

OUTSIDE OF THE BOX: SHIFTING FROM TRADITIONAL
TO PERFORMANCE-BASED CURRICULUM
AND ASSESSMENT

by

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of the requirements for the degree

of

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Susan Cater Sullivan

November, 2012

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my late husband, who believed in me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No man is an island

Entire of itself

Each is a piece of the continent

-John Donne

My deepest and most sincere gratitude is extended to Dr. Jayne Downey for her guidance, her support, and her mentorship. Her wisdom is unparalleled. My committee members, Dr. Scott Davis, Dr. Lynn Kelting-Gibson, and Dr. Christine Rogers Stanton have provided support and patience throughout this process, and I thank them for that and so much more. I have been profoundly influenced over the years by Jane Lowe, Diane Cashell, Richard DeLorenzo, and every “diverse learner” that I have had the pleasure of working with.

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ABSTRACT

In an era of rapid technological and economic change, public school systems are challenged to find new ways to engage today's student and increase student learning. Clearly it is difficult to create and implement a "one-size-fits-all" educational model for all students in the United States. However, current research indicates that increases in student achievement may be achieved by implementing educational approaches built around active inquiry, authentic learning, and project/performance demonstrations of student achievement (DeLorenzo, 2012; Haystead, 2010; Marzano, et al., 2001, Mortenson, 2009). This qualitative study examines the process by which an alternative program in a public high school setting began the shift from a traditional teacher-led, time-based system of curriculum delivery and assessment to one that is student-centered and performance-based. Findings from interviews with five administrators and five classroom instructors indicate that national mandates, local mandates, a motivator, and a moral purpose led the district's move toward a performance-based educational model. Communication, time, and alignment with traditional school systems were the challenges faced and increases in teacher engagement, student engagement, and academic rigor were the successes encountered. Suggestions for further research are presented.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the last fifteen years, federal, state, and local governments have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to uphold our nation's mission of providing a "fair and appropriate" education for all (Datnow & Kemper, 2003, Gollnick & Chinn, 2009, p. 173; Vernez, Karam, Mariano, & DeMartini, 2006). Although many reform efforts have resulted in modifications to our educational system, none have led to the level of change anticipated when they were enacted (Aud & Hannes, 2010; Gross, et al., 2009). Notably, data reported for Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 2007), Program for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2009), and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIAS, 2009) indicate that by age 15 American students trail behind many countries in core subjects (The National Center for Education, 2011). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), administered by the U.S. Department of Education, data from 2007 indicates that only 32 percent of 8th graders in both public and private schools demonstrated competency of NAEP proficiency standard in mathematics, and only 31 percent demonstrated proficiency in reading (Peterson, Lastra-Anadon, Hanushek, & Woessman, 2011).

The data paints a gloomier picture for people of color. Only 11 percent of African American students, 15 percent of Hispanic students, and 16 percent of Native Americans were identified as being proficient at grade-level math and only 13 percent of African

American students, 5 percent of Hispanic students, and 18 percent of Native American students were proficient at grade level in reading (Peterson, Lastra-Anadon, Hanushek, & Woessman, 2011). Given the statistics, it is evident that there is a continued need for reform efforts that meet the needs of all learners.

Traditional Paradigm of Education

Defining a traditional paradigm of education is a complex task. Historically, American education has been based on teaching skills needed for material and social success (Dewey, 1938). As America's foundational economic systems change, so have approaches to educating the work force. For the purpose of this study, definition of the "traditional" approach to education is based on the public school model that has been in place since the industrial revolution (Robinson, 2010). A traditional classroom operates within the confines of a time-based system where teacher-centered instruction is delivered with the expectation that students memorize fixed information (Dewey, 1938). This mode of delivery requires students to engage in memorization and rote learning (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Robinson, 2010; Jerald, 2009). Assessment often takes place through written tests consisting of true/false answers, multiple choice answers, and hand-written essays. All students are given the same materials at the same time with the expectation they learn at the same pace (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Robinson, 2010; Jerald, 2009).

While the traditional approach to public education was seemingly successful in the past, it is no longer appropriate for teaching the skills that have been identified as

necessary for economic success in post-industrialized America (Berrett, 2012; Jerald, 2009; Robinson, 2010; Wagner, 2008). In response to the rapidly-evolving educational landscape, educators and Government agencies have implemented programs intended to meet the needs of all learners.

Two Decades of School Reform

Comprehensive School Reform

Beginning in the late 1990's, significant modifications to the American educational system were implemented. *Comprehensive School Reform (CSR)* heralded in an era in which the federal government made substantial financial investments in public schools, stressing higher student achievement goals "with an emphasis on prevention rather than remediation" (Datnow, et al., 2003). Over two billion dollars were allocated to states resulting in the development of in excess of 1300 *CSR* models (Gross, et al., 2009; Vernez, et al., 2006). Unfortunately, according to Datnow (2003), the objectives of whole school and student improvement that was the foundation of the *CSR* failed to "make the transition from the federal legislation to the school as was envisioned" (p. 2). By 2009 the United States Office of Management and Budget stated that they could find no direct relationship between *CSR* funding and student achievement (Gross, et al., 2009, p. 122).

No Child Left Behind

In January 2002, shortly after taking office, President George W. Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. The Act was created in an effort to place highly qualified teachers in schools, to ensure that schools were using scientifically-based

educational strategies, and to provide sufficient federal funds to states. Under *NCLB*, each school district in the country is held responsible for learner outcomes and must demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress in student achievement (Moran, 2009, p. 18). Under Title I of *NCLB*, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the measure by which “schools, districts, and states are held accountable for student performance” (Moran, 2009, p. 20; Research Center, 2011). Schools failing to meet AYP may suffer sanctions such as staffing changes, loss of funding, and in worst-case scenarios (schools that continually fail to meet AYP), face a state take-over or privatization (Moran, 2009, p. 18; Research Center, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Studies to date indicate that the implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act* has encountered obstacles at the state and local level (Moran, 2009, p. 24). The Brookings Papers on Economic Activity note that state funding from the federal government for *NCLB* was inadequate and inconsistent, and enforcing accountability problematic (Dee & Jacobs, 2010). McNeil (2011) reports a diversion of resources from curricular areas such as social studies, music, and art in some schools to accommodate funding issues. In addition, the pressure has been so great to make AYP that a number of districts around the country have been accused of altering test materials, appearing to satisfy AYP requirements when in fact they have not. In one reported instance, 178 educators in Atlanta, Georgia school districts were accused of altering student test forms with many acknowledging their guilt (Flock, 2011; Sarrio, 2011). Many educators contend that the criteria of achieving 100% grade level proficiency in math and science

for all students by the 2012 school year is simply not feasible (Adequate Yearly Progress, 2004/2011).

As the deadline approaches for 100% compliance with federal mandates, schools in all states are failing to meet AYP (McNeil, 2011). As a result, many states and districts protesting *NCLB* with its stringent accountability criterion have petitioned to withdraw from the program. United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, informed Congress that *NCLB* has been "creating a slow-motion train wreck for children, parents and teachers" (Dillon, 2011, p. A12). Duncan also noted that *NCLB* actually drives down standards and "causes the narrowing of the curriculum and labels too many schools as failing" (Birch, 2012, para.7). President Barack H. Obama, after taking office in 2008, agreed with Secretary Duncan regarding issues surrounding *NCLB* and has been working with the Department of Education, evaluating and expanding school reform.

Race to the Top

On February 8, 2012, President Obama announced that ten states are being granted flexibility from "the arduous mandates in No Child Left Behind" (Birch, 2012, para.1). In addition to calling for modifications (and waivers) to the *NCLB* Act, Obama introduced the *Race to the Top*, which has the stated intent of supporting educational reform and research-based innovation. In phase one of *Race to the Top*, 4.35 billion dollars in funds were awarded to individual states through the implementation of a competitive process of application from which the most innovative educational reforms were selected (The Condition of Education, NCES, 2010).

Currently, two cycles of grant distribution have been completed. In Phase One, only two states were able to meet the criteria set forth by the federal government, sharing in 600 million dollars. Ten states qualified during Phase Two (Digest of Education Statistics, NCES, 2011-015). According to a January, 2012 press release by Education Secretary Duncan, Phase Three awards of 200 million dollars had been allotted to an additional seven states in December of 2011 (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Although program recipients are being held to stringent and rigorous scrutiny, *Race to the Top* is a new government program with data collection is in its infancy; evidence of sustained success remains to be documented.

Current Factors Informing Reform Efforts

Common Core Standards

Most recently, and in conjunction with both *NCLB* and *Race to the Top*, *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* have been adopted by most states (Phillips & Wong, 2010). Common Core State Standards, derived from successful models both nationally and internationally, provide academic benchmarks that inform students, teachers, and parents of each student's progress toward specific educational goals (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2011). The National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers assert that these standards provide an understanding of what students are expected to learn and have been designed to be:

- aligned with college and work expectations;
- clear, understandable, and consistent;

- rigorous in content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- developed to build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in the global economy and society; and
- evidence-based

As of November 2011, all but four states had adopted rigorous common college and career ready standards in math and reading (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2011).

21st Century Skills

There are many innovative programs being developed and implemented throughout our public school system that are addressing the analytical and technical needs of 21st century learners. For example, the STEM Coalition is working with governmental agencies, colleges, and schools to increase student performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (Stem Education Coalition, n.d.). Other approaches to reform include private schools, charter schools, magnet schools, and home schooling are offered as alternatives to the traditional public school setting. The United States Department of Education offers grants to innovative programs that endeavor to: a) provide challenging academic achievement standards; b) improve student academic achievement; and c) are part of an overall education reform strategy (U.S. Department of Education, Innovative Programs, n.d.). Rich examples of 21st century skills in action can be seen through the work of students involved in the deforestAction program, from article writing to community action, students transferred skills from the classroom into rich,

authentic demonstrations of understanding (Tierney, 2011). Finally, over 100 schools districts in states including Alaska, Montana, Colorado, New York, and Florida, as well every district in the state of Maine, are currently in the process of moving away from the traditional teacher-led model of curriculum delivery to a specific performance-based, student-centered approach developed by Richard DeLorenzo and the Re-inventing Schools Coalition (*RISC*) (Haystead, 2010; *Re-Inventing Schools Coalition, 2012*).

