IDAHO BUILDING CAPACITY: DEVELOPING A STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF

SUPPORT FOR DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

by

Lisa L. Kinnaman

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DEFENSE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of the dissertation submitted by

Lisa L. Kinnaman

We have read and discussed the dissertation submitted by Lisa L. Kinnaman, and we have deemed it satisfactory for a doctoral degree by the proportion of votes designated by the program.

_____   _____
Date   William Parrett, Ph.D.
                                 Chair, Supervisory Committee

_____   _____
Date   Jonathan Brendefur, Ph.D.
                                 Member, Supervisory Committee

_____   _____
Date   Kathleen Budge, Ed.D.
                                 Member, Supervisory Committee

_____   _____
Date   Robert Smart, Ph.D.
                                 Member, Supervisory Committee

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To the Graduate Council of Boise State University:

I have read this dissertation of Lisa L. Kinnaman in its final form and have found it to be

of satisfactory quality for a doctoral degree.

Approved for the College of Education:

Date	Diane Boothe, D.P.A.
	Dean, College of Education

Approved for the Graduate Council:

Date	John R. Pelton, Ph.D.
	Dean of the Graduate College

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

Pete, who encouraged me from start to finish and serves not only as my best friend and partner in life, but as an amazing educator whom I deeply respect for his never waivering commitment to me, our family, and his students. Thank you for all the hours you sacrificed your wife to the computer, for the countless lattes you made to keep me caffeinated, and for the extra love you gave our kids during the busy times. We certainly did this together!

Ryan, Will, and Abby, who were willing to share their mom with the world of research and writing for a season. I hope that all three of you will believe that if your mom could finish this…you can accomplish anything you set your mind to in life.

Mom, Dad, and Tiffany, who have always supported my crazy endeavors and provided me with amazing love and support in countless ways throughout this process.

Bill, for not only shaping the course of my studies, but the direction of my life work in the area of improving education for the benefit of *all* students.

The administrators, teachers, and students that continue to teach me so much, and whom I hope are significantly impacted by the result of this work.

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Finally, without a grounding faith and tremendous support from family and friends, this would not have been possible. Thank you for the countless ways you contributed to this work including childcare, meals, a spot at your kitchen table to write, and never ending encouragement to keep going. I could not have done this without you.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lisa Kinnaman is currently serving as the Idaho State School Improvement Coordinator, a partnership between the State Department of Education and the Boise State Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies. Prior, she was an education professor at Northwest Nazarene University, as well as a History and Sheltered Instruction teacher at Capital High School in the Boise School District. Lisa has participated in various projects, trainings, and consultations at the state, district, and local levels on topics including state standards, standardized assessments, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and strategies that promote learning and achievement for all students. This past year she has worked to develop and implement the Idaho Building Capacity project, a cornerstone of Idaho's statewide system of support designed to provide frequent and meaningful technical assistance to schools and districts in needs improvement status. She finds it a great privilege to work with amazing educators around the state who are hard at work in the continuous school improvement cycle, striving together to increase student learning and achievement.

Most importantly, Lisa is Mom to Ryan, Will, and Abby; and wife to Pete, a fantastic teacher at the Meridian Medical Arts Charter High School.

ABSTRACT

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, established by Congress as a re-authorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (EASA) requires that all states establish a statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for local educational agencies and schools. This provision in the law was designed to insure that states are adequately supporting districts and schools in their efforts to help all students meet the State's academic content standards and student academic achievement standards. This study will describe and analyze the design and establishment of a comprehensive statewide system of support in Idaho, the Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project.

Central to the study is the question: How does Idaho develop and implement an effective, comprehensive statewide system of support that will provide technical assistance to schools and districts at all levels of needs improvement status? This study will also look at a second question: How has a targeted district and its schools integrated these efforts into its improvement process? Information learned during the course of this study will be applied toward the continued expansion and improvement of Idaho's statewide system of support. While each state currently is implementing a unique statewide system of support, all states can continue to learn from one another. The Idaho story to date has key findings that are not only critical to the continued evolution of

Idaho's statewide system of support, but may also prove useful for other states that are striving to develop and refine their own statewide systems of support.

Additionally, the comprehensive review of statewide systems of support best efforts and practices has provided implications for the continued work in Idaho.

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PREFACE

On more than one occasion I have been called a Pollyanna; an eternal optimist of sorts. It is true to some extent. While I too can get sucked into the quagmire of negative conversation that swirls around the field of education, I much prefer to focus on the legions of amazing teachers and students that permeate American schools and classrooms. My positive outlook however does not keep me from also taking an honest look at the field of education and the many challenges we face as a profession.

A good friend and mentor of mine really got me thinking when she stated that we have become very skilled at "admiring our problems. "Think about that. Many have observed, or experienced first-hand the teacher's lounge morphed into a hotbed for complaints and negative rhetoric. Conversations are plentiful on topics such as low teacher pay, the totally out of control kid who refuses to learn, the parents who are less than supportive, and the evils of the new accountability standards that have invaded our system! Sure, there are flaws in the system and serious challenges faced at every level of education. But rather than "admire the problem," I desire to be a part of identifying key challenges and implementing solid solutions that will continue to improve the educational system that is currently charged with teaching approximately 49.8 million school-age children in America (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008).

Career Reflections

My first day of teaching I walked into a high school History classroom filled with 31 students all of whom had found themselves either on an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a 504 accommodation plan, in major behavioral trouble, or in the category of an English Language Learner (ELL) student. I was faced with the challenge of finding a way to teach several students not yet conversational in English, a professed Satan worshiper, a schizophrenic who believed one of her personalities was the seventh bride of Satan, an openly professed Neo-Nazi, and a German foreign exchange student. One girl had such an extreme case of narcolepsy that she would often fall asleep mid-sentence smacking her head on the desk as it fell forward. There was an array of learning disabilities, including a student with Aspberger's Syndrome so severe that he had a bald spot the size of an orange on the crown of his head from pulling the hairs out, splitting them with his long fingernails, and then eating them in class.

Just out of my teacher preparation program, I naively thought that this type of assignment filled with so many diverse student needs would require a teacher with a high level of training on learning disabilities and differentiated instruction. Instead, the system I had just signed on to be an employee of seemed to think that my one undergraduate course on special education qualified me to work with this group of diverse learners. Looking back on it, I believe that the system did not really care whether I was qualified to teach these students. They were looking for someone they could throw into this assignment who would hopefully keep things under control. I was never asked any questions about how the students were progressing in their learning, but rather heard

daily questions and comments like, "So how many behavioral referrals have you written so far?" "Oh, you have Johnny. Isn't he just a nightmare?" "You should just let Rocky sleep; at least that way he won't be disruptive." Everyone in the building knew what classes I had been assigned as a brand new teacher and seemed to throw me looks of pity as they passed me in the hall. The dominant discourse in my building was that I had a room full of "crazies" and "dummies" that could not possibly learn. I was viewed not as a professional teacher, but as a babysitter for the students that no one else wanted to deal with.

Once I began to recover from the shock of the students I was to "teach" all year long, I began my journey on a massive quest for ways to engage these struggling learners, and to simultaneously improve myself and the educational system I had become a part of. Many challenges had indeed been presented, but I came to believe in that first year of baptism by fire that you could teach *all* kids, even the ones with purple Mohawks.

Though I found the classroom to be very challenging and rewarding, I was afforded an opportunity to teach for several years in a higher education teacher preparation program. I considered it a great privilege to work with future teachers and attempt to instill in them the same passion I maintain for struggling students, teachers, and systems alike.

As I sat each year and watched a new little army of teachers walk across the stage and accept their diplomas, ready to head out into their own challenging first year of teaching, I would reflect on all the things I taught them, and obsess about all the things that I may have left out. I hope they entered into the classroom full of excitement and

passion for teaching; ready to see and teach every kid as an individual. I hope they learned not to fear data and accountability, but rather to utilize it as a powerful source to continually better their practice of teaching. I hope someone down the hall is calling them a Pollyanna too as they put on their hat of positivism and work hard each day to reach each kid.

Once again, I was lured away from the classroom and jumped into a role of working with school improvement at the state level. Not quite sure what all this would entail, I was excited about the opportunity to work with schools and districts through the work and challenges of school improvement.

With each job change, the sphere of influence has changed, but my original charge the same; to avoid admiring the problems of education, but rather strive on a daily basis to positively impact the educational system that so heavily invests in the future of millions of kids, including my own.

Whenever I find myself bogged down with policy details and what can seem like insurmountable challenges to fostering sustainable school reform, I am reminded of specific students that in an instant can once again put a face of meaning to my work and goals.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, established by Congress as a re-authorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (EASA) requires that all states establish a statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for local educational agencies and schools. This provision in the law was designed to insure that states are adequately supporting districts and schools in their efforts to help all students meet the State's academic content standards and student academic achievement standards. This study will describe and examine the design and establishment of a comprehensive statewide system of support in Idaho, the Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project.

Information learned during the course of this study will be applied toward the continued expansion and improvement of Idaho's statewide system of support. While each state currently is implementing a unique statewide system of support, all states can continue to learn from one another. The Idaho story to date has key findings that are not only critical to the continued evolution of Idaho's statewide system of support, but may also prove useful for other states that are striving to develop and refine their own statewide systems of support.

Additionally, the comprehensive review of statewide systems of support best efforts and practices has provided implications for the continued work in Idaho as state leaders work towards meeting federal policy requirements and designing a system able to

provide meaningful technical assistance that will result in increased student learning and achievement.

Federal School Improvement Policy

There has been much written on the accountability standards established by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the most recent reauthorization by Congress in 2001 of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In summary, NCLB calls for all students in the nation to be proficient in reading and math by 2014. In order to identify schools in jeopardy of not meeting this goal, states are charged with establishing standardized measurements of student achievement used to benchmark student performance. Based on these indicators, schools are identified as either meeting, or not meeting Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP). Those who are not successful in meeting the state's measures of AYP enter into a leveled system of needs improvement status with various requirements and sanctions within each level (NCLB, 2001).

State School Improvement Policy

Federal school improvement policy has certain requirements that are very prescript, and others that allow for state flexibility in how they are applied. In order to demonstrate compliance with federal policy, each state must submit, and update as needed a Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook that outlines the specifics of how individual state policies meet accountability requirements.

The following chart illustrates Idaho sanctions and available technical assistance, approved by the federal government in the State of Idaho Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook (2008) for schools and districts, referred to as local education agencies (LEAs) in relation to the various levels of needs improvement status (p. 13).

Table 1

Idaho AYP Accountability Chart

Not Meeting AYP After	Schools	Local Education Agencies
Year 1 & 2	Identified as Not Achieving AYP	Identified as Not Achieving AYP
Year 3	School Improvement Technical Assistance from LEA Choice Intervention School Improvement Planning Supplemental Services (for eligible students in reading & math if choice not available)	LEA Improvement Technical Assistance from SDE Develop an Intervention Improvement Plan
Year 4	School Improvement Technical Assistance from LEA Choice Supplemental Services Previous Year Sanctions plus Implementation of Intervention School Improvement Plan	LEA Improvement Technical Assistance from SDE Implement the Intervention Improvement Plan
Year 5	School Improvement Previous Year Sanctions plus Corrective Action	Corrective Action Planning Technical Assistance from SDE
Year 6	School Improvement Continue Previous Sanctions Develop a Restructuring Plan	Corrective Action Implementation Technical Assistance from SDE
Year 7	School Improvement Continue Previous Sanctions Implement Alternative Governance	

Both federal and state policy identify the State Department as responsible for providing technical assistance to districts, designed to help build the district capacity to provide support to their struggling schools. Sanctions and technical assistance increase at both the district and school level with each continuous year of not meeting AYP.

School and district report cards are frequently published in local newspapers, labeling many as "failing," yet there has been less public discussion on the topic of a state's specific responsibility to support schools and districts in the daunting task of bringing *all* students to academic proficiency, as determined by each individual state and approved by the federal government, by the year 2014, per NCLB (Sweeney, 2007; Wood, 2007).

Statewide Systems of Support

The law is clear that states do indeed have a substantial role to play in this nation-wide attempt to reform schools and insure that we "leave no child behind."

> Each state shall establish a statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for local educational agencies and schools receiving funds under this part, in order to increase the opportunity for all students served by those agencies and schools to meet the State's academic content standards and student academic achievement standards (NCLB, 2001, Section 1117).

The law further defines that there must be a prioritization process of first serving those in the furthest level of needs improvement status, partner with NCLB established comprehensive centers designed to provide support to statewide systems, and include at a minimum the following components, as summarized from section 1117 of NCLB (2001):

- Establishing school support teams composed of persons knowledgeable about scientifically based research and practice on teaching and learning and about successful school-wide projects, school reform, and improving educational opportunities for low-achieving students, including:
    - Distinguished teachers and principals
    - Pupil service personnel
    - Parents
    - Representatives of institutions of higher education
    - Representatives of regional educational laboratories or regional technical assistance centers
    - Representatives of outside consultant groups
    - Other individuals as the State educational agency, in consultation with the local educational agency, may determine appropriate
- Providing state support as needed to the school support teams
- Designating and using distinguished teachers and principals who have experienced success in improving academic achievement in challenging school assignments

The functions of school support teams are further defined in the law, summarized as follows from section 1117 of NCLB (2001):

- Review and analyze all facets of the school's operation, including the design and operation of the instructional program, and assist the school in developing recommendations for improving student performance

- Collaborate with parents and school staff and the local educational agency serving the school in the design, implementation, and monitoring of a plan that, if fully implemented, can reasonably be expected to improve student performance and help the school meet its goals for improvement, including AYP

- Evaluate, at least semi-annually, the effectiveness of school personnel assigned to the school, including identifying outstanding teachers and principals, and make findings and recommendations to the school, the local educational agency, and where appropriate, the State educational agency

- Make additional recommendations as the school implements the school improvement plan concerning additional assistance that is needed by the school or the school support team

Policy is clear regarding the above stated set of expectations, yet there has been great variance in the specifics of how states have mobilized and established such statewide systems of support to carry out the charge given through the NCLB Act (Carlson-Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a/2008b; Redding & Walberg, 2008; Walberg, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Given Idaho's limited funding, support, and staffing to address the required needs of the high percentage of schools and districts designated as in needs improvement status, Idaho is not only required by law to have implemented a statewide system of support, but

also must offer a system that is equipped to provide districts and schools in needs improvement status with effective technical assistance. The State Department of Education in Idaho is only one year into the establishment of a statewide system of support offering this type of technical assistance.

Idaho's Need for a Statewide System of Support

While Idaho did not have a comprehensive statewide system of support, they did historically offer its underperforming schools and districts a variety of technical assistance programs including, but not limited to Title I, Reading First, Making Middle Grades Work, and the Principal Academy of Leadership (PAL). Other programs designed to serve various student populations such as, but not limited to, Special Education, Limited English Proficient (LEP), and migrant have also provided ongoing technical assistance throughout the state.

Despite the efforts of these programs, the charge still remained for the state to establish a comprehensive statewide system of support, as defined by law, designed to deliver services to Idaho districts and schools in needs improvement status. This need increased in urgency due to a federal review of Idaho's Title I programs in the spring of 2008, as well as a steadily increasing percentage of Idaho schools and districts falling into needs improvement status.

Idaho ranks among the top when it comes to the percentage of schools and districts labeled as needs improvement. Table 2, includes the most recent information available regarding schools identified as needing improvement, offering a comparison of

the states. This table was compiled and distributed by the Council of Chief State School

Officers (CCSSO). The number of districts identified for improvement is not included in

this data table.

Table 2

Schools Identified for Improvement by State

State	Total number of schools (2007-08)	Total number of schools that did not make AYP (2006-07 testing)	Total number of schools that did not make AYP (2007-08 testing)	Total number of schools Identified for improvement (based on 2007-08 testing)	Percent of ALL schools NOT making AYP 2007-08	Percent of ALL schools Identified as in need of improvement 2007-08
Alabama	1,367	221	224	137	16%	10%
Alaska	501	170	206	171	41%	34%
Arizona	1,875	515	516	291	28%	16%
Arkansas*	1,082	398	453	375	42%	35%
California*	9,854	3,272	4,748	2,261	48%	NA
Colorado	1,977	482	785	127	40%	6%
Connecticut*	980	315	406	284	41%	29%
Delaware*	189	57	60	45	32%	24%
District of Columbia	206	146	140	147	68%	71%
Florida*	3,306	2,157	2,514	928	76%	28%
Georgia*	2,153	374	432	196	20%	9%
Hawaii*	283	98	164	125	58%	44%
Idaho	648	458	286	303	44%	47%
Illinois*	3,803	895	1,200	815	32%	21%
Indiana	--	886	--	--	--	--
Iowa*	1,477	139	455	136	31%	9%
Kansas	1,365	152	137	33	10%	2%
Kentucky*	1,145	284	322	115	28%	NA
Louisiana*	1,263	187	282	113	22%	9%
Maine*	632	195	214	109	34%	17%
Maryland*	1,365	312	227	218	17%	16%
Massachusetts	1,772	852	1,123	861	63%	49%
Michigan	3,763	646	756	448	20%	12%
Minnesota*	1,916	723	933	197	49%	10%
Mississippi	893	184	125	74	14%	8%
Missouri	2,209	1,039	1,270	780	58%	35%
Montana*	820	83	231	73	28%	9%
Nebraska*	623	79	136	17	22%	3%
Nevada*	654	197	246	186	38%	28%
New Hampshire*	457	185	276	178	60%	39%
New Jersey*	2,209	585	645	442	29%	20%
New Mexico	770	440	525	422	68%	55%
New York	--	602	--	--	--	--
North Carolina	2,412	1,297	1,664	550	69%	NA
North Dakota*	470	41	169	28	36%	6%
Ohio	3,765	1,455	1,352	1,099	36%	29%
Oklahoma	1,796	222	119	45	7%	3%
Oregon*	1,240	276	460	248	37%	NA
Pennsylvania*	3,105	692	870	409	28%	13%
Rhode Island	304	66	81	57	27%	19%
South Carolina*	1,111	678	966	259	87%	23%
South Dakota	692	119	126	84	18%	12%
Tennessee	1,644	217	255	135	16%	8%
Texas*	7,282	661	1,109	349	15%	5%
Utah	947	219	194	15	21%	2%
Vermont	306	37	114	39	37%	13%
Virginia*	1,842	468	479	91	26%	NA
Washington	2,111	756	1,296	623	61%	30%
West Virginia*	692	131	134	253	19%	37%
Wisconsin*	2,155	92	153	56	7%	3%
Wyoming	354	19	87	28	25%	8%

When looking at the percentage of schools identified as in need of improvement, and thus requiring technical assistance in order to address student achievement needs, Idaho ranks fourth from the top when compared to other states plus the District of Columbia (note that the data was not available for two states during the fall 2008 survey used by CCSSO to compile this data table). This is an improvement from the previous year when according to a similar data chart provided by the Center for Innovation and Improvement (CII) displaying 2006-2007 AYP data placed Idaho second from the top. Utilizing the available information from Table 2, a summary view of the number of states in each percentage grouping increments of ten was compiled and shown in Table 3 (this data was not available for 7 states).

Table 3

State Percents of Schools in Need of Improvement

Total % of Schools NOT Meeting AYP 2007-08	# of States w/ Total % Grouping From Column 1
90-100%	0 states
80-89. 9%	0 states
70-79. 9%	District of Columbia
60-69. 9%	0 states
50-59. 9%	1 states
40-49. 9%	3 states (including Idaho)
30-39. 9%	6 states
20-29. 9%	8 states
10-19. 9%	10 states
0-9. 9%	15 states

With such a large percentage of schools in needs improvement status, Idaho's small state department of education, in desperate need of increasing internal capacity for a technical assistance need of this magnitude, faces a tremendously challenging situation.

