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CONDITIONS FOR SCHOOL REFORM:
THE VIEWS OF URBAN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

A Dissertation Presented

by

WILLIAM L. DANDRIDGE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of
Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1992

School of Education

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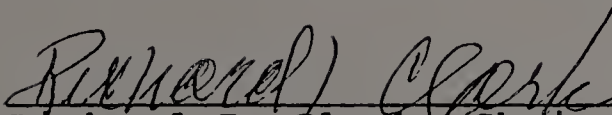
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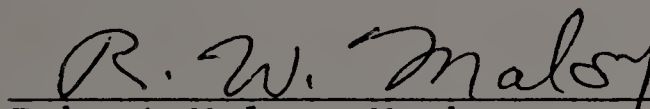
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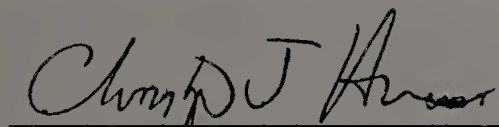
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the fulfillment of the
aspirations of James Edward Dandridge.

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I want to thank the members of my dissertation committee for the guidance and support: Dr. Richard Clark, my Chairperson and mentor; Dr. Atron Gentry, Dr. Christopher Hurn, and Dr. Robert Maloy. I also want to express my appreciation to the following for their suggestions and encouragement: Eleanor Kutz, Melanie Barron, Joseph Check, and Suzy Groden, and to a special reviewer and supporter, Ms. Gloria Wilson. I am especially grateful for the support, encouragement, and superb assistance of Ms. Shirley Hodgson who carefully reviewed and prepared each draft of the text and to Ms. Rhonda Orringer for her research assistance.

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ABSTRACT

CONDITIONS OF SCHOOL REFORM: THE VIEWS
OF URBAN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

FEBRUARY 1992

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This study explores conditions that lead urban high school teachers to voluntarily participate in school-wide reform programs. The study is significant because of the leadership roles assigned to teachers by the current national and Massachusetts school reforms.

Information was gathered through interviews with the teacher leaders of reform programs at three urban high schools in Eastern Massachusetts and a survey of all the teachers at the same schools. At the time of the study, each school was engaged in a reform project that incorporated recommendations from the leading national and Massachusetts reform reports.

Six themes emerged from the interviews. The themes included: recognition of the social and academic needs of students; resources to meet the teachers' immediate needs as well as the needs of the reform; time for teachers to

participate and time for reforms to be implemented; opportunities for teachers to collaborate; teacher in-put in defining the problems and formulating solutions; and respect for teachers' contributions.

All full time teachers at three schools were asked to react to these six conditions. The teachers' responses indicate that it is the collective impact and general climate created by the six conditions that influence their decisions to participate rather than any single condition. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents.

Six recommendations are offered for future reform proposals. Reforms must make allowances for the collective histories of teachers and schools; address the most immediate needs of teachers; recognize the special concerns and interests of teachers regarding curricular, pedagogical, and student policies; provide a clear vision of their goals and the essential steps to reach those goals; and connect the research on school reform with the experiential base of teachers.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

It is our strong conviction that teachers possess the major portion of the available knowledge about teaching and learning, and that it is only through a recognition of that knowledge and an articulation and understanding of it that we can begin to find ways to improve schools.

Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller, 1984

American elementary and secondary schools have been the focal point for an unprecedented decade long national movement to improve their performance since the publication of the 1983 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. One of the Commission's most significant findings, and a view that has been cited repeatedly in nearly two dozen national and three major Massachusetts studies, is the central and critical role that teachers play in their schools and in the lives of their students. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching [1988] concluded a national survey of American classroom teachers by observing that, "after all, teachers have a unique vantage point from which to evaluate education. The relationship between the teacher and the student is the heart of education, and only when improvements reach the classroom will excellence be achieved" [p. 1]. The Carnegie Foundation also notes that, "still we are troubled that the nation's teachers remain skeptical. Why is it that

teachers, of all people, are demoralized and largely unimpressed by the reform actions taken?" The purpose of this study, then, is to explore the conditions that lead teachers to want to participate or not to participate in the current school reform movement.

The conditions of secondary schools in America's larger metropolitan areas have received extensive discussion in the national school reform reports because urban secondary schools seemed to be especially troubled institutions, and seriously ineffective in meeting the educational, occupational, and social needs of their students and communities [Maeroff, 1984; Goodlad, 1984;Sizer, 1984; Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, 1985; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986]. The school reform studies and reports note dramatic increases in school drop out rates, teen pregnancies, drug abuse, incidents of criminal assaults on students and by students, and growing concentrations of students from the most disadvantaged social and economic circumstances. The reports conclude that for many, if not most, inner city high schools, conditions are so desperate that they are in a state of total crisis [Maeroff, 1984; Hodgkinson, 1985; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Quality Education for Minorities, 1990]. At the same time, the leading demographic reports are predicting the greatest increases in enrollments to occur in urban schools [Hodgkinson, 1985]. There is the clear implication that urban schools will have

to play a more substantial and significant role in meeting the educational and other needs of the next generation of young people.

The study explores the conditions that influence a select group of urban secondary school teachers in eastern Massachusetts to participate in building-based programs that seek to improve student performance through changes in the organizational structure and administrative arrangement of their schools. The study seeks to develop an understanding of the teachers' sense of themselves, their profession, and their ability to improve both the conditions in which they work and the learning experiences of their students. Carnoy [1990] observes that, "it is teachers' time and energy that drive the reform movement, and no matter how organizationally efficient or politically appealing, it is not going to work unless they think it makes sense" [p. 32].

The study grows out of my interest in the willingness of individuals to continue to reinvest their lives, emotions, and psyches in a vocation that has rarely been valued and respected by the larger society [Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1982; Boyer, 1983]. Understanding what keeps experienced teachers involved in their teaching, committed to their students, and loyal to their schools is important, especially at a time when teachers are being assigned new

roles and increased responsibilities, and subjected to new and more demanding standards of accountability in charting a course to save America's public schools [The Holmes Group, 1986; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Boyer, 1983; and Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986].

In the light of the current, decade-long national movement to make major changes in the basic goals and traditional organizational structure of American public schools, it is important to engage those who are most directly affected by the proposed changes as full participants in the process of school reform, in the identification of the factors that have created the problems and in the formulation of possible remedies. In the most recent national movement to improve public schools, which coalesced with the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education [1983], school-based practitioners have played only minor roles on the national and Massachusetts commissions and panels that have been studying the conditions and performance of American public schools [Gross & Gross, 1985]. The concerns and perspectives of teachers have not been tapped nor seriously considered in the identification and diagnosis of the problems that have affected public schools, and their perspectives and experiences have not been sought in the formulation of possible remedies.

This study explores the perceptions and attitudes of a select group of the current cadre of experienced practitioners regarding the conditions in their schools that influence their decisions to participate in or not to participate in school-wide reform programs. The study's special focus is urban secondary school teachers in Massachusetts. Clearly, teachers have a unique sense of and special perspective on the conditions of public schools, the current population of students, and what works best in their particular school setting. I believe teachers can inform the school reform process by contributing their collective knowledge, insights, and experiences about the nature of teaching and learning, and the culture of schools as social institutions to the national and Massachusetts school reform dialogues.

The Urban High School as the Focal Point

The setting for the study is three large, urban secondary schools in eastern Massachusetts. At the time of the study, each school was engaged in a formal, school-wide program to improve student achievement through changes in key elements of its instructional program, organizational structure, and/or administrative pattern. Each high school serves a multicultural/multiracial population; however, minority racial and linguistic groups [African American, Hispanic, Haitian, and Southeast Asian] form the majority of students at all three schools. While each school also

includes a broad range of income groups, all have substantial numbers of students from moderate income and welfare families. Their enrollments range from approximately six hundred students to over two thousand. The two larger schools, which enroll more than one thousand students, are organized into "houses" of three to four hundred students to create smaller and more personal settings for their students and teachers. The curricular offerings at two of the three schools include large numbers of remedial and lower level academic courses, and a large number of special courses and support programs for bilingual and special needs students. The college preparatory programs at two of the sites are very small because most of the more academically able students seek admission to one of the district's special examination high schools.

Teachers as Important Forces in Shaping Schools

The topics of teachers and teaching as a profession receive considerable attention in the most recent national and Massachusetts school reform reports [Holmes Group, 1986; Gross and Gross, 1985; Green, 1987; Massachusetts Joint Committee on Education, 1987; Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education and State Department of Education, 1987]. Many of the reports consider teachers to be a major source of the problems that have affected schools. At the same time, they also indicate that teachers are an important and influential force in any serious effort to successfully

implement and sustain major changes in the public schools [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986;Sizer, 1984].

Boyer [1983] observes that, "whenever schools are discussed, teachers are blamed for much of what is wrong" [p. 154]. He also notes that, "whatever is wrong with America's public schools cannot be fixed without the help of those teachers already in the classroom. Most of them will be there for years to come, and such teachers must be viewed as part of the solution, not the problem." [p. 154-5]. Given the central and influential role that teachers play in their schools and in the lives of their students, this study explores the conditions and circumstances that lead secondary school teachers at three select urban sites to become willing and active participants in programs to improve their schools and profession.

A qualitative methodology is employed for the collection of data in order to develop an understanding of urban high school teachers perceptions about their schools, their working conditions, their traditional roles, and their views of the leading proposals to make significant changes in these areas. A critical consideration in the development of an understanding of the concerns of teachers is to acquire a sense of the climate, tone, relationships and ethos of the settings in which they work, and a sense of the meanings that teachers make of their work. The qualitative

approach provides a more natural means to enter the world of the teachers in that it allows the teachers to describe their schools and classrooms in their own words and on their own terms. It also reflects an important working assumption for this study that individuals try to make sense out of their experiences and in doing so create their own realities [Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, 1987]. Any attempt to make substantial and permanent changes in the basic mission and structure of schools must address the concerns and perceptions of teachers in the terms in which they present them [Rosenholtz, 1987; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Maeroff, 1988].

The study seeks to engage teachers through group and individual interviews. Group interviews were conducted with the teacher members of the project steering committee at each of the three high schools. Follow-up interviews were conducted with two to three teachers from each group to clarify questions, comments, or events that were mentioned during the group interview at their school. The individual interviews provide a context in which to interpret and evaluate comments and issues that emerged from the group interviews. Both sets of interviews provide a rich, contextual portrait of life at three large and multiracial and multicultural, urban high schools.

A set of statements developed from the group and individual interviews was incorporated into a modified

Likert scale questionnaire that was administered to all the full-time teachers at the three schools. The teachers were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with statements about the conditions of urban schools, descriptions of urban students, teaching as a profession, their working conditions, and a select group of the recommendations from the major national and Massachusetts proposals to change the roles and responsibilities of teachers and schools.

The Context, Structure, and Conditions of Schools

School reform is not a new or rare phenomenon in American education. Since the earliest days of the Common School Movement, compulsory attendance, and universal education, there have been countless efforts by individuals and groups at the local, state, and national levels to change the mission, direction, content, organization, and governance procedures of public education [Tyack, 1974; Boyer, 1983]. Whenever segments of the public have felt that their local schools were not addressing their concerns and needs, or meeting their perceived standards, reform movements were created to tackle whatever they felt were the problems [Sarason, 1982; Lortie, 1975]. The most recent movement, which began in 1983 with the publication of "A Nation at Risk" by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, appears to be no different.

In fact, the primary concerns and findings of the National Commission as expressed in its report have been cited repeatedly in more than a dozen other national studies and reports [Gross & Gross, 1985; Green, 1987]. While each of the studies was sponsored by a different group, and gathered its data independently, there was a remarkable degree of consensus in their findings. Among the most common points were: (1) American students were falling behind their peers in the other industrialized nations on tests of basic skills and in the increasingly important areas of mathematics and science; (2) American industries were experiencing critical shortages of literate and skilled employees; (3) the standardized aptitude and achievement test scores for people who were preparing to teach were lower than their peers who were preparing for the other major professions; and, (4) the growing drop-out rate, particularly in the inner-city areas of the larger metropolitan areas was fueling a growing pool of people who would be locked in poverty for the rest of their lives. All of these trends suggest that students were finding little of real substance or personal value in their schools.

The ultimate objective for teachers, central administrators, school committees, and the general public is to improve the quality of education for all of the nation's children. I believe there is wide spread consensus on this point. However, since local conditions and experiences

shape each individual's attitude and perceptions, there is a considerable difference of opinion regarding the nature, depth, and breadth of the problems, and the types and intensity of the remedies that should be applied. The public discussion, then, focuses on the different views and approaches to reach the common end. The school reformists seem to divide into those who seek to make changes within the general structure and context of the present system versus those who feel the present structure is a major deterrent to effective teaching and learning, and better schools [Cuban, 1988; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Deal, 1990]. This study considered this question from the perspective of the teachers in three large urban high schools.

A major problem for the current national and Massachusetts school reform discussions, and this study, has been finding a clear and generally agreed upon language to describe the intent and substance of the changes that have been proposed. In the current discussions of how to make schools more effective and efficient, school reform advocates, educational researchers, state legislators, the media, and school based practitioners use the terms "school improvement", "school reform" and "school restructuring" as interchangeable labels to present their various proposals. However, in reality, these terms represent different perspectives about the nature and depth of the problems and

the range of possible approaches to their resolution [Cuban, 1988; Moorman and Egermeier, 1989; Moorman and Spencer, 1989].

Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions were selected to delineate the terms: "school improvement", "school restructuring", and "school reform" as they are used in this study. It is important to distinguish between casual and informal activities that are undertaken by individuals or ad hoc groups within a school, and those that are deliberate and formal activities of the school as a social and organizational unit. The definitions are drawn from the works of Cuban [1988], Moorman and Egermeier [1989], and Moorman and Spencer [1989]. The working definition for "school improvement" is a deliberate set of activities that attempt to improve the conditions or outcomes of schooling by using strategies that draw on a knowledge base, employ a strategic planning process, engage the participants in participatory planning and problem-solving, use formative evaluation, provide staff development, and include assessment and feedback components [Moorman and Egermeier, 1989]. The critical point is that these activities are carried out for the most part within the existing context and structure of the school.

"School restructuring" is a deliberate set of activities that seek to change the "rules, roles, and

relationships" in schools in order to facilitate the achievement of the desired outcomes in student performance and program effectiveness [Moorman and Spencer, 1989]. The critical point is the emphasis on "changing" the organizational structure and administrative arrangement of the school. Those who advocate this approach believe the traditional structure of public schools can no longer accommodate the increasing diversity and social needs of the current student population. They also believe that offering more of the same, in terms of pedagogy, curriculum, and delivery systems, will make no substantial difference in the long term impact of schools.

"School reform" provides a general context or "umbrella" that supports both views of what should and must happen to improve the performance of American public schools. It is helpful as a unifying theme and necessary label because the major national and Massachusetts studies represent a blending of both concepts rather than a strict adherence to one point of view or the other. Their common focus on the school as the unit for change and teachers as critical change agents is important. Let me hasten to acknowledge that there is the wide-spread recognition of and acknowledgment among the leadership of the current school reform movement that school officials at all levels, public policy makers, and representatives of local communities must also participate in the reform and restructuring of public

schools and accept their fair share of the responsibility for improving public education. However, the setting or focus for their attention and activities should be the individual school building [Goodlad, 1984; Sizer, 1984; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986].

There were similar shared themes in the recommendations of the same national reports, particularly regarding new roles for teachers, new organizational structures for schools, new and higher achievement standards for students, more rigorous training programs for future teachers, and comprehensive strategies for addressing the complex array of social conditions that affect urban high schools. These points will be pursued in the review of the literature.

School Reform in Massachusetts

Public education in Massachusetts has not been immune to the national concerns about the quality and effectiveness of public schools. Massachusetts has a long and distinguished history of providing leadership and innovation in public education [Tyack, 1974; Katz, 1975]. Since 1900, there have been more than 105 formal studies of public schools in Massachusetts [Gaudet, 1987]. Educational leaders such as Horace Mann and John Dewey provided significant leadership to both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and American public education generally. This tradition of leadership continues in the current school reform movement.

In 1987, three state-wide panels were convened to study the conditions of public education in Massachusetts and to develop appropriate recommendations based on their findings. The Legislature's Joint Committee on Education established two panels. The first panel, The Special Commission on REACH (Rewarding Educational Achievement) and School Improvement Councils was directed to: (1) set up a state-wide system to identify educational programs and services that were making a significant difference in the lives of children, and (2) to establish School Improvement Councils in every public school to provide greater input from parents and representatives of the local community in the direction of their neighborhood school. The second panel established by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Education was The Special Commission on the Conditions of Teaching which recommended more rigorous performance standards for teachers and new forms of teacher training [Massachusetts Joint Committee on Education, 1987].

The third state-wide panel was the Joint Task Force on Teacher Preparation [JTTP] which was sponsored by the Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education and Massachusetts Department of Education. The JTTP was established to develop new approaches to the recruitment, preparation, and induction of future teachers. Working independently, the Legislature's Special Commission on the Conditions of Teaching and the Joint Task Force on Teacher

Preparation reached many similar conclusions about the unfavorable conditions of public schools and performance of teachers. Their chief recommendations were also consistent with those of the national reports in terms of raising entry standards for perspective teachers, requiring more rigorous graduation standards for high school students, proposing enhanced roles for teachers in the daily management of their schools, and calling for more stringent forms of accountability for teachers and principals.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify the conditions that influence the decisions of urban high school teachers in Massachusetts to participate in and actively support, or not to join and support, school-wide programs that seek to improve the conditions of teaching and learning by changing the school's administrative, organizational, and instructional arrangements. The leaders of the current national and Massachusetts school reform movements are asking teachers to revamp the curriculum, to devise new and more effective instructional programs, to incorporate the latest technologies into their teaching and classrooms, to restructure the organizational arrangement of their schools, to assume new roles and work in new relationships with their peers, and to participate in the preparation and induction of new teachers. Teachers are expected to play a substantial role in the implementation and

institutionalization of these major reforms. Therefore, it is important to develop a better sense of the conditions that teachers feel must be present in order for them to want to participate voluntarily in major programs that will change the rules, roles, and responsibilities of teachers.

The major issues of the current school reform movement are expressed in broad conceptual paradigms and sweeping public policy statements, such as, teacher empowerment, shared decision-making, school-site management, school restructuring, and elevating teaching to the status of a true profession. A significant issue for this study is the degree of congruence or lack of congruence between urban high school teachers and the leaders of the Massachusetts and national school reform movements on the steps that must be taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning, to raise the performance levels of urban high school students, and to make teaching a more attractive and rewarding profession.

An individual's organizational experiences are major and powerful factors in the shaping of their sense of reality [Patton, 1980; McHugh, 1968; Jones & Maloy, 1988]. Teachers' perceptions, then, regardless of their source or the accuracy of the information on which they are based, are important factors to be considered by the current and future school reform movements. Are urban teachers and the leaders of the school reform movement talking about the same issues

and concerns, with the same shared sense of priority and intensity? What are the primary areas of agreement and disagreement between urban high school teachers and the leaders of the current school reform movement? I believe our ability to successfully implement major reform proposals and to sustain them over time is tied directly to the degree of understanding and consensus that is developed between those who establish the policies that govern schools, and those who are expected to implement those policies on a regular and sustained basis.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it recognizes that urban high school teachers are an important source of information about urban children and their needs. The views of urban teachers have not been sought on a wide-spread basis nor have their views been given serious attention and valued in the assessments of public schools by the leading national and state school reform groups [Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Corcoran, Walker, and White, 1988; Boyer, 1983]. Teachers, as a result of their daily interactions with hundreds of children, are in a unique position to know the needs of their children and their schools.

The study is significant because it seeks to add the voice and perspective of urban high school teachers to the growing body of educational research. Teachers, generally, have been peripheral to the process of educational research.

Teachers tend to be viewed as "users" of information developed by others rather than active and co-participants in field based inquiry and investigation. Schools are generally viewed as places where research findings are implemented rather than places where new knowledge is developed [Atkin, 1989].

The study is also significant because it seeks to identify the conditions that inform the perspectives of a particular population of teachers - teachers who work in large multiracial/multicultural, urban high schools. Given the difficult and complex circumstances that impact secondary schools in America's larger metropolitan areas, it is important to understand the conditions that lead the teachers in these schools to invest their personal and professional egos, self-esteem, and energy in school reform programs. While there are generic issues in the current school reform movement that can be applied to nearly all teachers, this study attempts to highlight those issues and conditions that have a special impact on urban secondary school teachers in Massachusetts.

The study can help inform the perceptions and views of public policy makers who are seeking ways to create and support more effective schools. The tendency of policy makers to pursue sweeping proposals that must serve "all" schools equally, often times, have substantially different and uneven effects on individual schools and children. The

"sameness" or similarities in the organizational structures, administrative patterns and titles, curricula and course titles, schedules, and physical plants of schools, mask substantial and significant differences that exist between schools based on their size, grade levels, courses of study, community settings, student populations, and many other important characteristics [Goodlad, 1984]. Urban schools and teachers face special and unique circumstances that need to be addressed by the current school reform movement. This study seeks to call attention to the special needs and concerns of urban high schools and their teachers.

It is important for policy makers, broadly defined, to understand the conditions teachers generally, and urban teachers as a significant sub-group, believe to be important to their voluntary participation in school reform programs, especially programs that seek to change the nature of their schools and teaching as their profession. One of the more important lessons drawn from the efforts to change schools in the early and middle decades of this century is the real limitations of "top-down" mandates and "external" efforts to regulate and control the behavior of teachers and the teaching process [Berliner and Koehler, 1983]. Sarason [1982] describes schools, and school systems, as loosely-coupled institutions that lack clear and enforceable controls from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom. Each level of the hierarchy, then, has a diminishing influence

over each of the succeeding lower levels. Stated somewhat differently by Saint Augustine, "No man does well against his will, even though that which he does be good" [Barth, 1980, p. 174].

Cuban [1988] asks, "how can it be, then, that so much school reform has taken place over the last century, yet schooling appears to be much the same as it has always been?" [p. 341]. His question focuses on the contradiction between long term stability and constant change. It is important to consider this contradiction from the perspective of urban secondary school teachers, and in their own words. It is equally important to seek a sense of the relationships and tensions between teachers' feelings of "ownership," "cooperation," "compliance," and "coercion" in response to proposals that recommend new roles and responsibilities for teachers. This study provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the conditions urban high school teachers identify as important to their decision to actively participate in school reform programs, and the incentives and rewards that have been proposed by the leading national and Massachusetts school reform programs.

Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on teachers in three large, urban high schools in Massachusetts who are working in schools that are engaged in formal, school-wide reform programs. The study does not address the efforts of individual

teachers to improve their own classrooms and performance, although some of the participating teachers may see this as a part of their rationale for joining the larger school-wide project. It does not address informal efforts by ad hoc groups of teachers nor individual teachers in their own classrooms. While several of the school reform projects that are included in the study began with informal conversations and gatherings of teachers, the study limited its focus to schools where the administration and faculty had jointly agreed to formally undertake a school-wide project to improve student learning, the performance of teachers, the conditions of teaching and learning, and the general climate of the school.

The study does not address schools that have decided consciously or by default not to pursue a formal school-wide improvement program. There is a need to know more about the forces that explicitly prevent or do not foster school climates that allow reform initiatives to emerge; however, that is not the purpose of this study. Also, excluded from this study are schools that have high student achievement scores, high graduation rates, high daily attendance, and other indicators of success on the traditional measures of school performance and effectiveness. Schools that meet these criteria may see little or no need to pursue dramatic and extensive programs to change their goals, programs, and settings. In these cases, a more appropriate focus may be

the "fine-tuning" of the school's programs and services rather than mounting an extensive and dramatic overhaul.

The study's findings may not apply to the experience, concerns, and conditions of suburban and rural schools, urban middle and elementary schools, or urban high schools that have special magnet themes or use highly selective entrance examinations. The information reviewed for this study indicates that there can be as much difference between schools in urban settings as there is between urban schools as a group and suburban and rural schools. One of the major points of this study is to identify and examine the conditions and factors that have led urban secondary school teachers to sense that they can make a significant difference in their schools, and to voluntarily join in a school reform program.

The study does not attempt to determine the depth and breadth of the teachers' understanding of the various national and Massachusetts school reform reports, or the accuracy of the information that has been made available to teachers generally by these panels and commissions, or the reliability of the teachers' sources of information. The teacher participants in this study have been asked to indicate in their own words their sense of the conditions that impact their schools and to offer recommendations that they feel will improve their situation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Two bodies of literature on school reform and teaching were selected for review in this chapter. The first body of literature includes twelve studies and surveys of teachers' perceptions of their working conditions, their professional status, and their response to proposals from the most recent school reform movement that began in 1983. The second body of literature includes a review of eight national and three Massachusetts school reform reports. The studies, reports, and articles that are included in this review were identified through a search of the Educational Resource Information Center [ERIC] Network and consulting the bibliographic references cited in the leading national and Massachusetts school reform reports.

The first part of this chapter describes a select group of school reform studies and reports from the perspectives of the teachers who work in urban schools, then contrasts them to reports from the leaders of the national and Massachusetts school reform movements. In examining this work, I sought to discover from the first set of studies an answer to the question, "what can these studies tell us, from the perspective of teachers who work in urban secondary schools, about the conditions that teachers feel are necessary to elicit their voluntary participation in school-wide reform programs?" The question I brought to the

reports of the national and Massachusetts reform movements was, "what do these leaders believe must be done to improve public schools and what role do they envision for teachers in this process?" The overall purpose of this chapter is to highlight some of the most significant points of congruence and disagreement between these two views of school reform for urban secondary schools.

The first group of studies is significant because they explore the process of change in urban secondary schools from the teacher's perspective. These studies create a richer context for this analysis because the issues are presented through the eyes and in the voices of teachers. Each of the selected studies examined the reactions of secondary school teachers, along with other teachers, to proposals that would dramatically change the organizational structures, administrative patterns, and instructional delivery systems of their schools. Particular attention was paid to studies that focused on urban secondary schools and urban teachers. All of the selected studies conducted extensive interviews with teachers and made numerous direct observations in schools that were engaged in formal school improvement and reform programs.

The schools and school systems that were included in these studies were pursuing school-wide reform strategies that had been inspired by or were greatly influenced by the reports and recommendations of groups such as the Carnegie

Forum on Education and the Economy, The Holmes Group, The Coalition of Essential Schools, The National Education Association's Mastery Learning Project, and The Center for Educational Renewal. The conclusions and recommendations presented in these studies provided an important sense of the views, concerns, and meanings that urban teachers, and urban secondary school teachers primarily, make of their work, their schools, and their profession.

Teachers' Views of School Reform

"The ultimate innovation in schools was the teacher. Lasting and significant change would not occur unless teachers were directly and actively involved in the planning and development of the desired changes."

Edward Meade, 1989

The views and voices of teachers are presented first because, as Meade [1989] observes, teachers are central and essential participants in any serious effort to improve the performance of public schools. In addition, the author believes teachers must develop a sense of ownership of the change process in their schools if it is to be effective and long lasting. Berman and McLaughlin [1978] concluded from their study of school improvement programs initiated by the United States Office of Education during the 1960's that, "to the extent that the effort at change identifies and meaningfully involves all those who directly or indirectly will be affected by the change, to that extent the effort stands a chance to be successful" [Sarason, 1982, p. 79].

The perspective and voice of teachers are critical to the formulation of effective school reform programs because teachers will bear the ultimate responsibility for implementing the reform proposals that are finally agreed upon by their building administrators, and local and state policy makers. It is important to note that the traditional, hierarchical and bureaucratic structure of schools and school systems create a false impression of the ability of those at the top, superintendents and school boards, to control and influence the behavior and performance of those at or near the bottom, teachers and principals. Sarason [1982] characterizes the American public school as a loosely coupled entity in which each higher level of the organization has substantially less control over each of the succeeding lower levels in the bureaucracy. He notes that once teachers enter their classrooms and close their doors, there is little that school administrators and local school authorities can do to directly monitor their work. There are practical limits to the controls and sanctions that can be employed from outside the schools to force the compliance and cooperation of teachers with reform proposals.