Diverse Learners

All schools have diverse learners; students who have differing skills and capabilities, students from varying levels of socioeconomic status, second-language learners; in essence, students that may benefit from varied instructional strategies (Freeman, Freeman, & Ramirez, 2008; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005). Diverse learners are often referred to as students “at-risk” of failure but for the purpose of this study, the term “at-risk” is not applied to the population of diverse learners. As our nation becomes increasingly diverse, and if grade-level academic achievement for all students is the goal of on-going school reform efforts, delivery of curriculum and assessment must become responsive to the needs of all learners, “at-risk” or otherwise.

The Re-Inventing Schools Coalition Approach to Learning

Winner of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 2011, the *RISC* Approach to Learning was initially developed in response to the needs of failing schools in the Chugach School District in southern Alaska (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). This system

allows students to move at their own pace in an educational environment that is flexible, standards-centered yet performance-based, individualized, and rigorous (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). The fundamental philosophy of transparency at all levels from administrators to students exposes the *RISC* Approach to Learning to continual assessment and improvement of the model (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Haystead, 2010).

Purpose

Clearly, it is difficult to create and implement a “one-size-fits-all” educational model for all students in the United States. Reform efforts have helped to focus our cultural lens on the need for continuing development of educational programs that guide student success. However, according to some studies, the mission of a fair and appropriate education for all has not been realized (Ayers & Ayers, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 642). As is evidenced by the data from international standings in student achievement, the large percentage of schools failing to make AYP, and the growing number of charter schools and alternative programs opening in all states, there continues to be a need for the implementation of educational models that will help guide students to success in academic settings and occupational fields (DeLorenzo, Battino, Schreiber, & Carrio. 2009, p. 2; Lamperes, 2005; Marzano, et al., 2001, p. 9; Mortenson, 2009).

At the most fundamental level, students want to be successful and teachers want to guide their students toward success (Jerald, 2009; Marzano, et al., 2009; Lamperes, 2005; Renzulli, 2012). However, presenters at a recent Harvard University conference

indicated that students are changing and “conventional” teaching is no longer effective; the current system of teacher-driven instruction is not meeting the needs of all learners (Berrett, 2012.) As is evidenced by the growing popularity of alternative, magnet, and charter schools, parents and students are seeking alternative forms of content delivery (National Academy of Education, 2009; OECD, 2011). As such, there is an identifiable need for ongoing research and development of effective curriculum delivery for our public school system as we move further into the 21st century in order to provide a “fair and appropriate” education for all.

Harvard University educators noted at a recent conference that students do not appear to have the same level of curiosity anymore (Berrett, 2012). Despite continuing school reform efforts, research also indicates that U.S. students are not graduating with the skills needed to compete and succeed in a “highly competitive, constantly changing” environment (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009, p. 8; Jerald, 2009; Robinson, 2010). The purpose of this study is to investigate an educational approach that varies from the traditional model of content delivery in an effort to re-engage students. The alternative approach is standards-driven and performance-based, deviating from the traditional time-based, credit driven mode of instruction where there are perceived “givers” and “receivers” of information (Ayers & Ayers, 2011; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Renzulli, 2012). This study examines one school’s transition from the traditional educational paradigm to one that is performance-based.

Research Questions

In an era of rapid change, technologically and economically, public school systems are challenged to find new ways to engage today's student. While there are many methods being studied, the performance-based model appears to be an approach that has shown demonstrable increases in student achievement (Berrett, 2012; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Haystead, 2010; Jerald, 2009). Research indicates that increases in learner outcomes may be achieved by implementing a program built around active inquiry, authentic learning, and project/performance demonstrations of student achievement (DeLorenzo, 2012; Haystead, 2010). As previously noted, numerous schools and districts have adopted the award-winning Re-Inventing Schools Coalition (*RISC*) Approach to Learning performance-based program (DeLorenzo, 2012).

In an effort to address the needs of its diverse learners, one alternative high school program located in a rural state in the Northwest is currently undergoing the shift from traditional teacher-led, time and textbook driven instruction to a performance-based system of curriculum delivery and assessment based on the *RISC* model. Staff from this program researched the *RISC* model, conducted site visits to *RISC* schools, attended staff training based on *Delivering on the Promise: The Education Revolution* (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009), and derived much of its educational approach from the model. However, it cannot be identified as a *RISC* school as they did not employ the services of the *RISC* foundation. Thus, in the context of this alternative school, the questions that guide this research are:

- Q1 What factors led to the decision to implement a performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment in an alternative public high school?
- Q2 What challenges arose as this alternative public high school began to shift from a traditional to a performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment?
- Q3 What successes have been realized as this alternative public high school made the shift from a traditional mode to a performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment?

Background of the Study

This case study is grounded in a body of literature reporting increases in student achievement in schools following a performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment. The foundational elements of the literature as they relate to this case study are the factors influencing program change and the challenges and successes encountered during transition.

Leaders in educational reform such as Lamperes and DeLorenzo, have successfully guided “failing schools” into high-performing centers of student achievement. Both agree that implementing change is difficult but necessary for the success of America’s place in a global society. This sentiment is echoed by Jerald in his 2009 report to The Center of Public Education, *Defining a 21st Century Education*.

Education is dynamic and so are the theories that guide curriculum development (Glatterhorn, et al., 2012). Those who believe that the American public educational system is rapidly becoming outdated could be considered “futurists.” These reformers look to the future, making a case that societal change needs to drive curriculum

(Glatterhorn, et al., 2012, pp. 99-100). Supporters of performance-based curriculum arguably have looked into the future, envisioning a completely transformed educational system rebuilt around successful business models and guided by input from parents, students, private companies, and technological advancements (Glatterhorn, et al., 2012). While DeLorenzo has referred to such reform as not being on the “cutting edge” of educational change, but on the “bleeding edge” (DeLorenzo, 2012, p. 27), the reported academic success of students in performance-based programs suggest a need for continued research of this educational model.

Foundational Assumptions

The study of one school’s transition from a traditional teacher-led, time-based system to one that is student-centered and performance-based was guided by several foundational assumptions. As a former employee of this alternative high school program, decisions related to the purpose, method, and the researcher’s relationship to the participants were guided by the following principles:

- it is important to acknowledge that not all students acquire knowledge in the same manner (Renzulli, 2012);
- schools and students would benefit from research that addresses the needs of diverse learners (Berrett, 2012; Jerald, 2009);
- research would be enhanced by gathering more information about successful school models;
- research indicates that performance-based educational models are effective for diverse learners (Borre, 2012, Lamperes, 2005);

- evidence indicates that the Re-inventing Schools Approach to Learning is an effective performance-based educational model (Borre, 2012; Haystead, 2010);

Operational Definitions

This study examines how one school experienced a paradigm shift from a traditional to a performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment. Key terminology in this study includes:

21st Century Skills: While 21st century skills can refer to a myriad of academic and social aptitudes, for the purpose of this study these skills are defined in context with problem solving, technical expertise, and highly-developed interpersonal skills.

According to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (as cited in DeLorenzo, et al., 2009, p. 9), along with core content, students need the following skill set:

- 21st-century content – global awareness, financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, and health and wellness awareness;
- Learning and thinking skills – critical thinking and problem-solving skills, communications skills, creativity and innovation skills, collaboration skills, contextual learning skills, and information and media literacy skills;
- Information and communications technology literacy;
- Life skills – leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility

Additionally, resilience is identified as a 21st century skill that employees will need to adapt to rapidly changing fields such as medicine, engineering, manufacturing, and communications (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009, p. 10).

Performance-Based Learning: Performance-based educational systems build on individualized learning tailored to the uniqueness of each student. Learning is driven by set standards and is demonstrated through authentic application of knowledge and skills. Assessments range from short, concise activities to long-term multifaceted projects. In referring to the *RISC Approach to Learning*, DeLorenzo, et al., (2009) write:

The *RISC* environment can be more specifically described as a standards-based, student-directed, individualized, and data-based learning environment emphasizing increasingly real-life application. Like all of the elements of the *RISC Approach to Schooling*, the context for instruction and learning is a dedication to continuous improvement toward excellence in professional practice and every student reaching the highest possible levels of achievement (p. 76).

Traditional Education: The traditional approach to education, for the purpose of this study, is defined as a time-based, credit-driven system of teacher-led instruction driven by standardized curriculum. Students are placed in classrooms according to age, receive the same material at the same time, are assessed by standardized testing, and must earn a pre-determined amount of by Carnegie Units (based on the number of hours spent in each class) in order to graduate.

Limitations of this Study

This generalizability of the findings may be limited due to the nature of the sample. This study was conducted in an alternative high school program with a small

population (fluctuating between 60 - 100 students), in a predominately white community of middle to upper-class individuals situated in a rural state in the northwestern United States (census.gov, 2010). Results from this research cannot be extrapolated to all alternative high schools in particular, let alone public high schools in general.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter examines literature involving one aspect in the continuum of educational reform in America's public schools. The review of literature begins with a comparative overview of traditional and performance-based educational modes of education. The review proceeds to identify and define "21st century skills" along with their relation to the global achievement gap. The study continues with an in-depth analysis of a performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment which has demonstrated measurable academic improvement in public school students (Burns, 1979; Haystead, 2009; Wirkala & Kuhn, 2011). Developed by the Re-Inventing Schools Coalition (*RISC*), this performance-based model has been successfully implemented in over 100 public schools around the country ("One million," 2001). The examination of the Re-inventing Schools Approach to Learning model includes the framework of the program, the role of teacher and student, challenges inherent in program change, and evidence of improved student outcomes.

