exhaustion of Sources: Running out of people to interview.

minor increments of new information relative to the time and energy expended to gather the information.

3. Emergence of Regularities: When there was a sense that the emerging themes were more similar than dissimilar.

4. Overextension: When new information appeared to be highly divergent from the emerging categories.

In this study, the second and third criteria actually determined the end of the data collection phase. The resultant data achieved a remarkable level of stability, and it was clear that additional interviews from participants in the three counties involved would not produce substantial contributions to the data base.

### Procedures

The Study Group appointed by the University Council was responsible for the overall direction and management of the study, specific identification and approval of interview participants, and general monitoring of the progress of the research. Dr. Beckey Reed, of Ahlgren Associates, was employed as a consultant and was responsible for the actual field research, including communications with participants once they were identified by the Study Group, data collection (interviewing participants), and data interpretation.

An interview protocol was developed by the principal investigators and approved by the Study Group before data collection commenced. The protocol incorporated interview questions directly pertinent to the research questions, as well as introductory and summary

items. In addition, an audit trail was maintained by Dr. Reed to ensure the trustworthiness of the interview process.

All interviews were conducted via telephone and were recorded with the knowledge and consent of the participants. During each interview, Dr. Reed took extensive notes by hand and interpreted them as soon after the interview as possible. A subgroup of the Study Group was identified to work with Dr. Reed during the data interpretation phase of the project. This subgroup consisted of several teachers and administrators who had not been involved in conducting any of the interviews. Debriefings were held periodically with members of the subgroup to provide opportunities for the investigator to validate her evolving perceptions, ask and answer questions, and consider subsequent steps in the process. This standard qualitative practice served to provide additional insights, as well as a check against potential biases of the individual responsible for data collection.

### Data Analysis

The guidelines identified below were utilized during the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in this qualitative study of site-based management.

1. Dr. Reed assumed primary responsibility for intuitive, evolving analysis of the emerging data base. In addition, she teamed with a subgroup of the Study Group for the purpose of validating her perceptions and interpretations in the data analysis process. This procedure served to reduce the effect of interviewer bias and provided additional and highly meaningful insights.

2. The language of the persons interviewed was preserved to the maximum extent possible.
3. A computer was utilized to facilitate the text management aspect of the data analysis process.
4. Dr. Reed and the subgroup of the Study Group, through intuitive and inductive reasoning, sought to determine prevalent themes in the data reported and identified and coded the types of site-based management strategies, significant experiences, lessons learned, professional development activities, and recommendations for future teachers and administrators reported by the participants.

### Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the intuitive analysis of the open-ended interviews with the restructuring leaders are reported and discussed. The original language of these leaders is captured where appropriate and is included in quotations. Actual interview questions addressed by the participants are described immediately prior to the summary and discussion of their responses.

#### Developmental Experiences

Based on their involvement with site-based management, the restructuring leaders were asked to identify experiences which significantly impacted the implementation of SBM in their schools or school systems and which significantly influenced their development as leaders in school restructuring. The personal developmental experiences that stood out in the minds of these restructuring leaders were classified into four categories: SBM

Implementation Strategies, SBM Innovations and Changes, SBM Leadership Roles, and SBM Professional Development Activities. They are presented in order of the relative magnitude of their contributions to the development of the restructuring leaders interviewed in this study.

### SBM Implementation Strategies

More developmental experiences were reported by restructuring leaders in this category than in the other categories of experiences, making it the most information rich. Respondents shared both positive and negative experiences which were all part of the process of implementing site-based management in their schools and school systems.

Leadership styles. “SBM starts at the top with a superintendent who believes in and pushes the concept” said one leader. Another noted the “school board has to buy-in with actions as well as words.” Still others noted that the “leadership of the principal is key.” “Everyone must buy in” and “empowering versus imposing,” were elements respondents considered essential to successful collaboration, and represented a theme respondents noted in regard to leadership styles they had encountered during their experiences implementing site-based management.

*Where site-based management or participatory decision making is kept alive and always up-front in the minds of staff, it becomes a way of life for a school. Where that happens, it becomes an easier thing to do and the growth is steady. Now, some schools do that and some schools don't. I guess the most critical thing is that the*

*becomes a way of life at the school, not a compliance function.*

Communication process. Respondents repeatedly indicated that it required intensive communication to implement a specific SBM plan. A respondent described many hours of hard work one team had spent trying to change the school lunch schedule, only to discover just before implementation that the plan would not work. Another participant noted that a “lack of representation resulted in poor communication and no voice in the process.” These leaders shared experiences which ranged from “ugly meetings where communication broke down,” to site-based management becoming an integral part of the daily communication process through written bulletins and informal or formal team meetings.