Given these constraints, I share the views of Sarason [1982], Maeroff [1988], and Rosenholtz [1987] that

more effective incentives must be found to encourage and persuade teachers to participate voluntarily in projects that seek to introduce major changes into the administrative and academic areas of their schools. Lortie [1975], Sarason [1982], Boyer [1983], Sizer [1984] and a growing list of the current school reform advocates, educational researchers, and policy makers have reached the conclusion that teachers are a critical source of information about the culture of schools, an essential element in the teaching/learning process, and the best source of information on the needs of urban children. Their reports draw directly on the perspectives and perceptions of teachers. Nine of the most publicized national studies of American public schools devote substantial portions of their reports and recommendations to what teachers say about teaching, and urban schools [Gross & Gross, 1985].

Two critical assumptions for this study are that: teachers must want the proposed outcomes or benefits that are offered by the school reform proposals; and teachers must be willing and cooperative participants in the implementation process of the proposed changes. Although the most recent reform studies of the 1980's have paid extraordinary attention to the role and influence of teachers, it is surprising that classroom teachers were not asked to play a larger and more significant part in

these studies. Classroom teachers were not included in most of the studies that initiated and shaped the current school reform movement [Gross & Gross, 1985]. Classroom teachers were not invited to serve on the leading national and Massachusetts school reform panels nor to participate as members of their research and study groups. The perspective and voice of urban secondary school teachers are important, even though they have not been tapped nor used to inform the studies of the problems that plague America's schools, nor in the formulation of possible remedies.

The starting point for this review is Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study by Dan Lortie [1975]. Lortie's classic study provides an important context for this and other studies of teachers, schools and the process of change. His work is significant to this study because it considers and treats schools as social organizations that are comprised of individuals, values, and a community ethos. His extensive surveys and interviews with a representative sample of teachers from a selected group of thirteen schools in five school districts in the greater Boston metropolitan area provides a detailed profile of who teaches, why they teach, how they were prepared to teach, their motivations for continuing as teachers, and the conditions that could persuade them to leave teaching.

Lortie's study offers a critical perspective on the constellation of factors that have shaped teaching as a

profession and distinguished it from law and medicine, the other professions to which it is most frequently compared. His account of the evolution of teaching from "middle class work" to its current ambiguous status as a "profession," and his analysis of the forces that have conspired to make teaching a form of blue collar trade rather than a white collar professional activity are important contributions to any understanding of how teachers view themselves and their work, and how they view the schools in which they work. Lortie's historical perspective is also important to developing an understanding of how teaching came to be the way it is today.

Lortie describes the relationship between teachers and their local communities as consistently ambivalent, at times too distant, and far too often under-valued and unappreciated. Many of the circumstances and perceptions that Lortie has identified as having given rise to prior school reform movements seem to apply to the current school reform movements in Massachusetts and the nation as a whole. Low scores on standardized tests, growing drop-out rates, particularly among low income and racial and linguistic minority students, and the increasing difficulties that employers and the military report in finding enough literate and skilled workers, to mention just a few examples, are major issues for the current school reform movement [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983;

National Governors Association, 1986; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Massachusetts Joint Committee on Education, 1987; Massachusetts Joint Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1987]. Today, as in 1975, teachers are considered to be a major source of the problems that plague America's public schools [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Boyer, 1983; and Goodlad, 1984; Massachusetts Joint Task Force on Teacher Preparation, 1987].

For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that teachers by their selection, training, induction, and the sentiments that characterize and shape their work have not been prepared for the rapid and dramatic changes in the expectations and challenges that they currently face in their schools. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching [1988] observed that, "we cannot expect a teacher trained twenty years ago to prepare students to live forty years into the future without a systematic program of renewal" [p. 8]. Since the general indoctrination and induction process of teachers has stressed working alone and in isolation from other teachers, working separately and privately from their building administrators, and maintaining a distance from parents, many of the current proposals to make fundamental changes in the manner in which teachers go about their work, and in their roles and relationships with their peers and others present formidable

emotional and psychological challenges for teachers [Lortie, 1975; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988; Eisner, 1988; Lightfoot, 1983, and Little, 1981].

Corcoran, Walker, and White [1988] of the Institute for Educational Leadership [IEL] conducted a study of teaching conditions in five large urban school districts between 1986 and 1988. Their study, which was supported by the Council of Great City Schools and the Ford Foundation, sought to determine the conditions under which urban school teachers work and to solicit the teachers' recommendations for improving the learning and teaching experiences in their schools. The superintendents of schools in the five targeted cities on the east coast, were asked to identify two high schools in their districts that served the same general mix of students by race and socio-economic status, but had very different rates of success, in terms of academic achievement on standardized tests, attendance, and student and teacher morale. Their study sought to determine the factors that accounted for the differences in the results of the schools that were considered successful and those that were viewed as troubled and difficult schools.

Corcoran, Walker, and White's observations and conclusions are significant to this study because they detail the severe and enormous challenges that confront urban teachers and students on a daily basis. Through interviews and surveys with teachers, interviews with school

based and central office administrators, and regular site visits spread over the three year period of the study, they gathered important information on the working conditions and self-images of urban teachers. They offered the following comment regarding their observations: "Urban teachers labor under conditions that would not be tolerated in other professional settings. This is true of teaching in general, but the compounding of the problems in urban schools create extremely difficult and demoralizing environments for those who have chosen to teach" [p. xiii]. They go on to note that, "there is evidence that the proposed dramatic changes in the teaching profession, including greater participation in decision-making and restructuring of schools to alter teacher roles, are distant from the day-to-day lives of most urban teachers" [p. 2].

The IEL study suggested that the long standing inability of urban school systems to provide their teachers with the barest essentials for teaching, their pattern of failure-to-follow-through on previous proposals and promises of school improvement, and their historical practice of excluding teachers from the policy development process has left a deep legacy of cynicism and distrust among their teachers. The question for future school reform movements is whether there is a reasonable basis and climate for initiating a new level of discussion and new relationship between urban teachers and their administrators and local

policy makers. Again, we are reminded that "changes, aimed at altering the conditions under which teachers labor, must be based on realistic descriptions of their (teachers') work-lives" [Corcoran, Walker, and White, 1988, p. 1]. Corcoran [1990], found further evidence to support the conclusions of his study for the Institute for Educational Leadership through an analysis of four surveys of teachers' opinions about their working conditions. The "Conditions and Resources of Teaching Study" [CART], was a 1986 national study conducted by Bacharach, Bauer and Shedd for the National Education Association. This survey focused on approximately 1,700 members of the National Education Association who represented a statistical profile of the national teaching force.

The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1986: Restructuring the Teaching Profession, [1986] was part of the series of annual national opinion polls on American education conducted by Lou Harris and Associates for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. The survey included over one thousand teachers who represented a statistical profile of the 1986 teaching force, and seven hundred national and state leaders from business and government. A 1986 survey by the Eagleton Institute of New Jersey teachers for the Center for Public Interest Polling solicited the teachers' comments and concerns regarding their working conditions and various proposals by the state

to improve the quality of public education. Also in 1986, the Policy Analysis for California Education [PACE] conducted a similar survey among teachers in California. These studies which surveyed large, representative groups of teachers included significant numbers of urban teachers and secondary school teachers. Corcoran constructed a matrix to carry out his comparison, and he identified eleven work place conditions that were critical concerns to teachers. I shall include some of the conditions in the discussion that follows on the themes that have emerged from the reviews.

Firestone, Rosenblum, and Webb [1987] conducted a study for Research for Better Schools, which is one of the regional education laboratories, entitled, "Building Commitment Among Students and Teachers: An Exploratory Study in Ten Urban High Schools." Their study focused on the conditions of teaching and learning in ten inner city high schools, two each in Baltimore, Newark, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Their work is important to this study because it adds crucial details to the descriptions of the work settings and demands on urban teachers, and identifies conditions that these teachers feel are essential to their continued struggle to provide meaningful, quality educational experiences for their students. Their observations also provide another lens or context for the analysis of the teacher responses from the three high schools that are the focus of this study. One

note that is of particular importance is that the study by Firestone, Rosenblum, and Webb [1987] begins to highlight the dramatic differences in the experiences and perceptions of urban high school teachers and other teachers. One example is the teachers very different views regarding the availability of appropriate and adequate teaching materials in their classrooms and schools. The teachers who responded to the CART survey in California indicated that they had sufficient materials, while the urban teachers in the five eastern cities who responded to the study of Firestone, Rosenblum, and Webb [1987] and Corcoran's [1990] IEL survey reported severe and critical shortages in their most basic instructional materials and supplies.

Eisner [1988] conducted a study of the experiences of students and teachers in four California high schools that offered a view of schools from an ecological perspective. His research team spent two weeks monitoring the daily activities and experiences of nineteen students and eight teachers. Based on their 1,600 hours of observations and interviews, Eisner concludes that school reform proposals need to begin with a view of schools as ecological systems that are shaped and driven by the interactions and tensions between their various components. He also suggests that it is important to begin the process of school reform by getting into and seeing schools from the perspective of those who live in schools, i.e., the students and teachers.

He urges greater attention be given to the interconnectedness of schools to the world in which they exist and, vice versa. His themes regarding the interrelationship of schools and their immediate communities echo the conclusions of Sarason [1982] and Lortie [1975].

Johnson [1990] of Harvard University provides additional information for this study through her qualitative study of the experiences of over one hundred Massachusetts teachers who were intentionally selected to provide a variety of view points on the school as a work place. The teachers who were invited to participate in the study were nominated by their principals and superintendents because they were considered to be outstanding professionals. In Teachers at Work: Achieving Success in Our Schools, Johnson's [1990] descriptions of the teachers' experiences enhance and reenforce many of the emerging themes regarding what teachers feel they need to make their schools more effective, and their views of and reactions to school reform proposals from external sources. Of special importance are her observations about the dynamics of the school as a work place. "A work place is more than a physical setting: it is also the context that defines how work is divided and done, how it is scheduled, supervised, compensated, and regarded by others" [p. 1]. Johnson asks how schools should be organized for better teaching and

learning? This question is at the center of the current school reform debate, and this study.

The work of Lieberman and Miller [1984] advocates additional study of and recognition of schools as social entities that have histories, biographies, social relationships, and ideologies. Like Lortie [1975] and Sarason [1982], they consider the ethos of the school a critical and primary element in gaining an understanding of what schools are, how they function, and how they can be changed. In their book, Teachers, Their World and Their Work: Implications for School Improvement [1984], Lieberman and Miller provide a personal and in-depth look at the daily operations and regularities of schools. They also outline the "dailiness of teaching" and provide a compelling picture of the "rhythms, rules, interactions, and feelings" [p. 5,7,8] that shape what happens in schools.

Lieberman and Miller [1984] also question the purported links between the quality of teaching and the quality and degree of student learning. They note, as does Goodlad [1984], that there is considerable evidence to support the connections between workers' satisfaction and their output, but there is little clear research to support the linkages between teachers' satisfaction and the quality and amount of student learning. And, they raise important questions about the real or perceived impact of various school reform proposals on the many personal relationships that exist

within schools. Their question for teachers is whether the potential benefits, or trade offs, of the proposed changes outweigh the current things that they value in their classrooms and schools.

Little's study of collegiality and work place norms [1981] further enriches the analysis of the elements, influences, and forces that govern the beliefs and behaviors of teachers in their schools. In "School as work place: characteristics conducive to influential staff development," [1983] a paper Little prepared for the Center for Action Research, she describes the powerful effects of the school as a place of work. She concludes that school reform must focus on the collective activities of the school rather than the individual efforts of teachers who are working in isolated classrooms. This point is also supported by the studies of Boyer [1983] and Goodlad [1984]. Little also outlines the characteristics and conditions that foster greater collaboration and cooperation among teachers, and between teachers and their administrators. The point of including Little's findings in this study is that she presents a set of conditions that must be addressed by teachers and school reform advocates if they are to achieve their mutual and complementary goals of improved teaching and learning, better school outcomes, and more professional roles and status for teachers.

Maeroff [1988], a senior fellow at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, in "A Blueprint for Empowering Teachers," provides several critical observations about teaching as a profession that suggest the need for new ways to both think about and address the needs of teachers if they are to be critical agents of school reform. First, he notes that teaching, unlike law and medicine, is practiced in isolation for the most part, without the benefits of peer input and support [Maeroff, 1988]. Teachers are forced to struggle with their problems in isolation, and they have too few opportunities to share their successes, questions, and failures, with their peers. He also notes that teachers must be persuaded that the proposals that are being proposed are in their best interest. Again, the history of prior school reform efforts and the scathing characterizations and charges of the first wave of reports in the current school reform movement have left deep scars on the spirits and psyches of teachers [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Boyer, 1983; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Deal, 1990]. Maeroff's point is that teachers will need more than another call to arms and new visions, or threats, that are proposed by people who are external to the schools.

It would be impossible to conclude this section of the review without some consideration of the contributions ofSizer [1984] and of Powell, Farrar, and Cohen [1985] of the

Study of High Schools. Their work, which was sponsored by the Commission on Educational Issues of the National Association of Independent Schools and National Association of Secondary School Principals, provides an important synthesis of the many and varied views and perspectives on American secondary education, and the experiences and self-images of high school students and teachers. Of special note for this study are their efforts to point out the substantial and marked differences that exist among high schools, and between high schools and other types of schools; differences which are masked by the similarities in their organizational and physical structures, and are reenforced by the similarities in their administrative patterns and curricula, and what to many adults appears to be the uniform appearance of their students [Sizer, 1984].

In Horace's Compromise [1984], Sizer offers a composite view of life for teachers and students in "most" American high schools. Sizer begins his inquiry by noting that, "A society that is concerned about the strength and wisdom of its culture pays careful attention to its adolescents" [p. 1]. He continues, "Analysts of the American psyche may explain that we pick particularly on the schools when we're unhappy with ourselves in general (a perhaps unfair but safe transference, as it were), but it may well be that the critical attention today paid to high schools is richly deserved" [p. 1]. Sizer feels the American high school is

akin to a "secular church, a place of national rituals that mark stages of a young citizen's life. The value of its rites appear to depend on national consistency" [p. 6].

Powell, Farrar, and Cohen in The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace [1985], provide further elaboration on the critical relationships and forces that shape American and large urban high schools. Their descriptions harken back to the observations of Lortie and Sarason regarding the dailiness of schools and the powerful impact of their rituals, relationships, and regularities [Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1982, and Lieberman and Miller, 1984]. They provide further evidence to support the views of Johnson [1990] and Lieberman and Miller [1984] regarding the importance of schools as work places which have values, beliefs, and an ethos. Both Horace's Compromise and The Shopping Mall High School provide an expanded view of high schools from the perspectives of teachers and students. Much of their focus is on urban high schools, but they also present a compelling case for the reconsideration and reconceptualization of all high schools.

"In the end, however, the struggle for quality will be won or lost in thousands of classrooms, in the quality of the relationship between teachers and students."

Ernest Boyer, 1983, p. xiii

External Views of High Schools and the Reform Process

"Significant educational improvement of schooling, not mere tinkering, requires that we focus on entire schools, not just teachers or principals or curricula or organization or school-community relations, but all of these and more. Consequently, it is advisable to focus on one place where all of the elements come together. This is the individual school."

John Goodlad, 1984, p. xvi

The second body of literature included in this review is a select group of national and Massachusetts school reform reports that were published after A Nation at Risk in 1983. The reports were selected to represent the concerns and perspectives of key segments of the larger society. The reports represent the concerns and views of governors and state legislators, the chief executive officers and major leaders of the business and corporate community, the presidents and staffs of the major national private philanthropic organizations, the presidents and deans of education of leading national universities, and the heads of education associations and organizations. The central questions are, "what have they concluded about the state of American high schools and, more importantly, what do they recommend that should be done to change these conditions?"

Six criteria were used to select the reports that are included in this review. First, each of the studies was directed by a panel or commission that included representatives from a variety of groups and perspectives rather than presenting the views of one narrow group. In

several cases, nationally recognized scholars directed the studies, but they involved an advisory committee that included lay people from different constituencies who reviewed and commented on the project's direction and findings. Second, the selected studies involved extensive information and data gathering activities, such as public hearings and site visits. Third, the studies made use of the growing body of research on schools and the teaching/learning process. Several studies commissioned special background papers and research reports. Fourth, the reports included major observations and substantial discussions about urban teachers and urban schools. Fifth, the reports received broad national coverage, and served as references for other studies and reports on American public education. Sixth, the sponsors of the studies are presently conducting follow-up components that are attempting to implement their recommendations in real school situations.

This review recognizes, but does not include, studies and reports that exclude teachers as significant forces in schools and school reform. This review also does not include proposals that advocate administrative arrangements that place the governance of public schools in the hands of private organizations, such as contracts with for-profit companies and universities, and tuition vouchers that encourage parents to make greater use of private schools.

These approaches should be the focus of future studies on school reform.

The selected school reform reports share a common sense of the pivotal role that teachers must play in serious efforts to introduce and sustain change in the leadership, administration, and outcomes of American public schools. They also offer many common recommendations that would, if implemented, affect both current and future teachers, and redefine the over-all mission of American high schools.

The following national reports are included in this review:

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, [1983] by the National Commission on Excellence in Education provides the perspective of the federal government as expressed by the Secretary of Education.

A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-first Century, [1986] which was produced by the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, provides the views of the national business and philanthropic communities.

Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group, [1986] provides the view of a select group of the nation's leading research oriented universities. Their report has dominated the discussions of

school reform and the restructuring of teacher education even though several other college and university organizations have issued their own reports.

A Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education, [1986] presents views of the nation's governors on the state of American public education and the conditions of public schools in their respective states. This report represents the views of one of the newer and more powerful forces in the current school reform movement. Much of the political leadership for the current movement to improve public schools has been provided by the nation's governors and groups of activist state legislators.

Two major research studies of American high schools are also included in the review.

High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America, [1983] by Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching describes in great detail the instructional programs, organization and administrative activities, and social functions of fifteen high schools. Of particular importance to this analysis is the equally detailed agenda for the reform of schools that is presented in Boyer's report.

The second report describes a longitudinal study of high schools that was directed by John Goodlad.

A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future, [1984] is included in this study because it offers a rich data base and extensive view of schools over time. It also offers a challenging agenda for the reform of public schools that is derived from intensive interviews with school based practitioners and extended discussions with the leaders of the education research community.

Three reports from Massachusetts are included in this review of school reform reports. The first two reports were part of a larger project sponsored by the Joint Education Committee of the Massachusetts Great and General Court.

Leading the Way: Report of the Special Commission on the Conditions of Teaching [1987] and Leading the Way: Report of the Special Commission on REACH (Rewarding Educational Achievement) and School Improvement Councils [1987] present a series of recommendations to improve the conditions of learning and teaching, to recognize the accomplishments of schools with effective academic and social programs, to make teaching a more rewarding career, and to expand the governance and ownership of the public schools by

their local communities. Their recommendations call for major changes in the administrative structure and operational patterns of schools, and for an alteration in the organizational relationships between teachers, principals, parents, and other significant groups in the local community.

The third Massachusetts report was prepared by The Joint Task Force on Teacher Preparation (JTTP) which was convened by the Chancellor of the Board of Regents of Higher Education and the Commissioner of Education.

Making Teaching a Major Profession:

Recommendations of the Joint Task force on Teacher Preparation [1987] proposes major changes in the way future practitioners are to be prepared and will practice their profession in Massachusetts. The JTTP's recommendations also call upon teachers to play an expanded role in the daily administration of their buildings, and in the preparation and induction of future teachers. The report includes the special needs of urban schools, and the pre-service and in-service training of teachers to work effectively in increasingly diverse racial and cultural settings.

The three Massachusetts reports cite many of the same conditions and concerns that are expressed in the national school reform reports regarding the poor outcomes of schools, the poor academic preparation of people planning to teach, and the loss of a literate and highly skilled and motivated work force. The Massachusetts reports also share many of the national reports' recommendations regarding new structures and administrative patterns for public schools, higher and more rigorous standards for both students and teachers, and more attention to students from disadvantaged and impoverished communities.

Five Significant Themes on School Reform

Five themes emerge from the review and analysis of the literature that speak to the central question of what are the conditions that lead urban secondary school teachers to participate voluntarily in school wide reform programs. The first theme is the shared sense among teachers and school reform advocates that America's urban high schools are being overwhelmed by an unprecedented constellation of social and economic forces. The second theme is the ambiguous role and place of teachers in the current school reform movement. A corollary issue that is raised in the discussion of this theme is the concern primarily among the school reform advocates about making teaching a "true" profession. The third theme is the uncertainties among teachers regarding the means and ends of the current school reform movement.

An appropriate sub-title for this theme could be the feelings of skepticism or cynicism among teachers about the views, objectives, and methods of the external school reform advocates. The fourth theme is the proposed vision and goals of the current school reform movement: who's vision is driving or should drive the process; and who should own the process and outcomes. The fifth theme is the nature and scope of the reforms that have been advocated. The issue is the tensions and contradictions between the minimalist and the radicalist perspectives on the types of reforms that are necessitated by the present condition of urban schools and the condition of teaching and learning.

Theme I - What's wrong with America's urban high schools:
defining the problem from two perspectives

The one point on which there seems to be consensus by all parties is that America's public schools, and urban schools in particular, are failing to meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of their students and the growing expectations of their local communities. The "21st Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" indicates that most Americans feel the nation's public schools are in serious trouble, and that they are not serving adequately the basic needs of their students nor the concerns of their local communities [Elam and Gallup, 1989, p. 42]. However, when the same public is asked to rate the performance of their local public schools, the schools their children attend, they tend to give these schools higher

marks. The question is how to interpret these contradictory views of public schools.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education [1983] states its concerns in very clear and dramatic language. "If an unfriendly power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" [A Nation at Risk, 1983, p. 3]. The Commission cites a list of indicators to support its conclusions about the poor performance of public schools and public school teachers. Among the major findings are the following: American students score well below their peers from the other major industrialized nations on standardized tests in the critical areas of math and science literacy and comprehension. Scores on the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test have declined consistently since 1963, so that the 1980 national scores are below the national average for 1963. About 13% of all seventeen year olds in 1983 are considered to be illiterate, and the rate for minority youth is dramatically higher. Over twenty-three million Americans in 1983 are considered functionally illiterate in terms of their ability to manage everyday reading, writing, and comprehension. The Commission's report is also clear in assigning responsibility for the failures of American schools. Teachers are cited as a primary and major source of the problems in America's schools. The Commission cites the low

high school and college grade point averages and Scholastic Aptitude Test scores for people in education programs, the fact that most teachers were in the lower half of their high school graduating class, and the number of teachers who failed to pass or received low scores on basic literacy tests [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983]. The Commission concludes that, "not enough of the academically able students are being attracted into teaching; that teacher preparation programs need substantial improvement; that the professional working life of teachers is on the whole unacceptable; and that a serious shortage of teachers exists in key fields" [p. 22]. In short, the Commission calls for a complete reconceptualization, reorganization, and recommitment to public education. Although the Commission's report also contains many positive recommendations to improve the working conditions, professional status and image, and salaries for teachers, there has been wide-spread and deep resentment among teachers regarding the report's initial, strong characterizations of teachers and the general assignment of blame to teachers for the problems in America's public schools. The Commission's views have been echoed by a series of reports from primarily business oriented groups, such as the Business-Higher Education Forum [1983], Task Force on Education for Economic Growth [1983], and The Twentieth Century Fund [1983].

The second group of school reform reports that followed A Nation at Risk, [1983] support many of the commission's concerns, but most take a very different view and approach to the role and influence of teachers in terms of creating and sustaining reforms. Boyer [1983] notes that "what is wrong with America's public schools cannot be fixed without the help of those teachers already in classrooms" [p. 154]. The reports, which are described as the "second wave" of the current school reform movement, consider teachers to be part of the constellation of problems that are affecting schools, but more importantly, they conclude that teachers are essential forces to any effort to improve public schools [Goodlad, 1984; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; and National Governors Association, 1986].

In 1986, the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, which was sponsored by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy issued its report, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-first Century [1986]. The task force, which represents the general perspective of the business and corporate sector, was created to focus attention on the connections between America's economic base, the availability of a highly trained and literate work force, and the quality of America's public schools. The task force included representatives from the business sector, federal

and state governments, foundations, higher education, and professional education organizations.

Using much of the same data base and many of the same comparisons as the National Commission on Excellence in Education, the task force concluded that America's leadership role as a major industrialized nation is in serious jeopardy due to the growing shortage of literate and skilled employees. The task force's report concludes that America's public schools lack direction and purpose, are poorly organized and administered, and do not have the human, fiscal, and technological resources to meet the growing challenge from the other industrialized nations. The task force also notes the growing racial and cultural diversity of the American society and its schools, and the need to pay greater attention to those groups that have not benefitted fully from America's economic and social prosperity.

The task force's report calls for a total restructuring of America's public schools, the redesign of the way teachers are prepared, and new and more sophisticated relationships between schools, the business community, higher education, and their local communities. The task force proposes that, "a fundamental redesign of that system is needed, a redesign that will make it possible for those who would reform schools from outside and those who would do so from inside to make common cause" [p. 26]. Most of the

task force's recommendations focus on high schools, and there are numerous references to and examples of the special circumstances and challenges that face urban schools. Its recommendations for teachers contain both more demanding entry and review standards, greater autonomy and authority over their work and students, and a more professional work environment and status, including higher salaries and differentiated roles.

The nation's governors and state legislators have provided a major source of the leadership and motivation for the current school reform movement. In addition to their individual interests and efforts in their respective states, the governors, through their national organization, have advanced their own vision and agenda for public education. In Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report of Education, [1986] the governors present their concerns about the state of their public schools and outline their agenda for addressing these problems. Urban high schools and teachers, once again, receive major attention. The governors, like their counterparts in business and higher education, recognize the changing demographics of American schools and society as noted by Harold Hodgkinson [1985] in his study, "All One System: Demographics of Education, Kindergarten through Graduate School." The governors also took heed of Hodgkinson's advice that, " ... we need to begin seeing the educational system from the perspective of

the people who move through it" [p. 2]. Their report calls for the inclusion of and a larger role for parents, the business community, and other local groups that have a direct stake in the performance of their public schools. In terms of teachers, the governors call for more rigorous preparation programs and standards, more professional work environments, better and more competitive salaries, and greater authority to direct their schools. For students, the governors propose higher expectations, more rigorous and relevant instructional programs, safer and better maintained school buildings, and more accessible and affordable post secondary educational and employment opportunities. The governors' national agenda is to be reviewed in five years [i.e., 1991] to measure the progress of the states and the nation toward the association's ambitious goals. In addition, individual states are encouraged to develop their own school reform agendas that will adapt the national vision to the specific needs of their local citizens and communities.

The higher education community became active participants in the national school reform movement with the publication, Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group [1986]. The Holmes Group included the deans and chairs of education departments at some of the nation's leading research universities. Its primary goals were reforming teacher preparation and up-grading teaching as a

profession. The attention that has been given to this report and the subsequent work of the Holmes Group is due in large measure to its membership, which includes the leading research institutions in their respective regions and states. As expressed by the groups' chairperson, Judith Lanier, "they are the teachers of teachers" [p. ix]. Lanier comments further that, "because they attract more than their share of the best and the brightest students; they have the faculty who, on the whole, are the nation's best and most authoritative sources of information in their fields; they command substantial resources; and, in the case of education, they are the institutions that have educated and will continue to educate the professorate in education" [p. ix].

The report of the Holmes Group is significant for this analysis because it shares the general, national concern about the low standards and productivity of America's pre-collegiate institutions, and the inability of a growing number of their graduates to perform effectively after they entered college [Holmes Group, 1986]. The membership of the Holmes Group focused its energies on its primary area of contact with schools, its programs to prepare teachers and administrators. Although a number of other college and university organizations, such as the American Association of State Land Grant Colleges and Universities, American Association for Higher Education, American Association of

Colleges of Teacher Education, The College Board, to name a few, have issued reports that also propose substantial changes in the way teachers are prepared, the Holmes Group's report has dominated and continues to dominate the current discussions regarding the preparation of future teacher practitioners.