The Study of Two Educational ParadigmsTraditional Paradigm of
Curriculum Delivery and Assessment

The American public school system initially evolved around our agrarian heritage and has continually adapted over the years to accommodate the changing face of our economic environment up to and through the industrial revolution (Jerald, 2009;

Robinson, 2010). In 1906, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recommended that American public schools enroll students in classes according to grade levels determined by date of birth (Jerald, 2009; Levine 2009). While today's schools may have different "cut-off dates," a general rule is that students begin kindergarten by age five with graduation anticipated by age 18 (Levine, 2009). Hallmarks of a traditional public school classroom include 50 minute classes, a 180+ day school calendar year, rows of desks facing the teacher, instructor-led and text-driven curriculum delivery that is time and credit-based; lessons that are preplanned and orderly (Ayers, 1993; Ayers & Ayers, 2011; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Lamperes, 2005; Levine, 2009; Willis, 2006). The traditional system, according to DeLorenzo (2009) is one in which "time is the constant and learning is the variable" (p. 18). Students are expected to move through the public school system by demonstrating knowledge and/or general aptitude in the core subjects of math, science, language arts, and history (Jerald, 2009; Levine, 2009; Robinson, 2010). In most traditional school programs, a D- (although the lowest level of achievement) is considered sufficient for a student to move to the next level of instruction or content (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Robinson, 2010).

In the current era of accountability, particularly with the enactment of *No Child Left Behind*, the educational system is also driven to standardization: standardization of instruction; standardization of curriculum; standardization of assessments; state standardization of testing; standardization of accountability at all levels (Levine, 2009). In a traditional public school setting, assessment often takes the form of pen and paper

testing where students demonstrate knowledge by getting the “right” answers which is, in effect, a summation of information (Ayers & Ayers, 2011).

Arguably, this system has worked well for many over the last 100 years.

Regardless, the case can be made that neither the early agrarian or industrial-revolution “factory-based” systems of education best serve the needs of students in our 21st century society (Berrett, 2012; Jerald, 2009; Levine, 2009; Robinson, 2010; Wagner, 2011).

Studies indicate that, on a global level, American students fall well behind other students in developed countries in academic achievement. The charts provided by Peterson, Lastra-Anadon, & Woessman (2011), on the following page, illustrate the international ranking of American students in math and reading performance. While a number of states rank above international averages in these areas, overall indicators of student achievement for the class of 2001 place the United States in 32nd place in math and 17th place in reading among participating nations.

The Global Achievement Gap/21st Century Skills

Educational consultant and founder/co-director of the Change Leadership Group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Tony Wagner noted that “schools haven’t changed; the world has” (Wagner, 2008, p. ch. 2, p. ii). While technology has been responsible for the ever-changing face of American economics and education for hundreds of years, experts agree that never has the pace of technological change been more rapid (Jerald, 2009; Wagner, 2011). Since the 1970s, technological advancements have spurred mechanized farming, highly-complex factory assembly lines, technology-based businesses, and a globalized economy. These advances, along with demographic,

political, and volatile economic shifts, have substantial consequences for today's students (Jerald, 2009; Wagner, 2011).

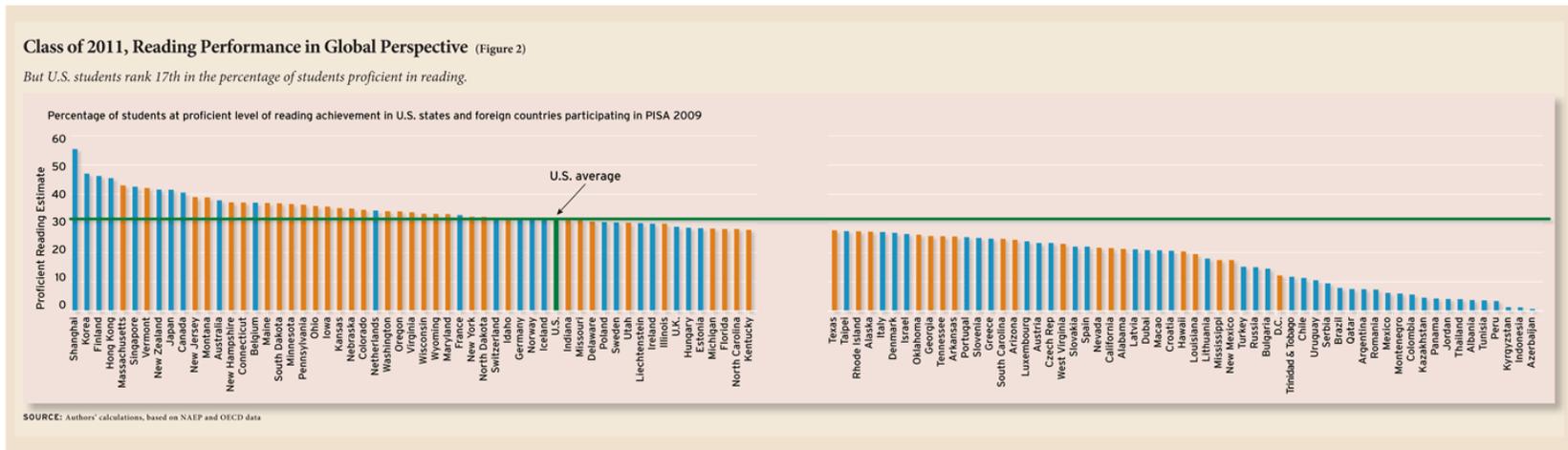
The United States now ranks tenth among a whole spectrum of nations in the rate of college completion of 25 to 44 year-olds. According to major business leaders, the skills needed to compete in an ever-increasingly competitive and global economy are not being presented in a traditional schools program (Wagner, 2008, Stillwell & Plotts, 2011). Our K-12 students leave school ill-equipped to compete in a global economy, equipped to work primarily in the kinds of jobs that are in danger of disappearing from the American landscape (Wagner, 2008).

The Department of Labor estimates that two out of every three new jobs created between 2006 and 2016 will require education or training beyond a high school diploma (Jerald, 2008, Wagner, 2008). The 2008-09 average calculated graduation rate of high school students in the United States is 75.5 percent with the lowest average being 56.3 percent in Nevada to the highest, 90.7 percent, in Wisconsin (Stillwell & Plotts, 2011). The United States graduation rate falls far behind that of other countries such as Japan [93%], Poland [92%], and Denmark [96%] (Stillwell & Plotts, 2011). As well, the graduation rates of American students are considerably lower for poor and minority students (Kidron & Darwin, 2007; Peterson, Lastra-Anadon, & Woessman, 2011).

Figure One: Math



Figure Two: Reading



Conversations among experts indicate a consensus that traditional curriculum is not enough; schools need to change radically to meet the needs of students who will be released into the labor force in a world that is rapidly technologically saturated and continually evolving (DeLorenzo et al., 2009; Lamperes, 2005; Robinson, 2010; Wagner, 2011). While it is difficult to predict the future, the following figure illustrates the changing face of employment opportunities in the United States:

Figure Three: Changing Mix of Jobs

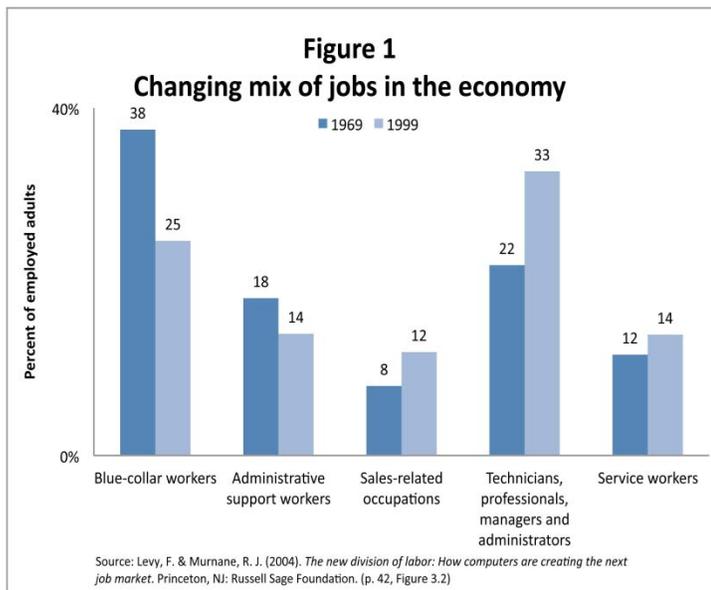


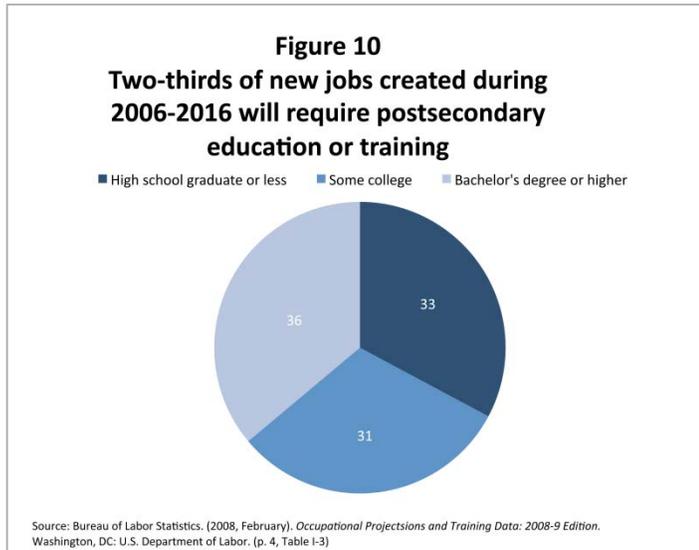
Figure Three indicates a trend away from blue-collar employment opportunities toward jobs that require skills such as problem solving, technical expertise, and highly-developed interpersonal skills. The implication for schools is that, according to Jerald (2009), “districts must do a better job attending the *application* of knowledge and skills, going beyond simply teaching students to ‘reproduce’ what they are taught within familiar contexts” (p. 69).