*Basically, all of our decisions are made through site-based management; we have a lead teacher meeting every week. The lead teacher group meets with the administration on a weekly basis concerning mainly curricular and budget issues, not just operational issues. It is just a really good system for getting information out, sharing concerns, and bringing concerns back to the administration so there is input and discussion on a lot of items without having to schedule that hour long faculty meeting on Wednesday afternoon where you only get fifty percent of the folks there. Teachers being members of a team makes them more apt to discuss things with their lead teacher, so we get more of the concerns as well as more of the suggestions through that process.*

Collaboration within the school and community. One restructuring leader indicated that SBM “reinforced belief in the positive traits of peers -- they took initiative when

invited.” Participants cited collaborative experiences which resulted in working with teachers in other disciplines and at other grade levels on specific projects related to site-based management. As a result of these efforts, they gained greater respect for their peers and continued to collaborate on other activities. Collaborating with parents and community groups was viewed by the respondents as an essential part of implementing site-based management.

*Working in a school and being able to share, you become one family. And if you are one family, you share and you want everybody to feel good about him or herself You work toward that. When you build up this morale, your school booms. It takes all of us to make that happen. And its not just the teachers, its the entire staff. Even our custodial staff works right along with us to assist the students in any way they can. For instance, if we need a buddy for a child they are right there and they do their part. The cafeteria staff is the same way.*

**Budget process.** Educators indicated that through implementing SBM they “learned to recognize the total needs of the school,” not just the needs of their own programs or grade levels. One restructuring leader reported they had “saved money by sharing resources,” Involvement in the budget process helped them “feel ownership in the school,” However, participants acknowledged the need for them to understand adequately fiscal policies and procedures in order to utilize their resources to the maximum benefit.

*In the budget process, teachers decide who needs what most. It is not this selfish attitude that I want a color monitor just to have a color monitor. We find out who*

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needs and how we work toward the end. That person says, "That's the making  
kind of thing we have."

*We decided each one of us could decide whether we wanted to use textbooks and how we wanted to spend money as far as resources in our classrooms. Just having that flexibility has made a big difference. It was quite a change when we could start making our own decisions as to how we were going to teach. With that, of course, came a lot of responsibilities and we've had to keep lots of documentation. I guess that accountability is a big issue.*

**Planning process.** Many restructuring leaders reported that a sound knowledge base is required to make plans and decisions in a SBM environment. Developing a School Improvement Plan and a Differential Pay Plan requires knowledge of areas in which typical classroom teachers are not well-versed. Classroom teachers require training in order to make informed decisions about school curriculum, instruction, and resource management (personnel and budget).

*I think one of the things that has been most difficult about it is that we change tests every year. Then we're constantly having to revise our milestones and our plans because we keep changing the way the state or the school system assessed and that is real frustrating when the measures keep changing. Then you can't ever determine if you're making progress because you can't attribute any plus or minus to your*

*strategies because changes could be attributed to the fact that you changed the measurement.*

*I think the thing that is out of control with this is the amount of paperwork and the hoops that we have to jump through in site-based management. People will go through the motions of getting the stuff on paper, but the process that actually occurs may not be what it should be. The importance of site-based management is as much process as anything else. If it becomes a paperwork exercise, the meaning of what should occur will not be there.*

One restructuring leader stated emphatically “we are charged with teaching students -- SBM planning is secondary.” Many restructuring leaders noted that development of the School Improvement Process was so time consuming, it “bogged down” the actual implementation of SBM. Still others indicated they were “writing a plan, but not spending time implementing the plan.”

#### SBM Innovations and Changes

Experiences in site-based management which resulted in innovations and changes within the school or school system represented the second category of experiences reported mostly frequently by restructuring leaders. Their involvement in having a real impact on their schools and school systems stood out vividly in their memories,

School operations. Restructuring leaders’ experiences in changing the operations of schools or school systems included the following areas: school calendars, daily schedules,

curriculums, policies, facilities, and climates. A comment made by one leader was indicative of the general tone of the responses: “You don ‘t have to sit back and accept things the way they are -- you need to speak up. ”

Restructuring leaders indicated that changing the school calendar created a sense of “oneness” within the *school*. Faculty, students, and parents worked together to implement this change to allow greater opportunities for students. At the same time, these educators learned a great deal about the complexity of making administrative changes which met the needs of all constituent groups.