Teachers' Views of the Problems in Urban High Schools

Secondary school teachers share the larger society's concerns and frustrations with the performance and outcomes of the public schools and their students. They differ, however, in their assessment of the root causes of the problems. The issues for many teachers are the administrative, bureaucratic, and structural restrictions of their work place that do not permit or encourage them to exercise their professional judgement and expertise over their students, programs, and schools [Corcoran, 1990; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Johnson, 1990]. The teachers who were surveyed for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's special report, "An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools," [1988] reported that they were concerned about the increasing array of social and non-academic demands that were being placed on their schools while the general level of fiscal and other types of support continued to decline. Corcoran, Walker, and White [1988] in their survey of urban teachers for the Institute for Educational Leadership offer the following observation which

summarizes the concerns of urban teachers. "Urban teachers often do not have even the basic resources needed for teaching. There are serious shortages of everything from toilet paper to textbooks; teachers have limited access to modern office technology, including copiers, let alone computers" [p. xiii]. On this point, Sarason [1982] also offers a useful observation that must be kept in mind when posing the question about what is wrong with the public schools. "It is all too easy to pinpoint a problem in schools and to propose changes within schools, unaware that the problems did not arise only in the context of schools" [p. 12]. For the teachers who were included in the four surveys that were analyzed by Corcoran [1990], the structural and bureaucratic impediments to operating responsive and effective classrooms and schools were major factors in their decisions to take no role in school reform initiatives, and in many cases, to leave teaching.

Rosenholtz [1987] concludes from her study of several major school reform projects that one of the underlying impressions left by most school improvement and reform projects is that teachers are not working or have not worked hard enough. This impression is fed, according to Rosenholtz, by some of the concerns about the personal academic qualifications and professional preparation of teachers that were cited by the National Commission on Excellence in Education [1983], the Holmes Group [1986], the

National Governors' Association [1986], and other groups at the forefront of the current school reform movement. The evidence most frequently cited includes the poor academic backgrounds and low academic standings of the people who are preparing to teach, reports of large numbers of teachers who have failed basic literacy tests, the high disaffection and departure rate for the most academically able teachers, and the wide-spread frustration and disappointment with the poor results from the huge investments that were made in public education during the 1960's and 1970's. The point is that these perceptions of the lackluster performance of teachers are considered to be a major source of the problems in schools. And, teachers seem powerless to refute or disprove this perception.

Teachers also cite the weight of the current perceptions about schools that are held by parents and the larger community as important and significant restraints on their work. Carnoy [1990] offers an interesting observation about some teachers' perceptions of parents. "Getting teachers to be more effective producers is complicated by another factor: schools share responsibility for their product with parents and the community" [p. 32]. He goes on to note, "if parents - who get the first crack at educating their children - are not very effective, teachers often feel that they can only do so much" [p. 32]. In terms of restraints from state and local government, the teachers who

responded to the Carnegie study of urban schools reported substantial increases in the political interference, state regulation of local schools, and bureaucratic paperwork [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988].

Finally, it should be noted that teachers express some degree of ambivalence regarding the performance of their peers. The studies of Johnson [1990], Lieberman and Miller [1984], and Little [1981] describe the powerful influences of the school as a work place. In these descriptions the norms of the school building can pose formidable barriers or restraints to changes from the outside and stifle reform efforts that might be initiated from within. Since teachers historically have worked in isolated settings, practiced their profession with little support and feedback from peers, the profession has lacked an ethos which argues for peer review, peer recognition and peer censorship. This paradox is described best by Goodlad [1984]. "Teachers have the expectations of a professional, but function like tradesmen" [p. 193]. Goodlad also reports that when asked to select what they (teachers) perceive to be their school's one biggest problem, teachers tend to select problems affecting their teaching that are beyond their control - lack of student interest, large schools, overcrowded classrooms, lack of parent interest, administrative demands and lack of support, inadequate resources, and at the junior high school level in particular, student "misbehavior."

There is an uncertainty among the ranks of the current teacher corps regarding the abilities and depth of commitment of their members.

Theme II - The ambiguous and uncertain role and place of teacher

Lortie [1975] provides an informative history of the evolution of the teaching profession. His chief point is that teachers have always experienced mixed messages from their communities regarding their status and importance. They have been frequently touted publicly as important figures in their local communities, but their compensation and other more tangible benefits have been more reflective of people who perform lower middle class work. He goes on to note that teachers feel alienated from university faculty who, they believe, see them as constantly in need of their training. Teachers have experienced continuous levels of confrontation with their administrators who, they feel, wish to control and manipulate them. Teachers have also felt estranged from parents who they feel have not respected their professional views and expertise. Many of these conditions continue to be important elements in the current school reform movement [Lightfoot, 1983; Maeroff, 1988; Corcoran, 1988; and Johnson, 1990].

Sarason [1982] observes that "the public schools have always had a transactional reality with their communities, affected by them and in turn affecting them. We tend to be unaware that we use the concept of the encapsulated school

system in ways that blind us to the daily realities of the school/society relationship" [p. 2]. The studies of Firestone [1989] and Deal [1990] also describe the tenuous relationship between teachers and their students, and teachers and the larger society. And, the task of "taking charge" of the reform process has been made more difficult by the exclusion of teachers from the diagnosis of the problems and conditions that negatively impact schools, and the formulation of remedies to address these problems. Carnoy [1990] reminds those who want change in their school that the success of any proposed change in schools rests on the receptivity and responsiveness of teachers.

Given the focus of prior reform programs on correcting or changing the behavior of teachers, and the emotionally and psychically damning charges that are presented in A Nation at Risk, teachers seem to be uncertain about their own abilities and capacities to lead school reform programs [Boyer, 1983; and Goodlad, 1984]. Maeroff [1988] suggests that teachers need new psychological ladders that will allow them to break their current isolating bonds and boundaries in order to be able to gain a larger overview of their schools and world, and the ability to take charge of both. His point, and one which provides important support for this study, is that teachers will not be willing and able to assume more responsible roles until they feel that the work they are doing is not small and insignificant, but is

respected and appreciated by parents, administrators, education researchers, and the larger public.

A corollary issue is the major recommendation from nearly all the national and Massachusetts studies and reports that teaching be elevated to the status of a true profession [Task Force on Teachers for the Twenty-first Century, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; and Massachusetts Joint Task Force on Teacher Preparation, 1987]. Adam Urbanski [1986], the President of the Rochester [N.Y.] Teachers Association, describes several characteristics of the status of most American teachers in the latter half of the 1980's. First, teachers learn their trade through sink-or-swim. There is no organized induction system. Second, their roles and expectations are the same on the last day of their careers as they are on the first day. The only path to promotion and greater responsibility leads out of the classroom. There are no forms of advancement and recognition that encourage and support teachers to stay in the classroom. Third, the most basic and significant instructional decisions are made by people at very distant locations. There are few opportunities for teachers to employ their collective experiences and expertise. The ultimate and final decisions are made outside the school for those who work in the schools. Fourth, teachers are too often evaluated by administrators who focus on non-instructional issues because they lack the

depth of background and preparation to understand and lead teachers on pedagogical issues.

Urbanski's description harkens back to the accounts provided by Lortie [1975], who described teaching as "dedicated service" which is also often lampooned as "easy work." In Lortie's discussion of the ethos of teaching he describes the importance of the orientations and sentiments, the beliefs and values, the rites and rituals, the constellation of elements that make teaching what it is and distinguishes it from other professions and forms of work. Lightfoot [1983], Lieberman and Miller [1984], Goodlad, [1984], Little [1981] and Johnson [1990] offer additional evidence from the perspective of teachers that they do not consider the status of their profession to be that of law and medicine, the two professions that are most often cited for comparison purposes. Teachers, as a group, do not control entry to their profession. Teachers, as a group, do not set the standards nor regulate the practice of their profession. Teachers as a group do not have a discrete and distinct language in which to exchange and share their professional opinions and judgements. Teachers as a group have only recently begun to develop a knowledge base that supports their work. Based on these and other factors, there is sufficient evidence to lead many people to question whether teaching is a true profession.

The picture is a bit more complicated because there seems to be considerable uncertainty among teachers about some of the proposals that have been offered to make teaching a true profession. Corcoran [1990] points out that there is no clear evidence of a link between teacher satisfaction and influence and the educational outcomes of schools. So teachers face a major question about the criteria on which they wish to have their work evaluated. On the specific recommendation regarding teachers' participation in shared decision-making in their buildings, Maeroff's [1988] interviews with teachers led him to conclude that many teachers are less concerned about making major administrative decisions in their schools. What teachers want is to have their insights and experiences considered in the formulation of policies and decision-making. The teachers who responded to the California PACE and NEA's CART surveys indicated that they wanted more opportunities to share their accomplishments with their peers and increased public recognition of their good work. For most teachers, the bottom line was that they wanted the time, resources, and support to work with their students in their classrooms. The invitations to participate in larger school-wide, system-wide, and community-wide governance were of secondary importance [Maeroff, 1988].

The discussions about improving the working conditions of teachers and providing greater professional status for teachers seem to have become intertwined, and overly convoluted. Boyer [1983] who has been a consistent advocate for more professional treatment of teachers, states that, "improving working conditions is, we believe, at the center of our efforts to improving teaching. We cannot expect teachers to exhibit a high degree of professional competence when they are accorded such a low degree of professional treatment in their work a day world" [p. 161]. The Carnegie Task Force [1986] concludes that the professionalization of teaching is a critical element in attracting the most intellectually able students into teaching. Bright, creative, and highly competent people will not enter nor stay in a profession that consistently restrains and frustrates their best efforts. Goodlad [1984] lends his support to this view when he notes that, "if teachers are potentially, powerfully influential in the education of children and youth in schools, but the circumstances of teaching inhibit their functioning, then we need to modify these circumstances so as to maximize the teachers' potential" [p. 168]. The Holmes Group [1986] also notes that "the best educated will be no antidote to demeaning jobs that make little room for what has been learned, that offer few incentives for learning more, and that are swamped with clerical and other responsibilities" [p. 8].

The central question for this study is what are the conditions that urban high school teachers feel are important to their decisions to participate voluntarily in school-wide reform programs? The issue then, is how and/or to what degree is the call for the professionalization of teaching related to or essential to the needs of urban secondary school teachers. The studies that have been reviewed provide no clear consensus; however, they do offer a strong and compelling case for the need for dramatic improvements in the working conditions of teachers, especially, those who work in large inner-city high schools in America's older cities [Corcoran, Walker, and White, 1988; Corcoran, 1990; Firestone, 1989; Johnson, 1990]. Corcoran concludes that, "increasing influence over decisions affecting their work is seen as particularly significant for professionals, such as teachers, who work in bureaucratic settings like the public schools and who often complain that they are neither respected nor consulted" [p. 157]. From this I have concluded that it may be easier to give teachers "professional treatment" rather than to expect teaching to become a profession that is comparable to law and medicine. Since there seems to be little reasonable chance that teachers will be able to control entry to their profession, to regulate who practices and how, to create truly differentiated hierarchical ranks within the profession, and to gain substantial salary increases that

will apply to all teachers, it might be more appropriate to start the improvement of teaching by acting in areas where teachers will be treated like the true professionals I believe they are.

Theme III - Issues of faith in the means and ends of school reform: teachers' feelings of cynicism and lack of efficacy

"Still we are troubled that the nation's teachers remain skeptical. Why is it that teachers, of all people, are demoralized and largely unimpressed by the reform actions taken?"

The Carnegie Foundation for the
Advancement of Teaching, 1988 (p. 10)

Deal [1990] offers a partial response to this question by noting that the central problem for schools may be more spiritual rather than technical. From his analysis of prior school reform initiatives, he points out that they failed to change deeply rooted beliefs and practices. And, many of these efforts are quickly stymied by the resistance of the school setting and the culture of schools to forces of change from external sources. Again, the studies of Lieberman and Miller [1984], Little, [1981], Lortie, [1975], Sarason, [1982], and Johnson, [1990] describe the power of the school as a work place. They share the conclusion that a driving force on the part of those who work in schools to resist and mute changes that have been proposed by external forces, is their concern about having little or no input, participation, and control over the direction, goals, and implementation of reforms [Sarason, 1982; Maeroff, 1988].

Teachers appear to be weary and wary of changes that are prepackaged and delivered to their doorsteps. They are also concerned about programs that are rigid and do not allow for adaptation to the teacher's style, skills, and interests [Rosenholtz, 1987]. Rosenholtz concludes from her study of the development and implementation of a major change initiative in schools that it is important to filter new innovations through the experience lens of teachers as a means to sort out potential flaws and other short-comings, and to gain the commitment of teachers. "How teachers experience policy changes will affect their commitment to them and the extent to which these interventions will have salutary effects on student learning" [Rosenholtz, 1987, p. 3].

The cautious and reserved attitudes of teachers also reflect their concerns about the potential impact of the proposed changes on existing relationships within their school buildings [Lieberman and Miller, 1984]. The views of schools as ecosystems [Eisner, 1988], as social entities [Lortie, 1975], and as dynamic communities of learners [Goodlad, 1984] suggest the need to set potential policy recommendations in a different and more contextual framework.

Teachers believe that much of what needs changing is outside their schools and beyond their control and sphere of influence [Lieberman and Miller, 1984]. The real sources of

control and power rest with the central administration, the state department of education, and the United States Office of Education. There are additional significant forces such as: Federal courts that are implementing desegregation orders, social service agencies that have custodial responsibility for children, medical authorities whose orders may supersede the powers of the school, and parents who are voters for school funding measures or represent potential litigants in civil and other matters. These groups create a complicated web in which teachers need to work and interact to address the conditions of their students, their schools, and their profession.

Theme IV - Different and conflicting priorities: whose vision drives the school reform movement

The fourth theme that emerges from the literature review pertains to the differences in the priorities of the teachers in urban schools and the leaders of the national and Massachusetts school reform movements. While there is a shared sense that schools must do more to provide better and more effective educational experiences for their students, there are important and sizeable differences in the two groups' visions of the appropriate goals for the current school reform movement, as well as the means to those ends. The general conclusion of the major national and Massachusetts school reform reports is that America has fallen behind the other industrialized nations in large measure because it lacks an adequately skilled and literate

work force. They see public schools as failing to provide the minimal level of education that would prepare graduates to enter America's high technology driven economy [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Carnegie Task Force on Education and the Economy, 1986; National Governors Association, 1986; Education Commission of the States, 1983]. The general view from the schools is that changes in the larger society, such as the disintegration of the family, the economic and social deterioration of America's inner cities, the declining influence of other social service institutions, and a constellation of other social and demographic changes have created a void that schools are now expected to fill. The number one priority for teachers is their students [Firestone, 1989; Corcoran, Walker, and White, 1988; Johnson, 1990; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988].

The differences in these respective perceptions continue in terms of the reform advocates' focus on improving the working conditions of teachers, expanding the role of teachers in the daily management of their buildings, and their specific proposals to elevate teaching to the same or similar status as law and medicine. The school reform advocates focus on teachers as the central and most essential force in their efforts to improve the performance of public schools [Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Carnegie Task Force on Education and the Economy, 1984; and Holmes Group,

1986]. Their proposals present a case to make teaching a more attractive profession so that it will attract the most intellectually able college students and retain the most expert of the current teaching force. Among their most frequent recommendations are calls for improvements in the physical conditions of schools, more time and space within the school day for teachers to work in teams on curriculum and administrative issues, the establishment of formal roles for teachers in the governance and administrative structures of their buildings, greater autonomy for teachers in the selection of their teaching materials, and differentiated roles for teachers with salaries adjusted to reflect the different levels of authority and responsibility [Holmes Group, 1986; Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; National Governors Association, 1986; and Goodlad, 1984]. One of the most important questions from teachers about these recommendations is how they will impact their students. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching [1988] found a sense of uncertainty and discomfort among teachers about the absence of specific mention of and clearly articulated connections between the recommendations to improve the lot of teachers and the urgent needs and potential benefits to students. The foundation observed, in response to its national survey of teachers, "still, we are troubled that the nation's teachers remain skeptical. Why

is it that teachers, of all people, are demoralized and largely unimpressed by the reform actions taken?" [p. 10].

The teachers who responded to the surveys conducted by Corcoran, Walker, and White [1988], Firestone [1989], Johnson, [1990], Lieberman and Miller [1984], and Little [1981] offered several possible answers. First, there is the holistic view of children and the strong sense of concern among teachers for the total welfare of their students. The teacher respondents feel that they must attend to the needs of the whole child. Issues of instruction could not be separated from the realities of hunger, homelessness, crime, and the other social conditions that plague the children of America's inner cities. They are concerned about how the school reform proposals speak directly to the realities of their students' lives. This point is emphasized in the teachers' call for more social services for their students. One might infer from the emphasis that teachers place on this issue that they feel they could not proceed in either "restructured schools" or schools as they currently exist, without greater attention to it.

Teachers are confused and skeptical about the contradictory messages that are contained in the various school reform proposals [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988]. There are calls for more autonomy and greater responsibility, but there have also

been calls for more demanding forms of evaluation and accountability, and increased regulation of teaching. Firestone [1989] in his study of feelings of alienation among the students and teachers at ten urban high schools observes, that we must attempt to do more than restore order and raise expectations. He urges greater respect for those who live and work in urban schools, and more relevance in their instructional programs so that students see clear connections between the world of the schools and their communities. Teachers in the Firestone [1989] and Corcoran [1990] studies indicate that they are not prepared to take on new or additional risk without greater assurance of support from the larger community.

The recommendations to establish school based teams of teachers, administrators, parents, and others from their communities to direct schools lack a strong and supportive constituency among teachers. The teachers who are included in the National Education Association's CART survey [1986], the MET Life survey of 1986, the Eagleton Poll survey of New Jersey teachers, and the Institute for Educational Leadership's survey of urban teachers [1989] indicate that they want to give their input into major policy decisions, but they are less interested in sharing responsibility for the many mundane administrative and bureaucratic tasks that consume so much of their principals' time. A related issue is the impact of this team management or collective

governance structure on the existing relationships within their buildings [Lieberman and Miller, 1984]. Again, the power and influence of the schools as a work place becomes an issue. There seems to be the general human concern about letting go of the old and familiar to take on something new and uncertain. Deal [1990] observes that school reform efforts tend to concentrate on correcting the visible flaws in organizational structures and instructional patterns. He suggests that "deep structures and practices cannot be reformed; they have to be transformed. In order to transform schools successfully, educators must navigate the difficult space between letting go of old patterns and grabbing on to the new ones" [p. 11]. For school reform to succeed it is important to consider the level of involvement that teachers seek rather than to assume they wish to be full partners in all major policy decisions.

Recommendations that seek to create differentiated roles within the teaching profession also receive a lukewarm, if not direct negative, reaction from teachers. Lieberman and Miller [1984], Lortie [1975], and Little [1981] stress the importance that teachers attach to the relationships that exist within their buildings. In Teachers, Their World, and Their Work [1984], Lieberman and Miller offer the observation that, "... schools are like families where unspoken understandings dominate" [p. 94]. While teaching has been characterized frequently as a lonely

profession where teachers work in great isolation from their peers, there are, however, some powerful points of contact in places such as the faculty room, the supply room, the faculty lunchroom and the school parking lot. The point is the need to pay greater attention to the norms of the schools and the conditions that influence, shape, and impact the professional interactions and personal relationships between teachers.

The tensions regarding this recommendation have been compounded by the stormy and contentious history of performance evaluation programs in public schools. The lack of faith in the objectivity of the criteria, the lack of confidence in the impartiality of those who have been charged to administer the process, and the political conditions that led schools to introduce performance evaluation programs have left a legacy of great doubt and suspicion among teachers [Lieberman and Miller, 1984; and Corcoran, 1990].

Teachers are concerned about pay and working conditions. However, their discussions of these issues seem to leave the impression that they are first and foremost in the minds of teachers. The teacher respondents to the 1988 Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching survey wanted more money to purchase up-to-date instructional materials, adequate classroom supplies, and more social service personnel who can address the growing medical,

legal, and other needs of their students. This finding is reenforced by the Institute for Educational Leadership's survey of urban high school teachers [Corcoran, Walker, and White, 1988]. The IEL survey reported that "even though class sizes are comparatively large, 25 to 30 students on the average, teachers wanted more personnel to help their students with social and personal problems rather than additional teachers" [p. xiii]. Perhaps the message is that discussions of resources require clearer distinction between the personal expectations of teachers, and their arguments on behalf of their students for more materials and other resources.

The central point of this discussion has been the lack of agreement between teachers in urban schools and the leading school reform advocates about the ordering of the priorities and the allocation of precious resources in the recommendations to reform public schools. This point is pursued in the survey of the teachers at the three high schools that are part of this study, and is reported on in Chapter Four.

Theme V - The minimalist vs. radicalist approach to school reform

The fifth significant theme that emerges from the literature review is the tensions regarding the nature and scope of the reform recommendations. The discussions seem to separate into two general positions. The minimalist position is that priority should be given to addressing the

current gaps or deficiencies in the basic services of schools as they are presently structured. The radicalist position is that the focus should be placed on overhauling the complete system rather than applying short term patches to a structure that is overwhelmed and outdated. Let me also acknowledge that there are important shades and gradations in these positions and attitudes, and viewpoints shift depending on the specific recommendation that is being discussed. The essential issue and relevance of the discussion for this study is to sharpen the focus on the conditions that influence the decisions of urban high school teachers to participate voluntarily in school-wide reform programs. If we accept the premise of Boyer [1983], Goodlad [1984], Lortie [1975], the Holmes Group [1986],Sizer [1984], the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy [1986], and the general leadership of the current school reform movement that teachers are critical and essential forces in this process, then teachers' views on the scope and nature of the reform recommendations are an important consideration.

Goodlad [1984] found in his survey of teachers that most teachers feel they are well prepared and question the negative characterizations of teachers and teaching by some school reform advocates [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Governors Association, 1986; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988;

and the Holmes Group, 1986]. The calls by the reform advocates for the recruitment of brighter and more intellectually able students into teaching strike a sensitive note in many teachers. There is the wide spread feeling among many teachers that the failure of the schools is being attributed to their personal abilities, visions, commitment, and preparation. The teachers studied by Lortie [1975], Lieberman and Miller [1984], Corcoran, Walker and White [1988], and Johnson [1990], report that an inordinate amount of bureaucratic paper work, excessive requests and confusing directives from the central administration, the traditional "egg crate" organizational patterns of their buildings and sub-units, and the increasing and shifting demands on schools severely limit their ability to use their experiences, insights, and expertise on behalf of their students. For many teachers there is the question of whether the problem is that teachers are not bright enough, smart enough, or do not work hard enough, OR, whether the present organizational structure of public schools stifles their good efforts. To present the issue somewhat differently, can the current cadre of teachers produce dramatically different results if they are only given the new structures proposed in the school reform programs, or must we seek a different caliber of person to teach, regardless of the changes in the organizational structure and administrative patterns of schools?

A corollary concern for the teachers included in the surveys described above is the growing list of expectations and more demanding measurement standards for public schools, and especially for schools that serve large numbers of students from socio-economically, disadvantaged circumstances. Boyer [1983] offers this observation from Arthur Bestor: "The idea that the school must undertake to meet every need that some other agency is failing to meet, regardless of the suitability of the school room to the task, is a preposterous delusion that in the end can wreck the educational system" [p. 56]. The public's apparent charge to teachers and schools is to provide the same high quality experience to all children that has been offered in the past to a select few [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988]. And, the basis of the comparisons between generations of American school children raises additional concerns and questions for teachers. The base on which the comparisons continue to be made are shifting, and include a more racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse student population.

While the national averages on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, American College Test, and National Assessment of Educational Progress, to name a few of the leading assessment indicators for American public schools, declined during the 1980's, there were dramatic increases in the number of individuals who took these tests for the first

time. The point is that in the past, many of these students would not have been encouraged to participate in these measures; but now schools expect and actively work to increase the numbers of their students from all segments of the national community to stay in school and go on to the next higher educational level [Hodgkinson, 1985].

A third issue for teachers was the linkage of reform measures in their schools with reform measures in the larger school system. Again, the teachers who responded to the surveys that are included in this review cite concerns about increasing levels of regulation of teaching by their central administrative offices and state departments of education [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988; Corcoran, 1990]. The teacher respondents report concerns and confusion regarding the contradictory recommendations of school reform advocates for greater authority and responsibility for teachers, and parallel recommendations for higher standards for admission into teacher preparation programs, more demanding entry tests for future teachers, the push to establish a national board of certification, and more rigorous annual performance reviews [Holmes Group, 1986, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988; National Governors Association, 1986; and Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education and State Department of Education, 1987]. The lack of clarity and the uncertainty about the possible linkages between the calls

for greater professionalism and the demands for more regulation of the work of lower level bureaucrats present serious concerns for teachers.

The leading national and Massachusetts school reform reports share the conclusion that the present organizational structure of public schools cannot meet the challenges of the changing national economy and society. There is consensus in the calls for a total restructuring of schools; the dramatic realignment of power among parents, teachers, principals, and their local communities; and a more effective response to the increasing diversity of America's school age population. Teachers appear to be concerned about the depth, breadth, and perseverance of those who are advocating these dramatic changes. Given the current average age of America's teachers, most have seen and/or participated in at least one major, school improvement or reform program and know first hand about the short term effects of those programs on their schools and their working conditions and the deep legacy of skepticism that they have left behind [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988; Harris, 1985 and 1986; Corcoran, Walker, and White, 1988; Firestone, 1989]. The potential effect of this legacy on urban secondary schools is an important question that is pursued in this study.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of a selected, representative group of school reform studies and reports, and surveys of teachers' opinions regarding the leading recommendations from these reports. The purpose of the review was to identify issues or themes that should be pursued in the study of the conditions that influence the decisions of urban secondary school teachers to participate voluntarily in school wide reform programs in their schools. Five possible thematic issues were identified, and they were used to shape the interviews and survey of the teachers at the three high school that were the focus for this study. The first thematic issue was defining the problems with urban schools with a special emphasis on the teachers' perspectives. The second thematic issue was the ambiguous role of teachers in the school reform process. A related issue that was included in this discussion was the specific set of proposals to make teaching a profession that is similar to law and medicine. The third thematic issue was teachers' feelings of efficacy in the school reform process. The fourth theme focused on the conflicting priorities of teachers versus school reform advocates as the agents of change. The fifth theme was the opposing views of teachers and school reform advocates on the issues of the depth and breadth of the changes that have been proposed. These themes provide important lenses for looking at and

developing a sense of the realities of teachers, and students, in large urban high schools that are engaged in school reform and transformation. These themes provided a basis for a dialogue and conversation with the teachers in three large urban high schools in Eastern Massachusetts regarding their sense of their work and its importance, their visions of what needs to be done to reform their schools and how we might proceed, and what they need to sustain themselves through the complicated process of institutional and community change.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on three groups of urban high school teachers who are engaged in school-wide programs to improve student achievement and the conditions of teaching and learning in their buildings. Given the importance that current school reform advocates and policy makers attach to the participation of teachers in school reform initiatives [Boyer, 1983; Task Force on Teachers as a Profession, 1986; Carnoy, 1990], and their concerns about the wide-spread skepticism and/or resistance of teachers to many of the proposals that have been presented by the current school reform studies [Cuban, 1988; Carnoy, 1990; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988], the central question for this study is, what do the teachers who are actively engaged in reform projects in their schools sense, see, or believe that leads them to feel that they can improve their schools, improve the academic achievement of their students, and improve their working conditions and status?

The School Settings

The settings for this study are three large urban secondary schools in eastern Massachusetts. At the time of the study, each high school was engaged in a school-wide project to improve student achievement through the reorganization of its administrative structure and

instructional delivery system. The participating schools were selected based on the following criteria: (1) the school was engaged in a comprehensive school-wide reform program; (2) the goals of the reform program were articulated in a written, public document; (3) the implementation strategies reflected recommendations from the leading Massachusetts and national school reform reports; (4) the reform program had the formal endorsement of the principal and teachers; (5) the project was directed by a school based committee that included teachers and administrators, and representatives of external groups, such as parents, university and business partners, etc.; and (6) the school served a substantial number of racial and ethnic minority students.