AYP Trajectories

One of the areas where the NCLB Act allows states flexibility is in setting individual trajectories on required AYP proficiency targets; provided they all reach 100% proficiency by 2014. A study conducted in on proficiency target trajectories by the Center on Education Policy (CEP, 2008) found that states have taken two different approaches:

> Almost half (23 states) have "backloaded" their trajectories for reaching 100% proficiency. In other words, they have called for smaller achievement gains in the earlier years of the trajectory, and much steeper gains in later years, as 2014 grows nearer. Some of these states assume large, and probably unrealistic, leaps in percentages proficient of more than 10 points per year in the out years (p. 1).

Another 25 states and the District of Columbia have adopted a more aggressive, incremental approach that requires steady progress each year towards 100% proficiency. The remaining two states have blended approaches that reflect both "backloaded" and incremental approaches (CEP, 2008).

An example of an incremental approach can be seen in Table 5, which represents the AYP trajectory set by South Carolina for elementary reading and math. The South Carolina approach reflects a very low starting place, with significant incremental leaps every three years (South Carolina Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, 2008).

Figure 1. Adequate Yearly Progress Objectives for South Carolina
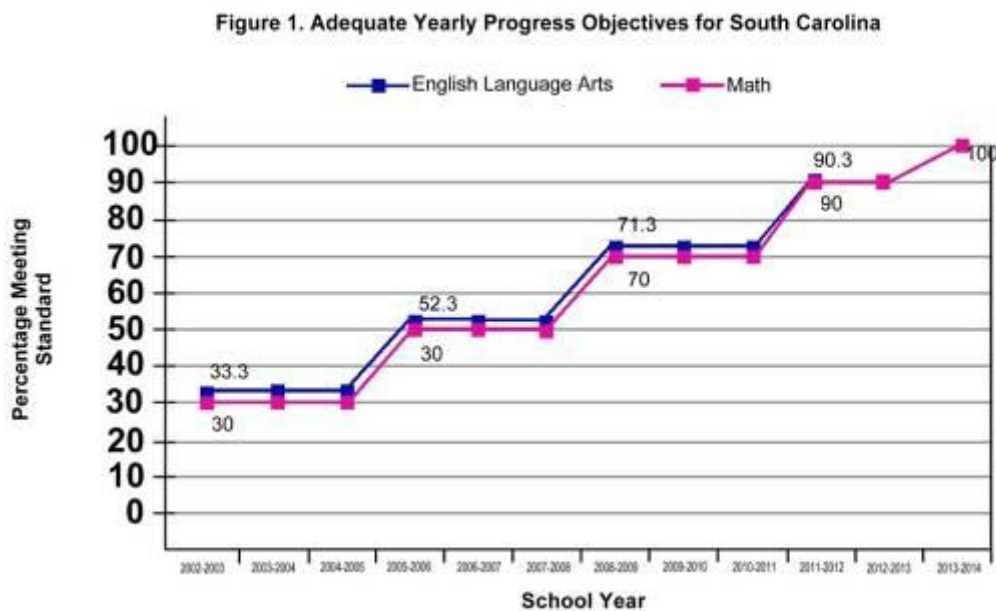
Figure 1. South Carolina AYP Trajectory

Tennessee has also followed an incremental trajectory, but with a different approach than South Carolina. Tennessee began their trajectory with high expectations, followed by smaller growth gains each few years, as reflected in Table 4 (Tennessee Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, 2008).

Table 4

Tennessee AYP Trajectory

	2002-03 2003-04	2004-05 2005-06 2006-07	2007-08 2008-09 2009-10	2010-11 2011-12 2012-13	2013-14
Reading/Language Arts	77%	83%	89%	94%	100%
Math	72%	79%	70%	86%	100%

California serves as a good example of a "backloaded" trajectory. They began their approach to 100% proficiency at a very slow rate, with only one small increase in the first six years, followed by steep increases starting in the 2007-08 school year leading up to 1005 in 2014 (California Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, 2008).

Figure 2. California's Intermediate Goals for English Language Arts at the Elementary and Middle School Levels
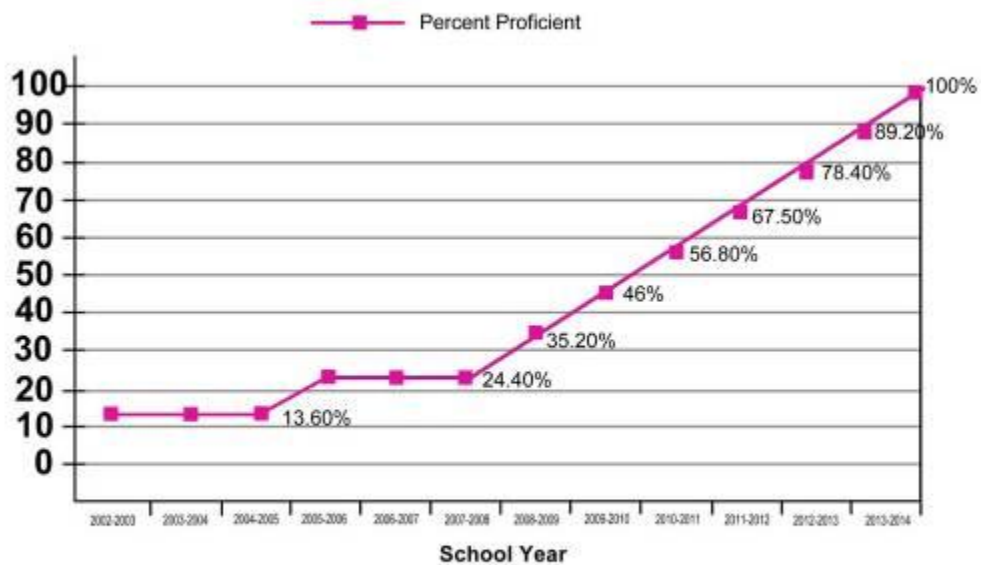
Figure 2. California AYP Trajectory

Oregon also qualifies as a using a "backloaded" trajectory, as demonstrated in Table 5, but waiting until closer to the end in the 2010-2011 school year to begin their dramatic climb to the 100% proficiency required by 2014 (Oregon Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, 2008).

Table 5

Oregon AYP Trajectory

	2002-03 2003-04 2004-05	2005-06 2006-07 2007-08	2008-09 2009-10 2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2012-13	2013-14
English Language Arts	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
Math	39%	49%	59%	70%	80%	90%	100%

Idaho clearly falls into the incremental approach group, and has been quite aggressive with their set trajectory, as demonstrated in Table 6, with current required proficiency rates set at 70% for math, 78% for reading, and 78% for language usage (State of Idaho Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, 2008).

Table 6

Idaho Math & Reading Proficiency Trajectory

	2002-03 2003-04	2004-05 2005-06	2006-07 2007-08 2008-09	2009-10 2010-11	2011-12 2012-13	2013-14
Reading	66%	72%	78%	85%	92%	100%
Math	51%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
Language Usage	66%	72%	78%	85%	92%	100%

Idaho's Accountability System

Also contributing to the high percentage of Idaho schools and districts in needs improvement status is the fact that Idaho includes *all* students in their accountability reporting. NCLB is a part of Title I law, geared towards improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged, and thus typically applies to districts and schools identified as Title I. Idaho has elected to apply the same regulations, expectations, and sanctions to Non-Title I districts and schools. Idaho is one of few states that have chosen to adopt one accountability system for both Title I and Non-Title I schools. In theory this is a demonstration of the state's commitment to truly serve *all* students. Yet, this also presents enormous challenges regarding the design and implementation of technical assistance programs that have capacity to serve a larger number of districts and schools in official needs improvement status.

The major challenge in effectively utilizing one accountability system for all is in obtaining funding to provide adequate technical assistance to both Title I and Non-Title I sites. The requirements of NCLB are primarily carried out by the states through Title I funding. While Idaho is requiring Non-Title I schools to follow the same accountability system, there has not been a tandem funding system established to meet this mandate. Thus, the state has struggled to provide equal services to the Non-Title I schools and districts that enter into needs improvement status.

As it stands, Idaho's current accountability system has resulted in 347 of 648 schools and 84 of 130 districts being identified in some level of needs improvement based on spring 2008 data and AYP determinants, shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Needs Improvement Summary, Idaho 2008

Districts that Met Goal	46		
Districts on Alert	8		
Districts in Needs Improvement Year 1	14		
Districts in Needs Improvement Year 2	15		
Districts in Needs Improvement Year 3	25		
Districts in Needs Improvement Year 4	7		
Districts in Needs Improvement Year 5	15		
Districts in Needs Improvement Years 1-5	**76**		
	Title I Schools	**Non-Title I Schools**	**All Schools**
Schools that Met Goal	121	180	301
Schools on Alert	25	21	46
Schools in Needs Improvement Year 1	71	57	128
Schools in Needs Improvement Year 2	31	38	69
Schools in Needs Improvement Year 3	29	33	62
Schools in Needs Improvement Year 4	7	14	21
Schools in Needs Improvement Year 5	5	16	21
Schools in Needs Improvement Year 1-5	**143**	**158**	**301**

With such a high percentage of schools and districts in the state being identified as needing improvement, it is even more imperative that the state have an effective statewide system of support equipped to deliver technical assistance to those moving through the school improvement process. Based on this need, the Idaho Building

Capacity (IBC) pilot project was designed to deliver early implementation efforts for a statewide system of support. This research study examines the design, implementation, and early evidence of impact from the IBC pilot project.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe and analyze the design and establishment of a school improvement statewide system of support in Idaho. Central to the study is the question: **How does Idaho develop and implement an effective, comprehensive statewide system of support that will provide technical assistance to schools and districts at all levels of needs improvement status?**

Whereas the Idaho statewide system of support is still in its infancy stages, it remains far too early to measure effectiveness in a tangible, quantitative fashion. However, it is critical to the process, to look at early evidence of improvement within the participating pilot schools and districts. To this end, a second research question will be addressed: **How has a targeted district and its schools integrated the efforts from the statewide system of support into its improvement process?**

Within this exploration, a variety of issues and topics will be discussed, such as what constitutes a comprehensive statewide system of support according to the law and as evidenced by observations of other state systems. Additionally, there is much to be considered regarding the area of the types of technical assistance being delivered through various statewide systems of support, how the technical assistance is being delivered, and by whom the assistance is being offered. Finally, it will also be important to begin

exploring how the effectiveness of existing statewide systems of support is being measured.

Rationale

While NCLB (2001) had required a statewide system of support since its passage, Idaho had struggled to establish a system that met the requirements of such a system. This study will document and analyze the process of Idaho school improvement leaders in establishing the Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project, the cornerstone piece of Idaho's emerging statewide system of support. To best continue refining, expanding, and evaluating the effectiveness of Idaho's statewide system of support, the project, process, and early evidence of impact will be studied.

Significance of the Study

This study will analyze the requirements, expectations, and process of a state in developing and implementing a statewide system of support. It is hoped that this study will advance knowledge in the field by examining the implementation of a statewide system of support in Idaho, and lessons learned through that process.

Through information learned during the course of this study, Idaho's statewide system of support will continue to expand and improve. While each state has a unique statewide system of support, and at varied levels of implementation; all states can continue to learn from one another. The Idaho story has key aspects that may provide

useful for other states that are also striving to develop and refine their own statewide systems of support.

Summary

The task of establishing a statewide system of support is challenging. While minimal guidance is provided in the NCLB Act, and there are numerous models to observe in other states, each state, in the end, establishes a system that is unique to their needs and available resources.

While Idaho has progressed in the recent past, considerable work remains to fully implement and refine the newly established statewide system of support. This study will explore available research on statewide systems of support, analyze the pilot of Idaho's statewide system of support, and inform the refinement of this system designed to deliver meaningful school improvement technical assistance that will ultimately result in increased student achievement and improved schools throughout the State. Bottom line: this study will benefit Idaho students and the quality of education delivered to them on a daily basis.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

We live in a democratic society that prides itself on participation of the people in public debate over critical issues impacting the future of the nation. The debate over the health and effectiveness of public education could be fractured into countless strands with individuals and groups arguing from a plethora of different perspectives. Richard Hofstadter (1963) observed that the history of school reform is in reality a "history of complaint" (p. 30). There is certainly no shortage on "experts" who think they know exactly what is wrong with our educational system.

> Each generation discovers what the generation before it discovered: something is wrong with America's schools and someone ought to do something about it. And each time reformers try to bring about change, the reforms fail to deliver what has been promised (Schlechty, 1997).

More challenging can be finding the "experts" able to unlock the specifics of how we go about truly improving education on a systemic level, and in a sustainable fashion.

This literature review will explore the historical development of school improvement and our current educational situation and task to improve student achievement nationwide; specifically in the context of state responsibility as designed in a statewide system of support.

Historical Development of School Improvement

Public education for all has long been valued as a fundamental right within American society. This has also been accompanied with a belief that education is not a static entity, but is continually evolving in order to best prepare waves of children for future participation in our democratic society. Over one hundred fifty years ago, Horace Mann led the charge to provide American children with access to education, seeking to provide education for all; followed by John Dewey's progressive ideas on how education might be different and improved, including a more formalized structure and the development of high schools (Fullan, 2001a; Elmore, 2004). Sputnik and the space race against the USSR sparked a whole new level of educational reform efforts in the 1950s, and the 1960s were marked by the compassionate critics who claimed that, "schools were ineffective, mindless, boring, inhumane, and destructive (Barr & Parrett, 1995, p. 23). In 1965 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (EASA) was passed with the goal of clearly identifying the expectations on the educational system to serve *all* students (Barr & Parrett, 2007). Reform efforts continued to advance in the 1980's following the publishing of *A Nation at Risk* which provided great momentum in continuing to better the educational system (Elmore, 2004).

In 1989 President George H.W. Bush called for an Education Summit that included the nation's governors and focused on addressing student achievement nation-wide. Shortly following, a second summit was convened by President Bill Clinton that resulted in six educational goals designed to be achieved by 2000, known as Goals 2000 (Marzano & Kendall, 1998). Soon to follow came the policy discussions that resulted in

the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the 2001 reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary

and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now deemed for evaluation and reauthorization

every five years. Ultimately, NCLB seeks to have all public school students proficient in

reading and math by 2014 (NCLB, 2001). More specific than any prior education

legislation, NCLB catapulted school improvement efforts into an entirely new arena by

establishing accountability requirements and sanctions for those not meeting the

established standards. Both the student achievement requirements and resulting technical

assistance programs discussed in this research are direct results of NCLB. Despite the

shift in tactic and specificity, the United States is still grappling with similar issues as

those raised by Mann in the 1800's and many others following regarding effective public

education for all.

Shifting Educational Landscape

> Cultural and social diversity is certainly not a new issue facing us humans.
> It has always existed, and we remain challenged by it. However, the
> burgeoning complexity of our times calls upon us as educators to face this
> challenge more directly, to value diversity, honor it with integrity, and to
> preserve the cultural dignity of our students (Lindsey, Roberts, &
> Campbell Jones, 2005).

The last decade has produced unprecedented growth in the number of students

entering American public schools that are culturally, linguistically, and

socioeconomically diverse (Klump & McNeir, 2005). In the schools of 2009, at least 38%

of the student population is racially and ethnically diverse, 69% of the entire students in

the nation's 100 largest public school districts are non-white, and it is predicted that by

2035 children of color will constitute the statistical majority of the public school student

population (NCES, 2003; U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996). In six states and the

District of Columbia, children of color are already in the majority (NCES, 2005 in

Villegas & Lucas, 2007). National reports show that more than one in four children in the

U.S. live in poverty, there are estimated 13.5 million immigrant children under 18 years

of age, and one in five Americans speak a native language other than English (NCELA,

2002).

> It is important to make clear here that it is not the changing demographic
> profile of the nation's schoolchildren in and of itself that is an obstacle to
> providing high quality schooling for all. The United States has long been a
> nation of immigrants, and there have long been students of various colors
> and ethnicities in the schools. The problems are the persistent and
> pernicious disparities that exist in educational achievement, resources, and
> life chances between students of color and their White peers (Hollins &
> Guzman, 2005).

Thus educators today are faced with the task of adapting the American school system to

effectively educate all children, including those representing diverse populations.

Regardless of how students are classified and reported according to data, or have

made their way into American schools, they bring with them a variety of unique needs

that must be met in order for all students to obtain academic and societal success. While

there has long been an achievement gap with marginalized students demonstrating

unacceptably low levels of achievement, the problem in many cases went unaddressed

until the passage of NCLB. New standards of accountability for schools to demonstrate

achievement for *all* students has forced the educators to take a hard look at the needs and

learning of students representing diverse populations. While this is indeed a good thing to

recognize and remedy the system for those being underserved in schools, a fair amount of

backlash has occurred against the very groups that the law intended to help.

Districts and schools must demonstrate reading and math proficiency not only with their overall student populations, but also with a series of sub-populations as determined by NCLB (2001): economically disadvantaged, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, White, Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, students with disabilities, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. A district or school could also find themselves non-proficient if they do not have enough students from each category present on the day of testing. This results in 42 different categories that a school or district could be subjected to meet for AYP, based on the size of subgroups determined by student demographics. Even if a school or district meets proficiency in all other categories, but falls short in one, such as Asian math scores for example, they find themselves in what is now being referred to by many practitioners as "AYP Jail."

Nationwide, schools and districts are struggling to meet a variety proficiency targets, particularly with minority, special education, and LEP populations. Deficits should be viewed as simply data demonstrating continued need for refinement in programs serving these students. Unfortunately, in many cases these shortcomings have instead provided ammunition for the public to place blame on these student groups for schools and districts landing in "AYP Jail."

The focus on academic proficiency of student sub-populations, or rather the blame associated with their non-proficiency, serves as a microcosm of the changing landscape of our nation. Many feel the current climate of our country is anything but friendly to new-comers and other groups needing additional assistance of any kind (Bigelow, 2007).

Issues such as affirmative action, welfare, immigration reform, making English the

official national language, and increased border control that may soon resemble the

Berlin Wall between the U.S. and Mexico has left the public ripe for placing the blame of

underachieving schools onto children who fall within these sub-populations. Others

cogently suggest that our nation must shift away from the blame game and into an era of

educational reform that claims responsibility for closing the achievement gaps, regardless

of the race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status of children.

School Improvement Impacting Student Achievement

When approaching school improvement from the systemic level, many argue that

it is easy to get focused on the system, administrative leaders, and even teachers. Clearly,

these are all key players in the educational system that must be considered in any kind of

reform effort. However, the end result of increased student learning, achievement, and

school success should never be far from sight. Whatever the school improvement

strategy, it must be designed and implemented with the end goal of positively impacting

student learning and achievement as the apex.

Defining Student Achievement

Ideally, student success would be assessed according to a variety of measures.

Sonia Nieto (2000), a giant in the field of educational diversity, used the following

criteria to determine student academic success:

- They were still in school and planning to complete high school, or had

  recently graduated.

- They had good grades, although they were not necessarily at or near

  the top of the class.

- They had thought about the future and made some plans for it.

- They generally enjoyed school and felt engaged in it.

- They were critical of their own school experiences and those of their

  peers.

- Most importantly, they described themselves as successful.

While these are certainly all desirable indicators of academic success, they are

difficult to measure. In the new era of high stakes accountability, test scores have become

the widely accepted measure of achievement. While other indicators of student success

will be researched and evidenced in this study, the working definition for achievement

will be defined as results on the standardized assessments used by states in accordance

with federal regulations (NCLB, 2001). It is also noted that state interventions are

typically able to produce improvements as evidenced by organizational, operational,

and/or fiscal indicators in three to five years, but student achievement gains often lag

behind (Seder, 2000). Longitudinal studies continue to seek explanation for this lag, and

more importantly possible solutions to speeding up the time frame required to see more

rapid gains in student achievement.