*Trying to change the schedule was one of the first ones, and what happened, the significant thing that I remember was, that brought this faculty together because everyone had an opinion about it and everybody got passionate about it. For the first time I saw people working together, and pulling together, and people doing research, and people coming up with justifiable reasons for what they thought. I saw people beginning to do what I consider critical thinking and justifying their positions. What I learned from it was, you don ‘t go into something that you ‘re eying to get group consensus on without doing your homework and being well-prepared.*

Understanding the needs of students helped many leaders develop alternative curriculums, extra-curricular activities, and rules and regulations which better met the needs of students. The flexibility of site-based management, plus the collaborative approach to leadership have resulted in many innovative programs being developed for students.

*We also realized we had a problem with students being tardy to class and we had a faculty group get together. A group of teachers created a tardy center and a tardy policy for kids reporting. Very structured, outlined exactly what was expected, and it was implemented by the faculty. It has really worked; it cut down our tardies. Teachers have been really proud of the fact that we thought of this, we came up with it, we set the policy and the rules, and it has worked.*

*One of the highs I have gotten out of this is working with some students in a weekly tutorial program that I've implemented at the school. We were also able to get an activity bus for some new students who live in another area and wanted to be involved in activities after school. Now we have many students who are involved in clubs and sports, and who really want to do things. We also started a club for all students, but set it up in a way that gave African-American students some ownership in the school, which was a strategy in our site-based management program. By starting the tutorial program, getting the activity bus, and getting the club, we've been able to provide students with some ownership. They were saying before "you don't want me here." Now that has changed and the attitudes of these students has improved greatly.*

New perspectives. Respondents also noted the profound significance of the changing roles and perspectives of central office personnel, principals, and teachers; as well as those of parents and the community. "People are willing to listen and communicate about a plan

that includes them. ” One leader described the challenge in simply changing the nature of meetings from “information sharing to interactive exchange of ideas. ”

*One of my roles is to coordinate buses and we are really hurting for drivers. The principal thought let's bring that to the Team. So, I started it off by explaining that we were trying to come up with some strategies where we could recruit and retain bus drivers. The teachers just sat there and nobody had anything to say. So, the principal said “that's that. “ I said no it's not, this is the Team and we need to talk about this since it affects our school and our children. I guess the teachers hadn't bought in to this because they don't look at bus drivers as being part of what they have to deal with and they don't see that bus drivers have anything to do with the learning process. But the bus drivers are very important because we need reliable people to get the kids here. If the kids are not here, then we can't teach them. I guess the lesson I've learned is that even though it maybe a major part of the school system, if people don't deal with something directly, they don't see the importance of it.*

### Leadership Roles

Restructuring leaders identified developmental experiences in which they had been elected or selected for leadership roles in their schools or school systems almost as frequently as they identified experiences in which they had made an impact on their schools. The leadership roles included chairing school committees, hiring new teachers and administrators,

and leading school restructuring efforts. Respondents often noted that additional information or training would have assisted them in serving in these leadership roles.

**Chairing school committees.** Restructuring leaders had served as chairpersons of numerous committees, including the overall school committee and numerous subcommittees. These activities were pivotal experiences in their development as leaders. Their experiences with these committees included both positive and negative events. Innovative solutions to curriculum issues, discipline problems, and student activities were generated by these committees, and restructuring leaders frequently reported that “those closest to the issues generated the best solutions.” Access to information, including state laws and local policies, as well as understanding of administrative issues were vital to respondents when serving in these leadership roles, as were strong collaboration and communication skills.