Lyceum High School

The Lyceum is one of six sub-administrative units of a large comprehensive high school that is located in a medium size city in eastern Massachusetts. The city has a large and diverse minority community, and includes a broad spectrum of income levels. The city also includes two world renown institutions of higher education, and the high school has a history of collaborating with both institutions.

In the early 1970's, the city merged its academic and vocational high schools to create a new comprehensive high school. The new, consolidated high school was organized into "houses" to create smaller and more familial

atmospheres for the students and teachers. Each house has its own core faculty and administrative leader, occupies a separate and clearly designated area of the campus, and functions like a separate and autonomous school. At the time of the merger, two of the school's six houses were designed to offer special instructional programs to give students and their parents a choice in the type of high school program in which the students would enroll. One house offered an alternative program where students are given wide latitude in their courses and activities. The other program offered a traditional and highly structured, college preparatory curriculum.

This study focuses on the Lyceum, one of the four regular houses, because it was in the early stages of creating a new instructional program that included the development of new administrative and organizational structures. The Lyceum serves approximately four hundred students in grades nine through twelve, and the majority of the students are members of racial and linguistic minority groups, such as African Americans, Haitians, Hispanics, and Southeast Asians. The Lyceum's large bilingual program has led to pejorative references, such as the "bilingual ghetto," by teachers and students in the other houses. While the students who are enrolled in the Lyceum represent a broad cross-section of abilities and interests, the teachers were concerned that their large population of

racial and linguistic minority students, especially those with special learning needs, were becoming increasingly isolated from the rest of the house and the high school, and that the large concentration of these groups in the Lyceum was leading many white families to avoid and actively resist the assignment of their children to their house.

The Lyceum's reform program was initiated in 1988 by two teachers in its bilingual program. The teachers wanted to share their successful experiences and ideas with their colleagues in the regular and special education classes. Of equal importance was their desire to counter the house's negative image and its affect on their students within the school and larger community. Over the course of the 1988-89 school year, the teachers invited their colleagues to participate in a series of informal discussions about instructional and student related issues. As the year progressed, and the number of participants increased and the conversations began to focus on developing a new vision for the house that would make it more appealing to its current students and more attractive to white students.

During the Spring of 1989, the city's superintendent of schools and school committee announced their interest in increasing the number of alternative programs at the high school to provide more choices for students and parents, and as a means to stem the out migration of the system's dwindling white population. Given the Lyceum's small number

of applications, the faculty felt their house would be assigned a new focus or theme, and they wanted to play a significant role in that process. The faculty, with the active support and encouragement of the Housemaster, visited approximately a dozen schools that were engaged in school reform and restructuring projects. The schools selected for visits served students and communities that were similar to the Lyceum's. Using the information that was gathered from their site visits and their review of school reform reports, such as the Coalition of Essential Schools, the teachers prepared a proposal to transform their house into a program that would stress five basic principles: cooperative learning/team teaching, diversity in cross cultural education, attention to individual needs and learning styles, shared decision making, and an emphasis on the arts in the curriculum. The year long planning process led to a new mission statement, instructional philosophy and implementation plan. The faculty presented its proposal to the superintendent and school committee in February of 1990, and received their approval to proceed.

The interviews with the teacher members of the Lyceum's steering committee were conducted in June 1990 as the house was preparing to admit its first class into the new program. The questionnaire was distributed to all the teachers mid-year 1990-91, the first year of the Lyceum's new program.

Oldtown High School

Oldtown High School is located in the largest urban city in Massachusetts. The school occupies an imposing, fortress like building on a small hill in one of the older neighborhoods in the city. The neighborhood has changed rapidly over the past twenty-five years from White to African American, and it is now mainly African American and moderate to low-income. The neighborhood that surrounds the high school is also considered one of the city's major high crime areas. The school enrolls approximately 700 students in grades nine through twelve, which is well below the building's capacity of 1,200 students. Seventy percent of the students are estimated to come from families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children, 35% are enrolled in special education classes, 30% are assigned to bilingual classes, including bilingual special education classes, and less than a third of the students are enrolled in the regular education program. As a district high school, Oldtown's students are drawn from an attendance zone created by a federal court order that was intended to desegregate the city's school system. The school's population is 90% minority, mainly African American, Puerto Rican, Haitian, and other groups from the Caribbean area. Less than 10% of the students are White and this percentage continues to decline each year. One of the most common explanations for

the school's inability to attract and retain white students is the neighborhood's negative image as a high crime area.

The initial discussions at Oldtown regarding a school-wide reform program began in 1987 when the district's superintendent of schools announced a plan to reorganize the city's district high schools and to assign each a magnet theme. The superintendent's proposal was intended to generate new interest in the schools among parents, and most importantly, to maintain the support of the city's business community which was in the process of reviewing its agreement to provide special support services and funding to the system and its graduates if the schools improved their performance in the areas of test scores, attendance, and graduation rates. During this period, the state's department of education established a special grants program to encourage schools to consider new instructional and organizational models that incorporated recommendations from the Carnegie Task Force on Education and the Economy and the other leading national school reform reports. Oldtown's Headmaster and a group of teachers formed a planning team, and developed a proposal that included broad participation from all segments of the school, including the school's business and university partners. Oldtown's proposal was presented to the district's superintendent of schools and submitted to the Department of Education's Carnegie School Grant Program where it reached the final round for review.

The proposal, however, was not selected for funding by the Department of Education.

In the spring of 1989, the President's Office of a public university invited Oldtown to participate in a collaborative program that would study the implications of the leading school reform recommendations in urban secondary schools, particularly schools that serve mainly racial and ethnic minority groups and students from socio-economically disadvantaged circumstances. The "Vision Project" was a collaborative venture of the university and three large multiracial urban high schools located in different parts of the state. Each high school was encouraged to use recommendations from the leading national school reform studies and reports to improve the conditions of teaching and learning in its building. The university provided technical assistance and funding, but a team of teachers and administrators was responsible for the direction and administration of the reform program at each school.

The Oldtown planning team decided to use the same proposal that it developed for the Department of Education program for the Vision Project. The planning team asked the faculty to review and reaffirm its support of the plan, and to formally endorse the school's participation in the Vision Project. The reform proposal received the overwhelming endorsement of Oldtown's faculty.

The interviews with the teacher members of Oldtown's steering committee were conducted at the end of the first year of the Vision Project, June 1989. The questionnaire was distributed to all the teachers at Oldtown during the Fall of 1990, shortly after the Vision Program came to an end due to a lack of funding. During this period, however, the planning team from the Vision Project, the faculty, and Headmaster were debating whether to join the district's proposed School Based Management/Shared Decision-Making Program, another school improvement initiative.

Tower High School

Tower High School, which is located in the same city as Oldtown, is one of the oldest, comprehensive public high schools in the United States. Tower serves approximately 1,500 students in grades nine through twelve with a staff of 125 teachers. Approximately 80% of the students come from moderate to low income families, 85% are minority, primarily African American, Haitian, Hispanic and Asian, and 30% are bilingual, mainly Spanish with some Southeast Asians. Tower is a magnet school that draws its students from all areas of the city. The school offers a large special education program, an innovative cluster program for ninth grade students, and a program for students with moderate learning disabilities.

The school reform program at Tower High School began in 1988 as the result of a series of conversations between the

school's Headmaster and the director of the teacher preparation program of a nationally known private university. These informal conversations led to the development of a proposal to seek funding from the United States Office of Education for a collaborative school reform program. The proposal sought funding for a school-university collaborative program that would redesign the high school's curriculum and restructure the school's administration using recommendations from some of the leading national school reform reports, such as the Coalition of Essential Schools, Holmes Group, and others; and create a special urban site for the training of future teachers. The project envisioned the development of a new mission for the school that would reflect broad school and community participation, and a new administrative structure that would engage representatives from all segments of the school in the daily operation and administration of the school. The Headmaster held a number of formal meetings with the faculty, met informally with departments and other groups within the faculty to elicit their support. He also invited TheodoreSizer, Director of the Coalition of Essential Schools, and Vito Perrone of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, among other leaders of the national school reform projects, to meet with the Tower school faculty. The Tower school proposal was funded by the

Secretary of Education and formal planning began in earnest during the Spring of 1988.

In the Spring of 1989, the city's superintendent of schools announced a plan to reorganize the city's high schools, and to relocate the Tower High School as a part of this larger restructuring of the district high schools. The public debate over the Superintendent's proposal extended into the Summer of 1989, and included a court challenge. The superintendent's decision was reaffirmed by the city's School Committee in August of 1989, and Tower school was relocated three weeks before the new school year began. The move created major divisions within the school, faculty and students, and much of the work on the reform project was delayed or deferred.

The interviews with the teacher members of Tower school's steering committee were conducted in June 1990 and September 1990, and the questionnaire was distributed to all the teachers at Tower during the late Fall of 1990.

A Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative methods of evaluation are in large measure designed to focus upon the process of educational practice in order to provide practitioners and others with information that cannot be secured from the scores that standardized achievement tests and other forms of summative evaluation provide.

Elliott W. Eisner, 1985

A qualitative inquiry methodology was selected as the primary means to elicit the perceptions and concerns of

urban secondary school teachers who are engaged in school-wide reform programs because it allows the participating teachers to identify what they feel are important and significant issues, themes and circumstances rather than simply responding to a preconceived and limiting set of questions. A qualitative methodology encourages the participating teachers to describe their schools in their own words, their working conditions, and the full range of their hopes and dreams for the reform program in their schools. Lortie [1975], in his discussion of the evolution of teaching, notes that, "the story of work is largely a matter of elaboration beyond economic necessity. From pre-literate mythology to modern ideology, man has made more of his daily routine, investing it with special feelings and broad meanings" [p. 107]. Through their stories, the participating teachers have opportunities to provide important background information, to share significant events, and to offer interpretations of their local practices as a means to increase the interviewer's understanding of their schools and communities.

The teachers' personal experiences and descriptions, and the language that they use to present their views, are important considerations in the development of a contextual framework for understanding the conditions of the teachers' schools, the settings in which they work, their relationships with their students, their interactions with

administrators, and their sense of hope or despair about the future of their schools and profession [Seidman, 1985; Patton, 1980; Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, 1987].

The qualitative inquiry methodology, which focuses on the participants' views and voices, is also used to emphasize the importance that this study attaches to the concerns of teachers who will bear the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the agreed upon reforms in their schools and classrooms. The key to understanding the central question that is raised by this study is contained in the teacher participants' views, understandings, and reactions to the major school reform proposals that have been initiated by external sources. The qualitative methodology then, focuses on the participants' experiences, and what they say they believe, the experiences that the participants feel are important, and the explanations that the participants give to interpret these experiences [Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, 1987]. Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman observe, "the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and develop a special kind of understanding for a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction" [p. 83]. For this study, a qualitative approach provides the means to develop as full a description of the conditions of urban high schools, and the issues and conditions that impact teaching and learning in these settings, and the conditions that lead urban high

school teachers to participate in school-wide reform programs.

If we accept Sarason's [1982] characterization of schools as loosely-coupled organizations and accept the growing sense among education researchers and policy makers that there are limitations to the enforceability of external controls that can be applied to teachers in their classrooms, then we might agree that it is important to devise new ways to encourage the voluntary participation or cooperation of teachers to implement and institutionalize school reform proposals [Boyer, 1983; Sizer, 1984; Rosenholtz, 1987; Corcoran, 1990; Sarason, 1982]. Gaining a sense of the perceptions and concerns of urban high school teachers, and the meanings that they make of their work is, in my opinion, an important and critical first step in school reform.

The Process

To gain access to the schools, the chairpersons of the steering committees at the three schools were contacted initially by phone, then followed by a meeting to discuss the purpose of this study. At two schools, the headmaster and a teacher were the co-chairs for their project. At the third school, the headmaster was contacted, and he arranged a meeting with several teachers from his school's steering committee. At these meetings, the purpose and design of the study were presented to the chairpersons of the steering

committees and the headmasters. Similar presentations were made to the full steering committees at two sites. At the third site, the steering committee reviewed an abstract of the study. The steering committees and headmasters at the three high schools formally endorsed the study, and agreed to encourage their teachers to participate.

A three step process was used to gather data from the teachers at the three high schools. First, the teacher members of the steering committee at each of the high schools were interviewed in one ninety minute group session. Second, two teachers from each of the group interviews were interviewed in one ninety minute individual session. Third, a questionnaire that included issues and themes from the group and individual interviews was administered to all the teachers at the three high schools.

The Group Interviews

Group interviews were conducted with all the teacher members of the three reform projects' steering committees. The interviews focused on the teachers' sense of the conditions in their school that led to the formation of the reform project, their awareness of the project's objectives, their role(s) in the project, their reasons for participating in the project, and the criteria that they will use to determine whether the project has fulfilled their expectations. The interviews were structured to cover the above points while allowing the interviewer

opportunities to pursue topics and issues of special concern to the teacher participants. A set of general questions was prepared that included issues and characterizations of schools and teachers and recommendations from the leading national and Massachusetts school reform reports to establish a general context for the group interviews. The issues and themes were drawn from the reports that were included in Chapter II - The Review of the Literature.

The central questions, which were raised in a variety of ways throughout the interviews were: "what are the conditions that led you to want to participate in a school-wide school reform project? What leads you to believe that you can make a difference in your school, and improve the quality of teaching and learning in your building? What are the potential benefits that you hope will accrue to you and your students as a result of your participation in this project?" The interviews were recorded and transcripts were prepared for analysis.

The review of the transcripts focused on the identification of recurring themes and concepts that pertained to the central question of this study. Statements regarding special events, local issues, or conditions unique to the school that might have shaped or influenced the project at each school were identified for further exploration in the individual interviews.

The Individual Follow-up Interviews

Two teachers from each of the group interviews were selected for a follow-up individual interview. The teachers were selected to represent the mix of experience levels, genders, races, and levels of participation by the teacher members on their school's steering committee. The individual interviews were used to clarify issues or questions that were raised during the group sessions, and to gather more detailed information regarding specific events and circumstances that led to the school reform program at their school. These interviews were also structured to seek clarification on these points and, at the same time, to encourage the teacher participants to provide whatever additional information that they felt would help the interviewer to understand the historical, social and political climate, and personal relationships at their school. The follow up interviews provided a sense of the school's "sentiments, values, beliefs, and ethos" [Lortie, 1975, p. viii]. The interviews were recorded and transcripts were prepared for analysis.

The information gathered in step two was merged with the data from step one. Once again, the focus was the identification of recurring topics and issues in the teachers' statements that might inform the study's understanding of the conditions that lead these urban high

school teachers to participate in school-wide reform programs.

A Quantitative Measure

A questionnaire that explored the reactions and perceptions of all the teachers at the same three schools to the concepts and themes that surfaced in the group and individual interviews was distributed. This step provided an opportunity to explore the breadth and depth of the perceptions of the teachers who were active participants and leaders of the reform programs in their schools with their fellow teachers. The responses from the high schools were compared, then they were compared to the findings of five studies of teacher attitudes in other urban communities. The comparison with teachers in other urban settings was intended to explore the consistency of the views of the teachers at the three high schools in Massachusetts with their peers in other urban schools.

The heart of the questionnaire was thirty statements about teaching, urban high schools, and school reform that surfaced in the group and individual interviews, and selected recommendations from the leading national and Massachusetts school reform reports. The statements were arranged in a modified Likert Scale survey instrument [Likert, 1967; Mueller, 1986]. An item pool was developed and tested with seven current and former teachers to determine the validity and reliability of the items. The

test group's responses were used to rewrite statements to achieve greater clarity, to eliminate items that were redundant or did not directly address the central question of this study, and to modify the questionnaire's format in order to facilitate completion by the teachers.

All the full time teachers at the three schools were asked to respond to a combination of thirty positive and negative statements about the school reform program in their school, and the leading Massachusetts and national school reform reports by stating whether they "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", or "strongly disagree". The thirty items were evenly divided between positively and negatively worded statements. The responses were tabulated to report the frequency of responses using the MICROTEST Survey Program which is published by National Computer Systems.

A questionnaire and cover letter that explained the purpose of the study and requested the teacher's assistance, along with a pre-addressed return envelope were placed in the school mail box of every full time teacher at the three participating high schools. The teachers were asked to return their completed questionnaire in the pre-addressed envelope to insure confidentiality. The questionnaires were coded to allow for follow up with teachers who did not respond and/or to contact teachers who raised new questions or only partially completed the questionnaire. Three

mailings were sent to each teacher to encourage their participation.

Comparison with Other Surveys of Urban Teachers

The responses of the teachers who participated in this study were compared to five selected studies and surveys of teachers attitudes about school reform proposals. Each of the selected surveys included a significant number of urban secondary school teachers, and explored their attitudes regarding their working conditions, relationships with their students and peers, interactions with their building administrators, contacts with parents, and their reactions to major proposals to improve the conditions and outcomes of public schools. Again, the focus was on identifying the major areas of congruence or lack of congruence between the perceptions of urban secondary school teachers in Massachusetts and teachers in urban schools in other urban communities regarding the state of urban public secondary education and the potential benefits, from the teachers' perspective, of the various proposals to improve the conditions of teaching and learning.

The surveys selected for comparisons included the following: The Learning Workplace: Conditions and Resources of Teaching, [1986] a survey conducted by Samuel B. Bacharach, Scott C. Bauer, and Joseph B. Shedd for the National Education Association. The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1986: Restructuring the

Teaching Profession, [1986] a survey conducted by Lou Harris and Associates for the MET Life Company. Working in Urban Schools, [1988] a study conducted by Thomas B. Corcoran, Lisa J. Walker, and J. Lynne White for the Institute for Educational Leadership. "Building Commitment Among Students and Teachers: An Exploratory Study in Ten Urban High Schools," [1987] which was conducted by William A. Firestone, Sheila Rosenblum, and Arnold Webb for Research for Better Schools. Report Card on School Reform: The Teachers Speak, [1988] a survey conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Each of these studies was described in Chapter II.

Much of the current Massachusetts and national discussions about the state of American public schools, American teachers, and the proposals to improve the outcomes of public education is presented in and characterized by slogans, broad and simplistic labels and emotional exhortations, such as "making teaching a true profession," "school-based management," "recruiting the best and the brightest," and "creating new career paths for teachers." The qualitative measures used in this study provide a means to develop an understanding of the teacher participants' perceptions of these slogans, labels and characterizations, and the meanings that these urban high school teachers make of their work [Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, 1987; and Seidman, 1985].

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS THAT EMERGE FROM THE STUDY

The information presented in this chapter was derived from interviews with nineteen teachers who were serving on the steering committees of school-wide reform programs at three urban high schools in eastern Massachusetts and a survey of all the full-time teachers at the same three schools. The interviews, which form the heart of the study, are central; they allow teachers who are actively engaged in school reform programs to frame the issues based on their personal experiences with urban high school students and in urban school settings. The survey is a secondary source; it provides a context for interpreting the critical concepts, central themes, and organizational and personal issues that are raised by the teachers who participated in the interviews. The survey also provides a context for determining whether or not the concepts and themes that are identified by the teachers who participated in the interviews are shared by the other teachers at the three schools. The central question for this study is, "What are the conditions that lead urban secondary school teachers to participate or not to participate in school reform programs in their buildings?"

The chapter is organized in two sections. The first section presents information gathered through group and individual interviews with the teacher members of school

reform programs at three large, urban high schools in eastern Massachusetts. The second section presents information derived from a survey of all the teachers at the same three schools. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study's primary findings.

Section I - Interviews With Urban High School Teachers

All of the full-time teachers who served on the steering committees of the reform programs at three urban high schools were interviewed for this study. A total of nineteen teachers, who were evenly distributed across the three high schools, participated in the three group interviews. The nineteen participants consisted of: 58% women; 42% men; 89% Whites; and 10.5% minorities. Fifty three percent of the respondents had more than twenty years experience; 31.5% had seven to nineteen years experience; and 15.6% had less than six years experience. The teachers who were selected to participate in the group interviews were considered leaders of the reform program in their schools because they were elected to the steering committee by their fellow teachers.¹

The group interview at each of the three high schools focused on the conditions that influenced the teachers' decisions to participate in the current reform program at their school. The interviews, which were ninety minutes long, were designed to explore a series of questions and

¹ See Appendix A for profile of teacher participants.

assumptions about the process of reforming schools and improving teaching that were developed from the review of the findings and recommendations of the leading Massachusetts and national school reform reports. The selected reports and studies were described in Chapter II. Among the primary recommendations and assumptions that were raised in the interviews were: the need to restructure the traditional administrative and organizational patterns of public schools, creating new career paths for experienced teachers, engaging teachers in the daily management of their schools, expanding the scope of schools' responsibilities and services to its students, engaging teachers in the induction and orientation of new teachers, and including representatives from local community agencies, business groups and higher education in school governance.

The format of the group interviews was also designed to allow the interviewer to pursue specific issues, concepts, and themes that were raised by the teacher participants. Among the primary questions presented in different ways throughout the interviews were: "What are the conditions that lead you to want to participate in a school-wide reform program? What do you hope to achieve for your students, your school, and yourself as a result of your participation in this reform project? What are your primary sources of inspiration and information about school reform models and strategies? How have these sources informed your

thinking about the reform program at your school? What leads you to believe that you can make a difference in your school? How will you judge the success of the reform program at your school?"

The three group interviews were recorded and transcripts were prepared for analysis. The three sets of transcripts, which included over eighty pages of teacher comments, were examined for recurring themes and concepts. The concepts and themes selected for further analysis were identified according to the following criteria: (1) the issue or concept was raised as a significant concern by the teachers at all three schools, (2) the school's reform plan included specific measures to address the issue or theme, and (3) the theme or concept was included among the major issues and recommendations of the leading Massachusetts and national school reform reports. As concepts and themes were identified, they were organized into tentative categories for further exploration. The initial categories that were established included: time, resources, roles and relationships, feelings of efficacy, needs of students, teachers' personal lives, and the teachers' awareness of school reform proposals. These categories were continually refined and reorganized as additional information was gathered.

A separate list of events, circumstances, and other factors for each school was developed for exploration in a

series of individual follow-up interviews. The individual interviews were used to gather additional background information about specific events, relationships, and circumstances that were raised in the group interview at that school. The individual interviews provided opportunities to acquire a better sense of the history, culture, and ethos of each high school. The teacher participants were also encouraged to provide as much information as possible to help the interviewer to interpret the concerns, expectations and relationships of the teachers at their school regarding their reform program.

Six teachers, two from each high school, were selected by the interviewer for individual, in-depth follow-up interviews. The teachers were chosen to represent as nearly as possible the teachers who participated in the group interview session at their school. The primary criteria that were used to select the teachers for the individual interviews included: gender, racial and ethnic status, years of teaching experience, years of teaching experience at their school, and subject area. Only two minority teachers participated in the group interviews. Both were African Americans who taught at the same high school.

The individual interviews, which were ninety minutes long, were recorded and over one hundred and twenty pages of transcript were prepared for analysis. The analysis focused on the teachers' descriptions, explanations, and

interpretations of the events, relationships, and circumstances that influenced the teachers' decisions to join or not to join the reform program at their school. The teachers' comments provided an important lens for determining the importance of specific events, relationships and circumstances that were cited by the teachers who participated in the group interviews.

The information gathered through the group and individual interviews was used to construct a survey instrument that was administered to all of the full-time teachers at the same three high schools. The survey was undertaken to determine whether the teachers who were active participants in the reform program, and were the focus of the interviews, held a special bias in favor of school improvement and reform initiatives. The question for the survey was, do the views and attitudes of the teacher leaders of the three school reform programs represent the general views and perceptions of their fellow teachers? The information from the survey is reported in the second section of this chapter.

After reading, marking interesting excerpts, and comparing excerpts across subjects and settings, the researcher identified six organizing topics to facilitate presentation of the results. The six issues are considered to be significant because of the frequency with which they are cited by the teacher participants at all three high

schools, and the intensity of the discussions by the teachers. The six issues are also interrelated so that they form a general context that the teacher participants feel is important to their response to reform proposals rather than each representing a discrete and independent determinant. The point, then, is the manner in which various combinations of these six issues coalesce to create a climate, context, or circumstance that encourages or discourages teachers from investing their personal time, energy, and emotions in programs that seek to improve the conditions of teaching and learning in their schools. In the following section, each of the six themes is presented in the words of the teacher participants. The selected statements were chosen by the interviewer to present the essential dimensions of each concept or theme and to provide a sense of the range of perceptions and reactions among the teacher respondents.

Homes and Neighborhoods in Crisis

You can't teach someone to read and write who is high on drugs. I've tried with somebody who was using drugs. I was working on long division and I came to find out that the kid had been smoking pot. You cannot do it. Teachers and schools need help. They can't do it by themselves.

BN, a teacher at the Lyceum

Students homes and communities are a major focus for the teachers' concerns and comments. A critical consideration for all of the teachers is recognizing the significance of the external environment.

JT, a special education teacher at the Tower School, occupies a classroom on the fourth floor in a suite of rooms across the hall from the "time out room", a place reserved for students who have difficulty controlling their behavior in their regular classes and/or who have been assigned to in-school detentions for infractions of the school's code of conduct. She teaches students with moderate learning disabilities and offers the following observation regarding her students.

I'm dealing with kids that are twenty years old and reading on a second grade level. I don't see them becoming 12th graders. What are ninth graders suppose to accomplish in a span of two years, or even four years in this building? There are too many other things that go on in their lives that distract them from academics.

I would like to know how a student gets to come into my class at twenty years old and be a ninth grader and still not able to read. How did that child make it from kindergarten through all these years? Where is the breakdown along the way? By the time he reaches my class, it is difficult to get him to where he should be, unless he really wants to learn to read. And, maybe he doesn't want to learn.

Ultimately, I would love to have these kids read at a twelfth grade level, be high achievers, and go out into the world and succeed. I would love that, but I have to take small steps. I need things to help me take these steps. Moving someone from a first grade reading level to a third grade reading level in the span of a year or two, is a major step for me.

A fellow teacher at Tower School offers the following description of the students in her class to support JT's comments about the problems her students face in their homes

and local communities. MS teaches special education students and several classes of lower achieving regular education students.

The students' ages in my class range from 14 to 19 years old. Many of the older students are repeaters who have severe problems with school. You could call their condition "school phobia." These students are constantly involved in the courts, so that much of their time out of school is involved in court hearings or stays at a youth detention center. The students come back to school because it is a requirement of their probation and to avoid further time at the detention center. We have a few girls in the special education program. Most of them have recently returned from pregnancy leaves.

The teachers express concerns about the difficult home and community settings of their students, and how these conditions impact their teaching and the quality of life in their classrooms and schools. SJ, another teacher at Tower High School, shares the following observation.

You can only do so much when you have policies that create situations where people have bad housing, poor health care, bad nutrition, and live in violent neighborhoods. You can't isolate and shield schools from these conditions. It's a question of the city and community's priorities. These are ethical and financial issues and priorities.

The concerns about the students' troubled homes and neighborhoods are shared by teachers at Oldtown High School. AJ, a co-chair of the Oldtown reform program, shares the following statement regarding the impact of several recent tragic events on her students.

It was important to be able to provide some wonderful activities this year because our kids suffered two serious tragedies. Two popular

students were killed in violent street incidents. Our Black students were shocked and hurt by the senseless shooting of CY. She was a popular leader and we had great hopes for her after graduation.

The Hispanic students had their own tragedy when FJ was killed during a robbery at his family's variety store. This was very difficult for the senior class, in particular. The class was a very nice group of kids.

When the teachers are asked to reflect on their descriptions of the challenges that their students face in their homes and neighborhoods, and at school, and then to explain their reasons for choosing to work in these settings, the discussions return to the theme of the central role that students play in the teachers' lives. A teacher at Oldtown High School, with more than twenty years experience at several high schools in the same city, shares this observation which connects her work on the school reform program to the needs of her students.

I would say many of us have a special commitment to urban kids. I'm a city kid, and I grew up in this neighborhood. I went to the public schools in this city, and I have been teaching here at Oldtown for more than nineteen years. When I was in high school we studied Hamlet and Latin and took science. I was well prepared for college. I don't know why that can't and isn't happening today.

I'm a very socially conscious person. I have to be here. I think that if I'm not here, I don't know who is going to come after me that cares as much as I do about these kids.