Closing the Achievement Gap

Standardized test proficiency scores continue to highlight what many have known for decades; a substantial achievement gap does indeed exist when data is disaggregated based on race, ethnicity, English proficiency, special education, and socio-economic status. So what do we do about this achievement gap and the backlash against the very students NCLB intended to rescue from a system that is failing them? Majority of the current teacher force is grossly under prepared to work with diverse students, one of the key factors leading to high teacher and student attrition rates (National Clearinghouse for Language Acquisition, 2002). Further, teacher preparation as a whole appears to be slow in reforming their curriculum in order to reflect programs that not only promote cultural responsiveness, but equip future teachers with specific strategies needed in order to successfully work with diverse students (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Experienced and new teachers alike are in need of specific strategies and training on how to meet the need of diverse students, particularly language learners.

The achievement gap can be closed, and we see evidence of such phenomenon every year in schools throughout our nation (Wilkins, 2006; Barr & Parrett, 2007).

> It's happening at preschools in Chicago. It's happening at schools on the Nez Perce Reservation in Idaho and in the bustling heart of Atlanta. It's happening in Newark and on Long Island and in thousands of schools in every part of the country (Barr & Parrett, 2007, p. 2).

These locations highlighted for success in closing the achievement gap; truly teaching all students at high levels, and demonstrating high levels of achievement across the board are not performing magic of any kind or somehow ridding their systems of struggling students. Rather, these schools and districts are "simply engaged every day in the hard

work of teaching all children to high standards" (p. 2). Specific strategies leading to such achievement gains for all students have been identified; such as clear goals, high expectations, rigorous coursework, remediation structures, and highly qualified teachers who are strong in content and skilled in pedagogy. "The evidence is clear: Given the right teaching, the right classes, and the right support, African-American, Latino and Native-American children soar" (p. 2).

Memetics and Educational Change

If we are able to point to sites of excellence that have managed to achieve great systems level change and close the achievement gap, why is it so difficult to replicate such efforts in other struggling schools? Part of this great challenge can be explained through the concept of memetics, a field of study that centers on the power of memories.

We spend our life building them, trying to hold on to some and wishing we could let go of others. We fill albums with pictures as tangible evidence of memories, and we weep at the devastation of age and disease that rob the mind of our ability to remember things that once seemed unforgettable. The schooling experience is one compartment of the memory that has been filled and overflows into countless areas of one's life. This in mind, education reformers need to understand the power of school memories and how they negatively and more importantly might positively impact attempted changes to improve schools.

Regardless of age, gender, or occupation, if asked the question, "Tell me about your strongest school memory," a wide variety of responses ensue. After asking this

question informally to countless high school and college students, as well as a plethora of adults, several trends have emerged. There is usually little think time after the question is asked before a memory is verbalized, the memory is usually a very strong one with much detail, and the memory is typically either very positive, or very negative. Though not as frequent as the previously stated trends, school memories are also often linked to a specific teacher.

Memories of school are strong; both academic and personal. What sticks in a student's memory about and from school will impact the rest of their life. If we recognize that school memories are such a powerful entity, the field of education must look at the process and results of information, feelings, values, etc. that are being replicated in the name of public education, as it has always been. Particularly in an era where we are consumed by results and mandating success for *all* children, there is great concern for the information stored in one's memory when they leave today's school system.

The Science of Memetics

The anthropological field of memetics studies this concept of how information patterns established in one's memory, known as memes, are replicated into the memory of another (Dawkins, 1976). By looking at the cycle of how memes are replicated and how to strengthen such information patterns, educators can gain key insights into how we approach school reform. Everyone has their memories of what schools were like when they were a student, which often influence what they think schools should be like today. In the work of current educational reform efforts, we must collectively learn from our

societal school memories, and be willing to branch out and establish new memes that can enhance the continuous improvement of schools.

Memetics is the science, both theoretical and empirical, that studies the replication, spread, and evolution of memes (Blackmore, 1999).

> Memes are ideas, skills, habits, stories or inventions that are passed from person to person by imitation. Like genes they compete to get copied, but unlike genes their competition is for space in our memories, and for the chance to get into books, magazines and television programs. The survivors in this game of the ones we see all around us. Just as genes have created our bodies, so memes have created our minds and our cultures (p. 19).

Some memes are replicated knowingly and even deliberately. For example, the marketing industry has movie stars tell us over and over again through various media outlets how we should live, from what toothpaste to use, to the kinds of cars we should drive, to the right place to go for a vacation.

Other memes are replicated simply through example and experience. These types may include religion, social trends, patterns of language and conversation, and even expectations from the experience of school.

The Grammar of School

Students learn early on what memes, or information/behavior patterns, must be committed to memory in order to successfully navigate in the schooling environment. Cuban and Tyack (1995) address this development and socialization around various institutional norms in places such as armies, churches, and schools. The language of the educational system, both verbal and behavioral, is referred to as "the grammar of

schooling" (p. 9). These organizational regularities include such familiar practices as the age grouping of students, the division of knowledge into separate subjects, traditional grading practices and the self-contained classroom with one teacher. The grammar of schooling is strong and deeply rooted in tradition. If we are serious about wide sweeping educational reforms, we must begin to speak the language of all the stakeholders in helping them to re-evaluate their existing memes to fit with the new grammar of schooling we are hoping to implement.

Administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members need to be assured that today's educational reforms are not just one more example of throwing everything out and starting all over again. Good things, no great things, are happening in schools across the nation and should be celebrated, and then built upon (Cuban & Tyack, 1995).

> Rather than starting from scratch in reinventing schools, it makes most sense to us to graft thoughtful reforms onto what is healthy in the present system. Schooling is being reinvented all the time, but not necessarily in ways envisaged in macro planning. Good teachers reinvent the world every day for the children in their classes (p. 133).

Some teachers are rejecting flashy trends that go against what they, intuitively as a master educators, believe is good for their students. That is the question we must continually return to in these conversations of educational reform, regardless of what your individual grammar of schooling may be: what is good for the students? "…policies work only when they take into account the exigencies and uncertainties of teaching and learning inside schools and classrooms" (Elmore, 2006, p. 227).

Reform and Building New Memes

There are abundant conversations to be found among educators about the struggles and challenges faced by those engaged in current educational reform efforts. One major difficulty is observed in both systems and individuals trying to hang on to the old ways of doing things while attempting to implement something new. Educators are torn between the safety and familiarity of the old, and the possibilities and potential of the new. Yet attempting to do both only leads to frustration, burn out, and short changing the reform of what its true potential may be.

There is also a distinct difference between a true systemic reform and what Cuban and Tyack (1995) refer to as add-ons.

> If the reforms they adopted were add-ons, such as kindergartens or classes in commercial education, few citizens or teachers would complain (except, perhaps, about expense). But if reforms reached into regular classrooms and departed too much from consensual notions of a "real school," protests or foot-dragging might ensue (p. 10).

Many educators claim to be progressive and open to change, as long as the change isn't too threatening to their ability to continue doing what they are comfortable with, or infringe upon what they strongly believe, based on their own personal memes, to be characteristic of a "real school."

> Over long periods of time schools have remained basically similar in their core operation, so much so that these regularities have imprinted themselves on students, educators, and the public as the essential features of a "real school" (Cuban & Tyack, 1995, p. 7).

The new meme that must be replicated here is that a "real school" can look quite different from the traditional schools so firmly planted in the minds of many.

As we seek to reform schools, we face long engrained traditions and memories of policy makers and other educational leaders of what school was like when they were a student. Many believe they are an expert on education simply because they went to school. We frequently hear comments that represent these memories and beliefs. "Those who can't do, teach." "Teachers have such an easy job; they even have the summers off to do nothing." "All social studies teachers are lazy coaches who show videos everyday." "Minority children aren't able to learn as well as white children." "Their parents just don't care about school." Many are quick to criticize or use the schools as a scapegoat for the problems of society. Yet there is also unbelievable support for a public education system that serves all children.

> The issue at hand, then, is not to convince citizens that schooling is important; there is still a deep faith that better education is linked to societal progress. The key problem is to devise plausible policies for improvement of schooling that can command the support of a worried public and the commitment of the educators upon whom reform must rely (Cuban & Tyack, 1995, p. 39).

The fidelity and longevity of schooling memes provides these traditions, or grammar of traditional school, with a great deal of strength and support. In order to successfully propose and implement serious reforms in education, we must replicate new ways of thinking that will help to build new memes.

A New Educational Meme Observed

ANSER Public Charter School in Boise, Idaho serves as a perfect example of a system where the grammar of schooling is much different from the typical memes of education being passed on to groups of current students. A learning culture has been

established at ANSER that continuous revision and improvement of student work is a normal part of the schooling experience. In drastic difference from most public school students, children turn in assignments at ANSER, knowing and expecting to have the opportunity to improve upon and resubmit their work.

It may seem like a small thing to some, but what an amazing accomplishment in this learning community. Students are moving beyond looking for the correct multiple choice answers, or the quickest way to get the assignment turned in and done with. Even if a work sample is turned in that meets or exceeds expectations on the first attempt, students are still expected, and grow to expect of themselves, to rework the assignment and make it even better. What an amazing life skill to develop over the course of your school experience.

This practice of repeated revision is not a meme that is part of the traditional grammar of schooling; but it is part of the schooling grammar of ANSER Charter School. Though this change may have come with resistance, through their strong belief in the learning process, and the longevity of their reform implementations, the ANSER staff and students now have their own set of memes that define learning in their school. The hope is that they continue to share and replicate these memes that have resulted in such a unique schooling experience for this particular group of children.

It is possible to change the grammar of schooling. New information patterns as to how things should and could operate in the schooling arena, backed by high levels of student learning and achievement, must be presented to the public as a challenge to traditional memes of education.

> To help us maintain this hope, we must celebrate and elevate success. We should regularly read and learn about schools that have overcome great odds. Staff development in practices that have manifestly had an effect on learning must be a regular feature of our school life (Schmoker, 1999, p. 20).

Substantial organizational change in the educational system can happen; but we must be willing to let go of some of our old memories and be open to the realm of possibilities that come with celebrating the successes of what is working, balanced with a willingness to try something new that could make that good memories even better.

Organizational Change

When considering the NCLB mandates in combination with AYP data trends, it is certain that the number of low-performing schools and districts requiring substantial organizational change and reform will dramatically increase nationwide (Brady, 2003; Elmore, 2003; Tucker & Toch, 2004; Ziebarth, 2004). While there are numerous approaches and factors to consider when discussing substantial organizational change, for the purposes of this research, critical elements will be discussed and organized into three categories: establishing trust, capacity building, and time.

Establishing Trust

The academic world continues to grow in its recognition of the critical role that trust plays in high functioning organization and most any kind of substantial organizational change process (Lencioni, 2002; Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003; Coleman, 1990; Williamson, 1993).

> Trust promotes effective communication, cooperation, and adaptability, which are the foundations for productive relationships in organizations. By facilitating an open exchange of information and teamwork, trust promotes the disclosure, diagnosis, and correction of problems before they are compounded (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003, p. 10).

The adverse is also true, that a lack of trust proves to be damaging to organizations where performance relies on the judgment and individual actions of employees, including schools (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003).

The following is a summary of five key findings from an analysis on the literature surrounding the issue of organizational trust, as identified by Arsen, Bell, and Plank (2003):

- Trust is strengthened by ongoing relationships that reflect benevolence, support, and concern.

- Trust is easier to establish when shared values exist

- Trust is easier to establish with a good reputation among peers

- Trust is more difficult when the relationship is not entered into freely

- Trust is promoted when behaviors of authority figures are characterized by consistency, integrity, concern, open communication, and a willingness to share control

Trust is difficult to build, and easy to destroy. The task of building trust is particularly challenging between state departments of education and administrators of struggling schools and districts. There are many hurdles to overcome.

Many districts and schools are skeptical of state departments of education when they offer technical assistance; primarily because they are used to viewing the state solely

in the traditional role of compliance monitors. Many states also appear to have a lack of

capacity to actually offer meaningful, systemic technical assistance to such a large

audience (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2005).

When offering technical assistance programs, many states, including Idaho, have

observed more resistance and lack of trust coming from larger, higher performing

districts with established professional development programs. Adversely, smaller districts

struggling to meet AYP and faced with their own lack of capacity to offer substantial

technical assistance seem quicker to the line of trusting and welcoming help from the

state and other outsiders (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2005).

Despite the challenges, trust remains critical to the improvement process. There is

also growing evidence of increased trust correlating to increased student achievement

(Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Hoy, 1992; Tarter,

Sabo, & Hoy, 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

> Schools where administrators, teachers, and parents trust one another and
> rely on one another to achieve common purposes are likely to perform
> better than schools where these conditions are absent (Arsen, Bell, &
> Plank, 2003, p. 11).

Establishing this environment of trust becomes exceedingly difficult when a school is

labeled as "failing." Pressure to improve increases while morale declines, proving to be a

lethal combination. The bottom line is that despite great challenge, in order for school

improvement efforts to maximize their potential, stakeholders at all levels must function

in an environment that values trust, collaboration, and thinking "out of the box" regarding

relationships and the change process (Arbinger, 2002 & 2006; Zander & Zander, 2000).

Capacity Building

Central to successful school improvement efforts in the context of NCLB requirements is the capacity of states to guide and support the change and improvement necessary in a vast number of struggling schools across our nation. The types of system-wide changes, reaching down to very specific instructional modifications necessary at the classroom level is not something that will happen overnight or without herculean efforts. This cannot be accomplished simply through a federal mandate and new focus on test scores. This type of system overhaul will only come through the building of capacity to implement and sustain change at all levels from the state down to the classroom. Capacity building is difficult work that leaders must be deeply engaged in over extended amounts of time, but with frequent and substantial effort.

> Briefly, capacity building involves any policy, strategy, or other action undertaken that enhances the collective efficacy of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning for all students. Usually it consists of the development of three components in concert: new knowledge and competencies, new and enhanced resources, and new and deeper motivation and commitment to improve things—again, all played out collectively (Fullan, 2006, p. 28).

An initial challenge presents itself in that many state agencies do not maintain the capacity themselves to carry out what NCLB is asking of them. They are "sorely lacking the human and knowledge resources to help low performing schools and districts" (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2005, p. 15). States must first deal with their own issues of capacity before they will be equipped to support districts and schools in addressing their capacity issues.

A recent study conducted by the Rennie Center (2005) looked into the issue of state capacity to carry out the state role currently mandated by NCLB. The study identifies four indicators by which to gauge the capacity of a state to fulfill their obligations under the law:

1. The number of schools and districts that the state reviews and provides assistance;

2. The size of the Department of Education staff;

3. The funding of the Department of Education relative to the total state education budget; and

4. The salary scale for state education employees (p.15).

Using these four criteria, states could self asses their own capacity, and compare their capacity to that of other states based on these criteria. More importantly, such an assessment effort has the potential to highlight areas where states could improve upon in order to increase their capacity to best serve districts and schools in need of improvement.

Capacity building for educational change will require both technical expertise, and local knowledge (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003). Turning around "failing" schools will require a new level of technical expertise that will change the way teachers present content material, and the way students interact with material being presented. Elmore (1996) refers to this as improved performance on the part of both teachers and students surrounding the "instructional core." This level of change will require teachers and

principals alike to learn something new, and translate that something new into behaviors that will alter their practices; a difficult task to be sure (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003).

Just as important as technical expertise, local knowledge must be factored into the improvement equation. The capacity for a state to provide impactful technical assistance to struggling districts and schools rests on their ability to learn and account for the local context that surrounds each district and school. This includes knowledge about personnel, students, reform history, as well as the social and political climate of the community (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003). "Standardized approaches to school reform will not work unless they can be adapted to respond to the specific circumstances and needs of each individual school" (p. 7).

Time

Despite all the debate and discussion on how to best approach school improvement initiatives, most agree that one key component of successful interventions is that they require a long-term commitment to the reform process (Phenix, Siegel, Zaltsman, & Fruchter, 2005; McQuillan & Salomon-Fernandez, 2008; Reville, Coggins, & Candon, 2004). Adding an international voice to the discussion, Turner (1998), writing from the perspective of a director of a school identified as failing, declared that state intervention alone will not produce the desired school improvement results. "Genuine improvement will occur only with the commitment of the staff, so commitment must be encouraged and nurtured" (p. 97).

If teachers are to implement radically different approaches to teaching, this will require substantial professional development in order for them to acquire new professional expertise required to make such change. Odden and Busch (1998) hold that successful state interventions can be achieved "only through ongoing, long-term professional development" (p. 35). This will not be accomplished through a drive-by model of professional development where a concept is thrown at a staff in a one day in-service training, but rather over a long period of time with great emphasis placed on the implementation process of any new knowledge and skill. Substantial school reform must occur over a lengthy time period; that will surely include many ups and downs, also referred to as the pattern of "punctuated equilibrium" (Elmore & City, 2007, p.1).

Based on the fact that dramatic change cannot be made overnight, but rather successful interventions may take two to three years to even begin to manifest AYP results; the timeline NCLB has set for 100% proficiency by 2014 may be expecting too much too fast (Brady 2003).

> We need a long-term solution, which can only lie in building the capacity
> of the states, districts, and schools to reach the kinds of goals
> contemplated by the framers of NCLB. This is not a simple matter, but a
> vast, man-to-the-moon kind of challenge (Tucker & Toch, 2004, p. 5).

That being said, it is also important to set short-term goals that can help to produce positive momentum and encouragement as leaders and teachers work towards long-term reform goals. While there is indeed a place for the big picture, strategic plan, Mike Schmoker (2004) suggests that success is to be found in simpler plans that focus on teaching lessons and units created in true 'learning communities' that promote team-

based, short-term thought and action. Reform movements can be continually fueled when we "win small, win early, and win often" (Fullan, 2001a, p. 32).

Time should not be used as an excuse to thwart aggressive approaches to school improvement. The situation is severe, and requires immediate and rapid attention to remedy ineffective systems, leaders, and teachers. Long-term and short-term goals must be set and frequently monitored and adjusted to best meet the needs of struggling systems and students alike. Trust must be established and improvement efforts must be taken to scale in order for capacity to be built over a reasonable amount of time.

Turnaround Leadership

The pressure for quick improvement as evidenced by student achievement results increases as a school advances in the consecutive number of years they have failed to meet AYP. "NCLB guidelines require quicker action than many state policies had previously called for" (Elmore, 2003, p. 2). Therefore, improvement approaches have begun to incorporate a rapid improvement process, often led by "turnaround leaders" specifically trained to turnaround a failing school in a short period of time (Brinson, Kowal, & Hassel, 2008).

Under the law, when a school fails to meet AYP five consecutive years, they must enter into what is referred to as "restructuring" (NCLB, 2001). The law provides the following five options for restructuring, as summarized from section 1116 of NCLB (2001):

- Reopen the school as a public charter school

- Replace all or most of the school staff, which may include the principal

- Contract with an outside entity to operate the school

- Turn the operation of the school over to the state educational agency

- Engage in another form of major restructuring that makes fundamental reforms

As one can imagine, most have chosen the last option, which leaves room for interpretation, and more mild forms of intervention. Despite the option chosen, after five consecutive years of not meeting AYP, a quick turnaround is expected from the restructuring process.

In response to this need of support for educational leaders attempting to produce rapid turnarounds in failing schools, Kowal and Hassel (2007) through the Center on Innovation and Improvement published a report that "identified fourteen leader actions associated with successful turnarounds in the business, nonprofit, government, and education sectors" (p. 4). Table 8 depicts the turnaround leader actions identified in this report (Brinson, Kowal, & Hassel, 2008, p. 6-7).