*The biggest impact that chairing the alter-naive schedule committee had on me was that I was not aware that it was possible for staff members to act in such a way as to have a significant say so in terms of their own environment. The experience was extraordinarily significant. The thing I remember most about it, the lesson I learned from it, was that if you ‘ve got the right people in the right place at the right time, there is very little that can’t be accomplished. As long as you don ‘t end up butting up against rules and regulations and laws that prohibit you from doing so. We managed to create an awful lot of new stuff in a very short amount of rime.*

*Chairing the Differentiated Pay Committee has probably been the most frustrating and least rewarding experience because there are so many rules and regulations. Also, it took so much time and the amount of money was so little for the number of hardworking teachers. It couldn't be across the board, it had to somehow be merit gain and we were trying to come up with something that everybody could access equally. We probably came up with a plan that's too complicated, trying to give everybody their fair shot at part of it."*

**Hiring new teachers and administrators.** Many participants who served on selection committees to hire new employees were involved in this process for the first time. Educators on these committees felt a strong sense of accountability for their final decisions. They had vested interests in the success of new personnel in their schools. Being involved in the hiring process helped "establish camaraderie with the new personnel."

*This teacher candidate was just out of school, he was young, and he was saying that he knew he was probably not really good, but he was going to be really good. He was so enthusiastic and you could just tell that he really, really wanted the job. I remember thinking that he didn't have as much experience as all the other people, but I liked his attitude. I remember it was neat to have input, to say these are the things I really like about this person and I think he will bring energy and enthusiasm into our department. And he got the job! My principal agreed! He's turned out to be wonderful. He took over the Advanced Placement (AP) course and just about everybody in his class last year got college credit for the AP test. I feel good*

*knowing that I helped pick him. And, I think that helped me work better with him. He wasn't just somebody that came in at the beginning of the year. You feel more projective of them, or helpful towards them.*

*I was involved in the interviewing process for the new assistant principal, That was not an easy job for me. I'm a very emotional person and sometimes I have trouble putting my head before my heart, and I didn't particularly like doing that. I felt it was too much responsibility for me, even though it was not my sole responsibility. Sometimes I felt that the responsibility was too great and I was afraid of the repercussions. What if I made a bad decision? What if what I thought really wasn't right?*

**Leading school restructuring efforts.** These leaders had a variety of experiences leading restructuring efforts in their own schools. Some had been involved in consolidating faculties from several schools into one faculty, several had implemented whole language instruction into their curriculums, and others reported their involvement in creating more professional environments.

*As the principal, I thought it was important that I back way off and not influence what happened during the SBM process. Those poor teachers floundered forever. They went through pain that they should not have had to experience. They went through being intimidated by one or two teachers. They went through worrying about hurting each other's feelings and not knowing when to speak up. They told me later that I*

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*really let them down, that they needed me more involved than Z was. I guess that gets back to knowing when to step in and when to step out. People look for leadership, but they don't look for dictatorship. As an administrator, you have to be involved, you can't just say go forth and do it. That was probably the most profound thing that I learned.*

### Professional Development Activities

While fewer restructuring leaders identified these types of experiences as compared to the other categories of developmental experiences, professional development activities were described by respondents as highly significant. Throughout the interviews, restructuring leaders repeatedly indicated that lack of professional development was a critical barrier to implementing site-based management effectively.

Leaders indicated that initial inservice training in site-based management had been meaningful and beneficial experiences for them. These professional development experiences included training in site-based management processes, leadership training, and highly constructive discussions among teachers and administrators focusing on the missions and beliefs of their schools and school systems. Several respondents reported that they had attended meaningful retreats where, for the first time, they had open and honest communication with their colleagues about the goals and objectives of their schools, as well as an opportunity to share their various philosophies of teaching.

*After attending a retreat on effective schools, I learned new ways of looking at things.*

*I had my eyes opened to a whole lot of information that I had never been exposed to*

*before. We get so bogged down in the day to day routine that it's hard to see the big picture. I think that was the first time that I really started thinking about what I believed and what was really going on. Also, that was the first time I think I really learned the value of the involvement of parents. Until that time, I really did not understand how parents and the community could really be positive parts of the process.*

Other leaders reported that visits to other sites, including other schools, businesses, and industries, or an exchange of ideas with persons located elsewhere had helped them reinvent their schools as they began to implement SBM. These experiences provided them with opportunities to change the operations of their schools by emulating the highly effective practices of other organizations.

*Now, administrators have been doing this for ages, but teachers have never done this before. Our committee visited a particular school to observe something, but they weren't doing that thing the way we perceived it should be done, so we wrote our own plan. While we were there, however, we saw some really neat things we thought another committee might like. The other committee got excited and sent teachers to see what we saw. I found it very exciting to be in someone else's school and see how they handled some of the same things we did and compare their perceptions to ours. The idea that we can go searching for better ideas, that we can get a small idea and investigate it by talking to other schools and then creating something new and different is exciting. I think it has a lot of possibility for the future.*

Other leaders indicated that a “lack of training created a cascade of problems and issues.” Clearly, lack of funding for staff development has become a major impediment to the successful implementation of site-based management in many schools.