This view is expressed by other teachers at Oldtown, and is reflected in the focus of the activities that were

sponsored by Oldtown's school reform program. AJ, one of the co-chairs, offers the following observation.

We are a very student centered school. That is what everybody associated with the Vision Project has told us. [The Vision Project is a collaborative project between the President's Office of the state's public university and three urban high schools.] Everything we did was really direct service of one kind or another to students. We did very little in the way of faculty development. We provided basketball, golf, swimming, and weight lifting, and sponsored two major drama productions. In addition, there were field trips, and the teachers purchased new materials and supplies for the students. There was some criticism that the kids were out of class too much, but all in all, I think the faculty felt that it was a good year, and we were able to do important things for our students.

While we are aware and concerned about achieving some measure of improvement in the students' academic performance, I think the faculty feels it has to begin by creating a different experience for students when they are at school.

AJ's colleague, who worked on the school's previous reform program, indicates that many of the teachers at Oldtown are concerned and frustrated that they see so little result for their investment of time and energy in their students. These teachers are seeking new and more effective ways to reach and serve their students. CB notes, "I think the teachers feel the weight of the burden that they have and many of them are interested in receiving support from some kind of special program that they hope will increase their success."

The teachers' comments make a connection between the larger social and community experiences of their students and their lives and work in the classroom. There is the

clear sense that efforts to improve the academic achievement of students are interrelated to the students' world outside the classroom, and the teachers feel school reform proposals must address both dimensions concurrently. What is not clear from the teachers' statements, however, is which comes first, improvements in the homes and neighborhoods of the students or reforms in schools and classrooms. Or, is it some combination of improvement on all these fronts at the same time.

TJ of the Tower school shares the following statement in response to the question of what keeps her going in the face of these major challenges to her students and her school.

Because I enjoy the kids. I really enjoy them most of the time. Being with them, especially with the students that I have right now. When you take someone who is a non-reader and watch them read a book and actually understand it and read it, it is like "wow", I did that. While the student actually did it, it is the sense that you made the difference, and there is no feeling like that.

I had a student last year who I worked with for three years, and he finally graduated. He went from a complete non-reader to reading on the third grade level, which is nothing, but "wow". I'm proud of him.

Most of the time I go home and tell my husband, if they would just leave me alone with my kids. If I could just stay with my kids all day and have a really good day with them. When we have those days it is great.

The above discussion leads to the first potential condition for engaging the active cooperation and support of urban secondary school teachers in school reform programs. The condition is: the reform proposal must recognize and in some manner seek to address the social as well as academic needs of students. As BN, the teacher cited in the first statement, observes:

The problems that children are bringing to school are increasing in their complexity and scope. They include sexual abuse, physical abuse, suicide, alcoholism, pregnancy, and drugs. I do not exaggerate. What more can I say. I am a special education teacher who has ten to fifteen students in a class, and all of these conditions are present and going on in the lives of my students. Sometimes you have to deal with these social issues before you can deal with issues of academics and general schooling.

Expectations and Resources

A second major topic of discussion among the teachers at the three high schools focuses on the need for more money for instructional and other related resources for the teachers' classrooms and schools. The issue is captured in the following comment from HJ, a science teacher at Tower High School.

You need money folks! This is going to cost you money. This isn't cheap. All of this stuff about being concerned and wanting schools to be more effective and productive, the bottom line is that it will take more, substantially more money.

The teachers at Oldtown and Tower High schools, which are located in the same city, devote a substantial portion of their discussions to the severe shortages of the most

basic instructional materials, which include textbooks, paper, pencils, chalk, maps, and laboratory equipment. TJ, who teaches at Tower describes the situation at her school.

It has taken me three years to get twelve reference books for my classroom. This is a very sad situation, but I am in the Special Education Department and I am not considered a part of the regular, traditional academic program. I'm not considered a part of this or that program, I'm in Special Education. When it comes down to delving out the budget, or giving money through different departments, if I say I have 28 students and I want a \$26 textbook, that's \$780, and they say, "for whom?" Since I have only a small number of students, they tell me to wait, so I have been put down, down, down. Finally, I have twelve books, and maybe next year I will get two more, and then five more. Since the system is spending over \$5,000 per student, I just don't know where the money is going.

TJ's colleague, who has taught at Tower for eight years, contributes the following observation to the discussion of the shortages of resources.

Everything in my classroom has my name on it so teachers and others will not steal them. Every year I take my pencil sharpener off my desk and lock it up because someone might steal my desk and chair during the summer. You get to be really crazy and possessive, but the problem has been that you have to fight for every piece of equipment that you have. When you walk into a classroom it is not like a business where you have a desk and chair, and a file cabinet. When you walk into a school, you are given a schedule of classes, and you are lucky if you get a room, and if it has enough chairs.

The first week of school they give us three days, which is nice, and it is supposed to be for planning and staff development, but you go around stealing everybody else's furniture for your classroom. We have to make our own elevator key, and key to the ladies room. In no other profession do you have to do that.

HJ, another teacher at Tower High School indicates that he volunteered to serve on one of the work groups in order to influence the group's decisions about the awarding of mini-grants to teachers to develop new classroom projects.

I joined the steering committee this year so that I could push for the special needs of the science department. Last year, I submitted two proposals to the program's mini-grants project, and they were not funded. Given the critical needs that we have in the science department, I feel someone should represent these concerns on the steering committee. So, I volunteered, even though I am still a new member of the faculty.

The teachers at Oldtown report similar conditions regarding shortages of instructional materials, inadequate and obsolete laboratory and audio-visual equipment, and poorly maintained classrooms, library, and gymnasium. CB a veteran teacher at Oldtown describes the situation at his school.

I hear all this talk about how much money is being spent per pupil, but then we are always looking around for another copy of a book. Do we have enough furniture for our classrooms, do we have enough equipment? I wonder where the money goes?

Buildings change, superintendents change, school committees change, but the needs in the classroom have remained the same for the nineteen years that I have been a teacher.

CB continues by explaining the importance of the additional resources that were provided to his school by the Vision Project. His comments also address the teachers' concerns for their students when they are not at school.

Although the Vision Project is over, the executive committee at its last meeting decided to divide the balance of the project's funds among the various departments. So, each department received \$1,100 to buy materials, which is terrific. Right now the Science Department is deciding how to spend the money on instructional materials, tapes, charts, and other things that we need. You have \$1,100 to play with, that's good. It is just a tremendous bonus and it did a tremendous number of things for the kids. It offered kids things to do after school. The main thrust of the program was to give kids things to do after school to keep them off the streets, which seems to be a very important thing today.

The teachers at the Lyceum, which is located in a different city, present a very different picture regarding the availability of instructional supplies and other resources at their school. NJ, who teaches two-thirds time in the Lyceum offers the following story to illustrate her system's support of teachers.

I think this system is an incredible place to work. I feel privileged to work in this system and I think the system empowers anybody who wants to be empowered.

It is a system that lets you teach. They are not down your neck with scope and sequence. They are there with frequent offers of support and encouragement. You can take the initiative. Where are you going to find another city that is funding eight teachers to work with twenty-five students for four periods a day? You are not going to find that place.

If you come up with something that offers the promise of helping students to learn and to improve their performance, or they see your name in the paper a couple of times, or the administration and school committee feel they can get a little publicity, they will say good, what do you need?

NJ's colleague shares the same view of the Lyceum's administrators and the school system, and offers the following story to support her point.

I have taught in two different school systems. I came here seven years ago, and I don't remember doing anything differently than I did at the other school, but I was here about six months, and I remember the Housemaster came up to me and said, 'gee, you're doing fantastic in your classroom.' I didn't know how to respond.

When we have concerns and see something that needs to be done, we go the Housemaster, and he will just do it. You can say to him that you need seven new computers, and he will find a way to get them. To me that is what administration should be. Administrators recognize that the teachers are on the front lines, that they know the kids, they know what they are doing in their classrooms. I think the Housemaster sees and understands that.

The disparity in resources and working conditions that is discussed in these statements is obvious to the first time visitor to the three schools. Tower High School occupies a fairly new building, by local standards, which was converted from a former electrical power generation station. While the classrooms are spacious and well lit by large windows and the halls and other areas are brightly painted, the teachers report severe shortages of instructional materials and support personnel to meet the needs of their students.

Oldtown occupies a dark fortress like building that was built in the late 1920's. The building is located in the midst of a secluded and densely packed area of triple decker homes, and it is surrounded and separated from its neighbors

by a high steel and wire fence and a poorly maintained athletic field. The school shows obvious signs of extensive use and years of neglect. The halls are dark and poorly lighted. Desks and chairs are in short supply, and most are badly scarred. There are few pictures, posters, or other decorations in the halls or in many of the classrooms, and many of the toilet facilities are inoperative.

The teachers at the Lyceum, on the other hand, report that they enjoy one of the more favorable settings and working conditions for teachers in their state. The school is part of a large park like campus that includes the main office of the public library and a health facility. The campus also is adjacent to one of the nation's leading private universities. Teachers' salaries are at or near the top among teachers in the area, and several teachers shared personal stories about how their housemaster, superintendent, and members of the school committee have provided support for proposals developed by teachers. Their stories are similar to the report by NJ.

There is also an obvious disparity in the impact and progress of the reform program at the Lyceum and the more modest and minimal results of the programs at the other two schools. Given the concerns of the teachers at Oldtown and Tower about the critical need for basic instructional materials, it is reasonable to speculate that their participation in school reform programs may be influenced in

part by the prospects of obtaining money and other resources for their students and classrooms. This also raises a serious question about how to engage the interest and commitment of teachers to support large and costly reform programs when their schools cannot properly address their present needs.

The above discussions lead to a second possible condition and consideration for future reform proposals. The condition is: the proposed reform must provide sufficient resources to address the most immediate needs of teachers before the new activities that are required by the reform program.

No Time

Finding time and/or making time for school reform activities during the school day is a major topic of discussion and debate among the teachers at all three high schools. Nearly all of the discussions of new possibilities and new opportunities are punctuated, at some point, by the sense of the limitations and constraints on the teachers' time. In the following discussions regarding the need for and importance of time, the teachers address several critical, but distinct references to time. The first reference is to time during the school day to participate in reform activities. The second reference is to time after school to participate in reform activities. The third reference is to time for reform programs to take root and

flourish. The fourth reference is to who determines how time will be allocated.

The teachers at the Lyceum describe the importance of time generally, but time during the school day also, as an important issue for school reform efforts. As a teacher at the Lyceum noted, "if there is no meeting time, it won't work." Her colleague notes that the success of a prior experimental program that started more than ten years ago was due in part to the provision of time for the teachers to participate.

There are several reasons why the Navigator Program succeeded. One of the most important is they were given time. They were given time to collaborate. This is not a new idea in education. The staff was given time to plan, to test new ideas, and to explore alternatives. Now that the system is facing a difficult fiscal situation, it is putting the squeeze on this program and others to produce results more quickly. The critical thing in the case of the Navigator Program was the time off during the school day that allowed interested staff to meet and administer the project.

Providing time during the school day encounters serious opposition from teachers who are concerned about the impact on their instructional time. Given the excessive and competing demands that are presently made on teachers and students, these teachers indicate that they are reluctant to participate in activities that take additional time away from their students and their teaching. Scheduling planning meetings and other activities after the formal school day ends raises other issues and problems as described in the following two statements. The first addresses the impact on

the teachers' families. The second addresses the question of paying teachers to work after school on reform programs.

JT has taught at the Tower High School for six years, and was very involved in the first year of the school's reform program. This year she has taken a less active role.

I don't know that I want to participate any more, just yet. It takes a lot of time. Although they try to make it an easy process, it is not an easy situation, and it takes lots of time and I have other things to do. I have a young child which is my priority right now. The project took a lot of time away from her. So, I don't think that I can give more time after school for the next several years.

CB, a former co-chair of Oldtown's Carnegie School Reform Program and member of the Vision Project steering committee, adds the following perspective on paying teachers to work after school on reform and improvement projects.

The people who worked on Oldtown's reform program after school were paid. A lot of people who got involved in the paid jobs really weren't fully compensated for the actual amount of time they put in, so they are reluctant to give up their second jobs. However, given the number of people who did participate, it goes to show you that there are a lot of people here who are excited about the kids, and excited about their profession, and are willing to go the extra yard for the kids.

I put in a lot of unpaid hours which didn't bother me at all. I volunteered for this program, and I don't expected to get any kind of money from the school based management program if the faculty votes to join that program.

The third reference to time focuses on the time that is required to conceive and implement a new program before tangible or measurable results can be presented. In the

following statement RR, a veteran teacher with more than twenty years experience at the Lyceum, makes the case for providing adequate time to allow new programs to take root and flourish.

It takes five years to put something new together, that's my thesis. It takes five years. At the end of five years, the success of the program will really depend on what teachers feel they are getting out of the program. But the process must provide time for talk, building relationships, and trial and error.

The classes in the Lyceum are basically four days a week and on the fifth, the students have gym and human development. While the students are engaged in these activities, the teacher teams meet. The instructional teams talk about their students, what went right last week, what went wrong, what skills they need to work on in the coming week, and which students are having problems. The teams meet weekly and they talk about the kids. They review what they have done and what they are planning to do.

The fourth reference to time focuses on how and who makes the decisions about the scheduling of reform activities during and/or after the school day. AC describes how the Lyceum faculty combined in-school time with voluntary after school time and the significance of the decision-making process.

The process, I think, was very interesting because it began with informal conversations among the teachers. The way it worked was that the Lyceum has a common activity period every Wednesday morning, and a small group of us began to meet very informally on Wednesday mornings to discuss what might happen and how we might make some changes. Basically, we focused initially on team teaching, then when BN got involved, she encouraged us to add cooperative learning to our discussions and planning. It was totally voluntary. People would come up to

my room where we met every Wednesday, and after a few weeks, we had sometimes 25 to 30 people there, which seemed to speak to the fact people did want to have change. We took informal notes, and we didn't have a fixed agenda. But we divided up the tasks, such as who would write this, who would write that, and then bring the groups together. I think it worked out to be a pretty effective way to build consensus and ownership among the teachers. And, the process is still going on.

The discussions regarding the importance of time indicate that it is a major concern to the teachers who participated in the interviews. There is consensus about the need for more time for teaching, professional development, work on reform programs, and a host of other important activities. However, there is no consensus among the teachers who were interviewed about the most effective means to establish an appropriate balance between these competing needs.

These statements raise a third possible condition that must be addressed by future reform proposals. The condition is: reform programs must provide adequate time for teachers to participate and time for their reform efforts to take root and flourish. What remains unclear from the teachers' comments, is how to provide and/or allocate time among the competing demands on teachers.

The incentives have to be there for teachers by way of reorganization, diversified professional roles, decent professional days, which means planning time if you are going to begin a new program. Those kinds of things are vital. The project will not work without them.

RR, a teacher at the Lyceum

Feelings of Isolation

In addition to the discussions of time and resources, teachers raise another important concern for teachers, that is finding ways to break out of their feelings of isolation when they are in their classrooms. As BE a teacher at the Lyceum notes, "teaching is a very isolated situation. You have a lot of power when you are in your classroom by yourself, but it is very lonely." BE offers the following statement to illustrate the importance of opportunities to collaborate with other teachers in her school.

My interest in the reform program began when I spoke to CA regarding his work with the basic skills program. CA, and two of his colleagues, felt that they were not having much success with this program, so they decided to merge their talents and team teach for two periods a day so that they could provide more individual attention to the most problematic students, and share and compare their reflections on their various strategies. They quickly began to see more success, and as very enthusiastic and vocal teachers, they began to talk about their experiences with other teachers. The Housemaster also began to talk about their experiment, and he shared their feeling that if it worked for the basic skills kids, it might help all of the students in the house. Other teachers began to look at their work, and to express an interest in joining the project. The Housemaster provided time for other teachers to observe the basic skills classes and other resources that would allow teachers to introduce these new strategies in their classrooms.

I think what had to happen was the staff, with someone leading the way, had to encourage other people to go outside themselves in what they believed. What happened is, we were showing that we were a group of people with lots of interest in doing something to improve our house and the experience of our students. A number of the staff who had been around for a number

of years showed that they were willing to consider new ideas and approaches. They just needed someone to organize them and provide opportunities for them to use their interests. Their enthusiasm was contagious, and that was an important catalyst.

The interest and excitement of working in teams and collaborative arrangements is elaborated on by BT, who also teaches at the Lyceum.

It's exciting working in the same room all together. T.. and I have always worked together very closely because she has worked with a lot of my social studies groups. But now, when T. and her colleague are in the room itself, and they can either work with an individual student, or then send them back to the main group, or lead another group themselves, we can just sort of shift things around among us as we need to. It's a very exciting and dynamic process.

It's also very dynamic and exciting to watch what is happening with the students. For instance, in this workshop we're doing after school, I'm watching a math/science group discuss the standard curriculum really building up some steam and I've watch the four of them sitting after the meetings are over, and they're still talking. So, why would we want to be involved and to work together? Because it works!

The teachers at these schools share similar concerns about the primary impediments in their buildings, from their central administrative offices, and from other external sources to creating effective, collaborative networks among teachers at their schools. In the following statements, several teachers describe the impact of their system's budget crisis and a federal court desegregation order on relationships in their building. The city's continuing fiscal problems have forced large numbers of lay-offs among

teachers and other city employees, and the desegregation order has forced the reassignment of teachers to achieve racial balance among the teachers in the system's schools.

The fear of frequent changes in personnel at Oldtown and other schools in the city due to the shortage of funds and anticipated lay-offs have made some teachers reluctant to develop new relationships because they may be forced to bump other teachers in order to maintain their jobs. We did have some programs planned that we wanted to implement this year, but at the last minute, we cancelled them because of staff changes. People who had been here for years, and had been active participants in the planning for the new programs, weren't going to be back on staff because they just happened to fall in certain categories. They were going to be assigned to another school or out of work.

The teachers at Oldtown, which is located in the same city as Tower, report the tensions about anticipated lay-offs have been complicated further by the controversy over the means by which the lay-offs will be determined. The issue is seniority versus race as the primary determinant. DW, an African American teacher at Oldtown describes the situation for her faculty.

Clearly there are concerns regarding how best to serve the needs of our changing student population. As a person of color, I am concerned about the high drop-out rate and other problems that prevent the children from my community from finishing school. It is hard to accept these teachers their statements that blame the students and their families. It is hard to hear their references to how well the school served its former students, who were primarily White and Irish.

We need more teachers of color assigned to this building and this may require the reassignment or retirement of some teachers who don't want to work with Black and Hispanic students. This may not be possible because the union's position

is that lay-offs should be based on seniority which will protect the older White teachers and lead to lay-offs among the system's small group of minority teachers.

AJ, the co-chair at Oldtown, offers the following statement to further clarify DW's comments regarding relationships between White and Minority teachers at her school.

I agree with DW that we need more teachers of color. In a school that is nearly 90% minority, we need to have more role models and other examples for the students to identify with. It's hard because the system has been laying off teachers, so there are fewer new teachers, which means there are fewer opportunities for Black and Hispanic teachers.

A further example of this problem, that may have more to do with age than race, is the different ways the older White teachers and the younger Black teachers handle discipline. I have the sense that the older teachers feel the school has lost control of discipline, and that the younger teachers are too lax in keeping order, and they are too friendly and personally involved with their students' social lives. I have also heard several of the Black teachers say that the older teachers don't care any more, now that the school is nearly all Black and Hispanic. They feel the older teachers are not open to new ideas nor are they willing to change their attitudes and expectations for Black students. I don't know how I feel about these impressions. I'm sure both groups have reasons for holding these different impressions.

Another dimension of this discussion is the concern about how to engage older teachers who are approaching the end of their careers, who are weary of the daily rigors of teaching, who are set in their comfortable and familiar ways, and who are reluctant and/or afraid of change. EB of the Lyceum faculty describes her sense of this problem and

the steps that she and her colleagues have taken to draw in their disaffected colleagues.

I think one of the biggest things that has to happen is people must be encouraged and supported to deal with change. When I first began to teach, I was in a different classroom each year by design. I saw what happened to people when they stayed in the same room and held on to the same teaching schedule. It was literally watching people die.

I came into teaching in the 1960's, and I have made it a point to make changes each year. I have taught different subjects, and tried to move to different rooms. I started a whole new project this year. You have to be willing to change, then take the opportunities to do it.

Our method of drawing in other faculty was our meetings. For instance, sometimes we would get to the point, let's say, where there wasn't anyone from science. One of us would go to the science department and ask them if they could join us at one of our Wednesday morning meetings because we needed some input about the science curriculum or some other science related issue.

We also tried to engage these teachers in our mini-seminars and to participate in our early release, professional days. It was a very informal process.

While the teachers stress the importance of encouraging voluntary participation and shared decision-making, they also recognize that for a small group of teachers, there is little hope that they will become engaged in their school's reform activities. BC offers the following account to support the point made by his colleagues regarding the prospects for engaging teachers who have become disillusioned and bitter about teaching and their school.

When I first came to the third floor at Oldtown High School, it was devoted to the business

department. Well, business education in this city is dead. Most high schools have pretty much phased out business education courses.

There is this older business teacher, who has more seniority than me, who had been an Assistant Principal at one point, but was demoted in 1981. Today, he is totally against all the latest improvement and reform initiatives. He has a very jaded view of reform programs like school based management. He and a few other teachers like him are bitter about the way they feel the system has treated them. They make their feelings known at most of the meetings of the faculty. They just don't think there will be any kind of meaningful change and improvement in the conditions of teaching and learning.

Another teacher at the Lyceum shares the following story to show that teachers understand that the process of collaboration takes time and that compliance cannot be mandated nor compelled.

The other day, I was sitting there in my room feeling discouraged about the slow pace of the project, and the fact that we only had a handful of teachers participating. One of the other teachers, this guy who teaches photography, who is a cracker-jack teacher, came up to me and said, look, we are going to pull them along by our example. They are not going to want to come in this house when they see the rest of us working every week and we are producing things. They are going to feel stupid after a while if they are not involved.

That is a critical part of what we are doing and it is thrilling for me to be working with these eighteen other teachers. Everyone is working together. I think our example is going to make them get off the dime.

The teachers who participated in the interviews stress the importance and need for greater collaboration between teachers. They also recognize that it takes time to build

relationships, to develop new interpersonal skills and the capacity to respond to and moderate negative external influences, such as lay-offs, court orders, changes in the leadership of the school and school system, and other circumstances that filter into their buildings.

This discussion leads to a fourth possible condition for future reform programs. This condition is: future reform programs must encourage and support greater collaboration and communication between teachers. It is difficult, if not impossible, for individual teachers to make a difference working alone and in isolated situations. Teachers, then, need time, opportunities, and support to develop effective collaborative relationships that support communication, cooperation, and mutual respect among teachers.

Untapped Knowledge

Interlaced throughout the discussions are strong feelings among the teacher participants that they possess important experiences, ideas and information about the teaching/learning process, and that their experiences and input have not been solicited nor valued by the initiators of school reform programs. This point is expressed well in the following comment by MT, a teacher at Tower High School.

You have got to listen to the classroom teachers who are respected in public high schools. You need to listen to the teachers who are doing innovative and exciting things with their students, and listen to what they say they need. If you don't listen to them and let them run

with their ideas, you can't change what happens in schools.

This is a critical time where the average age of teachers in this city is probably in the late thirties or early forties, and the average teacher will be ready to retire in about fifteen years. This city and state will be in real trouble if these teachers aren't willing to do something about the conditions of public education.

MT's comments are echoed in the statement of another teacher at the Tower school. MS, a special education teacher, described several social situations where she felt put down by people when she indicated she was a teacher. She offers the following statement to indicate how she presently feels about herself and other teachers.

I've reached a certain point in my life that I am very comfortable with what I have done and what I have accomplished, and I don't want people, other people, controlling my classroom and students. I don't want the administration or outsiders telling me how to do things because I'm out there doing it, they aren't. They don't see all the things I see.

Two teachers at the Lyceum carry this point further in their statements regarding the initiative and leadership of teachers in the development of the reform program at their school.

MT: It is not as though we sat down and said let's read some books and come up with some new idea that we wanted to start. This program is the result of a lot of people who have worked together for many years sharing and melding their ideas and experiences together. They have spent a year or two trying to slowly build consensus about what has to be done to make their school better.

FT: You learn by falling on your face and getting up.

MT: Exactly, and that is what I like about this program. I can tell you honestly, I've been teaching for eighteen years. I have a Ph.D. and all the other crap, but I have never read a book about education. I don't mean to say that all the present education courses and certification stuff is crap, but experience is very important.

FT: When we went to a conference that was sponsored by the Coalition of Essential Schools and listened to the other schools, I thought it was interesting that we had come up with the same ideas and tried many of the same approaches. This experience gave me more confidence in the things we had discussed and the plans we had developed.

There is also the sense that teachers understand that assuming larger and more influential roles in the direction and administration of their schools will mean more work and more time. SM, who describes herself as an activists, articulates the position of one group of teachers who welcome opportunities to play a larger and more significant role in the direction and administration of their schools.

I know that it is difficult to include more people in the management of the school. We are operating under certain constraints such as the number of minutes per course, size of classes, and allocation per student. However, if I had a better sense of the problems and a feeling for what the administration has tried that has not worked, then I might respond in a different way. For example, I mentioned the problem with books. I want to know why I cannot get more money for books. Certainly, I would like to see where the money goes. There is supposed to be a budget, and it would seem important to set priorities for this money, and to include teachers in the process of developing priorities. I think teachers should have the right to vote on budget allocations,

and to know where the money is going, or has gone. If, for example, I knew paper was being wasted, maybe I would do something else, or reuse folders, or do other things that would save money.

Including teachers will help to change the perception of teachers versus administrators. Instead of teachers going to the teachers' room and griping about what they [administrators] did, the teachers will have to take responsibility for any changes in their school.

The big thing is communication. We need to share ideas because there are different ways of doing things. We want the same things for the students, to provide an environment where learning can take place. I don't think that we can make them learning, but if we provide that environment and provide the different things they need, they will learn.

AJ, the co-chair of the Oldtown Vision Project, offers a reservation about recommendations that expand the authority of teachers and to create new and differentiate roles for teachers that are being proposed by the leading Massachusetts and national school reform reports.

I think teachers are weary of discussions about teacher empowerment. Maybe I'm a little paranoid about teachers taking over and deciding to do this or that, or the other. It's too much 60's stuff. I think they are happier with shared decision making, which is a key part of the system's new or proposed school based management program. I certainly have stayed away from the label teacher empowerment.

Anything to do with hiring and firing, and I don't know all the labels, but anything that has to do with these types of activities are very scary to teachers. And, they are worried about this aspect of the school based management concept.

Teachers are also worried about over-load. They want to know whether they will be given time to work on these tasks, and which of their current

responsibilities will be eliminated so that will they have the time and energy for these new assignments.

AJ's observation about the excessive use of labels to describe and shape the current school reform discussions is shared by RR who teaches in the Lyceum. RR's view is shaped by his deep involvement in a prior alternative school program that received national attention.

School based management to me is a jargon term, so it doesn't mean anything. Shared decision making is more in my language. School based management implies a manager and recipients of management's services or whatever. My model more like shared decision-making where decisions about schools are made in schools, and those who work in schools participate in various ways in the shaping of the decisions. So school based management does not go quite far enough for me.

The teachers' comments indicate there is a general feeling that they want to be better informed about and consulted on major policy decisions in their schools regarding the curriculum, instructional methods and programs, and services to students. The tone of the discussions indicate that most teachers want to be consulted, but there is little agreement regarding the range of new responsibilities that teachers should and want to assume. And, the issue of expanded roles for teachers raises again the teachers' concerns about time and resources.

The comments presented above indicate a fifth possible condition that needs to be carefully considered in the

development of future school reform proposals. The condition is: reform proposals should draw on the extensive experience base of teacher practitioners in their conceptualization and in the design of their implementation plans.

Respect and Recognition

The discussions of new roles for teachers in the daily management of their schools raise major concerns for the teacher participants which is their sense of the intent of the proposed reform initiatives. CB, who has taught at Oldtown High School for more than twenty years, frames the issue in the following statement.