Table 8

Turnaround Leader Actions

Turnaround Leader Action	What It Means
Initial Analysis and Problem Solving	
Collect & Analyze Data	Initially, turnaround leaders personally analyze data about the organization's performance to identify high-priority problems that can be fixed quickly. Later, they establish organization routines that include ongoing data analysis (see Measure and Report below).
Make Action Plan Based on Data	Turnaround leaders make an action plan so that everyone involved knows specifically what they need to do differently. This allows people to focus on changing what they do, rather than worrying about impending change.
Driving for Results	
Concentrate on Big, Fast Payoffs in Year One	Successful turnaround leaders first concentrate on a very limited number of changes to achieve early, visible wins for the organization. They do this to achieve success in an important area, to motivate staff for further change, and to reduce resistance by those who oppose change.
Implement Practices Even if Require Deviation	Turnaround leaders make changes that deviate from organization norms or rules-not just for change's sake, but to achieve early wins. In a failing organization, existing norms and rules often contribute to failure. Targeted deviations to achieve early wins teach the organization that new practices can lead to success.
Require All Staff to Change	When a turnaround leader implements an action plan, change is mandatory, not optional.
Make Necessary Staff Replacements	Successful turnaround leaders typically do not replace all or most staff. But they often replace some senior staff, particularly those who manage others. After the organization begins to show turnaround success, staff unwilling or unable to make changes that their colleagues have made leave or are removed by the leader.
Focus on Successful Tactics; Halt Others	Successful turnaround leaders are quick to discard tactics that do not work and spend more resources and time on tactics that work. This pruning and growing process focuses limited time and money where they will have the most impact on critical results.

Table 8 (continued)

Do Not Tout Progress as Ultimate Success	Turnaround leaders are not satisfied with partial success. They report progress, but keep the organization focused on high goals. When a goal is met, they are likely to raise the bar.
Influencing Inside and Outside the Organization	
Communicate a Positive Vision	Turnaround leaders motivate others inside and outside the organization to contribute their discretionary effort by communicating a clear picture of success and its benefits.
Help Staff Personally Feel Problems	Turnaround leaders use various tactics to help staff empathize with-or "put themselves in the shoes of"-those whom they serve. This helps staff feel the problems that the status quo is causing and feel motivated to change.
Gain Support of Key Influencers	Turnaround leaders work hard to gain the support of trusted influencers among staff and community. They work through these people to influence those who might oppose change.
Silence Critics with Speedy Success	Early, visible wins are used not just for success in their own right, but to make it harder for others to oppose further change. This reduces leader time spent addressing "politics" and increases time spent managing for results.
Measuring, Reporting (and Improving)	
Measure and Report Progress Frequently	Turnaround leaders set up systems to measure and report interim results often. This enables the rapid discard of failed tactics and increase of successful tactics essential for fast results.
Require all Decision Makers to Share Data and Problem Solve	Sharing of results in open-air meetings allows turnaround leaders to hold staff who make key decisions accountable for results, creating discomfort for those who do not make needed changes and providing kudos to those who are achieving success. This shifts the focus of the organization's meetings from power plays, blaming, and excuses to problem solving.

The University of Virginia has established a training program designed to prepare

principals in the art of school turnaround. In partnership with this program, Dan Duke has

conducted research on the implementation of school turnaround efforts. Case study

research conducted by Duke, et al. (2005) on the student achievement gains in schools

where trained turnaround principals had been placed demonstrated significant results; the

process does work when the key elements of turnaround leadership are implemented. However, long term data must be collected in order to measure the sustainability of such turnaround efforts.

Knowing-Doing Gap

Despite the wide array of research available on what works in schools, the start of a research base on how districts can support such efforts, and what must be done to reform education systems; we still observe an alarming number of schools in our nation and state that have been deemed "failing." It begs the question of why when we know so much theory about reforming schools, it is so difficult to actually get the job done. Therefore, we must also explore the impact of the "knowing-doing gap" (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). The knowing-doing gap concept derived from a research study in the business world that explored the phenomenon of managers who had the book knowledge of how to be a good manager, but lacked the ability to transfer that knowledge into practice. "It was clear that being smart was not enough to turn knowledge into practice. It was evident that reading, listening to, thinking, and writing smart things was not enough" (p. ix).

The knowing-doing gap has also been referred to as the "smart-talk trap" in which people know too much and do too little. They operate as if discussing a problem and creating plans for addressing the issue is the same as actually taking action to solve the problem. It is believed that shutting the smart-talk trap would greatly decrease the knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999).

This phenomenon also exists in the field of education. In the early 1980's a substantial research effort was made to explore the lack of transfer from knowledge gained during teacher preparation to action in the classroom (Joyce & Showers, 1983).

> Trainers have often operated as though their task was completed with the achievement of skill mastery. The assumption that teachers (or any learners) will automatically transfer their learning to new settings is not, however, strongly supported by the research on training. We have to consider not only how to help teachers acquire and improve their skills but also how to help them integrate those skills into their active repertoire (p. 77).

They suggest such strategies as collaborative approaches to teacher development, continuous training in the craft of teaching, and the use of coaches to aid in the transfer of knowledge to action in the classroom (Joyce & Showers, 1983).

Adding to this line of research, Shirley Hord (1992) coined the term "facilitative leadership" when writing about the use of coaches, or individuals to guide and support the work of transferring knowledge to action in delivering effective instruction to all children. She holds that systematic change or true restructuring of schools will not occur without facilitators focused on implementing the change (Hord, 1992). Teachers are in need of support as they attempt to implement the skills and knowledge gained during teacher preparation, while dealing with the mounting pressures that exist in today's educational system.

More than twenty years of research has continued to support a push for teacher development that nurtures learning communities, injects new knowledge and life into classrooms, and engages students in increasingly successful learning experiences (Joyce & Showers, 2002). There will always be a need for teachers to learn more, but we also

need to be addressing the gap that exists between what teachers do know, and what they actually choose do in their classrooms.

The Role of the State in School Improvement

The vast majority of state departments of education across the nation have struggled to establish statewide systems of support that fully meet the requirements of NCLB. "State departments of education have never been equipped to do the kind of work that NCLB now demands" (Tucker & Toch, 2004, p. 3). There are major challenges facing states that are scrambling to quickly establish and implement systems with capacity to carry out the requirements of the law. They are being forced to continue with the more traditional monitoring and compliance roles played by state departments, while adding to the plate leading major reform efforts that require substantial and specific technical assistance, and to a rapidly growing number of schools and districts. "Nothing in the recent history of state accountability efforts has equipped states or localities to handle the number of schools that will likely be classified as low-performing under NCLB" (Elmore, 2003, p. 5).

National data collected from all 50 states in 2008 by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) indicate that all states have implemented some type of statewide system of support designed to provide services to schools and districts struggling to meet AYP (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a). This research couches accountability in the framework reflected in Figure 3.
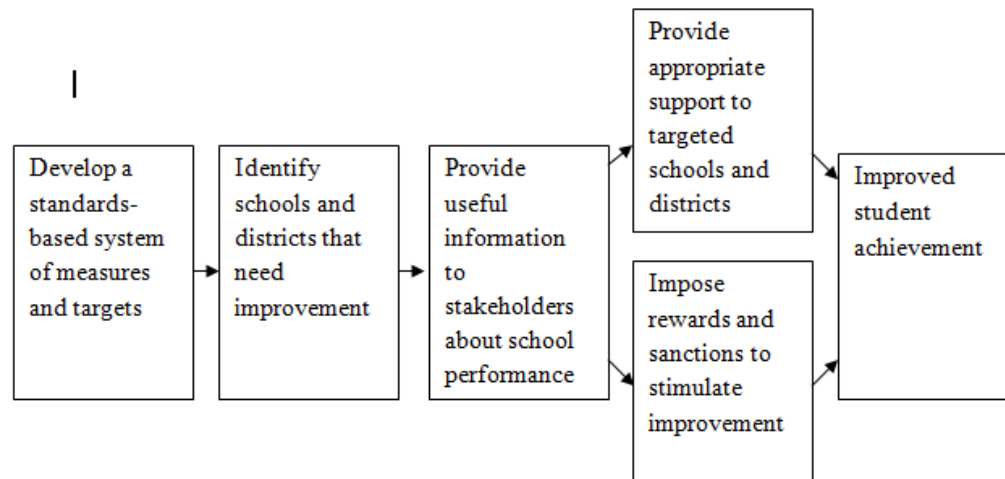
Figure 3. NCLB Accountability Approach to Improving Student Achievement

As depicted in the figure, a results based accountability system uses student learning outcomes to motivate educators to change and build capacity with the support of external assistance that will result in improved student achievement (O'Day and Bitter, 2003).

Based on the data gathered in the above mentioned AIR report (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a), reflecting all 50 states, five key components of statewide systems of support were identified (shown in Figure 4):

1. Tools to support the school improvement process

2. Providers who deliver support

3. Support activities

4. Funding for school improvement

5. Content of the improvement strategies themselves (p. 4-5).

State Education Agency

| Federal Regulations | → | Theory of Action | ← | SEA Capacity |

Differentiation of Support

Support Providers

Tools
-Sequenced steps of improvement process   (school improvement framework)
-Protocols, charts, and other resources

Sources:
SEA   Districts
Regions   Consultants

Support Activities:
Audit   Coaching
Data Analysis
Needs assessment
Coordinating resources

Funding for Improvement Activities

School-Based Strategies for Improvement

| Development of | → | Selection of | → | Implementation |

Improved Student Outcomes in schools identified for Improvement

Figure 4. Components of State Systems of Support for Low-Performing Schools

Based on these components, most states have developed their own frameworks for

delivering such services. Michigan for example identifies the following five strands

within their system: teaching and learning, leadership, personal and professional learning,

school and community relations, and data and information management. Within each

strand, standards, benchmarks, and key characteristics have been developed by the state department of education by which efforts can be measured (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a).

Wisconsin has focused heavily on district level reform developing standards, rubrics and tools organized in the following areas: vision, values, and culture; leadership and governance; decision making and accountability; curriculum and instruction; professional development and teacher quality (Wisconsin Department of Education, 2006).

New Mexico has developed an "Education Plan for Student Success" that focuses on the following areas: quality teaching and learning, professional culture and collaborative relationships, effective leadership, and support for system-wide improvement (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a).

Despite the specifics of the framework behind the support provided, the law is clear that statewide systems of support must analyze AYP data, assist schools and districts identified for improvement to develop plans, and then monitor the implementation of school improvement plans (NCLB, 2001). Though there is much variability in framework, structure, and implementation of statewide systems of support, the 2008 AIR report did result in the development of eight indicators of a quality statewide system of support. The first four indicators (coherence, comprehensiveness, stability, and responsiveness) reflect systemic features, and the last four indicators (intensity, prescriptiveness, fit, and timeliness) deal with actual school level support (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a).

Statewide systems of support are progressing in the evolution of their structure and the services they are able to provide throughout the states. Some are further along than others in these efforts, and all have room for continued improvement.

Challenges Facing State Agencies

The tasks required of a statewide system of support according to NCLB is great, and numerous challenges exist as states attempt to overhaul their role and function without increasing budgets or bureaucracies. NCLB went into effect at a time when state agencies were shrinking in size and learning to manage limited resources (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008b).

> Little effort is made through NCLB to build state capacity. This leaves understaffed, underfunded education agencies, with a history and culture of compliance monitoring, to suddenly reinvent themselves into leadership agencies. Policy analysts frequently cite the low capacity of state education agencies as a challenge to the implementation of NCLB mandates and maintenance of adequate state-level systems of support (p. 1).

Among the many challenges faced by states in providing adequate statewide support to struggling schools and districts are issues of limited staff, providing uniform but flexible services, defining what technical assistance is needed and how it will be delivered, and overcoming issues of distance between state departments of education and the districts and schools needing assistance.

Limited State Capacity

As the need for technical assistance in the area of school improvement has increased nationwide, the size of most state departments of education has not increased. Research in eight large states found that departments of education have experienced significant cuts in personnel over the last decade, and that none of the eight states researched had added staff in order to cope with new accountability and assessment requirements (Massell & Goertz, 1999). Lack of staff capable to carry out the increased expectations at the state level has left many state departments trying to determine how to best utilize the fiscal and human resources that are available.

> Given limitations in capacity, financial resources and knowledge about intervention strategies, states have been forced to make tradeoffs in supporting low performing schools and districts. Though the federal government mandates a state role, no state is able to provide complete and targeted intervention services to every school and district that could benefit (Rennie Center, 2004, p. 5).

States have been left to grapple with the depth verses breadth issue; contending with the tension between supporting all schools and districts in need, and at the same time trying to support schools and districts at a substantial level that will produce dramatic results (Rennie Center, 2004).

Examples are plentiful of the different ways that states have attempted to deal with this issue of limited state capacity. North Carolina, South Carolina, and New Jersey are among the states that have attempted to focus their state school improvement efforts on a small number of schools that have been identified as those having the greatest level of need. Kentucky and Alabama have designed systems that will be able to serve all schools identified as needing improvement. State law in California has required that their

state department of education serve all low performers, but state leaders readily admit to

an inability to extend high levels of service to such a broad and vast group of schools.

Other states such as Massachusetts have developed various levels of services to

coordinate with the various levels of needing improvement, starting with watch lists at

the early levels, culminating with intense interventions at the furthest levels of needs

improvement status. Louisiana has gone so far as to remove chronically underperforming

schools from the local districts and creating separate "recovery districts" targeted for

substantial reform (Rennie Center, 2004).

Adding to the issues related to limited state capacity is a lack of coherence in

many education systems reaching from the state to the district, to the school level. There

are a plethora of reasons backing this lack of coherence, that contributes to limited state

capacity including lack of fiscal resources, limited technical expertise, weak

communication systems, fragmented departments operating as silos, and difficulty

transitioning from the traditional role of the past of state departments serving as

monitoring, policy regulating bodies, into the leaders of innovation now required by our

current system (Unger, Lane, Cutler, Lee, Whitney, Arruda, & Silva, 2008).

> The fact that the fragmentation exists suggests that there is an opportunity
> to dramatically improve the system of public education by fostering
> coherence and aligning structures and processes within and across levels
> of the system (p. 7).

A recent study conducted by the Education Alliance housed at Brown University

(Unger, Lane, Cutler, Lee, Whitney, Arruda, & Silva, 2008) came to the following

conclusions on great areas of need as related to limited state capacity:

- SEAs need a new organizational structure, a reorientation in their approach towards working with schools and districts, and greater expertise to effectively support districts and schools.

- There is a need for a shared focus, common language, and greater coherence.

- There is a need to "right-size" the work.

- There is a need to utilize timely and meaningful assessments of student achievement and purpose (pp. 14-15).

As a starting point for addressing these identified areas of concern, the report suggests the following considerations of promise:

- Using the shared expertise of SEA officials and district leaders to jointly define what "district capacity" means, how to appropriately "diagnose" district capacity, and what might be the focus of efforts to build district capacity.

- Developing appropriate and differentiated services and supports for districts.

- Creating "safe zones for improvement."

- Networking educational agents for improved capacity.

- Broaden and deepen constituency (pp. 15-17).

The challenges presented by limited state capacity are immense, fortunately states continue to collaborate and work with centers charged with supporting states in

increasing their internal capacity to effectively support schools and districts in need of improvement.

Defining and Developing Technical Assistance

It is also difficult to determine just what the law expects, and what districts and schools need from states when it comes to technical assistance. Massachusetts has organized their state technical assistance into three main categories: curriculum and professional development, data and assessment, and leadership (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2005).

Vermont has developed extensive criteria beyond just one standardized test used to identify schools for technical assistance, and has further defined specifics regarding the technical assistance to be offered in a set state plan.

> The technical assistance provided to identified schools: is designed to help the school improve student learning; is grounded in the school's action plan, and is done in partnership with the school; will address any barriers to learning if present, including issues of curriculum, professional development, supervision and evaluation, school climate, student mobility, and community support; and will link schools with the resources that will support improved student learning (Vermont Department of Education, 2007, p. 17).

Also linked to the Vermont technical assistance programs, as with many states, is a focus on public recognition of improvement and academic achievement.

Several states including Washington, New Jersey, and Kentucky include a substantial school review/audit process to the school improvement technical assistance they offer. Specifically, the New Jersey Collaborative Assessment for Planning Achievement (CAPA), modeled after the Kentucky Scholastic Audit, "establishes teams

to work in concert with schools and districts, using a thoughtful, systematic, evidence-based process to reach agreement about the changes needed in order to make a positive difference in teaching and learning" (Center on Innovation and Improvement, 2007).

Several states are establishing professional networks or learning communities that promote collaboration between school improvement experts and leaders of systems identified for improvement (Reville, 2007). Massachusetts for example provides monthly collaboration opportunities for superintendents of districts in need of improvement. In Michigan, principles are required to participate in a series of leadership institutes where training on school improvement and collaboration is provided (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a).

The technical assistance being offered to schools and districts varies greatly from state to state. Comprehensive centers and other organizations are working to better network school improvement leaders from the states to increase the amount of collaboration, resource sharing, and research findings that can be used to befit the collective work of providing meaningful technical assistance to the plethora of schools and districts in need of improvement.

Distance Between State Departments of Education and Districts

The distance between state education agencies and schools, both geographic and figurative, creates serious impediments for direct state intervention (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003; Wong & Shen, 2001). State education agencies serve a large number of schools and districts that reflect a wide range of capacity and need. Due to this wide range, state

level employees often possess little local knowledge of the schools and districts they work with. This makes it very difficult to tailor interventions and effectively deal with deeply rooted local resistance (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003).

Nationally, states are struggling with the task of how to best educate poor and diverse students, and at scale within an entire state system (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2005). In order for states to effectively meet this charge, leadership in this effort must extend beyond just state departments of education.

> While the Department of Education (DOE) needs to play a leadership role in reorganizing the state system toward a greater focus on instructional and student learning, the scope of the work is more than that entity can accomplish alone (p. 7).

Taking these efforts to scale does not have to mean an immediate growth in state bureaucracies. Rather, states need to look for increased opportunities for partnerships in this work including school district leadership teams, district and state boards of education, universities, external service providers, intermediary educational organizations, and individual consultants.

External Support Providers

As previously discussed, there are numerous challenges districts and states face when serving as the sole providers of school improvement technical assistance. Many states utilize external support providers, also called intermediary institutions or intermediate districts, that present themselves in a variety of forms such as regionally located Educational Service Agencies (ESAs), Educational Service Districts (ESDs) that often operate in partnership with clustered districts, for-profit education management

organizations (EMOs), institutions of higher education, and other local government entities (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003). Most schools that have made their way into needs improvement status are in need of more than just goal setting and public pressure for improvement. Those that are truly in need of reform will require outside assistance to help diagnose problems, identify solutions, and build internal capacity to implement such solutions (Finnigan & O'Day, 2003).

States are also turning to the services of external providers due to their own lack of capacity to meet the mounting need for statewide assistance. In fact, NCLB (2001) mandates that external support be provided as part of the statewide system of support. States have reported that they are providing this external support in partnership with a variety of public organizations including individuals within state agencies, regional assistance centers, existing district staff, external consultants, and private organizations. Of the 50 states, only one state department of education reported that they are able to internally staff all the external support required in their state (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a).

University Partners

Since the passage of NCLB (2001) there has been an increase in the number of partnerships being made between K-12 education systems and institutions of higher education.

> Universities often have a rich stock of highly specialized technical
> expertise embodied in their faculty and staff, which could be deployed to
> assist a relatively large numbers of schools. Many universities have a
> history of working with districts to train pre-service teachers, and many

local educators are alumni. These prior interactions should help to establish a reservoir of trust between universities and public school educators (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003, p. 18).

While there are certainly some advantages to university partnerships, there are also some potential challenges to be aware of. University faculty have on occasion been viewed by teachers as "prisoners of the ivory tower" that portray themselves as more knowledgeable than educators in the schools, making it difficult for faculty to be full participants in efforts to support improvements in teaching and learning (Valli, Cooper, & Frankes, 1996).