*People just don't know what it means, how to do it, and are not trained in how to work with other adults. They run into brick wall after brick wall because they have to deal with adults now; running meetings and trying to reach consensus. How do you have a good argument? Our people were not ready to handle all the stuff that came down with this. It really goes back to the fact that you cannot train too much. Not just in terms of definitions, but you have to decide on a model of how to decide who decides. You have to take time to build a process. You've got to take time to train the people to be effective leaders and followers, how to be on a team, and how to reach consensus without arguing and getting d. Training really needs to be a focused effort.*

#### Lessons Learned Through Developmental Experiences

The restructuring leaders were asked to reflect on their developmental experiences and elaborate on the critical lessons they had learned from those experiences. The lessons the leaders learned from their experiences were categorized into ten areas. They are identified and described in the order of the relative magnitude of their contributions to the development of the restructuring leaders interviewed in the study.

Collaboration Skills: These lessons included the skills adults need to work with one another in team environments within their schools and school systems.

*Stick with the process. If you are going to have participatory decision making, you've got to get the participation before you ever start the decision making. If you don't do that, you're going to have to go back and do damage control. It takes much longer to do that than it does to stick to the process initially. People have got to be kept involved and informed. People do tend to support what they help create. You bring them along by staying with the process of input and feedback. It takes time, but when you don't do that it takes more time in the long run. Pay now or pay later. When you pay later, you pay interest . . . always.*

**Communication Skills:** The lessons learned here related to verbal and written communication skills, as well as effective listening skills.

*One of the major things we had to do was to learn to listen to others and accept differences among people. You have to learn that everyone will not always agree with your ideas and that you don't get hostile when that happens. When disagreement occurs, you still have to be able to talk about those things and sometimes you can bring others around to see you're trying to get away from traditional activities because of the population that you're working with now. We are all different, but we can accept those differences and move on in a positive direction.*

**Decision Making Skills:** These lessons focused on the ability to make sound decisions based on the information available.

*As an administrator, what I learned was that when we started doing SBM, I was getting a lot of good feedback from the staff. Kind of a wow, this is really neat. You*

*if we 're really doing something. Those reactions are short-lived and they learn the reality real quick. They realize how much work it is and that it takes a lot of rime to do all this good stuff. They have these meetings and make these decisions, and sometimes they wish they weren 't even on the leadership team because they start to catch some of the flack for the things that get done. They find themselves having to make tough decisions that affect real people.*

**Management Skills:** These lessons were related to basic management and administration skills needed for smooth operations in public schools and school systems.

*Learn how to delegate without feeling guilty. That's probably a hard lesson for teachers because they are so used to being independent and doing everything themselves and counting on themselves to get things done. Don 't feel guilty about delegating what they signed up to do anyway.*

**Time Management Skills:** The lessons learned here were primarily in relation to the inadequate time available to function effectively in a site-based management environment and the criticality of time management skills.

*Teachers are giving up their planning time, their afternoons, and their nights to be mini-administrators. We do nor have a structure in place where reachers are allowed the time to do this extra work. If you 're serious about site-based management, there needs to be a cadre of individuals in a school who have significant release time, as in*

*a lead teacher model. You just can 't ask teachers to do these new things without giving them time to do it.*

**SBM Process Skills:** These lessons were specifically indicative of the skills needed to respond to the mandates of the School Improvement Process, including both planning and implementation phases.

*The process can 't be rushed. Real change involves consensus building and that's a very time consuming process. I learned through this process that unless people believe in their hearts, change isn 't going to happen. You can 't mandate the type of change we are talking about. The time and energy we expended coming to a consensus about what we believe and what vision we have for our school was very necessary and created a strong base for us to proceed. Translating beliefs and vision into concrete changes is equally time consuming.*

**Leadership Skills:** The lessons in this area pertained to the importance of leadership and motivational skills in site-based management environments.