I have been here for twenty-four years, and I have been treated like a child for twenty-four years. I'm a head of a household and a tax payer. I'm an outstanding citizen, but when I come to school, I'm a peon. The teachers know that. One thing about this job is I know my place, and it is not a happy and respected place.

As far as being in the classroom, I feel I am a good role model. I am sober, I come to school every day, I show the kids that you can be an adult and be normal. You can be happy, and sad, and humorous, and strict. I find myself, as far as being a teacher, I'm fine. I think I'm a good teacher, but it is time that I stop being treated like a child, or like someone who is not skilled or who is incompetent.

There are frequent questions from the teachers about whether to trust the promises of new opportunities and rewards, the promises of additional resources, and the assurances that teachers will be supported for taking risks with new approaches and programs. TJ of Tower school

expresses her reservations about the reform process that represent the view of small groups of teachers at all three high schools.

To be honest, I really don't care about the larger statements and reports regarding the school reform program at my school. I'll take advantage of all the stuff that comes my way that is going to help me and my students. But most of this stuff has no effect on what I do in the classroom. I just see it as one more step in the never ending cycle of new programs in education. The way education in this country is suppose to be. This will be here for maybe five years, then all of a sudden, someone will think of something else for schools and teachers to do. So, yes, I'll use what I can get from this program, but I'm not 100% sure that it will make a lasting difference in my school and to my students.

SM of the Tower school faculty offers the following thought that summarizes the sentiment of the teachers at the three schools regarding the local, state, and national discussions about how to make American public schools more productive and its graduates better able to compete in the new high tech global economy.

I think teachers have to be treated with respect and it has to come from the top down. I think teachers have to push for the same level of respect as the other professions so that they can get the same recognition and rewards as the other major professions. Teachers have lost much of their prestige and the respect of parents, students, and local tax payers over the last several decades.

I think it is important to be recognized as a professional person, and to develop a professional role and development program. I think teachers have to take themselves more seriously, and if they do, then others will take them seriously, also. Respect is important. It is essential for teachers and public schools.

This leads to a sixth possible condition for future school reform proposals. The condition is: the proposed program must be seen by teachers as helping them to create the kinds of classrooms and schools that promote good teaching and learning, and that show respect for their experience, expertise, and commitment to their students and profession.

Four Additional Issues

Among the concepts, themes, and concerns that received secondary attention in the interviews were issues of increased salaries and special compensation for teachers who work on school reform programs; the role of the faculty senate and teachers' union in the reform process; new roles and career paths for experienced teachers; and the influence of the leading Massachusetts and national school reform reports on the direction of the reform programs at the three schools. Each of these points was raised deliberately by the interviewer when they did not surface as major topics during the interviews.

Compensation for Additional Work

The issue of special or additional compensation for teachers who work on school reform programs and increased salaries for teachers drew a mixed response from the teachers who were interviewed. In the statement from CB of the Oldtown school that was presented earlier, many of the teachers at his school understood that they would not be

paid for the additional work nor did they hold serious expectations that they would receive substantial sums for their work on the reform program. As BC of the Oldtown faculty observed, "he did not expect to be paid for his participation in the Vision Project, nor was he expecting to be paid if his school joined his district's proposed school based management program." For CB, it was part of his commitment to his students and his job.

There were days when I went home at 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. I guess that it was not a problem for me, I don't have a second job or young children. I don't think I missed a meeting. For those of us on the steering committee, there has been no compensation, and I don't expect any for my service on the proposed school based management council. This is just a non-paying job!

CB also reports that his school reform program set aside money to pay teachers to work after school and on Saturdays, but the modest stipends did not adequately compensate teachers for the time and effort that they invested in the various reform activities.

CA of the Lyceum offers an interesting story regarding the issue of paying teachers who are engaged in reform programs.

When our work group went to the school committee and they listened and approved our proposal to reorganize the school, several members of the school committee said to me afterwards how impressed they were that we had produced this document, and there was no mention of stipends and that no one's name was on the proposal. This was something that came from a group of teachers on their own initiative, and I think they were quite impressed. No one asked for money as a condition for working on the new program, and no one received any money.

Faculty Senates and Unions

In response to questions about the lack of discussion about the school's faculty senate, the teachers responded by characterizing their faculty senates as being generally ineffective and not a significant force in the school's efforts to mount and sustain a reform program. The following statement by CB of Oldtown High School offers a widely held view among teachers of their school's faculty senate.

I just have this sense in the back of my mind that nothing gets done in the senate. Its a sounding board for the concerns of individual faculty members, but nothing much happens. You go down there, you hear various grievances, and you get yes to death. Maybe at some schools you have principals who listen and perhaps change a decision or policy in response to arguments from the faculty senate, but I've never seen it done here. All I've seen is faculty senate burnout.

AJ of Oldtown offers the following response to the question about the role of the faculty senate in her school's current and previous reform programs. She also emphasizes the steps that her reform program has taken to involve and collaborate with the school's faculty senate.

It's hard to explain, but the faculty senate seems to only get involved in issues when a majority of the teachers are upset. The senate takes on administrative issues between the teachers and headmaster or administration. The relationship is more adversarial.

Our steering committee has worked with the faculty senate on several common concerns, and we used the senate to conduct the elections for

the steering committee. But other than these few instances, the senate has had little real input into our process. And, since our committee includes several teachers who serve on the faculty senate, I think this has helped our relationship.

The potential role of the teachers' union is important at Oldtown and Tower, which are in the same system, because their central administration and teachers' union recently agreed to co-sponsor a school based management program as a key provision of their newly signed collective bargaining agreement. CB of Oldtown shares the following statement regarding his support for the teachers' union and his expectation that the union will guide his school into the proposed school based management program.

I'm sort of relying on the teachers' union to help us understand our new roles and responsibilities in the school based management program. I'm a union person and I think this city's teachers' union, although there has been a lot said in the papers, has done tremendous things for Teachers. Being a family man with kids, we have eye and dental care, so to me the union can do no wrong. I know people either love them or don't like them, but personally, I think the union has our welfare at heart. And, I've been untouched by the various lay-offs.

MS has been a union building representative for nine years. She has also been involved in the reform program as a member of the steering committee. MS believes the teachers' union and the reform program can and should have a complementary relationship, even though she feels the reform program at her school has not been influenced by nor connected in any formal way to the teachers' union.

I have been a building representative for nearly nine years, a member of the faculty senate for four years, and now a member of the steering committee of the reform program. All of these are elected positions, so I feel I have had many opportunities to represent my fellow teachers. I also don't see or feel any conflict of interest between these roles. Each group has its own set of issues, and while there could be tension, I have not felt it so far.

From these accounts and other comments by the teachers who participated in the interviews, the degree of influence and the tone and quality of the relationships between the school's faculty senate and teachers' union and the reform program may be pre-determined and more influenced by prior interactions between these bodies and the school's administration. The fact that the teachers' union is cosponsoring the district's new school based management program may lead teachers at Oldtown and Tower schools to feel more comfortable with this concept and to be more willing to participate. The faculty senates and unions have not actively opposed nor seriously challenged the reform programs at any of the three schools, so this study is left to speculate about the potential power and influence of these two bodies on reform initiatives.

Creating a Professional Hierarchy

Creating new roles and career paths for teachers are major recommendations of the Holmes Group [1986], Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy [1986], and the Massachusetts Joint Task Force on Teacher Preparation [1987]. Among their other recommendations are proposals to

establish differentiated career categories for teachers that include different roles and levels of responsibility, such as instructor, professional teacher, career professional teacher, lead teacher and mentor teacher. There was a modest, but mixed response to these recommendations by the teachers who were interviewed, and the responses focused on questions such as the specific duties for the proposed categories, and the selection process and criteria. The comment by AJ, the co-chair of the reform program at Oldtown, regarding her reservations about involving teachers in personnel decisions cited in the discussion of teacher efficacy, may offer a clue to the reasons for the reserve and cautious responses to these recommendations.

AJ's caution is illustrated in the following statement from TJ a teacher at the Tower School in response to a series of questions about the recommendations to create differentiated roles for teachers.

I think teachers should be involved in decisions regarding the development and allocation of the budget and other resources because I think they know what to spend the money on. They are in the schools and classrooms every day. They see what needs to be done.

I think teachers should be involved in program evaluation, but they do this now everyday. You're constantly evaluating what you teach and how it is working with your students. Did it work, did it succeed, can we do it better, and at the end of the year, you look at what you taught and say well, did this make a difference? You are always reevaluating what you do.

I personally don't want to be involved in the selection of staff. I don't want to fire and hire

people. And, I don't know that I agree with this aspect of the school based management program. In some respects it would be nice, having a colleague, someone who does what you do and understands what you do day in and day out being the one to evaluate you, but I also see it as full of conflicts because of politics and personalities.

Given the historical tensions and contentious debates that have enveloped performance evaluation programs, teachers may need a better sense of the ability of assessment instruments to properly record and measure what they do, and they may need to develop more confidence in assessment procedures, including the objectivity of those who administer the process, before they will seriously entertain proposals to create differentiated roles for teachers.

School Reform Studies and Reports

The general sense of the teachers' response to questions regarding their awareness of the major recommendations of the leading national and Massachusetts school reform reports is summarized in a statement by a teacher at the Lyceum which was cited earlier in this chapter. AC, who is a member of the steering committee at the Lyceum, participated in a several site visits to urban high schools that were members of the Coalition of Essential Schools.

I guess maybe what teachers don't know is which came first, our feelings and ideas, or their publications. When I attended a conference that was sponsored by the Coalition [Coalition of Essential Schools], most of the discussions

mentioned things that we had discussed and/or tried, so I didn't hear or see much that was really new. As a result when people say this is the way to do things, we know all those things. That's probably one of the reasons why I have never read an education book. I mean you would read some of these books and articles and say, what is so profound about this.

This observation is supported by a comment from AC's colleague who has participated in the Lyceum's reform program from the initial meetings. This observation which was reported in an earlier section of this chapter is repeated here because it makes a special point about the teachers' sense of personal confidence about what they know and are discovering through their own efforts.

What we are working on are ideas that were developed slowly and over time by a group of teachers in this building. It is not like we sat down and said, let's read a lot of books and come up with some cock-a-mime new idea that we want to start. This is the result of people's personal experiences that were melted together over a long period of time, a year or two of trying to build consensus slowly and to take into consideration all of our different view points. Maybe we didn't do it in the best way. Perhaps we should have had some specialist come in and talk about how you approach change when it involves change on this scale. But you learn by falling on your face and getting up and trying again.

These statement are related to themes that surfaced in the prior discussions regarding the teachers' sense of efficacy and feelings that they possess important experiences and information about the teaching/learning process and the culture of urban schools. The statements also indicate that the participating teachers also sense

that the national and state school reform discussions have created opportunities for them to pursue their own recommendations for improving schools and teaching. The Lyceum's steering committee did establish a work group that reviewed several of the national reform reports, but the group's findings were not discussed or considered in any formal or deliberate sense in the development of their reform program's goals and strategies.

At Oldtown and Tower schools, individual teachers report that they have read a few of the national reports, but there is no clear pattern or consistency about the reports that were read or in how they have or have not used the information they acquired from their readings.

Summary of Section I

The analysis of the interviews with the teachers who are serving in leadership positions in their schools' reform programs suggests six possible conditions that can influence their response to school reform programs. These conditions include: (1) the proposed reform must recognize and in some manner seek to address the social as well as academic needs of students; (2) the proposed reform must provide sufficient resources to address the current needs of teachers and the additional needs of the proposed reform; (3) the proposed reform must provide time for teachers to participate and time for the proposed program to take root and flourish; (4) the proposed reform must encourage greater collaboration and

communication between teachers; (5) the proposed reform must draw on the extensive experience base of teacher practitioners in their conceptualization and implementation; and (6) the proposed reform program must be seen by teachers as creating the kinds of classrooms and schools that promote good teaching and learning, and that show respect for their experience, expertise, and commitment to their students and profession. The discussions indicate further that it is various combinations of these conditions rather than each as an isolated factor that create the context for the teachers' responses and decisions regarding their willingness to participate or not participate in reform initiatives.

Section II - Teachers' perceptions of reform efforts at three urban high schools

The second source of data for this study is a questionnaire that was distributed to all of the full time teachers at the same three high schools. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether the views of the teacher leaders of the three school reform programs reflect the views and perceptions of their fellow teachers. The questionnaire is important because it provides a broader contexts for the views and perceptions of the teachers who participated in the interviews. It also provides a means to determine whether the teachers who have been elected to serve in leadership positions in the three reform programs, and who are the focus of the interviews, are predisposed to join reform or school improvement initiatives.

The questionnaire focuses on six conditions or themes that emerge as major concerns for the teachers who participated in the interviews. The conditions include: the proposed reform must recognize and in some manner seek to address the social as well as academic needs of students; the proposed reform must provide sufficient resources to address the current needs of teachers and the additional needs of the proposed reform; the proposed reform must allocate time for teachers to participate in reform activities and time for the reform initiative to take root and flourish; the proposed reform must encourage greater collaboration among teachers; the proposed reform must draw on the experience and knowledge base of teachers in its conceptualization and implementation; and the proposed reform must give teachers' a sense of support and respect for their important contributions and dedication to their students and profession.

A series of positive and negative statements about each of the six conditions were constructed and organized in a modified Likert Scale survey instrument. The teacher respondents were asked to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each of thirty statements. The teachers were also asked to indicate their level of awareness of ten specific school reform recommendations, then to list the ones that they felt could help teachers to improve their schools.

The questionnaire requested personal information on the respondents' teaching area, gender, racial/ethnic status, years of teaching experience, and participation or nonparticipation in their school's reform program. These categories were used to analyze the teachers' responses. The teachers were also invited to provide any additional information or comments that they thought would help the researcher to understand their school's circumstances and the conditions that inform their decisions to participate or not to participate in the reform program at their school.

Analysis of the Questionnaire

Questionnaires were sent to all 203 full time teachers at the three schools, and 100 teachers returned completed forms. The over-all response rate was 49% after three requests. The percentage response by school was 73% for the Lyceum, 51% for Oldtown, and 20% for Tower school. The fourteen questionnaires from the Tower School were not included in the final analysis because they did not provide a sufficient data base from which to draw reliable inferences and conclusions. The remaining eighty-six questionnaires from teachers at the Lyceum and Oldtown high schools comprised the data base for the analysis.

The teacher respondents include: 51% males and 46% females; 67% White, 8% African American, 6% Hispanic American, 1% Asian American, 4% other, and 14% of the respondents did not indicate their racial/ethnic status.

Sixty percent of the respondents report that they participate to some degree in their school's reform program, and 40% report no participation. Ninety-three percent of the respondents report that they have taught for more than seven years and 46% report that they have taught for more than twenty years.

The responses are analyzed for the sample as a whole and by male and female participants and male and female non-participants. The small numbers of minority teachers and those with less than seven years experience do not provide sufficient samples to allow one to draw reliable inferences and meaningful conclusions from their responses. There is the additional concern that the small number of teachers in these categories makes it difficult to maintain their anonymity.

Several individuals who are familiar with the two schools were interviewed to gather additional information regarding the small numbers of minority and junior teachers at the two schools. They report that their school districts have laid off several hundred teachers over the past six to seven years due to major cuts in the districts' state and local appropriations. The small number of new teachers hired during this period have been in subject areas and special programs where there have been long standing shortages, such as Bilingual Education, special education, foreign languages, and math and the physical

sciences. Since most of the systems' minority teachers were hired fairly recently, they have little seniority and are affected first by the districts' lay-off policies.

The profile of teachers who responded to the questionnaire was compared with data from the 1990 Massachusetts census of educational personnel [Massachusetts Department of Education, 1991]. The census reports that Massachusetts has an older teacher work force. Eighty-five percent of the state's teachers are over thirty years old and 63% are over 41 years old, and most of the older teachers are at the high school level and in the major urban centers. This report also indicates that it, too, encountered great resistance and sensitivity in response to its request for information on the racial/ethnic status of teachers. Minority teachers comprise 7% of the teachers in Massachusetts; they are clustered in the state's larger urban centers; and they comprise a larger percentage of the younger age group of teachers.

The perceptions and concerns of minority teachers and novice teachers are essential to developing a full understanding of the culture of urban schools and the process of school reform, and they should be the focus of future studies.

The teachers' responses are reported in the context of the six themes that emerge from the group and individual interviews with the teachers who are serving as leaders of

the reform programs at the three high schools. The responses were scored using MICROTEST Survey, a computer program published by National Computer Systems. The statistical significance or lack of significance for the responses of the participating and non-participating teachers was determined by a Chi-Square test. The data is presented in two types of tables. The first type of table reports the responses by participants, non-participants and no response. The second type of table provides a further analysis of the data by male and female participants and male and female non-participants.

Condition I - Recognizing and seeking to address, in some manner, the social as well as academic needs of students

Tables 1.1a through 1.4 present the teachers' responses to four statements about the importance of using school reform programs to address conditions in their students' homes and communities that impact students performance at school.

Table 1.1a

[% of total responses]

"I will only participate in reform programs that have a direct impact on my students and classroom."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	52.4%	40.6%	7.1%
Non-participants	[35]	34.3%	60.0%	5.7%
No Response	[9]	22.2%	55.5%	22.2%

Total	[86]	41.8%	50.0%	8.1%

Table 1.1b

[% response per category]

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants				
Male	[21]	43.0%	48.0%	9.5%
Female	[21]	62.0%	33.3%	5.0%

Non-part.				
Male	[17]	29.4%	70.5%	0.0%
Female	[18]	33.3%	55.5%	11.1%

No Response	[9]	22.3%	55.5%	22.2%

Total	[86]	40.5%	51.0%	8.0%

Table 1.2

[% of all responses]

"The primary reason that I continue to join school reform projects in my school is my students."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	7.2%	90.4%	2.4%
Non-participants	[35]	8.6%	77.2%	14.3%
No Response	[9]	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%

Total	[86]	7.0%	84.9%	8.1%

Table 1.3

[% of all responses]

"I believe the school reform reports have not paid sufficient attention to the problems of students' families and communities."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	69.0%	16.7%	14.3%
Non-participants	[35]	68.6%	20.0%	11.4%
No Response	[9]	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%

Total	[86]	68.6%	18.6%	12.8%

Table 1.4

[% of all responses]

"Improving the academic performance of urban students must begin with improving their social, health, and other critical services."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	16.7%	78.6%	4.8%
Non-participants	[35]	17.1%	80.0%	2.9%
No Response	[9]	0.0%	88.8%	11.1%

Total	[86]	15.1%	80.2%	4.7%

The data suggests that while teachers may have concerns about the social conditions that challenge their students, the respondents do not support the proposition that they will limit their participation in reform programs on the condition that they focus on or seek to address their students' social as well as academic needs [Table 1.1a]. The only group that supports this proposition is female participants [1.1b]. The teacher respondents as a group

reject the proposition that their primary reason for joining reform programs is their students [Table 1.2]. The data suggests that a majority of the respondents feel the current national and Massachusetts school reform reports and studies have not paid sufficient attention to the needs of urban students [Table 1.3]. A substantial majority of the respondents reject the proposition that the social, health, and other social services of students must be improved as a precondition to improving student performance and reforming schools [Table 1.4]. The data indicate that while teachers are concerned about the social as well as academic conditions that face their students, they are not prepared to make this the sole determinant for their participation in and support of reform programs in their schools. In addition the patterns of responses between the participating and non-participating teachers is not statistically significant so that the interpretation of teachers' attitudes and concerns about these four propositions must depend on the data that was provided by the interviews.

Condition II - Providing new resources to address the current needs of teachers and the additional needs of the proposed reform

The second condition that emerges from the interviews focuses on the severe shortages of instructional materials and student support services in urban schools. The teachers at Oldtown and Tower, which are in the same school district, provide numerous stories regarding their efforts to scrounge

badly needed instructional materials and equipment. The teacher respondents were asked to respond to four statements about the availability of appropriate instructional materials and the accessibility of essential student support services in their schools, and their sense of the potential resource needs of the proposed reforms.

Table 2.1a

[% of all responses]

"The teachers in my building are inhibited from doing their jobs because they lack the appropriate materials, settings, and support from the administration and parents."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Non-participants	[35]	54.3%	40.0%	5.7%
No Response	[9]	66.6%	33.3%	0.0%

Total	[86]	53.4%	44.2%	2.3%

Table 2.1b

[% by category]

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants				
Males	[21]	47.6%	52.4%	0.0%
Females	[21]	52.4%	47.6%	0.0%

Non-Part.				
Males	[17]	70.5%	23.5%	5.9%
Females	[18]	38.9%	55.5%	5.5%

No Response	[9]	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%

Total	[86]	53.4%	44.2%	2.3%

Table 2.2

[% of all responses]

"I am concerned about investing lots of personal time in new programs when the prospects for future funding are unclear."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	31.9%	64.3%	4.8%
Non-participants	[35]	17.1%	80.0%	2.9%
No Response	[9]	11.1%	88.8%	0.0%

Total	[86]	22.1%	73.3%	4.7%

Table 2.3

[% of all responses]

"The cost of the proposals to restructure schools is beyond the means of my school system."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	21.4%	61.9%	16.7%
Non-participants	[35]	28.5%	48.6%	22.9%
No Response	[9]	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%

Total	[86]	25.6%	54.6%	19.8%

Table 2.4

[% of all responses]

"The focus on changing the organizational structure of schools is draining scarce resources and time from instruction."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	30.9%	69.1%	0.0%
Non-participants	[35]	34.3%	57.2%	8.6%
No Response	[9]	55.5%	33.3%	11.1%

Total	[86]	34.9%	60.4%	4.7%

According to Tables 2.1a and 2.1b a slight majority of the teacher respondents appear to feel that their efforts are inhibited by shortages of basic instructional materials and support personnel. Participating teachers are evenly divided in their response to this question, and small majorities in the "Non-participating" and "no response" categories agree with this statement. An important limiting factor that must be considered in the interpretation of this statement is that it includes multiple variables, so that the respondents are not able to make distinctions between the different variables in their response to the general proposition. The pattern of responses for both the participating and nonparticipating teachers indicates no statistical significance so that the data gathered by the interviews provides the best sense of what the teachers at these three high schools believe about the importance of new resources as a factor in their decisions to participate in reform programs. The teachers who were interviewed at the Lyceum report numerous examples where their administrators have gone to extraordinary lengths to obtain equipment and provide other resources to support their teaching. On the other hand, the teachers at Oldtown provide equally vivid accounts of their struggles to scrounge books, maps, and other basic instructional materials. The responses to the questionnaires and the interviews suggest that there can be

considerable differences in the resources that are available to and exist in urban schools.

Table 2.2 suggests that the teacher respondents are not deterred from participating in reform programs even though they have questions about the availability of and prospects for future funding. While there are differences in each category between those who agree and those who disagree, the overwhelming majority of teachers in each category, and as a total group, do not agree with this statement. Given the desperate picture that is presented in the interviews at two of the high schools in regard to shortages of basic instructional supplies, it is reasonable to speculate that some teachers may be more concerned about their immediate needs, and not able or willing to take a long range view of their school's reform program.

The respondents appear to have little sense of the actual or potential costs of the various reform recommendations and the resource capacity of their school districts to assume these new costs [see Table 2.3]. According to Table 2.4, the respondents do not seem to feel that the various reform proposals are draining or diverting their scarce resources away from the regular instructional program.

The responses support the proposition that teachers are concerned about immediate shortages of instructional

materials and student support services; therefore, one might infer that they want these issues included in the identification of funds for reform programs. The teachers also indicate that their decision to participate or not to participate in their school's reform program will not be determined solely on the issue of new resources.

Condition III - Reforms must provide time for teachers to participate and time for the reforms to take root and flourish

The issue of time to participate in school reform activities and time for new initiatives to produce measurable results are pursued in four items on the questionnaire.

Table 3.1

[% of all responses]

"Teachers need substantial blocks of time during the school day to work on school improvement programs."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	90.5%	7.1%	2.4%
Non-participants	[35]	88.6%	8.6%	2.9%
No Response	[9]	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%

Total	[86]	88.4%	9.3%	2.3%

Table 3.2

[% of all responses]

"Most of the current reform proposals mean more work for teachers who are overburdened."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	66.7%	26.2%	7.1%
Non-participants	[35]	57.1%	37.1%	5.7%
No Response	[9]	55.5%	22.2%	22.2%

Total	[86]	61.6%	30.2%	8.1%

Table 3.3a

[% of all responses]

"I am concerned that pressure from the central administration to produce tangible results overnight will undermine the reform program in my school."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	54.8%	42.9%	2.4%
Non-participants	[35]	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%
No Response	[9]	55.5%	0.0%	44.4%

Total	[86]	50.0%	38.4%	11.6%

Table 3.3b

[% of response by category]

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants				
Male	[21]	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Female	[21]	42.9%	52.4%	4.8%

Non-Part.				
Male	[17]	64.7%	23.5%	11.8%
Female	[18]	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%

No Response	[9]	55.6%	0.0%	44.4%

Total	[86]	50.0%	38.4%	11.6%

Table 3.4

[see Table 2.2]

"I am concerned about investing lots of personal time in new programs when the prospects for future funding are unclear."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	31.9%	64.3%	4.8%
Non-participants	[35]	17.1%	80.0%	2.9%
No Response	[9]	11.1%	88.8%	0.0%

Total	[86]	22.1%	73.3%	4.7%

The responses indicate that time is an important issue for most teachers. The question for the teacher respondents is how and where to find the time to do all the things that are expected of them such as teaching, advising, counseling, coaching, professional development, service to their school and community, and their families. And, time to participate in school reform activities.

The respondents, both participating and non-participating, support the proposition that teachers need substantial blocks of time during the school day to participate in reform activities [Table 3.1]. The respondents also seem to feel that the reform programs in their schools will impose additional work and demands on them, but this does not appear to be a deterrent to either participating or nonparticipating teachers [Table 3.2]. One might speculate that some teachers feel that reform programs may require more work during their initial development and

implementation stages, but once the programs are in full operation, they will improve the management of instruction and the other tasks that teachers perform, and give teachers more time for instruction.

The responding teachers appear to be especially sensitive to pressures from their central administrations to produce quick and measurable results. The teachers feel there is increasing pressure from their central administrations to demonstrate as quickly as possible the success of their new programs [see Table 3.4]. But a majority of the female participants in this group do not concur with this statement.

The teachers' responses to these statements in general support the perceptions of the teachers who participated in the interviews. Once again the differences in the responses of the participating and nonparticipating teachers is not statistically significant, so that the data provided by the interviews becomes the primary source of information regarding the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers at these three urban high schools. While the respondents to the questionnaire share the concerns of the teacher leaders of their reform program, they do not suggest that their decisions to participate or not to participate will be determined by this issue alone.

Condition IV - The reform must encourage greater teacher collaboration and communication

The fourth major theme to emerge from the interviews focuses on the teachers' sense of isolation in their struggle to change the school and social conditions of their students. This theme is pursued in the two statements that are presented in the following tables.

Table 4.1a

[% of all responses]

"Working on School reform programs provides a rare opportunity for me to work with other teachers in my building."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	83.3%	14.3%	2.4%
Non-participants	[35]	48.6%	37.2%	14.3%
No Response	[9]	55.5%	11.1%	33.3%

Total	[86]	66.3%	23.3%	10.5%

Table 4.1b

[% of responses per category]

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants				
Male	[21]	80.9%	19.0%	0.0%
Female	[21]	85.7%	9.5%	4.8%

Non-Part.				
Male	[17]	47.0%	41.2%	11.1%
Female	[18]	61.1%	27.7%	11.1%

No Response	[9]	55.6%	11.1%	33.3%

Total	[86]	66.3%	23.3%	10.5%

Table 4.2

[% of all response]

"The school reform program in my building provides an opportunity for me to influence the mission and vision of my school."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	73.8%	19.0%	7.1%
Non-participants	[35]	57.2%	34.3%	8.6%
No Response	[9]	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%

Total	[86]	62.8%	27.9%	9.3%

The responses indicate that the teachers who have elected to participate in the reform program at their school feel it does provide an opportunity to work with their peers [Table 4.1]. From the interviews one can infer that it is the opportunity to work with teachers from other departments and areas of the school that may constitute the added or special appeal since high school teachers are members of subject area departments where they have group or departmental meetings to develop courses, design new curricula, and engage in other collaborative tasks.