Education Management Organizations

In 2008, 46 of the 50 states reported contracting with individuals and outside organizations as a way to provide the required external support. In Tennessee for example, Edvantia, Inc., a private organization, hires, trains, and monitors the Tennessee Exemplary Educator program which is utilized to deliver technical assistance to schools and districts. 29 of the 50 states reported using existing district staff in a consulting role, after extensive training from the state and 25 states report utilizing some form of regional support centers (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a).

Due to the NCLB recognition of Education Management Organizations (EMOs) as a restructuring option, the industry has grown considerably in recent years. Roughly 50 companies were employed to manage over 400 schools spanning 23 states plus the District of Columbia by the fall of 2002, numbers which have since grown (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003). For-profit charter schools make up 75% of all EMO-managed public

schools. Only a handful of companies currently manage traditional public schools, with Edison School holding a corner on this market by managing over 80% of the districts and schools in partnership with for-profit firms (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003). Interestingly, improvement in student achievement in EMO managed schools is about the same as that of comparable districts not in partnership with EMOs (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003, U.S. GAO, 2002).

Education Service Agencies

Education Service Agencies (ESAs), also referred to as Education Service Districts (ESDs) are public entities created to best utilize funds and provide educational support programs and services to schools and districts clustered geographically. At least 37 of the 50 states utilize such agencies, and more than 500 ESAs employ over 100,000 individuals assisting approximately 80% of the nation's public schools and districts (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003). This allows states, districts, and schools to maximize resources, systematically collaborate and network, and access highly skilled individuals and trainings; things that are much more difficult to accomplish in isolation.

The major function of ESAs is in providing professional development. 527 of 530 ESAs surveyed reported providing staff development and/or curriculum development services (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003). In addition to the benefits of collaboration and shared resources, ESAs also enjoy a relatively high degree of trust that comes with their geographic proximity, and perceived function outside of the official state agency (Arsen, Bell, & Plank, 2003).

Regardless of the type of external support provider, these intermediary institutions have an important role to play in this nation-wide task of improving schools and districts as states seek to expand their capacity and partnerships to best meet the vast needs of schools and districts.

Supporting Struggling Schools

Countless reform efforts and movements have swept through the field of education over the last decade and beyond (Shirley, 2009). Before teachers and school leaders have had a chance to master any new concept or program, it is too often pushed to the side to make room for the new drive-by professional development training. "We have to move beyond reform du jour compliance, flavor-of-the-month change strategies, and educational tourism that seeks the 'next big thing'" (p. 143). This approach has often resulted in deeply fragmented school improvement efforts (Schlechty, 1997). This leads to the belief that regardless of program or effort, that a once a direction for school improvement has been selected, is should be implemented with vigilance, staying the course through the long and challenging process often associated with reform.

Initial efforts by states to turn around "failing" schools have included such approaches as taking over schools and districts, assigning control to municipal governments or private companies, sending in teams of experts to provide consultation, and changing leadership or majority of a staff, to name a few (Arsen, Bill, & Plank, 2003). Each of these strategies derived from NCLB guidance has been implemented with variation, and with a wide array of results in a number of states (Brady, 2003).

Characteristics of High Performing Schools

Although the research world has not been able to narrow in on one magic-bullet approach to turning around "failing" schools, there is some very conclusive evidence from 30 plus years of research on the characteristics of effective schools (Edmonds, 1979; Jerald, 2001; Taylor, 2002; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). A meta-analysis of effective schools research called the *Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools* was published in 2003 by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Washington state and replicated in 2007 (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007), resulting in the following set of characteristics found in high performing schools:

1. **Clear and Shared Focus.** Everybody knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.

2. **High Standards and Expectations for All Students.** Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. Students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course study.

3. **Effective School Leadership.** Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders proactively seek needed help. They nurture an

instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders have different styles and roles—teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.

4. **High Levels of Collaboration and Communication.** There is strong teamwork among teachers across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community, to identify problems and work on solutions.

5. **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Aligned with Standards.** The planned and actual curriculum are aligned with the essential academic learning requirements. Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understand the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

6. **Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching.** A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time is provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

7. **Focused Professional Development.** A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focuses extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.

8. **Supportive Learning Environment.** The school has a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

9. **High Levels of Family and Community Involvement.** There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just teachers and school staff. Families, businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort (p. 24).

States are utilizing school improvement strategies that include attempts to increase school effectiveness regarding these characteristics in hopes that they too can move schools into the category of highly effective, as demonstrated by student achievement gains.

Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has also been cited as a critical strategy that could be used by any school or district as a vehicle for accomplishing the

work of school improvement; a mode for "how business is done" (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005). The term professional learning community has become a widely used buzz word in education, but with much variation in the interpretation of meaning. In an attempt to reign in the use and meaning of what the authors intended when developing the professional learning community concept, they recently summarized the key tenants of true professional learning communities as follows:

- A focus on learning

- A collaborative culture with a focus on learning for all

- Collective inquiry into best practice and current reality

- Action orientation: Learning by doing

- A commitment to continuous improvement

- Results orientation (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006).

Following the PLC model allows each school or district to work in unique capacities, but utilizing an effective structure for engaging in the work of school improvement.

Studies have also linked the utilization of PLCs to increased student achievement. Newman and Wehlage (1995) found this direct correlation in schools that established clear goals and purpose for student learning, as well as shared responsibility for student learning; key tenants of PLCs.

> If schools want to enhance their organizational capacity to boost student learning, they should work on building professional community that is characterized by shared purpose, collaboration activity, and collective responsibility among school staff (p. 37).

Regardless of the specific areas needing improvement, the initiatives passed to address such concerns, and the individuals involved in the process, professional learning communities can be a powerful tool to guide the actual process of planning, implementing, and sustaining improvement.

The 21st Century Classroom

While research supports the importance of a healthy systems and effective educational leaders, recent studies demonstrate that second to none regarding impact on student achievement, is the power of the classroom teacher (Carey, 2004; Haycock, 2004; Marzano, 2003). Too many reform efforts have focused solely on top levels of leadership and have neglected to include the critical layer of the classroom teacher, who has the daily direct contact, influence, and ultimate responsibility for student learning.

A recent National Education Technology Plan (2004) reported that two-thirds of U.S. high school students are bored in at least one class. 47% of dropouts surveyed in the "Silent Epidemic" study conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation said they quit school because "their classes were not interesting" and they were bored (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morrison, 2006). "The study goes on to report that 88% of the dropouts actually had passing grades; what they didn't have was a learning environment that kept them adequately engaged" (Eduviews, 2008, p. 3). Our schools are filled with teachers who need additional training on how to develop and deliver engaging instruction fit for a new generation of learners. Instruction that is fit for the 21st Century learner should

include the development of the following skills as identified by the U.S. business

community:

- Mastery of core subjects including English/Language Arts, World

  Languages, Arts, Mathematics, Economics, Science, Geography,

  History, Government, and Civics

- Collaboration—the ability to work as part of a team

- Critical thinking—the ability to tackle complex problems and concepts

- Oral communications—the ability to present ideas

- Written communications—the ability to present ideas in writing

- Technology—the skills to use technology tools, resources, and

  communications

- Citizenship—the ability to engage in and understand civic and global

  issues, and the experience of service learning

- Career learning—the opportunity to investigate careers through

  internships and other experiential learning

- Content—the skills to conduct research, evaluate and develop content

  to support all of the above skills (p. 7).

Accomplishing the above list in today's diverse classroom with unique learning

styles and needs will mandate a shift from the traditional school and classroom and will

require additional training and implementation support for administrators and teachers

alike.

Models of Reform and Professional Development

There are numerous packaged reform models that schools have fully engaged in with varied results, such as Accelerated Schools, the Comer Model, and America's Choice, to name just a few (Arsen, Bill, & Plank, 2003). These models often come with prescript programs, required activities for all, and accompanying outside consultation and networking. While these programs have frequently demonstrated impressive results, there is not a single model that comes with a 100% guarantee for the desired change, and they often come with a high price tag.

In Arkansas for example, when schools get to the Corrective Action phase of school improvement, they are strongly encouraged to utilize strategies prescribed in the America's Choice school reform model. Hawaii has a similar expectation, but provides struggling schools and districts with three programmatic choices when they reach the restructuring phase of school improvement: America's Choice, ETS Pulliam, and Edison Schools (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a).

Many districts and schools do not have the funding available to engage in such programs, and also run the risk with such movements of becoming dependent on the program or company; rather than making internally sustainable changes.

> Some states endorse a view that school-level stakeholders (generally with some external assistance) are in the best position to understand their own context and challenges. In these cases, school staff themselves decide which solutions are appropriate, often with some level of facilitation from the state. The assumption is that having schools develop their own approaches to tackling their most salient problems will more naturally encourage school-level-buy-in, implementation, and sustainability. It also supposes that schools have some basic level of internal capacity, and just need a little help to articulate, refine, and implement solutions (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a, p. 10).

Many reform efforts generated from the outside become dependent on the outside group and collapse when the term of support expires (Fullan, 2005). Homegrown improvement plans and strategies that are locally developed have proven to be successful when the capacity and resourcefulness of school stakeholders matches the scale of the challenge (Simmons, 2006). Thus, districts and schools continue to look to the state for guidance in how to turn their struggling schools around using existing resources.

School improvement strategies are being shared with all levels of educators through a variety of professional development offerings. A study conducted in Massachusetts found that superintendents and principals are eager for low cost, high quality professional development in the following areas:

- Curriculum frameworks, especially math

- Strategies for special education and English language learner students in academic content areas

- Using test data to improve instruction (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2005).

Small districts in particular often struggle with the ability to provide meaningful and high quality professional development that can meet the needs of all educators within their system. Two-thirds of our nation's districts have fewer than fifteen hundred students, and only about three percent have enrollments of more than fifteen thousand (Supovitz, 2006). By increasing the frequency and array of professional development offerings from the state level, all have the opportunity to benefit and grow professionally,

relieving a heavy burden from small districts without the capacity to offer such

development through their own limited personnel and budgets.

There is a great need nation-wide for improved professional development that can

be directly correlated with increased student achievement (Blank, Alas, & Smith, 2008).

> The ability to provide leadership in the areas of curriculum and
> professional development is a central capacity the state needs because
> *improving teaching and learning* is the core mission of the state education
> system. Building the capacity to broker and deliver the services educators
> need to enhance their practice is pivotal in the department of education's
> transition from a bureaucratic, compliance-oriented organization to a
> service-oriented organization. The state will not be perceived as service-
> oriented until it is able to provide its clients (teachers and administrators)
> with the essential services they need most (Rennie Center for Education
> Research & Policy, 2005, p. 20).

Statewide systems of support have a great opportunity to help large and small

districts alike by organizing and providing much needed, high quality professional

development opportunities at the state and regional level.

The bottom line is that whether through a specific reform model or particular

professional development tract; schools do need support in the form of specific strategies

on how to make changes that will result in increased student achievement. If schools and

districts knew what to do they would be doing it (Elmore & Burney, 1997).

Increase District Capacity

Keeping in mind the capacity issues that most state departments are facing, and

the increased need to distribute leadership in the arena of school improvement, many are

looking to increase district capacity as a way to spread improvement efforts. With almost

sixteen thousand school districts in the United States, research continues to highlight the

importance of the role that districts must play in school reform efforts (Supovitz, 2006).

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of the district role in school improvement

(Elmore & Burney, 1997; Hightower, 2002; Spillane, 2001; Supovitz, 2006). "To date,

however, no concrete strategy for technical assistance at the district level exists" (Rennie

Center, 2005, p. 15). Many states have swung back and forth from focusing on district

improvement, to school improvement, and in some cases back again.

Rather than choosing to serve one or the other, Idaho is moving towards an approach

of serving districts and schools in tandem. The state is working towards building district

capacity through partnership with the district in developing theories of action that meet

the individual needs and structures of each district. According to district reform expert

Jonathan Supovitz (2006), these district theories of action must include four central

components:

1. Developing a specific vision of what high-quality instruction should

   look like inside classrooms.

2. Building both the commitment and the capacity of employees across

   the system to enact and support the instructional vision.

3. Constructing mechanisms to provide data at all levels of the system

   that will be used both to provide people with information that informs

   their practices and to monitor the implementation of the instructional

   vision.

4. Developing a means to help people continually deepen their

    implementation and to help the district continually refine this vision

    and understand its implications (p. 5).

Just like with schools, if districts knew exactly what to do to turn around their

struggling schools, they would be doing it (Elmore & Burney, 1997). Districts are often

in need of direct, specific strategies and support from the state level in order to build their

own internal capacity to better develop, implement, and sustain improvement efforts with

their struggling schools.

It is projected by state education leaders that providing scaffolded support to a

few schools, in partnership with district efforts, for a set period of time, will result in the

district developing internal capacity to sustain and replicate such efforts in all schools

within their district (Supovitz, 2006).

> Districts can play a powerful role in supporting school improvement if
> they reposition themselves both internally to the schools they serve and
> externally to the greater educational environment. Internally, districts must
> develop a reciprocal relationship with schools, exchanging a commitment
> to capacity-building for accountability. Externally, districts must develop
> the capacity to scan the broader educational environment and negotiate
> relationships with external providers in order to enhance the expertise
> within their systems. Perhaps most important, districts must evolve into
> organizations that explore instructional problems more systematically in
> order to build their own knowledge base, and thus to improve teaching
> across their systems (pp. 3-4).

While there has been evidence of districts achieving such reform on their own,

they are few and far between. Districts are in need of state support if they are to build

their own capacity to effectively turn around struggling schools.

Research has been able to inform the public on common characteristics across districts that have been able to successfully develop theories of action that have resulted in system wide improvement both in efficient structures, and more importantly in student learning and achievement results. A study authored by Wendy Togneri and Stephen Anderson (2003) in partnership with the Learning First Alliance examined the following five high functioning school districts:

- Aldine Independent School District, Texas

- Chula Vista Elementary School District, California

- Kent County Public Schools, Maryland

- Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota

- Providence Public Schools, Rhode Island

All five school districts were selected through a rigorous set of criteria, demonstrating at minimum the following characteristics:

- Success in increasing student achievement in math and/or reading over three or more years

- Improvement in student achievement across grade levels, races, and ethnicities

- A poverty rate of at least 25 percent, as defined by students eligible for free and reduced lunch

- A reputation for effective professional development practices, based on recommendations from education leaders (p. 2).

Their extensive study resulted in the following seven factors that emerged as essential to substantial district level improvement:

1. Districts had the courage to acknowledge poor performance and the will to seek solutions.

2. Districts put in place a system wide approach to improving instruction—one that articulated curricular content and provided instructional supports.

3. Districts instilled visions that focused on student learning and guided instructional improvement.

4. Districts made decisions based on data, not instinct.

5. Districts adopted new approaches to professional development that involved a coherent and district-organized set of strategies to improve instruction.

6. Districts redefined leadership roles.

7. Districts committed to sustaining reform over the long haul (pp. 4-5).

State departments of education can learn a lot from studies such as this one (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Based on data and evidence of district level improvement that has resulted in substantial increases in student learning and achievement, states can develop and organize professional development that will help foster the replication of such factors in other struggling districts.

Summary

With the recent push towards standards and increased student achievement, we certainly have no shortage of "data" within the educational arena. However, in many cases we are "data rich, but information poor" (Schmoker, 2006). In order for districts and schools to improve their current systems of delivering services and instruction, they must function in healthy systems that are able to analyze data at a level that will inform the countless decisions that are made on a frequent basis. Rather than making decisions based on "cardiac data," or what we think feels like the right thing to do; we must make intentional decisions based on what the data tells us is the right thing to do (Holcomb, 2004).

A critical part of school improvement efforts is to guide districts and schools through a process of learning to use multiple forms of data, beyond just the yearly standardized test score results, to analyze their systems and instructional delivery models to better inform future decisions regarding student learning. The task at hand is a large one; both what is being required by the law, and what states, districts, and schools are taking on regarding the charge that *all* students will learn and achieve. There is much to be found in the literature on how to improve state, district, and school systems. Now the task remains to implement and sustain such change.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the development and pilot implementation of a statewide system of support, the Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project, designed to provide technical assistance for Idaho schools and districts identified as needing improvement per NCLB. This examination was conducted based on the experiences and perceptions of state school improvement leaders and Capacity Builders (distinguished educators trained as school improvement coaches/consultants). This system of school improvement technical assistance is called the Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project.

This study seeks to answer two main questions. First, **how does Idaho develop and implement an effective, comprehensive statewide system of support that will provide technical assistance to schools and districts at all levels of needs improvement status?** Second, in an attempt to look at early evidence of impact related to the pilot project, **how has a targeted district and its schools integrated the efforts from the statewide system of support into its improvement process?**

Whereas this study is primarily an analysis on the process of building a statewide system of support and the initial year of pilot services, observations and interpretations of the process serve as critical data sources. The researcher also looked for early evidence of impact within the pilot sites. This analysis focused on the challenges of implementation, indicators of success, and the perceived impact of the IBC pilot project, particularly the impact of the Capacity Builder in the process. Findings from this study will inform the

continued development and refinement of the IBC project, now recognized as a cornerstone of Idaho's statewide system of support.

The established system resulting from this study is still in its infancy stages; thus it is still too early to conduct valid and reliable analysis of quantifiable results that can be clearly correlated to the early project efforts. While this provides an overarching limitation to the type of analysis possible, it did allow for qualitative research to be conducted as a starting point for analyzing the project and early evidence of impact linked to project efforts. Therefore, the methodology used to frame this study comes from the branch of interpretivism qualitative research which seeks to uncover deep understandings of a given situation or experience.

This study will address early evidence of impact through three data sources; written reports submitted by Capacity Builders at the mid-point mark of the pilot study and at the end of pilot year services, as well as a quantified perceptual survey collected for the project by the Center for Educational Effectiveness. The need for additional, deep analysis of quantifiable results as the project continues will be further discussed as implications for future research in Chapter Five.

This chapter will provide a basis and description of the methodology utilized in this research design. The role of the researcher, context of the study, and participants will be described, along with procedures used for data collection and analysis.

Research Design

An interpretivism qualitative research approach as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) has been used to guide this study. This method of analysis dates back to the work of Dilthey (1911/1977) in establishing that observed human activity can be seen as text or data. Social interactionists engage in interpretivism methods in their attempts to understand group actions and interactions in the research process. This study seeks deeper understanding of the IBC project and early evidence of its impact on schools and districts in needs improvement status that participated in the pilot project.

This specific study was designed to analyze the development, implementation, and early evidence of impact resulting from the IBC project pilot in order to inform continued practice and efforts to provide meaningful and impactful technical assistance to Idaho schools and districts in needs improvement status. This design supports the kind of research described by Patton (1990) that strives to improve human efforts that will positively impact effectiveness in any given situation, through the analysis of effect on participants. This type of research greatly values the perspective and perception of the humans that are grounded in the experiences being studied. Through this analysis, this study in particular will contribute to the developing field of school improvement with the ultimate goal of supporting improved student learning and achievement for Idaho students.

Analysis of the Idaho Building Capacity Project

Based on a directive provided by the Idaho State Department of Education to increase the state's capacity to meet the needs of Idaho's schools and districts identified as needing improvement, according to NCLB (2001), an effort was launched to research statewide systems of support in other states, develop a framework to support increased school improvement technical assistance in Idaho, and conduct a pilot study with plans to build and refine a support system to be replicated statewide.

This analysis covers the span of five months spent researching and designing the IBC project (August-December 2007), and the pilot year of services provided to nineteen school/district sites (January-December 2008).

Analysis of IBC Development

There are two threads of analysis in this study regarding the IBC pilot project. The first is based on the process of establishing this statewide system of support to deliver school improvement technical assistance to schools and districts in need of improvement. The documents used in this analysis process will be discussed in the Data Collection Procedures and Analysis section of this chapter.