*The leader is just so, so important. There is a real paradigm change, however, from the supervisory model, which I had been taught, to a team model . . . much more participatory. In the supervisory model, you are in charge of it all, give directions, and follow up all the time. That appeared to be power, but in essence it was not. Actually, when I share my power I think I have more power. But the fact is a leader must be a leader . . . the leader guides, the leader massages, the leader provides challenges, the leader doesn 't let the team stop growing.*

to work with groups outside the school, including parents, school boards, advisory councils, and representatives from business and industry.

*I was talking to people who were talking about businesses, community life, and different cultures. It was a really exciting experience. It was what I had always imagined that being in a board room must be like. Disagreeing, arguing, compromising, researching, and coming up with something really special that would have extremely positive educational value and change our lives and the lives of the persons that we were teaching and touching in the community. This was really the height of what site-based management is all about.*

Accountability: Restructuring leaders in this category learned about being accountable for the consequences of their decisions and actions.

*It's important to acknowledge and celebrate success. Where that happens, people tend to be more supportive. But you've got to be able to see some success as a result of all this energy and activity involved with site-based management or participatory decision making. You've got to see some successes and some results. That has to be recognized and, for lack of a better word, celebrated.*

Professional Development: These lessons addressed the need to include meaningful professional development activities during efforts to implement site-based management.

*We were going to redesign the schedule, and we were also going to redesign our instructional delivery and I don't think we had the follow through on that. We got*

*caught up in the showy things, the changing of the schedule. And it looks good that you're doing something, but when the teachers shut their doors, even though we 've gone to longer periods now, I don 't think a lot has changed in their classrooms.*

*The teachers who lectured before still lecture. The teachers who did worksheets still do worksheets. We really fell short as a system on that because that's another area that we were promised some staff development that we did not get.*

### Conclusions and Recommendations

After examining the findings of this qualitative investigation, members of the Study Group met to discuss the implications of these findings for teacher and administrator preparation programs in institutions of higher education. One key recommendation formulated by the group was that Colleges of Education review existing undergraduate and graduate curricula for both teachers and administrators and infuse site-based management competencies as appropriate.

The profile of developmental experiences and critical lessons learned from those experiences by the restructuring leaders who participated in this study provides the framework for implementing this recommendation. In essence, the lessons are competencies for the preparation of educational leaders and can be used conveniently by faculty members to examine the extent to which these competencies are addressed within their various programs. In the event that certain competencies are not addressed in a particular curriculum, faculty can infuse those competencies in a manner most appropriate for that particular curriculum. Perhaps more importantly, the categories of developmental

experiences can be used by faculty to evaluate existing and design new developmental student learning experiences for the purpose of developing or reinforcing the competencies experientially and, therefore, better prepare as teachers and administrators to function in site-based management environments. Study Group members believed strongly that students should develop these competencies through a planned series of developmental experiences that span a significant portion of the time they are involved in their programs. The members felt that it was extremely important that efforts to develop these competencies not be reduced to a single course or, worse, to a lecture or discussion within a single course. They felt that in order to prepare students properly, the developmental approach was essential and that the approach should involve planned developmental experiences in local schools. Their shared perception was that teachers and administrators in many of the area schools would be highly interested in working with the College in a collaborative manner to accomplish the intent of this recommendation.

Another recommendation made by the Study Group was that Colleges of Education, in order to improve the public schools, develop educational leaders committed to collaboration. The Study Group included this recommendation to address the important role and responsibility of the Colleges of Education in efforts to improve the public schools. School improvement, and the concomitant improvement of student performance, represent the fundamental impetus for implementing site-based management. It is important to note that site-based management does not directly affect students or their academic performance. Rather, it affects students indirectly through their teachers, administrators, and school

environments. Effective site-based management directly affects the professional lives of school teachers and administrators. It can have a profound effect on their perceptions of their profession, their perceptions of themselves as professionals, and their professional self-esteem. This study clearly illustrated that in schools successfully implementing this new management paradigm, the perceptions of both teachers and administrators were changed in positive and unalterable ways. Teachers and other school leaders who acquire a genuine sense of empowerment and a belief that they can truly make a difference in the lives of students contribute enormously to the improvement of the public schools. By developing teachers and administrators who are true restructuring leaders committed to collaborative improvement for the benefit of students, Colleges of Education can make a vital contribution to school improvement.

Author's Note: A copy of the full report, [Implications of Site-Based Management for the Preparation of Public School Teachers and Administrators in North Carolina](#), is available from Dr. O'Brien. All quotes within the manuscript are verbatim from participants. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality, and therefore are not identified.