There is much literature being produced concerning 21st century skills and the competencies purportedly needed to compete in a global economy. To date, there is no one clear definition of 21st century skills. Experts argue that these skills need to include more than a factual knowledge base; graduates also need technological expertise, superior interpersonal skills, a mastery of higher-level math skills, critical-thinking skills, the ability to work collaboratively, and an ability to adapt to new circumstances. School districts are being urged to consider whether their educational environments address the fundamental basics of 21st century skills which include open ended curiosity, creativity, and taking individual responsibility for identifying and solving problems (Jerald, 2009).

Performance-Based Paradigm of Curriculum Delivery and Assessment

Due to international standing in student achievement and the rapidly changing needs of a country competing in a global economy, educators are acknowledging the urgent demand for diverse instructional opportunities for all learners. As well, industrial leaders are increasingly requesting that students entering the work force come prepared to compete in the 21st century. In response, schools are evaluating programs designed to meet the educational needs of diverse learners (OECD, 2011; Wagner, 2008). The following chart illustrates the projected needs of business leaders that are influencing educational practices:

Figure Four: New Jobs



It is evident that students need to be prepared to enter a workforce that requires more skills than the traditional K-12 education offers.

Currently, 36 states have policies in place which allow students to earn credits based on outcomes which demonstrate academic proficiency as opposed to the traditional Carnegie approach (Cavanagh, 2012). Some of these programs include pre-developed instructional packets, on-line courses, performance-based programs, standards-driven programs, virtual schools, etc. (Berry & Beach, 2009; Cavanagh, 2012; DeLorenzo, et al., 2012; Jerald, 2009; Levine, 2009; “One Million Students,” 2011).

This study focuses on one paradigm in particular, the performance-based approach to education. Performance-based approaches to curriculum delivery and assessment are as varied as the schools implementing them. Locally-focused reform initiatives are personalized school to school and district to district; however, the overall paradigm profoundly deviates from traditional teacher-driven instruction, by asking

students to take responsibility for their own learning (DeLorenzo, et al., 2012; Lamperes, 2005; Levine, 2009). The performance-based design of curriculum delivery and assessment no longer provides a standard process for all students but looks for a standard outcome from each student (Levine, 2009). In effect this is a system where “learning is the constant and time is the variable” (Delorenzo, et al., 2009, p. 19). While developed around Common Core or state standards, students move at their own pace through a locally-developed, bench-marked curriculum, not bound by “hours in the seat” (DeLorenzo, et al., 2012). This approach relies heavily on student-centered learning, active learning, and cooperative learning within a classroom (Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005; *Noteworthy Perspectives*, 2000). Performance-based classrooms become models of inquiry driven, real life application of learning generally using measurements that track progress of individual student improvement rather than through comparison to others (Jerald, 2009; Lamperes, 2005).

The *RISC* Approach to Learning

The Re-inventing Schools Coalition (*RISC*) approach is one of many performance-based approaches to curriculum delivery and assessment, but it is the only one that has won both a prestigious national award and the endorsement of a leading educational researcher (Heystead, 2010, DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). The *RISC* Approach to Learning has been studied by Robert J. Marzano, educational expert and founder of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), through imperical studies and site specific observations (Haystead, 2010; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). Most notably, the

Chugach School District in Alaska (origin of the *RISC* Approach to Learning) was a 2001 recipient of the Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award (Cokeley, Byrnes, Markley, & Keeley, 2006; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). The Baldrige Award is the only national Presidential honor given to businesses, healthcare organizations, and educational institutions for quality and organizational performance excellence” (Cokeley, et al., 2006, DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). Under the leadership of Richard DeLorenzo, this performance-based system of education was developed to “. . . focus on learning and student success for schools at all levels” (Cokeley, et al., 2006). Cokeley, et al. state that the *RISC* approach to Learning met all seven criteria for consideration of the award including:

- Leadership
- Strategic planning
- Customer and market focus
- Measurement, analysis, and knowledge management
- Human resource focus
- Process management
- Results

The process involved in application for the Baldrige award is long and arduous, generally requiring years of award-winning performance at the state level, a multi-tiered and in-depth application processes, and hundreds of hours of site analyses (Cokeley, et al., 2006; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). The Chugach School District had never won an award at the state level and their ability to win the accolades of the Baldrige community was considered a “Cinderella Story” (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009).

Continually self-assessing and correcting, the current model of the *RISC* Approach to Learning has a fundamental framework from which individual schools and districts replicate their performance-based model, making it authentic to their students and communities. According to DeLorenzo, et al. (2009) the four interrelated principals that form the foundation of the *RISC* system are:

- Shared Vision
- Personalized Mastery
- Student Ownership
- Continuous Improvement

In 2012, the Barack Obama Charter School, a public elementary program, was identified as “the most improved elementary school in California.” A press release from the school states that following the *RISC* model, math proficiency on state achievement tests increased by 30% and English language arts by 24% from 2011 to 2012 (one academic year). Chief Academic Officer, Nikolaus Namba, is quoted as saying that “this academic growth is proof of what is possible when students, families, and staff all agree to expect nothing short of proficiency and utilize a performance-based learning model, shifting away from time-based student advancement” (Borre, 2012).

To elaborate, *Shared Vision* has to include all stakeholders from students and staff, to school and community leaders. Goals are identified by all stakeholders, including parents, with the objective of having a common context and using common language. *Personalized Mastery* involves creating an individualized learning plan for each student with specific goals established by student, teacher, and parent/guardian. Objectives meet

pre-determined standards and benchmarks as determined by continuous internal assessment. *Student Ownership* of learning is one of the primary goals of the *RISC* system. Students are guided to create their own assessments as they move through standards and levels. Students take increasing responsibility for developing their own educational goals and on-going assessments. *Continuous Improvement* involves formal assessments of every level of performance within a *RISC* system. These assessments include systemic feedback, systematic evaluation, and benchmarking cycles (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). This system requires that all stakeholders be flexible, dedicated to a high rigor of student learning, and willing to check and adjust as needed (Cokeley, et. al, 2006; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009).

Teacher Role in a *RISC*-Based Program

In performance-based models of curriculum delivery and assessment, teachers become guides on the student's educational path rather than "dispensers of information" (Jerald, 2009). Classrooms no longer consist of rows of desks but have learning centers and seating arrangements that encourage small group learning, peer instruction, small group instruction from the teacher, and any other number of grouping options (DeLorenzo, et al., 2012). Teachers need to be flexible, adapting to the needs of individual learners as they move through subject areas and levels of content (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Lamperes, 2005; Marzano, et al., 2001).

Although direct instruction still occurs in performance-based classrooms, it is mostly at the beginning of a class and used as a guiding framework from which the individual student moves outward toward a larger theme. Because of this, formative

assessments are considered critical to student learning, particularly when openly displayed in classrooms (a component of the *RISC* model). Assessments are developed and agreed upon by teacher/student and range from traditional written assignments to large and multi-layered projects (DeLorenzo, et al., 2011). Research indicates that immediate feedback increases retention of knowledge and increases student outcomes over the long-term (Burns, 1979; Lamperes, 2005; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Willis, 2006). When implemented correctly, the *RISC* model allows classroom instructors to have more one-one-one or small group time with students.

Educational goals are driven by individual student plans and curriculum delivery and assessment becomes student-centered. Teachers provide students with frequent benchmark assessments, monitor individual progress, and provide a learning environment that is interdisciplinary, integrated, and based on a project-based curriculum (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Jerald, 2009).

Student Role in a *RISC*-Based Program

One of the most critical objectives among performance-based educational programs is the development of student motivation (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Lamperes, 2005). To foster participation and ownership of their own learning process, students are guided toward the development of open-ended curiosity that there may be “no right answer;” creativity and thinking “outside of the box;” and personal responsibility for identifying and solving problems (DeLorenzo, et al.; Lamperes, 2005; Levine, 2009). In a *RISC* model, students are required to show mastery of curriculum and standards before moving to another level. Students may be at level 5 in one subject and level 1 in another.

The ability to learn in an individualized, self-paced manner empowers student ownership of learning (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009).

Evidence of Success of the *RISC* Approach to Learning

The Chugach School District of Alaska was the first district to implement the *RISC* Approach to Learning and the program provided evidence of increases in student achievement (Haystead, 2010; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). Growth in reading, language, math, and spelling improved dramatically over a 5-year period (Haystead, 2010; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009). Average student achievement as measured on the California Achievement Test increased from the 28th percentile to the 71st percentile in reading, from the 54th percentile to 78th in math, and from the 26th to the 72nd percentile in reading (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009, p. 50).