As previously established in the literature review, a statewide system of support has been required of the states since the passage of NCLB (2001). However, each state is at a different point of implementation, specificity, and evidenced success within their statewide systems of support. A critical first step in establishing such a system in Idaho was to thoroughly research such systems already established in other states. While there

have been many challenges in "showing up late" to this effort, one of the benefits has

been the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other states.

<u>Analysis of Perceptual Evidence of Impact</u>

The second thread of analysis on the IBC pilot project is based on early evidence of

school improvement, as identified and described by participants of the project through a

series of data sources to be further discussed in the Data Collection Procedures and

Analysis sections of this chapter.

The crux of this study focused on the development of a statewide system of support

and pilot project efforts of implementation. There will be great value in the baseline data

gathered in this study as project efforts continue to be measured in years to come. It is too

early to expect substantial growth in student achievement data and other forms of

quantifiable evidence that might demonstrate traditional "results." Student achievement

data has been, and will continue to be looked at by project leaders, particularly in relation

to growth and areas of continued concern. However, IBC services began in mid January

2008 and state student assessments were conducted in April of that year. Thus, the project

had only been effect for three months before the most recent standardized achievement

tests were administered. Chapter Five will suggest further study of spring 2009, 2010,

and 2011 standardized student achievement data as a critical source of project

effectiveness, reflecting impact of efforts at the end of each year of IBC services.

It will also be a continued challenge in the evaluation of the IBC project to

accurately account for the variance in results directly correlated to project efforts. There

are numerous factors that might contribute to improvement in student achievement

results, many related to areas focused on in the IBC project. Thus claiming improvement

in student achievement resulting solely from IBC efforts would be impossible and

inappropriate.

Despite these challenges, it is important to analyze early evidence of improvement

linked to IBC efforts in order to inform the continued refinement of the project and its

impact on the effectiveness of districts and schools, ultimately resulting in increased

student learning and achievement.

Researcher Role

Interpretivism research heavily relies on the interpretations of meaning made by

both the research participants and the researcher. Majority of research branches

encourage or mandate the researcher be detached from the participants and certain pieces

of the research process.

> Interpretation, by contrast, is not derived from rigorous, agreed-upon,
> carefully specified procedures, but from our efforts at sense-making, a
> human activity that includes intuition, past experience, emotion-personal
> attributes of human researchers that can be argued endlessly but neither
> proved nor disproved to the satisfaction of all. Interpretation invites the
> examination, the pondering, or data in terms of what people make of it
> (Wolcott, 2001, p. 33).

Interpretivism embraces the participation and value of the researcher viewpoint.

> Researchers, they argue, have their own understandings, their own
> convictions, their own conceptual orientations; they, too, are members of a
> particular culture at a specific historical moment. Also, they will be
> undeniably affected by what they hear and observe in the field, often in
> unnoticed ways (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8).

Rather than focusing on laws of research, interpretivism centers on discovering "practical understanding of meanings and actions" (p. 8).

The researcher in this study serves at the Idaho State School Improvement Coordinator, who oversees the Idaho Building Capacity Project. It is important to note that while this position fills a State Department role, the job has been contracted out to a Center for School Improvement housed within the College of Education at a local University, allowing for a strong partnership, yet separation from the State Department of Education. This has proved to be an important distinction when working with schools and districts in the area of technical assistance, to be one step removed from the agency that holds the bottom line responsibility for compliance.

In this role, the researcher frequently interacts and communicates with other state school improvement leaders, Capacity Builders, administrators and other leaders from participating IBC schools and districts. She designed the project, obtained funding and executive sponsorship from the Idaho State Department of Education, forged partnerships, began the project and continues to oversee the IBC project.

The researcher cannot be removed from the study. She holds observations and perspectives valuable to this research, and will thus serve as a full participant. This being clearly stated, the researcher has made attempts to limit potential bias, and it is believed that the research did not influence the data sets analyzed for this study. In addition to first hand observations and data collected within the project, a perceptual survey was conducted by an outside organization, to be further discussed in the Data Collections, Procedures, and Analysis sections. The researcher has focused analysis efforts on existing

data sets comprised of written responses submitted by participants in order to limit interpretation, leading, and other influences that are difficult to account for in face to face interviews.

Context

There are several important contextual factors to address within this study. The two districts represented in the pilot study were selected based on the following criteria, prioritized in the order that criteria were considered:

- The district was within one hour driving distance from the center conducting the pilot study to allow for frequent contact

- The district and schools reflected a high level of need (based on rates of poverty, mobility, language learner populations, and special needs populations), coupled with low resources.

- The district was in the furthest level of improvement possible for an Idaho district

- Every school within the district was identified in some level of needs improvement status

- A demonstrated history of the district and schools participating in state led school improvement efforts

- Superintendent voluntarily entered into the pilot project

Even though the superintendents agreed to pilot participation in the study, the project was loosely framed at the time they agreed to participate, so it is fair to say they

did not know all aspects of the project implementation at the time they agreed to participate. Additionally, the superintendents made the decision to participate on behalf of the schools within their district, thus school level buy-in had to be built along the way in the pilot project.

It is also noteworthy to recognize the challenging climate and potentially resulting negative perspective within the schools, districts, and communities that participation in this project was a direct result of their "failure" to achieve required levels of student learning outcomes. While the components offered in the project provide valuable services to the schools and districts, there may be a perception that participation is a reflection of their inability to achieve/deliver on their own accord, leaving many leaders to operate in a somewhat defeated environment. It is also possible that the opposite is true; participation could be viewed as a positive step to rigorously tackle school improvement.

Within the pilot sites, a fair amount of pressure to rapidly improve exists; resulting from both federal/state compliance issues, and more so from pressure related to public perception. No one wants to be labeled as a "failing" school or district, and the stakes are high in the participating pilot districts.

Participants

Participants included Idaho state and national school improvement leaders, the initial cadre of thirteen Capacity Builders, two pilot districts, and seventeen pilot schools participating in the Idaho Building Capacity project. The perceptions of these individuals during the IBC pilot project, as well as their reported "evidence" of school improvement

are key to this study in that they provide first-hand knowledge and perspective on impact of the project.

School Improvement Leaders

Previously mentioned was the strong partnership forged with the Idaho State Department of Education. While the scope of work to improve schools is vast, this specific area has been organized in Idaho under the division of Student Achievement and School Accountability (SASA). The Deputy Superintendent of this division and the Director of NCLB have provided state level executive sponsorship for this project, as well as mentorship and involvement in project leadership. Also providing important support and partnership are the coordinators of other state programs including Title I, Limited English Proficient (LEP), Special Education, Migrant, and Response to Intervention (RtI).

There have been several advantages to contracting the office of school improvement out to a Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies housed within the College of Education at a local University. Being one step removed from the State Department of Education, often viewed in light of their traditional role of monitoring for compliance, has proven to be very helpful in building trust with district and school leaders, a factor that has been critical in attempting to provide high levels of technical assistance outside of monitoring for compliance.

There have also been opportunities to collaborate with educational leaders associated with the University. For example, within the College of Education, two

professors representing the ED Leadership Master's program have been heavily involved in the IBC project, one of them serving as a Capacity Builder, and the other in an advisory role. Several other state technical assistance programs such as Reading First, the Idaho Charter School Network, and Southwest Regional Special Education are also contracted to the Center, providing ample opportunities to coordinate our efforts in working with Idaho schools and districts. The leaders of these programs and others have proved to be valuable participants in this study.

In addition to state school improvement leaders, several leaders from outside the state became critical participants in this project. The relationship with leaders from other states, regional comprehensive centers, and content centers has previously been discussed. Of these, one individual in particular, the director of the Center for Innovation and Improvement (CII), became a heavy influence on the continued development of the technical assistance resulting from this study. He has become an important outside voice and advisor to the development of school improvement assistance in Idaho and has provided connection to other national school improvement leaders, direct involvement in the Idaho work, and continued support as Idaho moves forward.

Capacity Builders

In accordance with the directive in NCLB (2001) to use "distinguished educators" as a critical component of a statewide system of support, recently retired superintendents principals, and other distinguished educators with a record of success in school improvement were recruited, hired, and trained by the state to work with schools and

districts identified for participation in the IBC project. Capacity Builders (CBs) were charged with the task of serving as both coach and consultant, while working along-side district and school leaders through the school improvement process.

CBs for the pilot project were recruited and selected on an individual basis. Of the original group of thirteen CBs, all had administrative experience, having served as principals, superintendents, and other leadership roles at the school, district, and state level with a track record of involvement in substantial school improvement efforts. The thirteen CBs served nineteen pilot sites. See Tables 9 and 10 for a breakdown of CB distribution. Eight CBs served one site (CBs 1-5, 7-8, and 13), five CBs served multiple sites (CBs 6, and 9-12), and one CB served a site within each district (CB 6).

Table 9

District One Capacity Builder Distribution

Site	Capacity Builder
District Office	Capacity Builder 1
High School	Capacity Builder 2
Alternative High School	Capacity Builder 3
Junior High 1	Capacity Builder 4
Junior High 2	Capacity Builder 5
Elementary 1	Capacity Builder 6
Elementary 2	Capacity Builder 7
Elementary 3	Capacity Builder 8
Elementary 4	Capacity Builder 9
Elementary 5	Capacity Builder 9
Elementary 6	Capacity Builder 9

Table 10

District Two Capacity Builder Distribution

Site	Capacity Builder
District Office	Capacity Builder 6
High School	Capacity Builder 10
Middle School	Capacity Builder 10
Junior High	Capacity Builder 11
Elementary 1	Capacity Builder 11
Elementary 2	Capacity Builder 12
Elementary 3	Capacity Builder 12
Elementary 4	Capacity Builder 13

The CBs serve as the critical factor in this project, the conduit for delivering technical assistance and support to the schools and districts. The perceptions of the CBs, both collective and individually, have been valuable to this study, the pilot project work, and the continued building and refinement of the IBC project.

Pilot Districts and Schools

The primary data sets analyzed in this study reflect the perceptions of Capacity Builders, as submitted in narrative written reports. However, these perceptions are directly representative of the school improvement work conducted with IBC pilot schools and districts; more specifically the leaders of these sites. The perceptions of school and district leaders are also directly represented in an outside survey conducted to reflect the effectiveness of the Capacity Builder, further described in the Data Sources section.

In the pilot project, every school within the two districts was identified for services. Combining the district office and schools in each district, eleven sites were identified to be served in District One, and eight sites identified to be served in District Two. This produced a total of nineteen sites to be served in the pilot project (seventeen school and two district sites). The combined school sites represented two traditional high schools, one alternative high school, one junior high, three middle schools, and ten elementary schools.

District One

District One serves approximately 6,400 students who represent a wide variety of strengths and challenges. All ten of the schools encompassed in this district are eligible for Title I services, with a little over 70% of their students district wide qualifying for the federal free and reduced lunch program. The ethnic demographic breakdown for the district is approximately 51% Hispanic, 48% Caucasian, and 1% other. Approximately 33% have some level of LEP designation, and approximately 12% of the district's student population is served by special education programs. The graduation rate for the 2007-2008 school year was 73%.

Table 11

District One Demographics

Approximate Student Enrollment	6,400
Free and Reduced Lunch Qualified	70%
Hispanic Student Population	51%
Caucasian Student Population	48%
"Other" Student Population	1%
Limited English Proficient Student Population	33%
Student Population Served by Special Education	12%
2007-2008 Graduation Rate	73%
Percent of Schools in Needs Improvement Status 2008 (Alert-Year 5)	100%

At the start of the pilot project, the district and all ten schools were in various levels of needs improvement status, ranging from Alert to Year Five, according to the Idaho AYP determinations previously discussed. The superintendent, and both assistant superintendents were serving in the first year of their positions, however all three had served in other district administrative roles the previous year.

In addition to their need for increased demonstration of student learning and achievement, the district has struggled with a number of challenges. Historically, the district has experienced a high level of teacher turn over on an annual basis, difficulty in effectively meeting the needs of their large LEP student population, and confronting an overall low internal and external reputation regarding the health of the education system. Among the initial perceived strengths of the district, a strong commitment by district and school administration to substantial and sustainable reform was expressed by leaders.

District Two

District Two is a rural school district serving a student population of approximately 3,700. Approximately 21% of students are being served by Title I, based on federal free and reduced lunch qualifications. The ethnic demographic breakdown for the district is approximately 16% Hispanic, 71% Caucasian, and 8% other. Approximately 7% have some level of LEP designation, and approximately 14% of the district's student population is served by special education programs. The graduation rate for the 2007-2008 school year was 85%.

Table 12

District Two Demographics

Approximate Student Enrollment	3,700
Free and Reduced Lunch Qualified	21%
Hispanic Student Population	16%
Caucasian Student Population	71%
"Other" Student Population	8%
Limited English Proficient Student Population	7%
Student Population Served by Special Education	14%
2007-2008 Graduation Rate	85%
Percent of Schools in Needs Improvement Status 2008 (Alert-Year 5)	100%

While the district technically includes eight schools, this study only worked with seven schools. One school is a distant one-room-school house serving nine students. Due to the remote nature of the school and the unique situation, a mutual decision with the superintendent was made to not include this school in the project. At the start of the pilot

project, the district and all seven schools being served were in various levels of needs

improvement status, ranging from Alert to Year 5, according to the Idaho AYP

determinations as previously discussed.

A Military Base is located about ten miles out of town representing District Two,

and falls within the school district. While enrollment has steadily declined over the past

six years, the enrollment of the schools located in town has increased. This fluctuation

has resulted in the closure of two of three schools on base. Upon leaving that elementary,

students are bussed from the base to secondary schools located in town. While the

military presence greatly contributes to the community surrounding District Two, it has

also provided challenges for the school district including fluctuation in enrollment and

funding, high student mobility rates, and unique student needs associated with military

life, particularly during times of war.

An additional challenge faced in District Two is a declining economy, one factor

leading to a failed bond election in the spring of 2008, despite a great need for funds to

deal with inadequate facilities and other district needs. A perceived strength of the school

district is a very committed staff. A large majority live in the community, and many were

raised there, including the superintendent. This has resulted in a staff that is highly

supportive of the schools and the community as a whole.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

A wide variety of data sources were explored during this study, particularly in

addressing the first research question related to the development of the IBC project such

as documents representing established statewide systems of support and interviews with state and national school improvement leaders. When considering at the second question related to district efforts to integrate the IBC project into their school improvement efforts and early evidence of impact, narrative reports submitted by Capacity Builders and a perceptual data survey collected by an independent organization designed to measure the perceived effectiveness of the Capacity Builder served as primary data sources. These data sets will be further described in the following sections.

Statewide System of Support Documents

A wide variety of documentation was gathered and explored in the research process which resulted in the development of the IBC project, including other State's documents as related to their statewide systems of support. Each set of documents provided valuable insight both to this research, and the process of creating a system of support for Idaho. This analysis focused on the following data sources:

- Documents representing other states established statewide systems of support
- Documents created to establish and support the Idaho Building Capacity project
- Interviews with national and state school improvement leaders

When researching other statewide systems of support, and later in developing the structure for the IBC project the following elements were considered and explored:

- Clarity of school improvement process and guiding documentation
- Funding sources and structures

- Methods of organizing and delivering technical assistance

- Utilization of external support providers

- Utilization of distinguished educators

- Connection to the federally required school improvement plan

- Evaluation protocols and process

- Evidence and indicators of success

A great deal was learned during this exploration and development process, such as how to best utilize the services of distinguished educators, the issues surrounding serving schools versed districts, and methods for delivering technical assistance services on a regional level. These lessons learned, and others will be further discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Perceptual Evidence of Impact

As previously discussed, an attempt was made to discover how participating schools and districts integrated the IBC project into their school improvement efforts and what early evidence of impact might be identified in relation to the pilot project. Data sources used to inform this analysis included narrative IBC reports written by the Capacity Builders, submitted at the six month and one year markers in the pilot project, and a Capacity Builder Effectiveness Survey (CB 360) conducted by an outside educational consulting organization. See Table 13 for a timeline of data collection points.

Table 13

Data Collection Timeline

Data Source	Collection Point
Documents Reflecting Established Statewide Systems of Support	August-December, 2007
Capacity Builder Six Month Report (Reflecting Work from Feb.-July 2008)	August 2008
Capacity Builder Year One Report (Reflecting Work from Feb.-Dec. 2008)	December 2008
Capacity Builder 360 Survey (Reflecting Work from Feb.-Dec. 2008)	Late January-Early February, 2009

Narrative IBC Reports

Most important to the analysis process utilized in this study were data sets comprised of written narrative reports submitted by Capacity Builders. Summary reports were submitted by Capacity Builders, both half way through the pilot (August 2008) and at the end of the pilot year of services (December 2008). See Appendix A for the prompts used to guide these narrative reports. These reports were designed to be very open-ended. As by design, the IBC project facilitates the implementation of school improvement plans designed at each individual site. Therefore, each site reflects a unique picture of school improvement. Prompts had to be general enough to allow for responses that would reflect the individual application of the IBC project in each site being served.

Capacity Builder Effectiveness Survey

The Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. (CEE) is an independent

organization based in Redmond, Washington that provides service, consulting, and

research organization dedicated to the mission of partnering with K-12 schools to

improve student learning. The IBC project had previously contracted with the CEE to

conduct perceptual data surveys, organized around the *9 Characteristics of High

Performing Schools* (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007) discussed in Chapter Two, on the staff

and students of participating IBC sites. These staff and student surveys will be collected

each of the three years a school and district participate in the IBC project in order to

measure trends in perceptual data, as linked to the *9 Characteristics of High Performing

Schools* (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). This perceptual data is provided at both the school

and district level, as well as in comparison to the CEE data repository which includes

over 42,000 respondents. Results are shared in a report designed to serve as a teaching

tool when working with district and school staff in the school improvement process.

These surveys were collected and provided for the internal development of participating

schools and districts. Therefore, results of these surveys are not included in this study in

order to protect the confidentiality of participants. However, coding of CB narrative

reports did include analysis of how many times CBs mentioned the utilization of school

and district level CEE survey data within their school improvement efforts in order to

identify common areas of effort, as well as inform future project decisions regarding

professional development.

In addition to the staff and student surveys, CEE was hired to create and conduct a multi-source feedback survey designed to measure with perceptual data the effectiveness of the CB (See Appendix B). Each CB was asked to submit the names of four individuals they had worked closely with at their assigned IBC site during the pilot year. One of these individuals had to be the principal if assigned to a school site, and the superintendent if assigned to a district site. The other individuals selected by the CB included vice principals, teachers, instructional coaches, and a variety of other district and school level employees. In addition to the four individuals selected by the CB, the IBC supervisor completed the survey, as did the CB, adding self perception of their work into the survey picture.

The original group of thirteen CBs was given opportunity to provide input into the creation of the survey, and view it prior to administration. The CB survey was administered on-line and was conducted during an approximated four week survey window in late January, early February 2009. It takes an approximated ten minutes to complete the survey.

Due to the multi-faceted approach of this survey, the CB 360 survey is designed to give the CB a perceptual look at their effectiveness from a variety of viewpoints surrounding their work. Results are reported for each individual CB, a tool to be used in their own reflective process of continually improving their effectiveness as a CB. Additionally, a roll up report that combines all of the CBs individual data is provided, and can be viewed in Appendix C. The survey results are presented in the following five categories:

1. School Improvement Skills

2. Management of Responsibilities

3. Advocates/Facilitates the Process

4. Trust Building

5. Communication Skills

The summary view provided for each category is represented by five to ten questions asked in the survey that feeds into each of the five categories. The report also provides a breakdown for each individual question, and a gap analysis between how the CB answered the survey about themselves, and how the leaders they work with answered about them.

The CB 360 survey was used not only as a tool for self reflection and professional growth for the CB, but to inform IBC project leadership on CB effectiveness from the perspective of those they are hired to support in the school improvement process.