The teachers who have elected to participate in the reform programs also support the proposition that the process provides opportunities for them to influence the direction and mission of their school [Table 4.2]. A smaller percentage of the non-participating teachers also agree with this statement, but their responses do not help

to illuminate their reasons for not utilizing these opportunities.

One can infer from the responses that these teachers are concerned about and want more opportunities to interact with their peers, but they do not make this a separate condition for their participation.

Condition V - The reform proposal must draw on the extensive experience base of teacher practitioners

A related theme to teacher collegiality and peer support is the strong feeling among the teachers who were interviewed that they are skeptical and suspicious of reform proposals that fail to recognize and draw on the extensive insights, experiences and knowledge basis of teachers in the diagnosis of the problems in schools and formulation of possible solutions. The theme of teacher input and influence over proposals that directly impact their roles, responsibilities, and status are explored in the following tables.

Table 5.1

[% of all responses]

"I am leery of school reform proposals when they do not reflect teacher input."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	90.5%	7.2%	2.4%
Non-participants	[35]	99.9%	0.1%	0.0%
No Response	[9]	88.8%	11.1%	0.0%

Total	[86]	94.2%	4.6%	1.2%

Table 5.2a

[% of all responses]

"I don't believe the current reform program in
my school will make a difference for teachers."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	16.7%	76.2%	7.1%
Non-participants	[35]	45.7%	42.9%	11.4%
No Response	[9]	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%

Total	[86]	31.4%	58.1%	10.5%

Table 5.2b

[% of responses by categories]

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants				
Males	[21]	28.5%	66.6%	4.7%
Females	[21]	4.7%	85.7%	9.5%

Non-part.				
Males	[17]	58.8%	41.1%	0.0%
Females	[18]	27.7%	50.0%	22.2%

No Response	[9]	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%

Total	[86]	31.4%	58.1%	10.5%

Table 5.3

[% of all responses]

"Teachers need new career paths and opportunities
to grow in status and level of responsibility
without having to become administrators."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	4.8%	95.2%	0.0%
Non-participants	[35]	5.8%	94.6%	0.0%
No Response	[9]	11.1%	77.8%	11.1%

Total	[86]	5.9%	93.0%	1.2%

Table 5.4

[% of all responses]

"Teachers should participate in the preparation
and selection of new teachers."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	11.9%	85.7%	2.4%
Non-participants	[35]	25.8%	74.2%	0.0%
No Response	[9]	11.1%	66.6%	22.2%

Total	[86]	17.4%	79.1%	3.5%

The data suggests that teachers give special attention and acceptance to proposals that have been conceived, shaped, and directed by people who have or are presently engaged in classrooms and schools. The responses also suggest that there is a widespread concern, and perhaps suspicion, among teachers about reform proposals from individuals who have little direct contact and experience in schools. The data presents a confused picture regarding what the teacher respondents want. On the one hand there appears to be a strong desire for increased autonomy and authority, but there are equally strong feelings about participating in critical personnel decisions, such as the hiring and firing of staff.

The data in Table 5.2 supports the view that teachers who have elected to participate in school reform initiatives hold expectations that the reform proposals will make a difference in their schools. The non-participating teachers

are divided in their sense of the potential impact of the reform program at their school. The data does not, however, help the study to resolve the inconsistencies in the teachers' responses and their decisions not to become involved in the reform program at their school.

According to Table 5.3, both teachers who are participating in reform programs and those who are not participating disagree with the proposition that veteran teachers need new career paths for advancement, prestige and money as an alternative to becoming school administrators. One might infer that the teachers who are participating in school reform programs consider this an attractive opportunity to serve in leadership positions that are an alternative to the traditional advancement route which is to seek an administrative position.

The data in Table 5.4 supports the statement that teachers are reluctant to participate in personnel decisions that effect other teachers. The teachers' responses run counter to some of the major recommendations of the leading national and Massachusetts school reform reports that propose new and enhanced roles for school based practitioners in the training and induction of novice teachers. What is surprising is that teachers who are participating in reform programs appear to be more inclined to reject or avoid opportunities to participate in personnel decisions. Since one of the most important functions and

responsibilities for any profession is to determine who should be allowed to enter the field, the data suggest that teachers maybe less willing to make this a part of their professional responsibility. As AJ, a teacher at Oldtown High School observed earlier, teachers are not willing nor are they prepared to participate in personnel decisions that will effect their present peers and future colleagues. Again, we are left with many questions and to speculate about possible explanations.

Condition VI - The proposed reform must be seen by teachers as creating classrooms and schools that promote good teaching and learning, and that show respect for their experience, expertise, and commitment to their students and profession

One of the recurring concerns of the teachers who participated in the interviews was the true intent of those who are proposing significant changes in the organizational structure and administrative patterns of schools. Of particular concern to the teachers who participated in this study are the criticisms that have been leveled at teachers by many of the school reform studies. These criticisms call into question the teachers' intellectual, professional, and personal qualifications and qualities [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; The Holmes Group, 1986; The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; and Massachusetts Joint Task Force on Teacher Preparation, 1987]. Reform proposals also raise important issues and tensions for the personal relationships within schools.

These issues are pursued through the following five statements.

Table 6.1

[% of all responses]

"I don't believe the general public values or cares about what happens to urban students and schools."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	64.3%	35.7%	0.0%
Non-participants	[35]	80.0%	17.1%	2.9%
No Response	[9]	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%

Total	[86]	73.2%	25.6%	1.2%

Table 6.2a

[% of all responses]

"I feel urban secondary schools have not benefitted, generally, from the current school reform programs."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	45.2%	42.9%	11.9%
Non-participants	[35]	51.4%	31.4%	17.1%
No Response	[9]	44.4%	22.2%	33.3%

Total	[86]	47.7%	36.0%	16.3%

Table 6.2b

[% of responses by categories]

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants				
Males	[21]	47.6%	42.8%	9.5%
Females	[21]	42.8%	42.8%	14.2%

Non-part.				
Males	[17]	58.8%	29.4%	11.7%
Females	[18]	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%

No Response	[9]	44.4%	22.2%	33.3%

Total	[86]	47.7%	36.0%	16.3%

Table 6.3a

[% of all responses]

"I feel the thrust of the school reform movement is
to exert greater control over how teachers teach."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	71.4%	19.1%	9.5%
Non-participants	[35]	65.8%	14.3%	20.0%
No Response	[9]	33.3%	11.1%	55.6%

Total	[86]	65.1%	16.3%	18.6%

Table 6.3b

[% responses by categories]

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants				
Males	[21]	76.1%	19.0%	4.7%
Females	[21]	66.6%	19.0%	14.2%

Non-part.				
Males	[17]	70.5%	11.7%	17.6%
Females	[18]	61.1%	16.6%	22.2%

No Response	[9]	33.3%	11.1%	55.5%

Total	[86]	65.1%	16.3%	18.6%

Table 6.4a

[% of all responses]

"The authority of teachers in instructional areas has been eroded by pressures to improve test scores and student attendance."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	42.9%	54.7%	2.4%
Non-participants	[35]	37.1%	54.3%	8.6%
No Response	[9]	22.2%	55.5%	22.2%

Total	[86]	38.4%	54.6%	7.0%

Table 6.4b

[% of responses by categories]

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants				
Males	[21]	38.0%	57.1%	4.7%
Females	[21]	47.6%	52.3%	0.0%

Non-part.				
Males	[17]	29.5%	64.7%	5.8%
Females	[18]	44.4%	44.4%	11.1%

No Response	[9]	22.2%	55.5%	22.2%

Total	[86]	38.4%	54.6%	7.0%

Table 6.5

[% of all responses]

"Teachers need more public recognition of their important contributions."

	[N]	Agree	Disagree	No Response
Participants	[42]	95.2%	2.4%	2.4%
Non-participants	[35]	91.4%	8.6%	0.0%
No Response	[9]	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Total	[86]	94.2%	4.7%	1.1%

According to Table 6.1 there is an overwhelming feeling among the teacher respondents that the public does not value or care about urban schools and urban young people.

However, among the participating teachers there is a larger group that disagrees with this statement. One might infer from the responses that non-participating teachers may see this situation, i.e., the lack of interest and support by the public at large - as an important consideration in their decision not to join their school's reform program.

There is a lack of agreement among the participating teachers regarding their sense of whether urban schools have or have not benefitted from the national and Massachusetts school reform movements [see Tables 6.2a and 6.2b]. A majority of the non-participating teachers agree with the statement which suggests that this may be among the factors in their decisions not to participate in their school's reform activities.

Tables 6.3a, 6.3b, 6.4a and 6.4b indicate that a majority of the respondents do not feel that the authority of teachers in instructional areas has been eroded by the current school reform movement or that the reform programs seek to exert more control over how teachers approach their teaching. A greater percentage of participating teachers disagree with these statements which may suggest that this is an important consideration in their decisions to engage in reform activities at their school.

The nearly unanimous response to the statement regarding the need for greater public recognition supports the issue raised in the interviews regarding a widespread feeling among teachers that their efforts to meet the increasing demands and social challenges of their students are not appreciated by the general public [Table 6.5]. The frequency of the responses for all groups indicates that recent attempts to recognize teachers and teaching as a profession have not yet reached the teachers who participated in this study.

Teachers' Awareness and Assessment of Ten Reform Proposals

The questionnaire also asked the teachers to indicate their sense of awareness or familiarity with ten of the most frequently suggested reform proposals, and then to indicate those that they felt could make a difference in their school. The ten proposals were selected based on the frequency of their inclusion in the major national and Massachusetts school reform reports, and because they were included in the discussions of reform strategies at the three high schools.

Table 7.1 presents the teachers' responses regarding their awareness or lack of awareness of the ten reform recommendations. Table 7.2 presents the teachers' prioritized list of ten recommendations that they believe can improve the conditions of learning and teaching in their schools.

Table 7.1

Teachers' awareness of ten reform recommendations.

[N = 86]

	Aware / Not Aware		No Response
School Based Management	81.4%	17.4%	1.2%
Peer Coaching	72.1%	26.7%	1.2%
Clinical Supervision	50.0%	47.7%	2.3%
Mentor Teachers	73.2%	26.7%	0.0%
Peer Evaluation of Novice Teachers	44.2%	53.4%	2.3%
Professional Development Schools	58.1%	38.1%	3.5%
School Improvement Councils	90.2%	9.4%	0.0%
Student Exhibitions for Graduation	48.9%	48.8%	2.3%
Peer Review for Experienced Teachers	29.1%	68.4%	2.3%
Cooperative Learning	95.3%	4.6%	0.0%

Table 7.2

Teachers' ranking of ten potential reform proposals to improve teaching and learning in their buildings.

[N = 86]

	Frequency of Response
Cooperative Learning	51.2%
School Based Management	40.7%
Peer Coaching	32.6%
Mentor Teachers	29.1%
Peer Review of Experienced Teachers	25.6%
Professional Development Schools	22.1%
Student Exhibitions for Graduation	20.9%
School Improvement Councils	19.8%
Clinical Supervision	16.5%
Peer Evaluation of Novice Teachers	16.3%

The teachers' responses to proposals for school based management, school improvement councils, and cooperative learning reflect intensive, system-wide discussions of these strategies, a special state funded grants program to required school based councils, and the incorporation of the school based management concept into one district's collective bargaining agreement. There is no clear response pattern that might indicate whether the teachers see linkages or connections between these various strategies. One might infer from Tables 7.1 and 7.2 that the respondents have not engaged in detailed reviews of the findings from the research on school reform.

The data in Table 7.2 suggest that teachers are more concerned about strategies to improve student learning, such as cooperative learning and peer coaching than to address their personal needs. Only one reform recommendation, cooperative learning which focuses on improving student performance, was cited by a majority of the respondents as having the potential to improve student performance and the conditions of learning in their schools. The responses provide no clear sense of which reform strategies might garner the most interest and support among teachers.

Summary of Findings

This chapter presents the findings from a series of interviews with teachers who are engaged in school wide reform programs at three urban high schools in eastern

Massachusetts and a survey of all the full time teachers at the same schools. The teachers were asked to respond to positive and negative statements about six themes or conditions that emerged from group and individual interviews with the teacher members of the steering committees of the reform programs. In addition, the teachers were asked to indicate their familiarity with ten of the most frequently mentioned reform proposals, and to rank them in their order of significance.

The teachers who participated in the interviews raised six issues as important considerations to their decisions to participate in reform programs. The six themes include: potential impact of the reform on the social as well as academic needs of their students; provision of resources to meet the immediate needs of teachers as well as the additional requirement of the reform program; the allocation of time for teachers to participate in reform activities, and time for the reform to take root and flourish; opportunities for teachers to collaborate with other teachers; the inclusion of teachers' experience, insights, and knowledge base in the diagnosis of the problems and conceptualization of possible solutions; and, the proposed reform recognizes the important contributions of teachers and seeks to support them in their important work.

The responses to the questionnaire generally support the themes and concerns that were raised by the teachers who

participated in the group and individual interviews. In the limited number of instances where there are differences in perspective, the teachers who indicate that they are or have participated in their school's reform program appear to be more emphatic in their responses. The collective responses of males and females are very similar, in fact gender does not appear to be a significant factor in the way teachers perceive these six themes.

The most distinguishing feature of the responses is the division of opinion among the participants who agree and participants who disagree with the various statements. There are larger gaps in their responses than is the case among the nonparticipating teachers who agree and disagree. Given the similarity in the collective responses between the teachers who report that they are participating and those who indicate that they are not participating in reform programs, one is left to speculate about why so many of the non-participants decide not to join their school's reform activities if they share so many of the opinions and perceptions of their participating colleagues?

The data indicates that the teacher respondents, regardless of their participation, share concerns about the lack of time and resources in their schools. They also share the feeling that the general public does not understand nor appreciate the enormous challenges that they face, and that the public does not recognize and respect the

teachers' contributions to their students, schools, and communities.

There is a difference of opinion among the respondents regarding the benefits that have accrued to the schools as a result of the national and state school improvement movement. A slight majority of the participating teachers feel their schools have benefitted to some degree from the national and local attention that has been given to the needs of public schools.

The respondents are clearly concerned about reform proposals that do not reflect the input, insights, and expertise of school based or school affiliated practitioners. This is not a new or surprising finding, but it adds additional emphasis to the importance of engaging teachers at all stages of the reform process as a means to build creditability for reform proposals among teachers.

The teachers who participated in the interviews and responded to the questionnaire support reform proposals that will increase their participation in the formulation of policies regarding curriculum, instructional approaches, and student affairs. The teacher respondents are less supportive and more reserve in their responses to proposals that seek their participation in personnel matters, including the training and induction of new teachers. This raises serious questions for those who seek to elevate teaching to true professional status because two of the most

important functions for a profession are determining who will be allowed to practice and who meets and maintains acceptable standards of practice.

This view is supported further by the teachers' ranking of the ten most frequently proposed reforms. The items that received the highest ratings focus on students, and the items that involve teachers in personnel decisions and related matters are at or near the bottom of the list.

The responses also suggest that none of the six themes is a single determinate to the teachers' decisions to participate or not to participate in the reform program at their school. The issue is how these six conditions coalesce to create a climate and context that teachers feel will support their efforts to introduce changes into their schools and classrooms.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

"The ultimate innovation in schools was the teacher. Lasting and significant changes would not occur unless teachers were directly and actively involved in the planning and development of the desired changes."

Meade, 1989, p. 30

This study has explored the conditions that have led teachers at three large urban high schools in eastern Massachusetts to voluntarily participate in school-wide reform projects which seek to improve learning and teaching in their buildings by using recommendations drawn from the leading national and Massachusetts school reform reports. The study's findings may be significant to the continuing research on school reform because they provide the perspectives of teachers who work in urban high schools that are a major focal point for the current school reform studies. The discussions of the state of America's public schools include special mention of the very difficult situations that exist in many of America's larger and older metropolitan areas, and especially in the inner city schools of these areas [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Governors' Association, 1986; Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Massachusetts Joint Committee on Education, 1987]. The insights of teachers who chose to participate in school reform programs in these contexts can provide important insights for future reform efforts.

The study's focus on urban high school teachers is also important because one of the more significant elements of the school reform movement that began in the mid 1980's is the influential roles that reformers have been assigned to classroom teachers. Johnson [1990] indicates that, "the strategy of the so-called second wave reformers was to transfer authority for educational design to teachers, making them the agents rather than the objects of school reform." [p. xvii]. The reform studies and reports note that teachers may be a major source of the problems that plague American public schools, but the reformers also recognize that the long term impact of any reform initiative requires the active support and cooperation of classroom teachers [Rosenholtz, 1987; Boyer, 1983; The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988; and Goodlad, 1984]. In an earlier chapter, I shared the following observation by Boyer [1983] regarding the central role that is being assigned to teachers in the current wave of school reform programs. It is repeated here because it helps to clarify and emphasize this point. "Whatever is wrong with America's public schools cannot be fixed without the help of those teachers already in classrooms. Most of them will be there for years to come, and such teachers must be viewed as part of the solution, not the problem." [p. 154-155].

The study's findings reflect insights and perspectives that were gathered through interviews with nineteen teachers who served on the steering committees for school reform programs in their buildings, and the responses of eighty-six teachers at two of the same high schools to a questionnaire that was developed from the statements and concerns of the teachers who participated on the steering committees for the reform programs. The data represent 100% participation by the teacher members of the steering committees at the three high schools, and 49% of the full-time teachers at the same schools. The responses of the teachers at one high school were not included in the final analysis because they provided too small a base for drawing reliable inferences and appropriate conclusions.

The study identifies six conditions that the participating teachers feel are important considerations to their decisions to participate or not to participate voluntarily in school reform programs at their schools. The conditions include the following: first, the proposed reform must recognize and in some manner attempt to address the social as well as academic needs of students. Second, the proposed reform must provide new resources to meet the immediate needs of teachers as well as the new needs of the reform program. Third, the proposed reform must allocate time for teachers to participate in the program, and time for the new initiative to take root and flourish. Fourth,

the proposed reform must encourage and support greater communication and collaboration between teachers in their building. Fifth, the proposed program must include teachers in its conceptualization and implementation. Sixth, the proposed reform must give teachers a sense that they are appreciated and supported, and that they are considered valuable contributors to the success of their schools, their students, and the reform program.

The participating teachers indicate that one of the primary determinants for their decision to participate or not to participate is the context and climate that is created by the presence or absence of these conditions. No one of the six conditions by itself is seen as so critical or significant that it is the sole or lone consideration in the teachers' decision. The teacher respondents in this study report that these conditions vary widely between schools, but all six conditions are present at the three schools that are included in this study. As Goodlad [1984] notes, "the evidence suggests that schools vary widely in almost all of their characteristics. It follows then, that no single set of recommendations applies to all schools." [p. xvii]. The six conditions are also greatly influenced and affected by the ethos of the individual school, by the teachers' prior experience with school reform projects, and by the teachers' sense of urgency and crisis about the social conditions and status of their students. To

paraphrase Lortie [1975], the emphasis is on the meaning that teachers give to these conditions and the sentiments that they attach to them while they go about their daily tasks.

Condition I: The proposed reform must recognize and in some manner seek to address the social as well as academic needs of students

The teacher participants report that it is important for them to see clear benefits in the proposed program for their students and classroom. Teachers who feel a special sense of urgency and crisis about the lives of their students appear to want more immediate and direct responses from reform programs for their students. Teachers who feel less urgent about the social conditions of their students appear to be more patient and more willing to allow time for the reform program to develop and filter down to their classrooms. The teachers at Tower and Oldtown describe the increasing encounters of their students with the courts, drug abuse programs, and pregnancy prevention projects as first order needs that must be attended to before schools and teachers can create an appropriate climate for effective teaching and learning. The significant point is the individual teacher's sense of the urgency and severity of their students needs.

The teachers' statements also raise a question about their personal sense of faith in the ability of their school administrators and school systems' ability to fulfill their

promises. In the case of the Lyceum, the teachers feel their administrator and school committee are active supporters of teachers and they make special efforts to obtain the resources that the teachers request. The experience of the teachers at Oldtown and Tower is quite different. At these schools, there is little evidence to encourage and support the teachers' expectations that the promises of their local administrators or central offices will be honored. It is also important to acknowledge that the teachers do not directly blame their administrators. They feel their administrators are also hampered by external forces over which they have little or no control. While the teachers recognize the limitations on the available resources and sympathize with the difficult working conditions that face their administrators, they are still concerned about the conditions in which they are expected to work.

The history of prior school reform and improvement programs is an additional consideration in the assessment and evaluation of future reform proposals by teachers. The teachers at the Lyceum enjoy and have benefitted from a history of innovation and experimentation in their district on which to build their latest reform program. The system's history led one teacher to describe it as the "alternative school capital of the world." The system in which Oldtown and Tower are located has a history of launching new program

initiatives and failing to implement these initiatives. Teachers have been left with little to show for their investments of time, energy, and emotions.

Condition II: The proposed reform must offer new resources to meet the immediate needs of teachers as well as new needs of the reform program

The teacher participants indicate that new reform programs must provide additional resources and support services. This condition, like the first condition, varies widely from school to school, but in all three settings for this study the teachers wanted to know what new resources would be provided by their reform program. For the teachers at Oldtown and Tower, where they report critical shortages of the most basic instructional supplies, including text and reference books, chalk, writing paper and pencils, this condition assumed greater importance. Among the central questions for these teachers is, will the new program further deplete their school's already scarce and dwindling resources? A related issue is will the teachers have opportunities to use the new resources to replace the shortages in their basic resources? An underlying question is how can the school department provide the resources for new programs when it has had great difficulty in meeting the existing needs of the students and teachers. This point is echoed in the study of urban teachers conducted by Corcoran, Walker, and White [1988] for the Institute for Educational Leadership. They found that, "unfortunately, there is

evidence that the dramatic changes that have been proposed for the teaching profession, including greater participation in decision-making and restructuring of schools to alter teachers roles, are distant from the day-to-day lives of most urban teachers." [p. 2].

The teachers' discussions of resources focus on their students' needs rather than on their own personal problems and situations. Their requests for additional money focus on the need for schools to provide additional personnel who can offer a variety of essential social services to their students. The teachers also indicate that they feel the critical needs of their students for these social services takes precedent over their instructional needs. As one teacher at Tower notes, she is willing to participate in any program that provides resources for her students. The teachers' stories support the observation by Goodlad [1984] that, "when asked to select what they (teachers) perceived to be their school's one biggest problem, teachers tend to select problems affecting their students, but appearing beyond their control." [p. 175].

There is the sense that some of the participating teachers are attracted to reform programs by expectations and perceptions that they may be able to acquire badly needed resources for their students and classrooms, rather than by the appeal of the reform program's goals and aspirations. The teachers also report that they will

consider their programs successful if they simply provided new resources. A teacher at the Tower High School acknowledges that she is willing to participate in the reform program at her school because she needs and is desperate for resources for her classroom. She also indicates that she does not believe her school's program will make a lasting impact on what she does in her classroom or for her students.

The statements of the teachers who participated in this study support the reports of severe shortages of resources and materials in urban high schools. These are situations that must be addressed in the process of engaging the attention and interest of teachers in future school reform initiatives.

Condition III: The proposed reform must provide time for teachers to participate and time for the reform program to take root and flourish

The excessive demands on the time of classroom teachers, and the critical shortage of time during the school day, are deeply felt concerns for all the teacher respondents to this study. The teachers' descriptions of the various and competing tasks, and contradictory expectations for their uses of the available time, support the findings reported by Johnson [1990] and Lieberman and Miller [1984] regarding the frenetic pace of life in schools. A teacher at the Lyceum reported, she needs time more than money, or computers, or public recognition. There

is not enough time during the day to teach, advise, confer with students and/or parents, complete paper work for students and the central administration, and still provide for a family or maintain a social life. Her experience is supported by the accounts of Lieberman and Miller [1983] who describe the fragmentation of the typical teacher's day, and the constant need to make quick and frequent transitions between their many and varied roles. Lieberman and Miller describe the "dailiness" of teaching which presents the many and varied roles that teachers are expected to play each day, and every day.

The discussions raise many important considerations, but they offer few obvious and easy solutions. The first consideration is the dilemma between sacrificing time from their students and classes to participate in school reform programs or remaining isolated in their classrooms. The teachers who participated in the interviews seem to feel that the public only values the time that teachers spend with and in front of their students. Time for professional enhancement and development, faculty discussions, reading and research, and similar activities are not, in the teachers' opinions, understood nor seen as important by the general public.

Additional pay for work after school and on weekends does not address the personal sacrifice of time with the teachers' families. A teacher at Oldtown also observes that

the amount of the compensation that is generally provided by special school programs does not reflect the true value of the additional time and energy that is invested by the teachers. In addition, many teachers have developed alternative commitments for their out of school time, and they would have to sacrifice these activities to participate in after school meetings and programs that are sponsored by their reform programs.

The teacher participants are also concerned about securing adequate time for their reform proposals to take root and flourish. There is the feeling among the respondents that the public and policy makers expect clear and measurable results from school reform programs as soon as possible. The uncertainties about future funding and the standards or criteria that will be used to determine the effectiveness of their programs add to the teachers' concerns about having to move too quickly to implement programs. As one teacher at the Lyceum observed, it takes about five years to install new programs in schools, and longer for their impact to be fairly determined. The teacher participants appear to recognize that funding commitments are made one year at a time, and decisions to renew funding require clear and measurable signs of improvement.

Time, then, is a serious consideration for all teachers, but the interviews provide no easy solutions

within the present school structure partly because there are no clear preferences among the teachers who participated in this study.

Condition IV: The proposed reform program must promote greater communication and collaboration among teachers

The participating teachers support the findings of Little [1983], Lieberman and Miller [1984], and Johnson [1990] regarding the isolated nature of teaching and the importance of increased opportunities for peer interaction. The teachers' comments indicate that the daily school schedule provides few opportunities for teachers to meet for the sharing of ideas and experiences, and it inhibits occasions for supporting and consoling each other about their successes and failures in the classroom. As Sarason observes, "teaching is a lonely profession by which we mean that the teacher is alone with problems and dilemmas, constantly thrown back on personal resources, having little or no interpersonal vehicles available for purposes of stimulation, change, or control against people's capacities to act and think foolishly." [p. 196]. Goodlad also notes, "there are no infrastructures designed to encourage and support either communication among teachers in improving teaching or collaboration in attacking school-wide problems. And so teachers, like their students, to a large extent carry on side by side similar but essentially separated activities." [p. 188].

The description of the evolution of the reform program at the Lyceum highlights the importance of voluntary efforts by teacher to create support systems. Three teachers in the Bilingual program initiated a series of informal meetings, held first after school, and then during the common advisory period, to share their experiences, to tout their successes and to explore together solutions to shared problems. Their conversations attracted the interest of other teachers in their building, and after several months the group had grown to more than twenty teachers.

At Oldtown, the reform effort has been carried on by a small group of teachers. Members of this small group have played a variety of roles in three successive reform projects. While they acknowledge their concerns about the inability of their school to mount and sustain a reform program, the teachers feel that the opportunities to work with peers from other departments and grade levels is important to their professional development. It also provides an important and expanded network for emotional support.

The teachers also report that they do not look to the traditional faculty senate or the teachers' union for leadership on school reform matters. There is the sense that faculty senates have been too preoccupied by confrontations with their principals over minor administrative issues, and the adversarial relationships

that have evolved between the faculty senates and school administrations do not provide a good foundation to support the new forms of collaboration and cooperation that are the hallmarks of the current school reform movement. The teachers' concerns or complaints about the ineffectiveness of the faculty senates are similar in many ways to the teachers' reservations and discomfort with the climate and conversational base of their teachers rooms.

The debates about the basis on which recent lay-offs have been carried out have further complicated the relationship and image of the teachers' union at Oldtown and Tower High Schools. The union's advocacy for seniority rather than affirmative action has created tensions and divisions among the teachers along racial as well as other lines.