In 2010, at the request of the Re-Inventing Schools Coalition (*RISC*), the Marzano Research Laboratory conducted a study comparing student achievement in seven *RISC* and eight non-*RISC* schools and districts (Haystead, 2010). State testing data from 2009 was analyzed for student proficiencies in reading writing and mathematics. The study compared districts in Alaska, Colorado, and Florida with similar demographics of size of student population, ethnicity, and urban/rural setting (Haystead, 2010; “One Million Students,” 2011). The results indicated that students in *RISC* school settings scored 2.5 times higher for writing and 2.4 times higher for math than students in Non-*RISC* schools (“One Million Students,” 2011). According to Haystead’s report (2010), “The odds ratio effect sizes ranged from 1.240 to 3.984, the risk ratio effect sizes ranged from 1.024 to

1.683, and the phi coefficients ranged from .031 to .264. With the exception of the phi coefficient for Florida on writing, the correlations were statistically significant at the .001 level ($p < .001$) (p. 21). The validity of these findings has been supported by subsequent studies conducted by researchers Gary Whiteley in Alaska and Theodore Coladarci and Lori Smith from the University of Maine (“One Million Students,” 2011).

Challenges Encountered During Implementation of the RISC Approach to Learning

School reform is an ongoing process with inherent challenges at each level of implementation (Lamperes, 2005). DeLorenzo, et al. state that while research clearly indicates what new direction education should take, “overcoming the inertia of traditional schools perhaps poses the greatest obstacle” (p. 45). They further write:

Many good teachers try to adjust their instruction to reach all of their students, but established structures and policies, as well as the culture itself, make individualized approaches difficult to implement successfully over time. In addition, administrators and teachers are often mired in complying with policies and mandates, a condition that leaves little room for innovation and creativity (p. 5).

In a *RISC* model, involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making is crucial.

Transparency is critical and approval must be met at every level of development and implementation from district and school administrators, union, school boards, students, parents, teachers, and the community (DeLorenzo, et al., 2006; “One Million,” 2001).

According to DeLorenzo, et al. (2009), a “significant and potentially costly misunderstanding of the *RISC* approach” is the potential for teachers to let students educate themselves as they passively sit by (p. 80-81). Teachers need to understand and

be trained how to implement “two-way individualized learning” (p. 74). Students need teachers who will actively participate by guiding them in their individualized learning, working closely with those students needing more help (DeLorenzo, et al., 2009).

DeLorenzo (2006) states, “Everyone wants to make a difference. We need to believe this. We just seem to get lost along the way (p.9). Despite the challenges inherent during times of change, if positive outcomes for students are evident, change will be sustainable.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Rationale and Approach to Data Collection

In order to best answer the research questions, this study used a qualitative approach to data collection in order to collect important insights about program implementation. There is little extant research as to the process of development and implementation of a performance-based curriculum model and qualitative inquiry, such as a case study, can offer insight into multiple realities, providing various perspectives of what is seemingly one system (Lichtman, 2010). For the purpose of this study data collection included interviews with school district personnel involved with the program shift at the alternative program. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both district administrations and instructional staff.

Research ContextCommunity

The program which serves as the focus of this study is located in the northwestern United States in a rapidly-growing community, home to over 37,000 residents. The greater valley is dotted with many small towns and hosts a permanent population of approximately 90,000 (quickfacts.census.gov). The economy of this area revolves around agriculture, year-round tourism, high-technology industries, and jobs related to a land-

grant university with enrollment of 14,000+ students (state website). Of permanent residents, 95% have self-identified as Caucasian (quickfacts.census.gov).

District

This case study focuses on a public alternative program serving high school students. This program is part of a greater district serving over 5,400 students from grades K-12. There are seven K-5 elementary schools in this district, two 6-8 middle schools, one high school, and one alternative high school program. Approximately 750 full and part-time teachers staff these schools (district website). The district has received several honors including one National Blue Ribbon School Award and twice receiving Red Book's "America's Best Schools Award" (district website).

High School

This area's high school was established in 1877 in a building named the West Side School. The current facility, constructed in 1956, is located west of the original site and serves as the community's only high school. Although the community has grown dramatically since 1956, all 1,800 students in grades 9-12 attend the institution. The staff consists of 129 teachers, numerous support staff, and four administrators (district website; state website).

Academic programs at the main branch of the high school include art, business education, English literature and composition, world languages, "health enhancement" (health education and physical education), family and consumer science, trades and industry, mathematics, music, science, and social studies. Students also have the

opportunity to participate in Advanced Placement courses eligible for college credit in American history, art, calculus, English literature and composition, French, German, government, music, physics, psychology, Spanish, and world history (district website). Students attending this school have consistently scored higher on state standardized tests than other students both in the home state and nationally (state website).

Alternative High School Program

As a branch of the district high school, the alternative high school program was established in 1993 to serve students considered “at-risk” of failure. As the program developed, it continued to focus on the needs of diverse learners. Growing from nine enrolled students for the first semester of operation, the program served over 95 full and part-time students during the 2011-2012 school year (district website; state website).

The alternative high school system currently occupies a separate wing of the main school campus and has its own administrative office, library, and parenting center (district website; state website). The 17 full and part-time classroom instructors consist of nine female teachers and eight male teachers. Of the 17, six are full-time program instructors, three male and three female. The majority of teachers self-identify as Caucasian, and range in age from early 20’s to late 50’s. Instructional experience spans from four to 19 years.

Acknowledging that are many methods of curriculum delivery, and that not all students learn the same way or at the same rate (Marzano, et al., 2009), this program has a stated commitment of providing “a safe, positive environment in which everyone is valued and respected [where] experiences will be academically challenging, relevant, and

varied so that all students have the opportunity to thrive in the 21st century” (Program Handbook). An application only admission policy certifies that students are voluntary participants in the alternative high school program. Students have the opportunity to take classes from the main branch of the high school and are encouraged to participate in athletics and other after-school activities.

As this program develops its performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment, staff meet twice-weekly to collaborate on the development of assessments, matrices, templates, benchmarks and standards, and content-specific expectations that are both authentic and rigorous. The traditional Carnegie grading system has been replaced by an alternative scale of emerging, nearing proficiency, proficient, or advanced proficient. Students advance to the next level of identified benchmarks when they have demonstrated proficiency (70% or better) in a content standard. Staff members readily acknowledge that they are in the infancy stages of program development and are, as two interview participants stated, “building the airplane while it is flying.”

Procedures for Data Collection

Research indicates that performance-based programs can be effective in increasing student outcomes at specific school sites (Haystead, 2010; *RISC*, 2012). Given that this alternative high school program has begun the process of development and implementation of performance-based curriculum delivery and assessment, the study set out to document critical issues and challenges involved in implementing change in order

to help mitigate struggles for future program development. Case study methodology was selected as it allows a focused, interactive form of research to occur (Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2005). Data were collected through interviews with district staff members involved in the shift.

Interview Protocol

Participants were recruited through the distribution of introductory/explanatory letters via an inter-school mail system. Respondents contacted the researcher and appointments for interviews were scheduled through the respective offices of district personnel. Interviews took place during the months of April and May 2012, purposefully after Spring Break and before the final month of the school year. Thirty minute semi-structured interviews were scheduled and conducted with the school district superintendent, the deputy superintendent, the high school principal, and two high school vice-principals (one of whom is the alternative school program director). In addition, thirty minute semi-structured interviews were scheduled and conducted with four full-time classroom teachers and one instructional coach. Field notes consisted of handwritten notes and an audio-recording device. When appropriate, interview participants were asked to provide examples and/or elaborations of their answers/responses. Participant responses were transcribed verbatim from audio recordings, with the exception of the first interview which was coded solely from field notes. All audio recordings were cross-referenced with field notes.

Data Analysis

Developed in line with other studies of this type (Maxwell, 2005; Lichtman, 2010 Patton, 2002), the research questions were used to guide the data analysis:

- Q1 What factors led to the decision to implement a performance-based mode of curriculum delivery and assessment in an alternative public high school?

- Q2 What challenges arose as this alternative public high school began to shift from a traditional mode to a performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment?

- Q3 What successes have been realized as this alternative public high school made the shift from a traditional mode to a performance-based model of curriculum delivery and assessment?

For each Research Question, the researcher conducted multiple readings of interviews and field notes from each participant in order to identify key points, commonalities, and unique or divergent statements. Margin notes were used to identify common and distinct features leading to the creation of a set of preliminary codes for each research question. Working definitions were created for each code and these codes were organized into categories. There were five categories that emerged for RQ1 (educational mandates, fiscal considerations, a culture of innovation, a motivator, and shared moral purpose), three categories that emerged for RQ2 (communication, time, and systems alignment), and three categories that emerged for RQ3 (teacher engagement, student engagement, and increased academic rigor).

Validity

This case study addressed validity, trustworthiness and rigor through the incorporation of varied “voices” of research participants (Lichtman, 2010). Each

interview was conducted in privacy in settings chosen by the participant, helping to create a “safe,” authentic environment. Research questions were developed specifically to allow for open-ended discussion; each participant appeared to be comfortable with the process.

In addition, the technical method of data analysis as described by Constan (1992) was used to support the validity of the categories developed for this data set. A colleague unrelated to the study was given an orientation to the investigation, an overview of the study's design, and a random sample of the segmented data. The colleague coded the selected portion of the data using the category definitions. This process produced an agreement rate of 96%, supporting the validity of the coding scheme and, as such, is considered to be an appropriate degree of agreement.

Researcher’s Position Relative to the Participants

As the researcher, I was influenced by multiple points of reference during this case study. Over the span of 16 years, I have had in-depth interactions with the program first as the school secretary (3years), as parent of a program student (2 years), and ultimately as a teacher in the setting (2 years). These were not years consecutively spent involved with the alternative program but laid the foundation from which this research evolved. Personal and professional interactions with students and staff fostered a desire to study research-based educational approaches effective for diverse learners.