Data Analysis Procedures

Despite the open nature of interpretivism research, this study employed several analytic methods used across many forms of qualitative research:

- Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences
- Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database
- Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 9)

Qualitative methods suggested by Glesne (1999) were also used from the area of "full participant" observational research, such as field notes, reflections, and document analysis. Particularly important to the development of specific procedures and sequential analysis for this study was found in Miles and Huberman (1994), representing the work of Chesler (1987) and Fischer and Wertz (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). The following will describe the procedures used to analyze data utilized in this study.

Initial analysis of the Capacity Builder Effectiveness Survey was conducted by the Center for Educational Effectiveness and included in the reports resulting from the CB360 survey. Further analysis was conducted by the researcher. These results and findings will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five. The following data analysis procedures described were used when the researcher analyzed the CB narrative reports.

Data Coding

The list of primary descriptive codes, displayed in Table 14, was derived from the review of literature and the conceptual framework of this study. A nationally recognized school improvement expert, also familiar with the scope of this study, was consulted to view the primary and secondary codes and provide input before the final list of codes was set. After the first round of coding using the primary descriptive codes, secondary descriptive codes were established to support a deeper analysis within each primary coding category (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A second round of coding was completed using the secondary codes. To increase consistency in the coding process, all primary and

secondary coding on the data sets were completed over the course of two consecutive

days in a secluded location.

Table 14

Primary and Secondary Descriptive Codes

Primary	Secondary	Code
Coherence		Coh
	State Leaders & District Leaders	St
	District Leaders & School Leaders	Di
	School Leaders & Teachers	Sc
Collaboration		Clb
	Professional Learning Communities	PLC
	Efficient Collaboration	Ef
	Data Driven Decision Making	DD
"Coachultants" (Critical Friends)		CF
	Relationship Building	RB
	"Expert" Function	Ex
Organizational Health		OH
	Center for Educational Effectiveness Data	CEE
	Effective Leadership	EL
	Organizational Trust	OT
Focused School Improvement (Theory/Plan of Action)		FSI
	9 Characteristics of High Performing Schools	9
	School Improvement Initiatives	SII
	Instruction (Powerful Teaching & Learning)	In

Inter Rater Reliability

While the researcher was the primary individual to code the data, there was a

check-coding process to this analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Two outside raters

coded two complete CB reports. Both outside raters are experts in the field of school

improvement and very familiar with the IBC project and qualitative coding procedures.

There was an 85.71% match with Rater 1, and an 82.86% match with Rater 2. This

resulted in an overall match of 84.29% between the researcher and the outside raters.

Every item coded by the researcher was corroborated by at least one of the outside raters.

A thorough breakdown of the two CB reports coded by outside raters and their

congruence with the researcher can be found in Appendix D. A summary of the check-

coding process can be found in Appendix E.

Analysis of Coding

After initial coding of the data, steps five and six from the sequential analysis

illustration provided by Miles and Huberman (1994) and summarized below were used to

further analyze the coded data. Steps one through four were essentially completed in the

previously described coding process.

- Step 1. Underline key terms in the text.
- Step 2. Restate key phrases.
- Step 3. Reduce the phrases and create clusters.
- Step 4. Reduction of clusters, and attaching labels.
- Step 5. Generalizations about the phrases in each cluster.
- Step 6. Generating minitheories: memo writing that poses explanations.
- Step 7. Integrating theories in an explanatory framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 87-88).

The minitheories generated in step six served as a critical point in the data

analysis process in linking information coded back to themes identified in the

literature. Chesler (1987) explained the process of generating minitheories as first

identifying patterns that arise from the coding process. These patterns then lead to

the forming of minitheories that are created and refined, and then contrasted with

one another. Finally, the researcher enters into the process of generating theory

that explains the meaning of the minitheories in context of the study (Miles &

Huberman, 1994). The minitheories identified in this study will be further

discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

These combined procedures and methods for analysis guided the work of this

study when analyzing the data sources gathered. This analysis represents the perceptions

of participating Capacity Builders.

Vignettes

In qualitative research there are often "pockets" of rich, data that fall short of a

full case study, but when pulled together in a focused way can provide important interim

understandings, often expressed through the writing of vignettes (Miles & Huberman,

1994).

> A *vignette* is a focused description of a series of events taken to be
> representative, typical, or emblematic in the case you are doing. It has a
> narrative, story-like structure that preserves chronological flow and that
> normally is limited to a brief time span, to one or a few key actors to a
> bounded space, or to all three" (p. 81).

Issues such as time and space can make it difficult to observe events directly or collect

traditional data sets. Vignettes can be used to mine such data and include in a study to

help formulate core issues within a case, and even serve as a vehicle for theorizing

throughout the process what is happening (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Throughout the course of this study, several sites being served by the IBC project, and their participating CBs emerged as locations and individuals appropriate for this additional mining of rich data. In addressing the second research question, several vignettes will be included in this study to provide a closer in-depth look at the process and early evidence of impact as related to participation in the IBC project.

Limitations

Given the unique nature of this study, several limitations exist such as the influence of the researcher, the ability to clearly measure the cause of observed phenomenon, the paucity of existing literature, and ability to limit the scope of this study. While the rationale for using interpretivism qualitative methodologies has been discussed, this type of research does indeed present limitations in the possible influence of the researcher and lack of traditional quantitative results. The following limitations will be addressed in this section:

- Researcher Influence

- Measurement of Observed Phenomenon

- Paucity of Empirical Studies

- Scope of the Study

It is the desire of the researcher to clearly articulate possible limitations to the study, and explain research decisions made regarding these limitations.

Researcher Influence

It must be clearly stated that there was undoubted influence of the researcher reflected in this study. As previously stated in this chapter, interpretivism qualitative research relies heavily on the observations and conclusions from the viewpoint of the researcher, whom in this study serves as the state school improvement coordinator charged with establishing and maintaining the statewide system of support in Idaho. While there will be many advantages to a research study written from this perspective, the position of the researcher within the study, and the bias that comes with this viewpoint must be acknowledged. While the researcher had great influence on the creation of the IBC project, she did not influence the data sets and findings analyzed in this research.

Measurement of Observed Phenomenon

Whereas there are numerous initiatives, reform movements, and school improvement focused programs and efforts in nearly every school and district, it is impossible to fully separate the work and results associated with the Idaho Building Capacity project from other efforts within any portion of the education systems being studied. Nor is it desired for results to be compartmentalized as such. With a key goal of having the IBC project help support individual sites in the school improvement process, it would be virtually impossible to clearly measure as a group, or even at individual sites what the IBC project could claim as a direct result from project efforts. Furthermore, while the IBC project supports and facilitates the work of school improvement, it is

recognized that true credit and responsibility for results must go to the district and school leaders who are actually implementing reform efforts that impact student achievement.

Paucity of Empirical Studies

Another challenge in this study is the lack of substantial empirical studies to be accessed on this particular topic of statewide systems of support, also referred to as state intervention programs in the literature. While great efforts were made to uncover the breadth and depth of published material on the topic, the researcher had to rely on interviews and first hand research on existing statewide systems of support. While much has been published on this topic from comprehensive research centers, policy briefs, and books geared towards providing assistance to statewide systems of support, there is considerably less to be found in peer refereed literature (McQuillan & Salomon-Fernandez, 2008; McRobbie, 1998; Spreng, 2005; Wong & Shen, 2003).

There is a particularly alarming lack of evidence based studies on the results of statewide systems of support of state intervention programs.

> To date, however, there is little research on the actual quality of the support provided through state systems, and few studies have attempted to link state supports with student achievement effects (Le Floch, Boyle, & Bowles-Therriault, 2008a, p. 11).

Despite the fact most states have developed and are implementing interventions in under performing schools, "little evaluation of the effectiveness of these actions on improving student and school performance has occurred" (Rudo, 2001, p.1). The common excuse rendered lies in that most individuals with interest in doing this type of research are those currently engaged in the work of delivering services within a statewide system of support,

and with the lack of capacity discussed in the literature review, time and effort has not

been taken to substantially evaluate and report upon such results.

Interviews with leading research centers and individuals in this field confirmed

there is indeed a considerable shortage of empirical studies in this area. There is clearly a

pressing need for such studies to be conducted and published in order to improve upon

the literature base being used, or not used, by state leaders who make critical decisions

regarding school improvement that results in the expenditure of billions of education

dollars each year nationwide.

Scope of the Study

The work of school improvement and the establishment of a statewide system of

support is a huge endeavor. There are countless studies that could be conducted within

this area, and should be as the project continues. More quantifiable studies analyzing

trend data, both perceptual and more importantly when it comes to student learning and

achievement results are needed. This study however has narrowed to focus on the process

of developing Idaho's statewide system of support, observations from the pilot year of

implementation, and early signs of impact. There are many possibilities for further study

in this area, which will be discussed in Chapter Five of this study.

Summary

The task of establishing a statewide system of support is a difficult one. While

minimal guidance is provided in NCLB (2001), and there are numerous models to

observe in other states; each state must establish a system unique to their needs and available resources. Such a system of support has been established through the Idaho Building Capacity project.

Based on perceptual evidence as demonstrated through primary and secondary coding of data sets submitted by Capacity Builders, this study will confirm, and disconfirm perceived impact through the generating of mini-theories, and further demonstrated through vignettes. This will be presented in Chapters Four and Five in order to answer the research questions guiding this study; how Idaho has developed an implemented an effective, comprehensive statewide system of support that will provide technical assistance to schools and districts at all levels of needs improvement status, and how a targeted district and its schools have integrated efforts from the statewide system of support into its improvement process.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Findings from this study will be presented in three main sections: the research and development phase of the Idaho Building Capacity project, perceptual evidence of impact during the pilot study as coded in reports submitted by the CBs, and the perceived effectiveness of the CBs as demonstrated in the CB360 survey. Results will be outlined in this chapter, and then further discussed in Chapter Five.

Establishing the Idaho Building Capacity Project

An effort was launched in the fall of 2008 to take initial steps geared towards the establishment of a statewide system of support in Idaho. Conferences were attended, extensive research was conducted on key states identified for the strength of their statewide systems of support, and initial contact was made with possible partners for this kind of system in Idaho. Whereas each state is unique in structure and needs, a system had to be developed that would serve as a best fit for Idaho.

Research of Other States

Information on other established statewide systems of support was gathered by researching individual state departments of education; through document collection and analysis, on-site visitations, cross-state meetings, and informal interviews. Information was also collected through regional and comprehensive centers linked to the work of school improvement. Sixteen comprehensive centers, and five content centers were

established as part of the federal support system to the states as a result of NCLB (2001). While numerous centers were accessed in this research, two were of particular significance.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) currently holds the contract for the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (NRCC), which includes services to Idaho. In partnership with this regional comprehensive center, the researcher was able to access a plethora of information regarding statewide systems of support, including key documents and current research studies, consultation with experts in the field, and participate in collaboration meetings with other state school improvement leaders included in the northwest region: Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. They also work in close partnership with the Alaska Comprehensive Center, adding Alaska to the list of states collaborated with.

In addition, the following five comprehensive centers exist to provide support and specific expertise to the comprehensive centers:

- Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center (AACC), housed at WestEd in San Francisco, California

- Center for Innovation and Improvement (CII), housed at the Academic Development Institute in Lincoln, Illinois

- Center on Instruction (COI), housed at the RMC Research Corporation in Potsmouth, New Hampshire

- National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, housed at Learning Point Associates (LPA) in Naperville, Illinois

- National High School Center, housed at the American Institutes for Research
  in Washington D.C.

While all five content centers were accessed during research, the Center for Innovation and Improvement (CII) was of particular significance to this study. Conferences were attended, interviews were conducted, documents were shared, consultants visited Idaho on multiple occasions, products and structures were developed, connections were forged with other key states (Washington and Virginia in particular), and Idaho school improvement efforts continue to move forward in direct partnership with CII.

Initial Efforts in Idaho

During the process of researching established statewide systems of support, numerous challenges were identified for Idaho to overcome in order to establish a qualifying statewide system of their own. The issue of funding quickly rose to the top. In response, a grant was written and submitted to the U.S. Department of Education requesting additional school improvement funds available to the states, if approved, under Section 1003g of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). The grant was written and submitted in November, 2007 and promptly approved and funded in December, 2007.

It was determined that this budding statewide system of support would be called the Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project. Structural and organizational decisions were made based on the previously discussed research and the unique needs of Idaho balanced with the available funding. A working framework was established for the IBC project and an advisory board was assembled to provide input to the creation of the IBC project.

Two pilot districts were identified for participation in the IBC pilot project. Criteria for selection included reasonable proximity to the State Department of Education, needs improvement status, and readiness to benefit. Reasonable proximity to the State Department of Education was required in order to foster frequent on-site contact during the pilot process. The two districts selected are both located within one hour driving distance of the State Department of Education. Both districts identified for pilot participation were in the furthest level of improvement status possible in the state of Idaho at the time of selection. In addition, every school within both districts had also been identified at some level of needs improvement status.

Not only were the districts selected in great need based on needs improvement status, but both districts fall into the quadrant of high need, low resources; a system of measuring "need" previously utilized by the state of Idaho. Finally, readiness to benefit was assessed based on previous experience and participation in school improvement related activities between the State Department of Education and the districts selected for pilot participation, interviews with district leaders, and analysis of available data on the districts being considered including the existing Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), district achievement trend data, and other available documents.

District and school sites identified for participation were awarded grant funds used to contract with an IBC service provider. For the pilot, the service provider was identified as a Center for School Improvement housed within the College of Education at a local University. Utilizing provided grant funds, the service provider was contracted to provide each site identified for services with professional development, resources, self

evaluation tools, and the services of an outside consultant (Capacity Builder), trained on a continual basis to support the work of school improvement at each site being served.

Capacity Builders were recruited, hired, trained, and matched with sites to be served. Work with IBC sites began in January 2008. While Capacity Builders worked on site with school and district leaders, the IBC service provider, in partnership with the SDE organized monthly collaboration meetings for Capacity Builders, conference calls scheduled both for Capacity Builders and participating administrators between monthly collaboration meetings, and much monitoring and adjusting along the way.

The phase of researching established statewide systems of support, and the development of the literature review for this study provided valuable information used by the researcher when designing specific components of the IBC project. Several of these critical design features will be further discussed in the following sections.

Frequent, On-going Capacity Building Support

The IBC project was designed to provide scaffolded support to districts and schools over a three year time period, with the highest level of support in Year 1, and the least amount of support in Year 3. This scaffolded approach was designed to facilitate the work of building internal capacity to sustain school improvement efforts, rather than the reform efforts being overly dependent on the outside support.

The term capacity building was selected to describe the work of the IBC project as it by definition infers that the internal capacity of someone (the school or district leadership team) is being built to sustain the school improvement efforts being supported

by the Capacity Builders, distinguished educators assigned to work with IBC schools and districts.

It is a goal of the IBC project to work towards internal sustainability from day one, through building the capacity of school and district leadership teams to create, implement, and sustain school improvement reform efforts that result in effective systems and increased student achievement.

Tailored On-site School Improvement

A major premise of the Idaho Building Capacity project is the notion that there is no "silver bullet" or one-size-fits-all approach to school improvement. CBs are trained to support a school or district leadership team through a process of developing a school improvement plan, and implementation process based on the unique and individual needs of each school or district site. This is not a cookie cutter approach to school improvement, but rather one that looks a bit different at each individual site.

Power in Simultaneous School and District Reform

In order to foster a higher rate of sustainability, the IBC project was built on the premise that districts and schools would be served simultaneously. The goal in the IBC project is to focus equally on reform at both levels together. While individual school sites are identified for IBC participation, the district office of each school accepted must agree to fully participate in the IBC project. Thus, a CB is assigned to each school

identified for services, and each district office representing a school being served in the project.

Distributed Leadership in Action

Mobility rates in the state of Idaho show that the average teacher will stay much longer in a position than the average administrator. In the original cohort of the PALs (Principal Academy of Leadership) project in the state of Idaho, a stipulation for continued participation was the consistency of the participating principal. Over the initial three years of the project, the number of schools being served went from 30 to 19 due to mobility of principals. If a principal left their original assigned building, they were then discontinued from the project.

Even if mobility weren't an issue, distributed leadership as an avenue for strengthening an organization is a widely accepted practice (Fullan, 2006; Hiatt & Creasey, 2003; Lencioni, 2000; Spillane, 2009). Learning both from the Idaho data, and similar findings in the literature it was determined that the IBC project would be charged with working with leadership teams, not just the superintendent and principal level of leadership.

Within Year 1 of IBC work, leadership teams are required to be identified at each site. The CB works with the superintendent or principal as their main contact, but they are also charged with working with the leadership team to develop and implement school improvement plans, thus increasing the changes of sustainability of school improvement efforts.

Data Driven Decision Making

In order for districts and schools to improve their current systems of delivering services and instruction, they must be able to analyze data at a level that will inform the countless decisions that are made on a frequent basis.

A critical part of school improvement efforts is to guide schools through a process of learning to use multiple forms of data, beyond just the yearly standardized test score results, to analyze their systems and instructional delivery models to better inform future decisions regarding student learning. Through using a data carousel approach coupled with a specific and measurable action planning process, district and school leaders become experts in using data to drive decision making.

Organizational Health Data

As briefly discussed in Chapter Three, all staff within a school participate in a data collection process that focuses on linking self perceptions of organizational health with student achievement, and highlighting discrepancies of self perception verses group perception. The data is collected, analyzed, and reported upon by the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE). Results are provided for individual school sites, in a district roll up report, and in comparison with a national repository that includes over 42,000 respondents. Results are provided in a summary report, broken down into elementary and secondary level, as well as certified and classified levels.

The reports provide a plethora of information in a report style designed to begin conversations in a school or district on a variety of topics organized under the already

mentioned Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). The importance of school culture, individual, and group self perceptions cannot be ignored. While the bottom line is indeed student achievement data, there are other areas of school culture, collaboration, and leadership that must be addressed in a comprehensive school improvement effort.

The information and professional development provided by CEE is one key piece of addressing the critical factor of school culture that must be part of school improvement reform.

School Improvement Reaching the Classroom

Districts and schools participating in the IBC project are required to include classroom teachers in their leadership teams, and demonstrate staff participation in school improvement efforts. All staff, from top leadership, to teachers, to cafeteria workers, to counselors, to janitors; participate in data collection activities that will influence school improvement work.

Additionally, participating IBC sites are given the opportunity to collect data from the parent and student perspective. An effective educational system that is serious about dramatic school improvement must include all the stakeholders. A critical professional development piece is included in the ICB project through a partnership with Powerful Teaching and Learning, an organization that provides professional development focused on student learning as an avenue for increasing powerful teaching practices. This component of the project allows for teachers to visit other schools and utilize a student

learning protocol that helps instructors to identify effective teaching and learning

practices through observing student learning. CBs are trained to facilitate such

observations and then lead small groups of teachers through a self reflection process that

makes connections between the observations and improving instruction in their own

classrooms. Observing student learning and analyzing student work must be a part of

school improvement reform efforts (Schlechty, 2002).

　　　　While many things were considered in the structural development of the IBC

project, and its pilot implementation, the analysis of data sets in this study provided

meaningful perceptual evidence of impact during the pilot study.

Perceptual Evidence of IBC Pilot Study Impact

　　　　Using the coding procedures described in Chapter Three, a total of 1,076 items

were coded and analyzed in this study. 618 of these codes represented the 22 reports

submitted by District One CBs, representing 11 sites served. 458 codes represented the

15 reports submitted by District Two CBs, representing the 8 sites served. Table 15

provides a breakdown of the CB report coded responses. Note that one site in District

Two did not begin IBC participation until the fall of 2008. There was a need to replace a

CB and a decision was made by IBC project leadership and the Superintendent to delay

the start of services to the highest performing site in the district until the fall of 2008

when a replacement CB was secured. Despite the delay in CB placement, this site did

receive project resources and participated in all related activities. A six month report was

not available for this site, but a year one end report has been included.