The teachers who participated in the interviews feel that too many of the exchanges that take place in their faculty rooms have more to do with the personal needs and complaints of individual faculty members and not enough with the needs of students or teaching. The teachers at the Lyceum provide an informative description of how the focus of the conversations in their faculty room have shifted to issues about teaching and serving the needs of students. The teachers who participated in the interviews feel the new tone and focus of discussions among their colleagues are related to the work of their school reform program. The

reform program at the Lyceum has created a new sense of community among the teachers where they feel collective responsibility for the well being of their students, and they recognize that their individual success as teachers is inextricably linked to the success or failure of their fellow teachers.

Condition V: The reform proposal must involve teachers in its conceptualization and implementation

This condition addresses the complex issue of teacher ownership of reform measures. Berman and McLaughlin conclude from their 1978 study of the impact of innovative programs that were funded by the United States Department of Education, that "to the extent that the effort at change identifies and meaningfully involves all those who directly or indirectly will be affected by the change, to that extent the effort stands a chance to be successful." [In, Sarason, 1982, p. 79]. The teachers in this study emphasize the importance of teacher input and active participation in the conceptualization, development, and implementation of proposals to introduce and sustain changes in their schools. Their discussions focus on two significant aspects of this condition. The first is that teachers feel they have valuable insights, experiences, and special perspectives on urban schools that can inform the focus, direction, and impact of reform initiatives. The 1988 survey of American teachers by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of

Teaching stresses that, "after all, teachers have a unique vantage point from which to evaluate education" [p. 1].

The teachers who participated in this study also stress the need for teacher input so that well-intended proposals reflect the realities of real schools and real children. Again, these teachers, as well as Goodlad [1984], make the point that the shared characteristics of schools tend to mask their significant and substantial differences. The three schools included in this study share a number of common characteristics and many similar experiences, but their reform programs have had very different outcomes. All the schools experienced image problems in their communities because they served large numbers of poor and minority students. All three were mentioned by their superintendents and school committees as potential sites for reorganization because of their image and enrollment problems. However, the Lyceum faculty initiated a reform program that engaged nearly all the teachers in their school in the development of a new mission and direction for the school. Their effort was informed by the system and school's prior reform and experimental projects. The Tower and Oldtown teachers received little external support for their programs, and the Tower program was seriously affected by the relocation of the entire school with little notice and planning time.

The second important aspect of this condition is that there are particular issues that teachers feel they should

be allowed to address. While the national and Massachusetts reform reports offer recommendations to expand the role of teachers to include the management of school budgets and other resources, the selection and evaluation of professional personnel, the training and induction of new teachers, and participation in the general governance of the school, the teachers who participated in this study focused their interest on three broad areas: curriculum, instructional methods, and student affairs. The teacher respondents believe that teachers possess unique perspectives and special understandings of these areas, and these are the areas where they, as professionals, feel that they should be in charge. This finding is consistent with the survey of teachers conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teachers [1988]. The Carnegie survey which included over 40,000 teachers in all fifty states reports that teachers feel they are the most appropriate source to make decisions about academics, pedagogy, and the placement and assessment of students.

The teachers who participated in this study believe their current involvement in the administration of their schools is limited to minor supervisory duties, hall and bus monitoring, and the preparation of routine reports that could best be done by non-professional staff. Shifting these duties to other personnel could provide more time for

teachers to teach and/or work on school reform programs, or serve on governance and policy making committees at their schools.

The significance of the teachers' feelings regarding this condition is presented in the following observation by Carnoy [1990], "It is teachers' time and energy that will drive the reform, and no matter how organizationally efficient or politically appealing, it is not going to work unless they think it makes sense." [p. 32].

Condition VI: The proposed reform must give teachers a sense that their contributions are recognized and the reforms are designed to support teacher

Lortie [1975] describes the ambiguous relationships that have existed between teachers and their local communities, and the relationships for the teachers at the three school that are included in this study are still ambiguous. The reluctance of local taxpayers to support tax override proposals, the frequent criticisms of schools and teachers by leaders of local business and civic groups, and the abandonment of the public schools by increasing numbers of middle class families, both White and African American, have created a sense of crisis for teachers in urban schools. Their feelings are reenforced by the critical shortages of basic supplies, the poor maintenance and repair of their buildings, and the public's willingness to entertain reform proposals from people who have little experience with schools. As Sarason [1982] notes, "it is

too easy to pinpoint a problem 'in' schools and to propose changes 'within' schools, unaware that the problem did not arise only in the context of schools. This is true if the aim of the change is remedial; it is more true if the aim is to prevent the frequency with which the problem occurs." [p. 12].

The first group of reports in the current school reform movement were extremely negative in their assessments of the contributions, skills, and intellectual capacities of American teachers [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983]. The National Commission on Excellence in Education makes a point of stressing the need to recruit more academically talented people for teaching and to reconceive teacher preparation programs so that they increase the content knowledge base of teachers [p. 22-23]. While the second wave of reports gives more sympathetic treatment to teachers, their calls for more intellectually able people raises the same feelings and concerns among teachers [Holmes Group, 1986, Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; National Governors' Association, 1986; Massachusetts Joint Task Force on Teacher Preparation, 1987]. The mixed messages of both the first and second waves of the current reform movement have led Freedman, Jackson, and Boles [1983] to comment, "teachers work in an institution which supposedly prepares its clients for adulthood, but which views those entrusted with this task,

the teachers themselves, as incapable of mature judgements." [p. 11].

The teachers at Oldtown and Tower report there was considerable skepticism initially among their fellow teachers in response to their reform project. At Tower, some teachers felt the proposed program was designed to allow the collaborating university to run the school. A similar experience was reported by the teachers at Oldtown regarding their collaborative program with the state university. These feelings were partially overcome once the teachers saw that their insights and experiences were solicited and respected, and they were, in fact, making the critical decisions regarding the setting of goals and use of funds for their programs.

Teacher respondents are both encouraged and leery of the recommendations that offer to change their traditional roles and responsibilities. As was noted in the discussions regarding the condition of teacher input and participation, the teacher respondents feel they are best prepared and suited to address issues of curriculum, instructional methods, and student matters. They are reluctant to participate in personnel decisions, such as hiring and firing, and they wonder about the types of evaluation and accountability that will be attached to their new roles. The discussions lead one to wonder whether the teachers who participated in this study feel that simply restoring the

integrity of their original and traditional roles would allow them to be more effective rather than pursuing new and more expansive roles for teachers in their schools.

Aspects of these six conditions for effective school reform, as they emerged from this study of the involvement and attitudes of teachers in urban schools, have been pointed to in other studies and reports. However, through the analysis of the teachers' responses, one can infer a coherent pattern of important factors to successful reform programs from previously scattered observations by and about teachers, and the study has affirmed the importance of these factors to teachers who must play a significant role in future reform efforts.

The perceptions of secondary school teachers
in other urban cities: a comparative analysis

The six conditions identified in this study of urban secondary school teachers in eastern Massachusetts were compared with the findings from five similar studies of the attitudes and opinions of teachers in other urban schools. The five studies were selected because they focused on teachers who were engaged in school-wide reform programs, they included substantial numbers of urban secondary school teachers, and they included schools that served mainly minority and low income students. Since these studies were conducted for different purposes and included different combinations of school settings and levels, they vary in the themes and conditions that they address. However, each

study contributes to our understanding of the conditions that urban high school teachers feel is important to their decisions to participate or not to participate in school reform programs.

The five studies selected for comparison include: The Learning Workplace: The Conditions and Resources of Teaching [1986]; The Metropolitan Life Survey of American Teachers 1986: Restructuring the Teaching Profession [1986]; Working in Urban Schools [1988]; Building Commitment Among Students and Teachers: An Exploratory Study in Ten Urban High Schools [1988]; and, Report Card on School Reform: The Teachers Speak [1988]. The studies were reviewed in Chapter II.

This study's findings are consistent with the findings from the five studies that teachers want their reform programs to address both the in school academic and out of school experiences and conditions of their students. The teacher respondents to the MET Life Survey of 1986 report that they are more likely to support and take an active role in programs that offer direct and immediate services to the students in their classrooms [Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1986]. The respondents also indicated that they are more likely to support and give preference to recommendations that focus on the needs of their students rather than proposals that are limited to creating new opportunities and incentives for teachers.

The National Education Association's survey [1986] also reports that teachers are concerned about how various reform proposals will impact and make a difference in the lives of their students, with whom they share a deep and significant relationship [MET Life, 1986, p. 23]. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching [1988] observed that, "we are troubled that the nation's teachers remain skeptical. Why is it that teachers, of all people, are demoralized and largely unimpressed by the reform actions taken?" [p. 10]. The Carnegie report, which is based on a national sample of teachers from all levels, disciplines, and types of schools, also reports that teachers from all school settings consider the potential impact of various reform programs on their classrooms and students an important and critical determinant in their decisions to participate in school-wide reform programs.

All the studies report their interviews with teachers in urban school settings affirm the reports of severe shortages of basic and essential instructional materials and supplies in many, if not most, urban schools and classrooms. Corcoran, Walker, and White [1988] report that a significant number of the urban teachers who were interviewed in their survey report critical shortages of the most basic instructional materials, such as paper, chalk, pencils, and maps. Many of these teachers also report that they use

their personal money to buy materials, textbooks, and other supplies for their students and classrooms [p. 26-27].

The urban high school teachers who participated in the Carnegie Foundation [1988] and the MET Life [1986] surveys report similar shortages of critical instructional materials and supplies, and inadequate and inappropriately equipped classrooms. But more importantly, the teachers feel that they need and would prefer money to provide support personnel who can help their students address their social and non-school related problems [Firestone, Rosenblum, and Webb, 1987; Corcoran, 1990].

The surveys conducted by Bacharach, Bauer, and Shedd [1986] of members of the National Education Association and by Corcoran, Walker, and White [1988] of urban teachers in five major eastern cities in the United States for the Institute for Educational Leadership highlight the competing and conflicting demands on the time and energy of urban school teachers. The MET Life Survey [1986] stresses the importance that teachers at all levels place on having dedicated time during the school day to work with their peers on school improvement programs [p. 36]. The surveys also affirm the serious tensions that teachers experience in balancing their commitments to their students and teaching, to their participation in school improvement initiatives, and to their efforts to pursue their own professional

development. This finding is consistent with the data in this study.

All five studies report that teachers place a high or special premium on programs that encourage and support greater communication, cooperation, and collaboration among teachers, between teachers and administrators, and between teachers and the larger community. The teachers who responded to the MET Life Survey [1986] and to the study by Firestone, Rosenblum, and Webb [1987] cite opportunities for greater interaction with their peers as a major factor in their decisions to participate in school reform programs. As a teacher at the Tower School noted, "teachers have great power once they enter their classrooms, but teaching is a very isolated activity."

This study's finding that teachers are leery of new reform and other school improvement programs which have little or no direct and sustained input from teacher practitioners is supported by the conclusions of the MET Life [1986] and NEA [1986] surveys, and the study of urban high schools by Firestone, Rosenblum, and Webb [1987]. The MET Life [1986] survey also reports that teachers have a special interest in and concern for decisions that effect the curriculum, instructional strategies, and student-related matters. In these three areas, teachers feel they are the experts because of their training and experience and, most importantly, their personal daily

contact with hundreds of children. Seventy percent of the teachers who responded to the MET Life Survey report that they want opportunities to inform and shape school and system policies in the areas of academics, pedagogy, and student affairs [p. 50].

Bacharach, Bauer, and Shedd [1986] determined from their study that one of the important features of an effective organization is that it allows and actively encourages its employees to contribute their expertise, insights, and experiences to the practices and policies of the organization. The responsiveness and willingness to listen to employees shows the organization's respect and appreciation for the employees' contributions.

This study's findings concur with the findings and conclusions of the five reports that there is a gap between the degree of participation that teachers want in decisions about programmatic issues and what in fact is the most common situation. Teacher involvement throughout the school reform process is a critical and significant factor in establishing the credibility of the proposed program with teachers.

Teachers are also concerned about the perceptions and motives that give rise to school reform programs, and the overt and covert messages that the reform programs convey regarding the performance, intelligence, and commitment of teachers to their students, schools, and profession.

Bacharach, Bauer, and Shedd [1986] describe the tensions and conflicting impressions of teachers, school reform advocates, and the larger community regarding the changing and growing expectations that are being assigned to public schools. Firestone, Rosenblum, and Walker [1987] note that teachers want to do a good job, but feel they are severely inhibited by shortages of the most basic instructional materials and supplies, an overabundance of administrative paperwork and duties, excessive and repetitive requests from the central office, and a plethora of conflicting recommendations for improving teaching and learning from external sources [p. 33]. There is a clear sense among the teachers who were interviewed for these reports that their ability to provide quality programs is severely restricted by administrative, organizational, and resource limitations that are not fully appreciated by the general public.

Recommendations

The analysis of the data that is provided by the teachers at the three urban high schools who participated in this study suggest five recommendations for attracting their support and active participation in future proposals to reform schools, and improve the teaching-learning process.

First, future reform proposals must recognize and attempt to create a climate and context for reform that includes the six conditions that are identified in this

study. It is the combined effect of these conditions rather than each as a single determinate that informs and influences the decisions of teachers to participate in school wide reform programs. This task is complicated because the six conditions need to be addressed simultaneously rather than sequentially. The data does not allow one to rank order the conditions which could suggest a sequential approach nor does it suggest or imply a preferred balance between the influence of each of the conditions. We can only infer that it is the collective presence and impact of these conditions that is the primary determinate of the teachers' decisions to join reform programs in their schools.

Second, future reform proposals must pay special attention to and make allowances for the collective histories and ethos of individual schools. Schools that have experienced success with previous school improvement initiatives may be better prepared and feel greater confidence to take on more demanding and complicated reform and restructuring projects. Schools that have little history with reform initiatives and those that have had bad experiences may need to begin with smaller and more manageable projects to build their confidence, to develop new and more stable relationships within their buildings, to develop consensus about a decision-making process, and

opportunities to experience early successes in their reform activities.

The thought that is presented here builds on the views of Sarason [1982], Lortie [1975], and Deal [1990] who consider schools social entities that reflect the collective histories, values, and perspectives of their teachers, administrators, parents, and students. And, as noted by Lieberman and Miller [1984], "schools are like families where unspoken understandings dominate." [p. 94]. The willingness of teachers to accept and agree to participate in school reform programs is clearly related to their sense of confidence in their ability to assume the added responsibilities and manage the additional demands. The resistance of some teachers may be more related to their bad experiences with prior reform projects rather than to a lack of understanding and/or opposition to the goals of the current or future school reform proposals.

The third recommendation, which is an extension of the second, is that future reform proposals must make provision for and include the most basic and immediate needs of teachers. Teachers who work in schools where they lack the most basic materials, who have little or no access to up to date and functioning equipment, who work in classrooms and buildings that are in critical states of disrepair, and who receive little or no recognition for their contributions to their students, schools, and communities have little reason

to support global proposals that may never reach their students or classrooms.

A critical part of this consideration is the teachers' perceptions of the social as well as academic needs of their students. Teachers take a holistic view of their students. This view does not create separate and discrete segments for their students' lives in terms of the classroom, school, their homes and their local communities. The teachers see and make clear connections between the stability of the students' lives outside of school and what they can hope to provide when the students are at school. While the teachers applaud reforms that seek to elevate their own status, to make teaching a true profession, they also are concerned about the impact of these proposals on the general well-being of their students. Although reform proposals must support the work of classroom teachers, those that limit themselves only to the school or classroom may receive limited support and cooperation from teachers.

The fourth recommendation is that reform proposals need to pay more attention to teachers' concerns in the critical areas of academics, pedagogy, and student affairs. These are areas where teachers feel that they possess special expertise, and these are areas that most affect their students, classrooms, and themselves. Proposals to engage teachers in management issues, such as personnel decisions, have limited appeal for teachers. Again the weight of the

teachers' prior experiences suggest that the contentious history of performance evaluation programs has left a legacy of distrust and bad feelings among teachers. There is the sense from the teachers who participated in this study that they question the process by which future evaluations will be conducted, the motives of those who are proposing teacher evaluation programs, and the objectivity and fairness of those who will implement and manage these programs.

In the area of budget and fiscal management, the teacher respondents seem to want a better sense of what funds are available and how they are used, but there is a considerable difference of opinion among teachers regarding what might be the most appropriate roles for teachers in these matters.

The fifth recommendation is that future reform proposals must present both a clear vision of what they hope to accomplish and more guidance on the process for reaching that vision. This response raises an important issue of how to structure or create a balance between developing visions and implementation plans and including teachers as active participants in this process. Tapping the knowledge base of teachers, soliciting teachers' views before decisions are made, and making appropriate course corrections based on the teachers' input pose serious and complicated challenges for those who seek to promote school reforms.

Teachers have serious and important questions about the intent of the various reform proposals, such as how they will function on a daily basis, and the steps and procedures that must be followed to implement the proposed reforms. A related question is, what is or should be the relationship between the numerous school reform proposals? Some teachers see them as pointing to discrete activities, with each holding its own appeal for different groups of teachers. The questions are how do the various proposals connect and can teachers pick and choose among the various proposals? To paraphrase Philip Schlechy, are schools engaged in series of little tries, or are they attempting to create major and permanent changes in their basic missions and how they go about fulfilling their missions?

The sixth recommendation which builds on the preceding, is that future reform proposals must find new and more effective ways to link the emerging research and literature on school reform with the experience and knowledge base of school based practitioners. The national and Massachusetts school reform reports play an unanticipated role that supports the work of school based practitioners. The current school reform reports have created a new sense of interest in public education and they offer bold new visions for the general public. The resulting climate has created a more receptive atmosphere for reform proposals that are formulated by teachers.

The teacher participants in this study are aware, in the most general terms, of the leading recommendations of the major national and Massachusetts school reform reports and studies. They have not, however, used the reports as primary sources to inform their discussions and plans for the reform programs and strategies in their schools. In the case of the Lyceum, the teachers did establish a subcommittee that reviewed the literature on the current school reform movement and they sent a team to observe several urban schools that are participating in the Coalition of Essential Schools. Their observations were intended to gather information on the implementation process rather than to assess the merits of the specific reform program. Nevertheless, their efforts were supported, in part, because of the public awareness of the need for school reform that the major reports generated.

This study has sought to explore the conditions that lead urban secondary school teachers to participate or not to participate voluntarily in school-wide reform programs in their buildings. It has focused on the perspective of teachers who work in urban high schools, and has attempted through its interviews to capture the voices of these teachers. The teachers' stories and perspectives are considered significant and critical sources of information about what teachers believe should be the focus of the school reform initiatives in their schools. At the heart of

this study is a concern that the views, perspectives, and actions of teachers be clearly presented and understood. The new focus of school reforms on the role of teachers in their schools is to be applauded. At the same time, it is essential to consider the context and conditions in which the teachers work. Tyack [1974] observes that, "like welfare workers and police, teachers in the urban colonies of the poor are part of a social system that shapes their behavior, too. It is more important to expose and correct the injustices of the social system than to scold its agents." [p. 11].

APPENDIX A

PROFILE OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS AND RESPONDENTS

Teacher Participants in Interviews

N = 19

Males 8
Females 11

White Americans 17
African Americans 2

Years of Experience: 0 to 7 years = 3
8 to 19 years = 6
20 or more years = 10

Teacher Respondents to Questionnaire

N = 86

Participants 45
Non-participants 35
No Response 9

Males 39
Females 44
No Response 3

White Americans 59
African Americans 5
Asian Americans 1
Hispanic Americans 5
Others 4
No Response 12

Years of Experience: 0 to 7 years = 3
8 to 19 years = 42
20 or more years = 41

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

Code # ____/____/

Restructuring Urban High Schools: A Teacher's Perspective

This survey seeks to gather information on the conditions that influence the decisions of urban secondary teachers to participate or not to participate in school reform programs in their schools. The statements were taken from interviews with teachers in three urban high schools. The responses will be used to design new school-college collaboratives and provide the focus for the dissertation of William Dandridge, a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Section I - Biographical Information

- 1.1 What is your official teaching assignment?
[subject/grade(s)] _____
- 1.2 How long have you taught at this school? _____ years.
- 1.3 How long have you been a teacher? _____ years.
- 1.4 Have you participated in a prior school-wide reform program(s) in this school? Yes / No

If No, please skip to item 1.6

IF, YES, please describe the project(s) - i.e., primary purpose(s), sponsor, impact on the school, and your role. _____

- 1.5 How would you describe your experience with the program described in item 1.4.

"Very Satisfied" "Satisfied" "Dissatisfied"
"Very dissatisfied"

- 1.6 How would you describe your level of participation in the current school reform project in your building?

Very involved [serve on committees and/or lead activities for the program.]

Somewhat involved [use specific services of the program on a regular basis.]

Occasionally involved [only attend special functions sponsored by the program.]

Not involved [do not attend meetings nor make use of the program's services.]

If you indicated that you are "very involved", please describe your role in the project:

- 1.7 Has your participation in the current school reform program in your school changed from last year.
Yes / No

If, yes, please explain: _____

- 1.8 How satisfied are you today, over all, with your role as a public school teacher?

Very satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied

- 1.9 Has your level of satisfaction with teaching changed during the last five years? Yes / No

IF yes, please explain the change. _____

1.10 How familiar are you with the following concepts that have been proposed by the leading national and state school reform proponents:

1 = Very familiar 2 = Somewhat familiar 3 = Have heard about 4 = Have never heard of

- ☐ a. School based management
- ☐ b. Peer coaching
- ☐ c. Clinical supervision
- ☐ d. Mentor teacher programs
- ☐ e. Peer review panels for the assessment of new teachers
- ☐ f. Professional development or practice schools
- ☐ g. School improvement councils
- ☐ h. Exhibitions or performance based assessments for high school graduation
- ☐ i. Peer assessment panels to review experienced teachers for tenure
- ☐ j. cooperative learning

1.11 Do you feel any of the concepts listed in item 1.10 could increase your level of satisfaction with teaching? Yes / No

If YES, please listed the item(s) that you feel would make a difference: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____,

1.12 Are you Male or Female

1.13 What is your ethnicity? _____

Perceptions Regarding School Reform Initiatives

The following statements address specific conditions that could influence your decision to participate or not to participate in the school reform program in your school. Please indicate whether you SA = "Strongly agree", A = "Agree", D = "Disagree", or SD = "Strongly disagree".

- 2.1 I believe we must change the traditional organizational structure of urban high schools to provide more effective learning environments for students.

SA A D SD

- 2.2 The teachers in my building are inhibited from doing their jobs because they lack the appropriate materials, settings, and support from the administration and parents.

SA A D SD

- 2.3 I am leery of school reform proposals when they do not reflect teacher input.

SA A D SD

- 2.4 Most of the descriptions of urban high schools that appear in the school reform reports do not reflect the conditions and issues in my classroom and school.

SA A D SD

- 2.5 I am concerned about participating on school-based management teams because I have no prior experience or training in this type of process.

SA A D SD

- 2.6 I believe the school reform reports have not paid sufficient attention to the problems of the students' family and community circumstances.

SA A D SD

- 2.7 The authority of teachers in instructional areas has been eroded by the pressures to improve test scores and student attendance.

SA A D SD

2.8 Teachers need substantial blocks of time during the school day to work on school improvement programs.

SA A D SD

2.9 I believe the proponents of school reform programs have overstated the proposed benefits of their proposals.

SA A D SD

2.10 Teachers need more public recognition of their important contributions.

SA A D SD

2.11 I don't believe the general public values or cares about what happens to urban students or schools.

SA A D SD

2.12 The focus on changing the organizational structure of schools is draining scarce resources and time from instructional issues.

SA A D SD

2.13 Improving the academic performance of urban students must begin with improving their social, health, and other critical services.

SA A D SD

2.14 The school reform program in my building provides an opportunity for me to influence the mission and vision of my school.

SA A D SD

2.15 I am concerned about investing lots of personal time in new programs when the prospects for future funding are unclear.

SA A D SD

2.16 Working on the school reform program provides a rare opportunity for me to work with other teachers in my building.

SA A D SD

2.17 Teachers need new career paths or opportunities to grow in status and level of responsibility without having to become administrators.

SA A D SD

2.18 The current interest in school reform has given me new opportunities and encouragement to try different instructional models.

SA A D SD

2.19 I don't believe the current school reform program in my school will make a major difference for teachers.

SA A D SD

2.20 I feel urban secondary schools have not benefitted, generally, from the current school reform programs.

SA A D SD

2.21 The cost of the proposals to restructure schools is beyond the means of my school system.

SA A D SD

2.22 Teachers should participate in the preparation and selection of new teachers.

SA A D SD

2.23 Raising entrance requirements for people who wish to teach will not improve the quality of teaching in my school.

SA A D SD

2.24 The primary reason that I continue to join school reform projects in my school is my students.

SA A D SD

2.25 Most of the current reform proposals mean more work for teachers who are overburdened.

SA A D SD

2.26 I will only participate in reform programs that have a direct impact on my students and classrooms.

SA A D SD

2.27 I feel the thrust of the school reform movement is to exert greater control over how teachers teach.

SA A D SD

2.28 The added work load of the school reform program in my school on teachers exceeds the proposed benefits.

SA A D SD

2.29 I am concerned that the pressure from the central administration to produce tangible results overnight will undermine the school reform program in my school.

SA A D SD

2.30 I feel teachers should be evaluated for tenure based on the recommendations of peer review panels.

SA A D SD

Final Thoughts on the Process of Reforming Schools

- 3.1 What are the two or three most important conditions that you feel must be present in order for you to want to participate voluntarily in a school reform program in your school?
- 3.2 How will you determine if your participation was a reasonable investment of your time?
- 3.3 If you had the opportunity to advise policy makers about how they can improve urban secondary schools, what would you recommend as the two or three most important goals?
- 3.4 Other comments

Thank you for your assistance.

Please return your completed form in the accompanying pre-addressed/stamped envelope to William Dandridge, Acting Dean, Graduate College of Education, University of Massachusetts at Boston, Wheatley Hall, Dorchester, MA. 02125.

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORMS, INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP INTERVIEWS

Project Title: "Conditions that Influence the Participation of Urban High School Teachers in School Reform Programs."

- I. I, William L. Dandridge, am the Acting Dean of the Graduate College of Education of the University of Massachusetts at Boston and a doctoral student at the School of Education, University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I am engaged in a dissertation project that seeks to develop an understanding of the conditions that influence urban secondary school teachers to participate in school improvement and reform programs.
- II. You are being asked to be a participant in my study. I will conduct one group interview with you of approximately 60 minutes. The interview will focus on the participants' impressions, concerns, observations, and involvement in the reform program in your school, and general awareness and knowledge of state and national school reform initiatives. My intent is to gain as full an understanding as possible of your views regarding the conditions you feel must be present before you are willing to support specific school reform proposals. Our discussion will also cover your assessment of the potential benefits of the leading proposals to improve urban high schools and the conditions of teaching.
- III. The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed by a secretary. My goal is to analyze and compose the material from your interview for the following purposes:
 - a. To prepare a survey instrument that will be administered to other urban high school teachers,
 - b. To use in my dissertation, and
 - c. To provide data, and examples, for presentations to policy makers and others regarding urban high school teachers' perceptions of school reform proposals proposed by state and national organizations.

In all written materials and oral presentations in which I may use the materials from your interview, I will use neither your name, names of people close to you, nor the name of your school. The transcript will be typed with initials for all proper names.

- IV. While consenting to participate in this interview, you may withdraw at any time from the actual interview process.
- V. Furthermore, while having consented to participate in the interview process and having done so, you may withdraw your consent to have specific excerpts from your interview used in any printed materials or oral presentations if you notify me within thirty days of the interviews.
- VI. In signing this form you are agreeing to the use of the materials from your interview as indicated in #III above. If I want to use the materials from your interview in any way not consistent with what has been stated in #III, I will contact you to get your additional consent.
- VII. In signing this form, you are also assuring me that you will make no financial claim on me for the use of the materials from your interview.
- VIII. Finally, in signing this form you are stating that no medical treatment will be required by you from the University of Massachusetts should any physical injury result from your participation in the interview.

At your request, I will be happy to supply you with an audio-tape copy of your interview.

I, _____, have read the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated above.

Signature of Participant

DATE

Signature of Interviewer

DATE

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