During the course of this case study, I noticed a shift beginning to occur in my focus as a researcher. Due to previous years of involvement with the program, my initial attention was on the school as an entity unto itself. However, as the research progressed, my focus shifted away from the whole school and the larger program, evolving into a

focus that centers on best-practices for diverse learners regardless of where their education takes place.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Data Analysis

This section provides a summary of data analysis and the answers it provides for the research questions. Analyses indicate that four themes emerged as significant factors leading to the district's move toward a performance-based educational model: national mandates, local mandates, what this researcher has identified as the catalyst, and a common moral purpose. Three themes emerged from analysis of all respondents as having produced the most challenges to the paradigm shift: effective communication, the magnitude of time involved in development and implementation, and alignment with traditional school systems. Finally, three major factors were identified as leading to a positive culture shift in the alternative program: teacher engagement, student engagement, and increased academic rigor.

Factors Leading to Program Change

This study examined a singular alternative high school's move from a traditional teacher-led approach of curriculum delivery and assessment to one that is student-centered and performance-based. Findings indicate that there were several key factors which led to the district's decision to implement a Re-Inventing Schools (*RISC*) Approach to Learning model at this site. Three key factors were indicated as having "set the stage" for the change. These factors consisted of 1) national and state mandates to

improve student achievement for all students, 2) local mandates to improve student learning in a culture of innovation and personalization, and 3) the approachable leader (or catalyst, in this case) with passion, vision, and the willingness to withstand the challenges associated with profound change.

Federal and State Mandates

Each research participant directly referred to federal and state mandates as guiding changes in curriculum and instruction in the district where the alternative program is located. Noted by one of the five administrators, the No Child Left Behind Act signed into law in 2002 (Moran, 2009) “. . . forced [this district’s] hand a little bit to think about the lower level kids because we always met the expectations of that high end group of kids because we have always been a high achieving school but we did nothing very successfully with our low-end kids and NCLB at least forces us to start addressing the needs of all of our kids.” As well, the majority of respondents indicated that Common Core State Standards, adopted by the state in 2011 (state website), were instrumental in the district’s focus on developing performance-based educational curriculum for all grades. One administrator commented that “There is national attention on standards, technology, etc. Those 21st century skills. And research indicates that performance-based education is effective for improving student achievement for all learners.” Every administrator noted that the alternative program is considered a pilot program for the district as it moves into personalized educational plans for every K-12 student.

Local Mandates

Mandates within the district itself were instrumental in the performance-based program being implemented at the alternative high school site. First and foremost was the foundation that had been laid by the district's Long Range Strategic Plan. Less concrete, but of particular importance was the conflagration of events that brought the necessity for, and timeliness of, change to light, specifically a budget crisis and the move of the alternative program from an off-site location to the main campus.

Long-Range Strategic Plan

Analysis of data indicates the school district's Long-Range Strategic Plan (LRSP) as the very basis upon which this change is being instituted. One administrator noted that the district's LRSP, amended in 2007, made "a promise" to the community that district schools would be fiscally responsible, operate in a culture of innovation, and provide a personalized, quality education for each and every student (district website).

Budget Noted multiple times, a budget crisis in the school district was one major factor in setting the stage for program change. According to one administrator, "We had a whole bunch of meetings about how are we going to save a whole bunch of money and I asked, 'Why is [this] program in a different location?'" It was ultimately decided by the district, and approved by the school board, to move the program from its independent, off-campus site to a wing of the main high school campus to save money. In conjunction with the move, a mandate was given to the program director, ". . . two things

really have to happen. The move **has** to happen. Due to the budget. And the rigor ... of the program **has** to improve.”

Culture of Innovation The impending move of the alternative program, to the main campus of the school, created an opportunity for examination of the existing program. “The program was moving to a new facility within the main branch of the high school so change was inevitable anyway...” stated an administrator. Another commented that there was nothing really alternative about the program as it had existed before. Although it was located off campus and had smaller class sizes, this administrator stated, “We always talked about having an alternative high school in our school district but it really wasn’t; it was basically just high school just in a different place, a smaller environment. We really weren’t doing anything different than we were doing in the regular setting. . .”

Two of five administrators pointed to the district’s Long-Range Strategic Plan as setting up the opportunity for innovation in program delivery. Each administrator commented on the opportunity for change. Noted by one, “The traditional model is just not working. The Native population, it’s just not working. There are different walks of life.” The intended goal of reaching all learners led to the formation of committees whose research eventually guided this paradigm shift. As summed up by one administrator, “. . . research indicates that performance-based education is effective for improving student achievement for all learners.”

Fiscal issues, a long range strategic plan, and research into best practices were aided by the stated district philosophy, “As we developed, first of all, a culture of change,

being accepting of change, we moved to...a culture of innovation. Actually moved to a culture of opportunity, which is what we are in now and next year we will be launching a culture of innovation.” While an increase in rigor, relevance, and student achievement is the ultimate goal for this program, another administrator noted that “. . . we want an alternative program that will allow kids of all abilities and needs to be there.”

The Catalyst

The paradigm shift taking place in this alternative school program was initially inspired by the work of Richard DeLorenzo and his non-profit Re-Inventing Schools Coalition (*RISC*). As previously noted, the “tipping point” for this program was the convergence of the budget deficit driving the move of the program, the move sparking a look into content delivery and student engagement which then led to research of innovative educational methodologies. While this district’s “culture of opportunity and innovation” may refer to the Long Range Strategic Plan mandate of fiscal responsibility and increased academic rigor with personalized learning for all students, it takes more than a mandate to make change at such a fundamental level. Worthy of note is data indicating the presence of a “the catalyst” as having been key to, as one administrator noted, guiding “second order change.” “A visionary leader may be great at identifying meaningful change necessary to bring about desired future reality, but may lack the wiring to develop a plan that can lead to change” (Egbert, 2010). The catalyst must be able to push through all of the challenges associated with second order change and translate “. . . vision into an actionable plan” (Egbert, 2010). Luke (1998) identified the most difficult task of the catalytic leader as being able to maintain the momentum and

"keep the fire burning" (p.146). The catalyst associated with this program has been characterized by administrators and teachers alike as an approachable leader with vision, passion, and personal fortitude.

Throughout each interview, the point was repeatedly made that the administrator in charge of the alternative program was fundamental in bringing change about. His role was referenced a notable 32 times by the other four administrators and sixteen times by instructional staff. As one administrator stated, "Any time you are blazing a trail of something that is new, you need people that are willing to be pioneers." Specifically, respondents noted the "catalyst" as someone who was ". . . willing talk until he was blue in the face, to as many people as he could," Another indicated that he was ". . ." the one who led the change, the committees, talking to the students, teachers, community members, and the educational community including colleges and universities. Developing templates, or programs that he could hand to folks so they could understand what it was." One administrator said that this person was ". . . the hammer, and the one they can all be pissed off at." As Robert Marzano has noted, this person has to have the guts to stand alone, be publicly brave, be easy to follow, and absorb the fallout from perceived setbacks (Marzano Research Laboratory, 2009). Affirmed by another administrator, "The drive and passion of [name omitted] cannot be understated as being imperative to moving his staff in the same direction."

Moral Purpose

A fourth factor emerging from the data and supporting the development of this performance-based program was referred to as "moral purpose." Unexpectedly, each

participant indicated that a common moral purpose has driven their quest to move away from the traditional mode of education. Although each had a different perspective regarding moral purpose, they unanimously argued that “What we were doing just wasn’t good enough anymore. What we were doing in the [alternative] program definitely wasn’t good enough, but what we were doing overall in schools wasn’t good enough.” In supporting the change in educational paradigm, each held firmly to the belief that all students can learn and that fair grading practices are a moral imperative. Two of the participants noted that, “It all tied together. Timing was critical here. To me it was almost divine intervention how things just all came together,” and “The stars were aligned for the shift.” Notably, this was echoed by two research participants from the instructional staff with, “There is a reason for me to be here at this time. The stars are aligned,” and “It wasn’t difficult for me to make that shift because I believe in it so much. . .”

Challenges Encountered During Program Change

Data indicates that there were three primary challenges encountered by administrators and instructional staff during the development and implementation of a performance-based educational paradigm for the alternative program. These challenges were effective communication amongst all stakeholders, the sheer amount of time it takes to develop and implement an alternative educational approach, and the difficulties encountered alignment between two systems of accountability.

Communication

Findings from the data analyses indicate that among the many obstacles encountered during program development and implementation, effective communication was a major challenge. From the administrators, “We should have given more information to our staff, not the [alternative program] staff but the other staff in the building . . . as we started the implementation because there was a lot of confusion, a lot of questions.” This confusion led to resistance to change among some of the teaching staff, a lack-of buy-in for the new approach, and, in a few isolated instances noted by both administrators and instructional staff, “back-stabbing” and “sabotage.” As noted by one of the instructional staff, the staff was divided, “Half did, you know, arrive, ‘Oh my gosh, this is what we need to do!’ The other half was, ‘Oh, my gosh, you are trying to take away what we have been working on for 15 years.’”

Each of the ten participants indicated that ineffective communication was detrimental to a healthy program change. An administrator noted that “What happened for a while there is because, especially for some of our regular staff members who didn’t have faith in the end product, it did a lot of almost back-stabbing or back-talking saying, ‘You know, this is one more thing they’re gonna try and it’s not gonna work.’”

Explaining standards-based or performance-based education, as one administrator indicated “. . . has been very difficult and so it’s something I did not foresee or predict.” There were multiple statements from each participant regarding the lack of communication to the alternative program staff in particular and the entire high school staff in general. Along that line, it was stated “. . . that’s the hard part. It will take a whole

bunch to get communities and everybody, our community, to understand this...” One administrator commented that “We need multiple conversations regarding this. Teachers need the time to reconcile their own philosophies about traditional education with this paradigm.”

Time as a Limiting Factor

All participants indicated that limitations on their time created major obstacles during development and implementation of the performance-based system. From the administrative perspective, without the time needed to fully engage the educational staff, there was a lack of cohesiveness from both branches of the school. While four participants acknowledged the vital role that the instructional coach played in guiding staff through some of the changes, all five administrators indicated that they, personally, would have preferred to have been “a stronger presence.” One administrator indicated that it would have been beneficial to have the time “to guide my staff more.” An instructional staff member noted that the administrators are “. . . pulled in too many directions . . . they have a lot of responsibilities.” Noted by another administrator, “We [school districts] always try to do it in a scarcity mode. . . if I could write the template, I would have provided the right kind of staffing and the right kind of time to allow those that were willing to be pioneers immerse themselves.” From the administrative perspective, as one participant stated, “Change seems to take forever but then people say, ‘This is too fast. I never saw it coming. How did this happen?’”

While the administration commented on time as a necessary factor for program development and implementation, instructional staff overwhelmingly indicated that the

lack of time available for program and professional development has led to a myriad of challenges. Although acknowledging the Creating rubrics, matrices, individualized assessments, individualized learning plans, building collegiality, and attending staff training and in-services have led to what each participant, in one way or another, referred to as exhaustion. Each participant commented on time taken away from families and life outside of school. It should be noted, however, that each instructional staff member interviewed was committed to the time it took to develop this program. One staff member commented that “. . . I worked a lot last summer writing the rubrics. I didn’t mind. But when you believe in it it’s just easy to do that. . . people who want to learn and continue in their professions, they do that regardless of the compensation.” From another, “Time is taken away from my family but you’re much more committed to it . . . you have drunken the Kool Aid and I believe in it. With every bit of myself I believe in this . . .”

Aligning a Performance-Based Program with a Traditional Educational Community

Three district administrators and four instructional staff members discussed the difficulties encountered in implementing an alternative grading program that would align with high school and college/university level reporting programs. Administration and instructional design committee members, in general, and “the catalyst” in particular, worked diligently with the district high school, the state office of public instruction, the local university system, and several out-of-state colleges to develop an accountability and reporting system acceptable to all. One instructional staff member has begun working with the district to develop compatible reporting software. This is an on-going process

but one which shows promise. The primary concern raised by those outside of the program, looking to accept performance-based proficiency benchmarks instead of traditional grade points is “making sure it’s (assessment) implemented with fidelity in the classroom.”

Interestingly, one administrator expressed concern about eligibility for college athletics stating “. . .if I were going to tell anyone else that is considering this that just make sure you have at least your local universities on board with what you are doing and then eventually of course the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association).” Another administrator underscored the concerns with reporting of academic proficiency in this performance-based system in stating, “You know, our hard part was people understood the concept, and they believed in the concept. But it was hard for us to really implement it across the board and make sure it was actually being done in classrooms.” All administrators and instructional staff referred to the collection of hard data regarding student achievement as being the next, most crucial step in gaining credibility.

Successes Realized with Program Change

While making such a profound program change is difficult, and there have been obstacles along the way, the administrators and instructional staff alike are enthusiastic about the changes they are witnessing within the alternative program in the first year of implementation of the performance-based model. These changes are occurring at multiple levels from teacher engagement to student engagement, and are leading to a demonstrable

increase in the academic rigor of the program. These three factors combined are said to be changing the “culture” of the program.

Teacher Engagement

Participants made statements indicating that, “The teachers are overwhelmed but happy,” and that “They see a change in students.” From one administrator, “I have seen this team step forward and make opportunity out of what could be challenge.”

Administrators also indicate that there has been a change in the way teachers interact with the students. As one participant said, “Content delivery is more authentic, meaningful, significant, and relevant.”

Teachers commented on their changing role from teacher to facilitator. As one teacher stated, “In the classroom I am starting to consider myself more of a facilitator, a coach, a guide. You know, instructor...I like those words better than teacher in a sense because you are kind of the manager of the room and of the time. . . So this gives the power to the students and, as a result, gives them more opportunities for authentic learning.” Another stated, “. . . it is more effective teaching when you are sitting down working with someone on what they need to work on at that particular moment. Talk about 100’s of teachable moments every week!” A third teacher shared, “I think that’s the perception. That if you are not standing in front of the class, you are not directly teaching. And I think direct instruction is more direct when you are with one student and you know . . . are they actually getting it or not? It’s more than just a lot of faces looking at you.”

Student Engagement

While data is not yet available analyzing the academic achievement of students (this is a baseline year), a culture shift is happening. One administrator stated, “It’s only the first year of implementation and there is already student buy in.” Another said, “. . . the greatest successes that I think I see is more engagement on an overall level.” It was pointed out that “. . . the successes right now are students that we see that had struggled with the traditional format in the past, for whatever reason, are now seeing some success.”

While still in its infancy, students have begun to take ownership of their own learning and have taken small steps toward peer teaching, particularly during the second semester of the school year. Noted by one classroom instructor, “All kids can learn, and can learn at a higher level, when it is relevant to their lives outside of schools.” An administrator noted, “They were telling me that students were beginning to take responsibility for their own learning.” Another participant discussed the first time that the students directed their own work in the class, “They were working together! And they learned more than I would have taught them.”

Along with student ownership of learning, a vast majority of the research participants noted positive changes in student behaviors. One teacher stated, “Attendance is better because there is more reason to be in class.” A second commented, “. . . when you give them more choices you diffuse the ‘Oh, this is really meaningless to me . . .’” A third stated, “And sometimes they are all so engaged and on task it is really exciting. The discipline issues alone should make people want to do this.”

Increased Academic Rigor

Each participant in the study was enthusiastic about the perceived increase in academic rigor at the alternative program. An administrator commented that “I am talking to kids, dozens of them, that are able to describe the rigor that . . . that they are taking responsibility for . . . and actually enjoying . . . it’s like, “If I get this done, I know I can do dot, dot, dot.” Without exception, those interviewed referred to Common Core State Standards as being a natural fit with performance-based education and that students were demonstrating more academic success due to the clearly defined standards and benchmarks for each level of learning. One instructional staff member stated, “I think it’s a better way. I am focused more toward the end goal. I think it is a far more accurate indication of student learning than the grading system where a student goes in with a zero for this or a 15 for that . . . but may not grasp the total concept. This is value added for the student.”

One participant discussed perceived differences between *No Child Left Behind* and Common Core. This teacher described *No Child Left Behind* as a reporting system, whereas Common Core, used in a performance-based program, was described as a growth model. The teacher stated that, “NCLB compares students with students, Common Core compares students with their own growth.” In a performance-based system, a student has to “. . . have at least 70 percent or else you are telling me you don’t really know this” said one participant. In support of that comment was this from another, “What I assess has changed big time. I think it’s harder.” As noted previously, even the administrators, removed from classrooms, have indicated that they can stop a student in

the hallways of the alternative program and ask them “What are you learning? Why are you learning that?” and that students are able to articulate their own learning.

Three of the five instructional staff participants observed that students have taken their learning outside of the scheduled classroom time. In particular, “. . . they get it; it’s not like school has ended and I don’t need to work. I can keep working (and accelerate learning and progress through the program).” One teacher interviewed is allowing students to continue their projects outside of a “set schedule” (i.e. the traditional school calendar year) and to bring in demonstrations of learning that address specific benchmarks and/or standards. The majority of administrators and teachers alike compared the rigor as now being at least equal to that experienced by students in the traditional program. And as one participant noted, “And that’s something to be proud of.”

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

This study followed an alternative program situated in a traditional public high school during its shift from a traditional model of curriculum delivery and assessment to one that is performance-based. The purpose of the study was to document the events precipitating the paradigm shift as well as the challenges and successes encountered during the first year of implementation. This qualitative study examined data collected from ten participants comprised of school district administrators and classroom instructors.

Overview of the Study

This overview of the study outlines the context for the research project and gives a brief synopsis of the important components of the investigation.

Context for the Study

This study investigates the process by which one school as it makes a paradigm shift in the delivery and assessment of curriculum to better meet the needs of diverse learners in an ever-changing educational landscape. The school investigated is a small alternative program included on the campus of a larger traditional school. District

administrators adopted a research-supported and data-driven alternative approach to educating students in this program.

Synthesis of the Investigation

The goal of this study is to investigate characteristics specific to one school's reform efforts. The first aspect studied was what might be considered "the tipping point" for adopting an educational reform model. This included interviews conducted with administrative leaders who supported the reform effort. Additional research was conducted with on-site program developers and classroom teachers addressing the successes and the challenges encountered during the transition from a traditional mode of curriculum delivery and assessment to one that is performance-based.

Methods of data collection included semi-structured interviews with district personnel consisting of the district superintendent, the district deputy superintendent, two high school principals (one of whom is director for the alternative program being studied), one instructional coach, and self-selected teachers in the program.

The methodology developed for this case study has identifiable and research supported strengths; nonetheless, there are inherent difficulties in analysis of data collected through interviews with sample participants (Lichtman, 2010; Patton, 2002). Qualitative researchers do not have "clear standards governing their activities" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 51). As such, analysis of data in a qualitative study must adhere to high standards to ensure validity, trustworthiness, and rigor (Lichtman, 2010; Patton, 2002; Rolfe, 2006).

Summary

The findings from this study indicate that there are three important factors central to successful implementation of a performance-based model of curriculum and assessment. The key factor is the critical role of effective communication within the organization and across the community as a whole. Effective communication is paramount in creating a “shared vision” that engages every stakeholder from student, to parent, to administration, staff, and community members. Effective communication allows all stakeholders to “speak the same language” and have a common goal in order for the model to succeed. The second key factor is time: participants were clear about the need for time for training, development of curriculum and assessments, and to fully develop the matrices and rubrics that guide student learning and align with the educational community at large. Finally, this study revealed the critical role of a charismatic, yet approachable leader in guiding the change process. The shift from traditional teacher-led instruction to a more student-centered approach to learning is likely to be difficult without a strong leader to guide the way.

This study found that together, the school leaders and a “catalyst” fostered a culture of innovation that created the framework from which the paradigm shift occurred at this site. The cultural shift has resulted in a positive change in both teacher and student engagement, as well as a perceived increase in rigor due to student-centered learning with benchmarks developed around standards. The participants’ positive outlook on this process is evident in a variety of their statements including, “I think the greatest success is that we are actually doing it!” and, “...we are kinda all in this together so that’s pretty

cool. I think that's one of the biggest things, but I think the biggest thing is that we actually got this going. And that it's working. And that we are seeing some results. I mean, kids are saying that 'gol, I wish I could do that in some of my other classes.' But so it's spreading into the regular building as well." The findings suggest that the performance-based approach to curriculum delivery and assessment developed in this program is having a positive effect on students and staff alike.

Educational Implications

As data indicates, Comprehensive School Reform and the *No Child Left Behind Act* have failed to meet the educational needs of diverse learner (Dillon, 2011, p. A12; Kidron & Darwin, 2007; Peterson, Lastra-Anadon, Hanushek, & Woessman, 2011). In this light, the findings from this study offer two major implications for the K-12 learning community. Implementing a performance-based educational model at the site studied has led to both a better awareness of, and an increase in, student academic achievement for diverse learners. As well, there has been a "shift" in the program, leading toward collegiality not just among the instructional staff but throughout the entire school community.

Students

Participants identified some significant benefits for students. For example, on administrator stated, "Right now for students the most significant thing is that students and teachers alike are becoming aware of real gaps in learning." Another pointed out ". . . in the past, in a traditional school setting, you could have gotten a C- or a D and moved

onto the next level.” Now, “. . . you’re not really going to be able to move forward until you complete the standard.” These comments echo the perspective of all classroom instructors interviewed. While there are “pockets” of students asking for more guidance to accelerate their learning, a majority of students, and teachers alike, are still in the process of shifting the way they perceive their roles in the educational system. “This is putting more of the onus on the student” commented one participant.

While the implications for performance-based educational approaches seem positive for diverse learners, and successes have been realized at the alternative program studied, there are concerns for students and teachers alike in making the shift. Many research participants noted that they struggled to learn to give up “control” of the classroom. As well, moving from a student-centered educational environment requires students to find the intrinsic motivation to take ownership of their learning. Teachers are finding that “students are no longer able to fly under the radar.” In a performance-based system, teachers interact with every student on a one-on-one basis almost every day. The challenge lies in teaching students to “think outside of the box” in regard to demonstration of learning. Projects and assessments need to be authentic and relevant to the student, and, as one participant stated, “rich and meaningful.”

The School Community

Each participant in the study indicated an enthusiasm for the future of performance-based curriculum and assessment in the alternative program specifically, and in the district as a whole. Data collected from this pilot program will help guide the implementation of this alternative approach. In addition to programs within the district,

such as World Languages, there are currently two other schools in the state undertaking the program shift that this site has already begun. Administrators from those programs have made multiple site visits to this district. The following quote is from one of this district's administrators:

It's cool to keep moving forward in new ways other than just thinking about the whole process, and I have the opportunity to pass those ideas on to colleagues and use those new ideas. And now that we have taken this out of our school and are collaborating . . . it's so awesome . . . It makes so much sense to collaborate with other teachers and other schools. You know, being able to share those ideas and building on the next best thing. We need to start moving a little faster especially with the progression of ideas. In order to be able to keep up with just the pace that students are moving forward at.

If data continues to support performance-based curriculum delivery and assessment as a means to increase student achievement for diverse learners, this approach will grow exponentially.

Dr. Robert J. Marzano (2009) noted that second order change in education (profound change that is not incremental and often not popular in the beginning) requires solid leadership and a committed faculty. Data from this study indicates that it takes not only commitment but passion and a strong moral purpose to implement a paradigm shift. Under less than ideal circumstances the program studied made that shift, from a traditional mode of curriculum delivery to one that is performance-based. This research extends other studies of performance-based programs by adding individual perceptions of challenges and successes encountered during the shift; perceptions from those "in the field" and doing the work every day.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study was conducted during the first year of an educational paradigm shift in an alternative high school program. Data collected from this investigation point to numerous areas for further research. As the program studied continues to develop its performance-based curriculum, further research is needed to identify the pros and cons of an individualized approach to education. Students attending this performance-based program could contribute to the literature regarding effective learning strategies, particularly for diverse learners. Future studies need to examine student perceptions of this shift to performance-based curriculum and assessment regarding effectiveness, engagement, and rigor. Of interest also is the exploration of parental and community perceptions of this shift in educational paradigms. Finally, data pertaining to academic achievement, student attendance, drop-out statistics, discipline issues, and teacher retention should be collected and analyzed beginning with the baseline year.

It is highly recommended that the role of “the catalyst” be considered in future research. Studies need to identify the characteristics and qualities of someone who has gone beyond the description of an effective leader and become a driving force for change. We also need to understand what happens to a program if that catalyst leaves? Finally, studies should be conducted with students’ perceptions of their educational experiences if a performance-based program is discontinued and the traditional model of curriculum and assessment is re-implemented.

All of the above factors should be considered when similar programs are implemented in other K-12 settings. There is a growing body of research surrounding

academic achievement in the *RISC* Approach to Learning model of education (Borre, 2012; DeLorenzo, et al., 2009; Haystead, 2010). However, a review of the literature indicates a lack of qualitative data from the perspectives of those “in the trenches,” developing and implementing these alternative approaches to curriculum delivery and assessment. This study begins to archive the voices of those affected by the change every day. Further research may play an instrumental part in guiding successful program change.

As for the program studied, “. . . the school is serving more students than it ever has.” As one administrator stated, “This is turning the system on its head, but in a good way. Education is never a destination, always a journey. It’s fascinating how this has come about and how it will evolve.”

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

ADMINISTRATORS

- Q1 What led to the shift from traditional teacher-led instruction to a performance-based educational approach at this school site?
- Was the decision research driven?
 - Were performance-based models studied or observed before the decision was made?
- Q2 Who/what comprised the committees and groups involved in the decision-making and approval process? What role did they play?
- Teachers
 - Parents
 - Community
 - Students
 - Administrative Staff
 - Unions
 - School Board
- Q3 What approach(s) were used in the development of this program?
- Did you have a model to work from? If so, have you been able to replicate the model?
 - What, if anything, has been site-specific in your program development?
- Q4 What have been the greatest successes encountered, to date, during this program change?
- With students
 - With staff
 - Student Outcomes
 - School culture
 - Community Interactions
- Q5 Inherent in any change, challenges arise. What has been your biggest challenge to date?
- Curriculum development
 - Systems interactions with technology
 - Staff development
 - Student buy-in
- Q6 How do you envision a successful performance-based program?
- What does it look like to you?
- Q7 If you could begin again, what would you change?

Q8 Is there anything that you would like to add? Perhaps a question that I didn't ask or a story you would like to share?

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

INSTRUCTIONAL COACH

- Q1 What prior experience and/or training helped prepare you to assist with this program's development?
- Education
 - Experience
 -
- Q2 What does a typical day look like for you?
- Classroom visits
 - One-on-one with staff
 - Peer teaching
 - Curriculum development
 - Interaction with administrators
 - Staff development meetings
 - Interaction with students
- Q3 What have been the most significant changes that you have seen during this paradigm shift from performance-based curriculum delivery and assessment?
- Classroom
 - Student
 - Teacher
- Q4 What challenges have you encountered in the early stages of program development?
- Q5 Is there anything that you would like to add? Perhaps a question that I didn't ask or a story you would like to share?

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

TEACHERS

- Q1 What does a typical day look like for you?
- Classroom visits
 - One-on-one with staff
 - Peer teaching
 - Curriculum development
 - Interaction with administrators
 - Staff development meetings
 - Interaction with students
- Q2 What does a performance-based classroom look like to you?
- Student role
 - Teacher role
 - Curriculum
- Q3 What have been the most significant changes that you have seen during this paradigm shift from performance-based curriculum delivery and assessment?
- Classroom
 - Student
 - Teacher
- Q4 What challenges have you encountered in the early stages of program development?
- Q5 Is there anything that you would like to add? Perhaps a question that I didn't ask or a story you would like to share?

APPENDIX D

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

**SUBJECT CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH
AT
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

You are being asked to participate in a research study investigating the development of a performance-based mode of curriculum delivery and assessment at the Bridger Alternative Program. This study will help researchers and educators better understand how best to implement paradigm changes in educational settings. By agreeing to participate, you are granting access to the researcher to conduct an interview session(s) with you, scheduled at your convenience. All findings will be shared with you. It is important for you to know that:

1. Your participation is confidential and voluntary.
2. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your consent at any time without penalty.
3. There is no compensation for your participation.
4. The risks for participating in this study are minimal.
5. Data collected will be kept confidential and secured in locked cabinets or in password protected computers. No one outside the investigator will have access to your information. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.
6. In research papers or other public presentations resulting from this study, your name will not be used and any identifying characteristics or personal information that could be used to identify you will be deleted or masked. It is highly unlikely that anyone would be able to identify you from any published report. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study you can contact the primary researcher: Susan Sullivan, 1228 Cherry Drive, Bozeman, MT 59715, 406-570-1786.
8. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Institutional Review Board Chair, 960 Technology Blvd., Room 127, Bozeman, MT 59717. For information and assistance, call 406-994-6783.