Table 15

CB Report Coding Breakdown

	6 Month Reports		Year End Reports		All Combined Reports	
District One	262	59%	356	56%	618	57%
District Two	181	41%	277	44%	458	43%
Districts Combined	443		633		1076	

A series of charts and graphs will be used to support the following observations

on data sets coded. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage when

displayed in pie charts, however full data reports with percentage points to the tenth can

be viewed in Appendix items F-H. Appendix F provides a complete data table with the

number and percent of coded items per site and per individual report for District One.

Appendix G provides the same report for District Two, and Appendix H combines the

two districts for an overall report of the coded responses.

Chapter Three described the use of both primary and secondary codes, however,

Chapters Four and Five have made no discrimination between primary and secondary

codes. Observations will be made following a pattern of looking at both the most

frequently coded responses, and those that were not frequently coded. All quotes will

reflect the names of districts and schools being replaced with generic descriptors in order

to protect the confidentiality of participants. The following sections will provide

observations on each cross-section of coded data from the CB reports. Chapter Five will

provide further conclusions and discussions on the following observations.

CB Six Month Report Observations

443 total items were identified when coding six month reports submitted by capacity builders representing eighteen of the nineteen pilot IBC sites. (Remember that one site in District Two did not have a six month report due to a delay in CB placement.) These six month report coded items represent 41% of the total responses coded in this study. Figure 5 demonstrates the breakdown of the six month reports for District One, and Figure 6 provides the six month report breakdown for District Two. Figure 7 combines the six month report data for both districts, providing an overall look at the six month project marker. The pie charts utilize the primary and secondary descriptive codes displayed earlier in this chapter in Table 14.
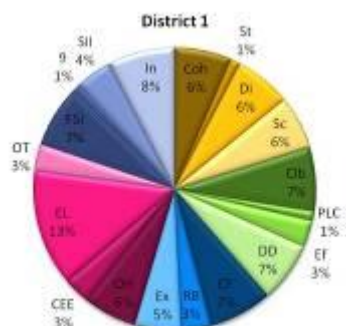
Figure 5. District One, Six Month Report Coded Responses
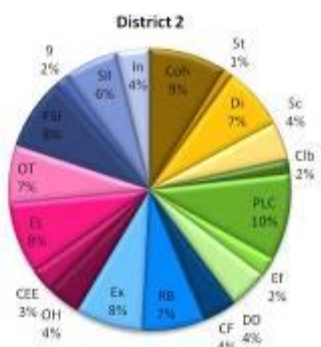
Figure 6. District Two, Six Month Report Coded Responses
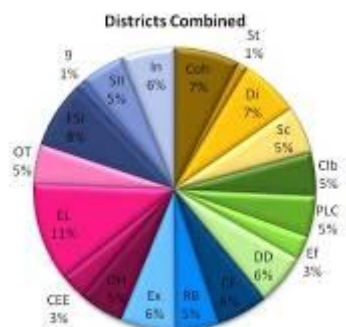
Figure 7. Combined District, Six Month Report Coded Responses

The item most frequently coded in the six month CB reports was that of Effective Leadership. 50 items related to Effective Leadership were coded, resulting in 11.3% of total coded responses in six month reports. The second most frequently coded item in the six month reports was that of Focused School Improvement with 34 coded responses representing 7.7%; closely followed by Coherence with 33 coded responses representing 7.5% of total six month coded responses. Figure 8 provides a graph showing in the bars the number of six month report coded responses for each coded item, broken out into the two pilot districts and combined. The percentage points reflect the percent of coded responses for each coded item represented by District One in yellow and District Two in red.
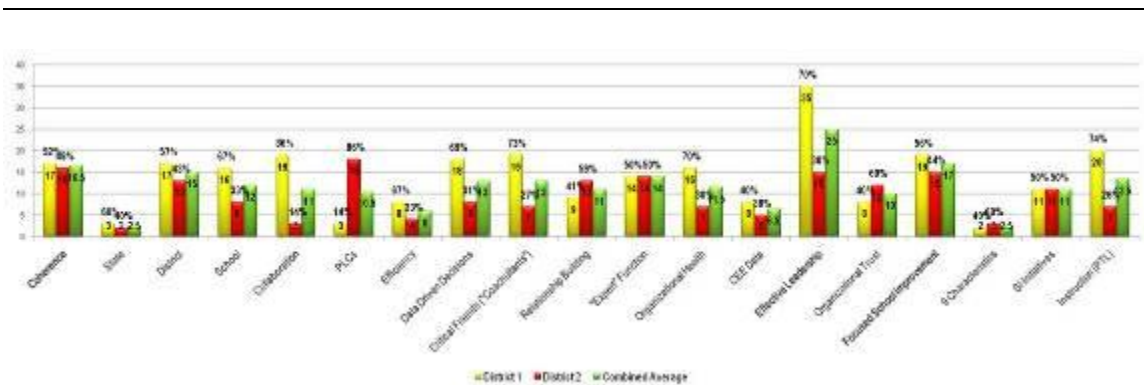
Figure 8. Six Month Report Coded Responses Overview

The lowest items to be coded in six month CB reports were the 9 Characteristics and State, both items were coded five times each, resulting in each item capturing only 1.1% of the total six month report coded responses.

The most frequently coded item for District One was Effective Leadership with 35 coded responses, 13.4%; followed by Instruction with 20 coded responses, 7.6%. The most frequently coded item for District Two was Professional Learning Communities (PLC) with 18 coded responses, 9.9%; followed by Coherence with 16 coded responses, 8.8% of the total six month coded responses.

CB Year One Report Observations

633 total items were identified when coding year one reports submitted by capacity builders representing all nineteen pilot IBC sites. These year one report coded items represent 59% of the total responses coded in this study. Figure 9 demonstrates the breakdown of the year one reports for District One, and Figure 10 provides the year one report breakdown for District Two. Figure 11 combines the year one report data for both districts, providing an overall look at the one year project marker.
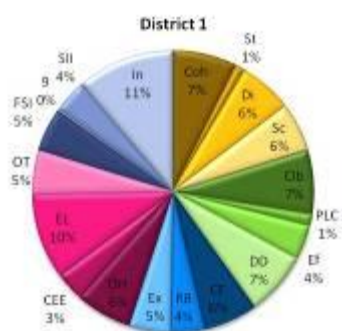
Figure 9. District One, Year One Report Coded Responses
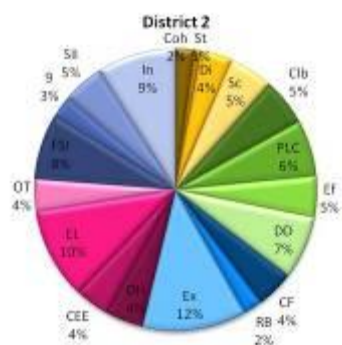
Figure 10. District Two, Year One Report Coded Responses
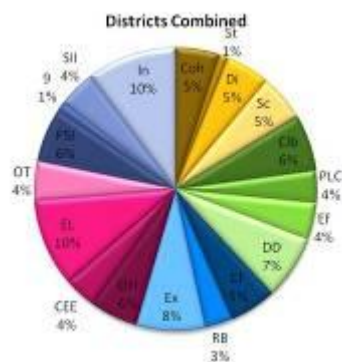
Figure 11. Combined District, Year One Report Coded Responses

The item most frequently coded in the year one CB reports was that of

Instruction. 65 items related to Instruction were coded, resulting in 10.3% of total coded

responses in year one reports. The second most frequently coded item in the year one

reports was that of Effective Leadership with 64 coded responses representing 10.1%;

followed by "Expert" Function with 50 coded responses representing 7.9% of total six

month coded responses. Figure 12 provides a graph showing in the bars the number of

year one report coded responses for each coded item, broken out into the two pilot

districts and combined. The percentage points reflect the percent of coded responses for

each coded item represented by District One in yellow and District Two in red.
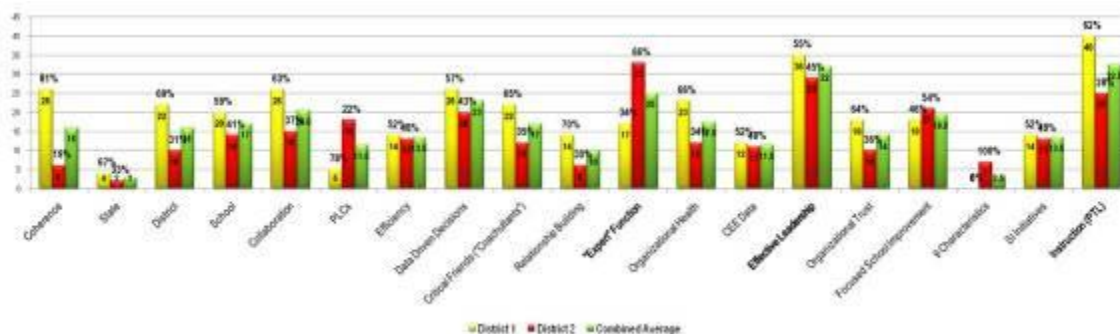
Figure 12. Year One Report Coded Responses Overview

The lowest items to be coded in year one CB reports were again the 9

Characteristics with 7 coded responses for 1.1%, and State with 6 coded responses for

1.0% of the total year one report coded responses.

The most frequently coded item for District One was Instruction with 40 coded responses, 11.2%; followed by Effective Leadership with 35 coded responses, 9.8%. The most frequently coded item for District Two was "Expert" Function with 33 coded responses, 11.9%; followed by Effective Leadership with 29 coded responses, 10.5% of the total year one coded responses.

Combined CB Six Month and Year One Reports Observations

1076 total items were identified when coding six month and year one reports combined, submitted by capacity builders representing all nineteen pilot IBC sites. These combined report coded items represent 100% of the total responses coded in this study. Figure 13 demonstrates the breakdown of the combined reports for District One, and Figure 14 provides the combined report breakdown for District Two. Figure 15 combines the report data (six month and one year) for both districts, providing an overall look at the coded responses from all reports.

Figure 13. District One, Combined Six Month and Year One Report Coded Responses
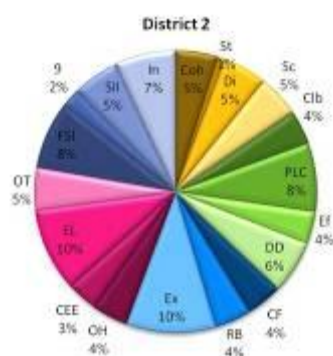
Figure 14. District Two, Combined Six Month and Year One Report Coded Responses
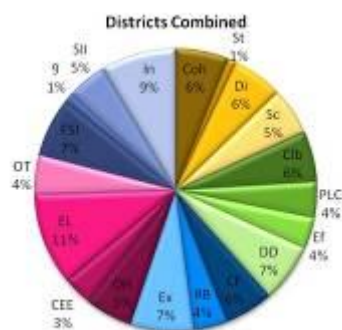
Figure 15. Combined District, Combined Six Month and Year One Report Coded

Responses

The item most frequently coded in the combined CB reports was that of Effective

Leadership. 114 items related to Effective Leadership were coded, resulting in 10.6% of

total coded responses in the combined reports. The second most frequently coded item in

the combined reports was that of Instruction with 92 coded responses representing 8.6%;

followed by "Expert" Function with 78 coded responses representing 7.3% of total coded

responses. Figure 16 provides a graph showing in the bars the number of combined

report coded responses for each coded item, broken out into the two pilot districts and

combined. The percentage points reflect the percent of coded responses for each coded

item represented by District One in yellow and District Two in red.
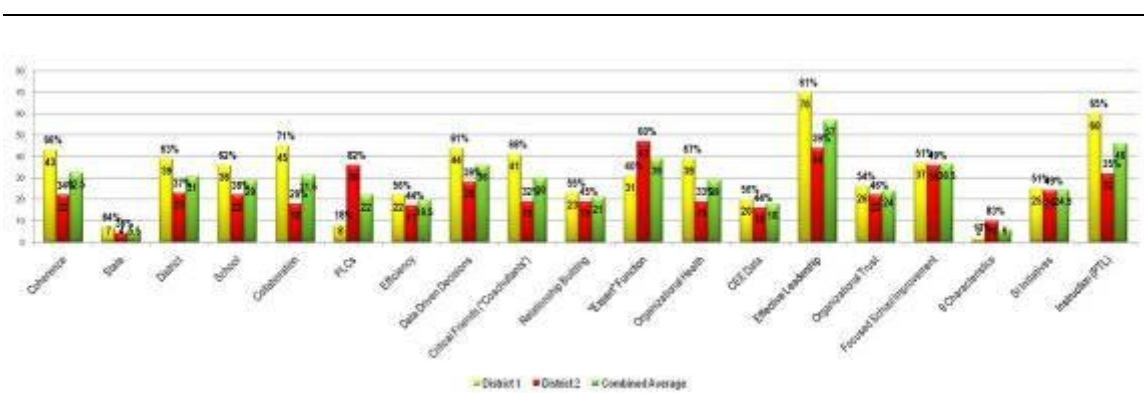
Figure 16. Combined Six Month and Year One Report Coded Responses Overview

The lowest items to be coded in the combined CB reports were again the 9

Characteristics with 12 coded responses for 1.1%, and State with 11 coded responses for

1.0% of the total combined report coded responses.

The most frequently coded item for District One was Effective Leadership with 70 coded responses, 11.3%; followed by Instruction with 60 coded responses, 9.7%. The most frequently coded item for District Two was "Expert" Function with 47 coded responses, 10.3%; followed by Effective Leadership with 44 coded responses, 9.6% of the total combined report coded responses.

Combined Data Set Mini-Theories & Mini-Vignettes

Observations to this point have been focused on the coding results of six month CB reports, year one CB reports, and combined reports. As discussed in Chapter Three, mini-theories were established based on the primary codes and their clusters on secondary codes. Returning to this list of codes, a brief explanation will be provided as to the intent of the codes, and observations will be recorded. In an attempt to share the deep, rich data that emerged from the CB reports, mini-vignettes will be provided through direct quotes, organized within each category and item used in the coding process. At least one quote was utilized from every submitted report in order to reflect the "voice" of every site served in the project. The mini-theories established from these clusters of coded data will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

Coherence

Items in CB reports were coded in relation to Coherence when mention was made of dealing with system coherence; the effectiveness of communication and working relationship between various levels of education systems. In the secondary coding

process this was further broken down into coherence between the state and the district

(State), the district and schools (District), and between school leadership and teachers

within a building (School). Table 16 demonstrates the breakdown of coded items within

the Coherence cluster.

Table 16

Coherence Coding Breakdown

	Coherence		State		District		School	
Combined Districts								
Six Month Report	33	7.5%	5	1.1%	30	6.8%	24	5.4%
Year One Report	32	5.1%	6	1.0%	32	5.1%	34	5.4%
Combined Reports	65	6.0%	11	1.0%	62	5.8%	58	5.4%
District One								
Six Month Report	17	6.5%	3	1.2%	17	6.5%	16	6.1%
Year One Report	26	7.3%	4	1.1%	22	6.2%	20	5.6%
Combined Reports	43	7.0%	7	1.1%	39	6.3%	36	5.8%
District Two								
Six Month Report	16	8.8%	2	1.1%	13	7.2%	8	4.4%
Year One Report	6	2.2%	2	0.7%	10	3.6%	14	5.1%
Combined Reports	22	4.8%	4	0.9%	23	5.0%	22	4.8%

Coherence Mini-Vignette

There are numerous roadblocks that can keep a system for operating in a coherent

manner. CB reports contained statements of evidence representing state, district, and

school efforts to improve system coherence. For example, one CB wrote about the

consistent message that continued to be voiced in a school that had struggled to

demonstrate a coherent system focused on instruction.

> The one message that we consistently repeated was that the staff at
> [School] possessed both the knowledge and the talent to create the image
> of the school that they all wanted to work at—a school that was motivated
> to success by its very culture and climate (Year One Report, District One,
> CB #5).

Another CB described his observations of efforts to improve coherence both at the

district and school level.

> The system, under the leadership of [Superintendent], are attuning their
> district efforts to (1) improving the quality of instruction and learning for
> students, (2) providing needed and beneficial professional development,
> and (3) using data to guide their decisions making process (Year One
> Report, District One, CB #2).

Specific examples of coherence as broken down into the specific levels of state, district

and school will be further explored in the following sections.

State Coherence Mini-Vignette

While coherence between state and district efforts was one of the lowest coded

items in the data set, there were a few examples in reports of CBs working to help

provide greater coherence and support between state and district educational leaders and

initiatives. One example of CB effort into increased coherence between the state and a

district was in the CB assisting the district in following up with some needs discovered in

a state monitoring visit. While the CBs are in no way part of compliance monitoring,

they can assist districts in preparing for monitoring visits, dealing with challenging issues

of compliance, and addressing specific areas identified for improvement by education

leaders at the state and the federal level.

> After a formal federal government review of the district's federal
> programs, we have seen a marked improvement in many of their

operations in these programs. The major one is in the development and implementation of a large SES program for all their students (Year One Report, District One, CB #1).

With the assistance of the CB in this effort, the district has gone from serving zero children through a Supplemental Education Service (SES) program, to serving over 250 students with additional tutoring and instructional support. CBs have also provided assistance to their leaders in preparing their Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) that are submitted to the State. "In June I met the new principal, [name removed] and helped him prepare for this CIP tool meeting with the leadership team" (Six Month Report, District One, CB #9). Another CB described a relationship of support initiated by the principal with various partners including the state. "He is fortunate to work with what appears to be a committed and experienced Board of trustees. He has wisely partnered with [University] as well as the SDE to garner support, guidance and advocacy" (Six Month Report, District One, CB #3).

District Coherence Mini-Vignette

IBC project structure provided the opportunity to work at both the district and school level, resulting in CBs reporting on various aspects of addressing coherence between district office and school level leaders.

> The changes in the district philosophy have 'rippled the water' at the high school. The conversations in the first year are changing. The superintendent and cabinet have been (1) clear in their focus, (2) aligned with secondary supervision, (3) actively involved in checking the progress at the high school on a regular basis. The principal is aware of the process and goals and is committed to making every initiative align with the direction of the district (Six Month Report, District One, CB #2).

Another CB report entry provided an example of all the secondary schools moving

towards working together within a district in order to provide a coherent system and

positive transitions for students.

> This has led to conversations about involving the 'feeder' schools in the
> planning process at the high school. We've met jointly with the principal
> at the alternative school, and we conducted a dual in-service with [Middle
> School] and [High School] leadership teams after we received the CEE
> data. I am very pleased for this teamwork as it will influence how the
> students in the district are served. For example, one of the goals is to
> better anticipate the needs of upcoming freshmen. This data will help
> focus the work and structure at the high school. The student achievement
> data will provide a more accurate picture of the entering classes (Year One
> Report, District One, CB #2).

In working with both schools and districts, reports reflecting work of the IBC project

included examples of working towards coherence both at the district level, and when

observing the coherence of an individual school system.

School Coherence Mini-Vignette

Various CB reports made mention to challenges and issues of coherence within a

school building site.

> The most immediate challenge areas when working with a large,
> comprehensive high school fall into two groups: the size of the institution
> and the isolation of instructional sectors. The latter is a vestige of the
> long-standing organizational structure of secondary schools—
> specialization and compartmentalization of subject areas. It is a difficult
> process to build a positive interdependency in a large school; it is really
> changing the culture. This is, of course, important work as the goal is to
> facilitate the improvement process in a coherent direction (Six Month
> Report, District One, CB #2).

Another CB described a shift from a previously fractured approach to school coherence

to a more fluid system. "The lines of communication improved with well intended and

thought-out discussions at staff meetings and grade level meetings" (Year One Report,

District Two, CB #11). A specific example of intentional effort towards increased school

coherence in relation to curriculum was described in context of empowering the staff to

take responsibility for their content coordination.

> Empowerment—to be gained in both grade level teams and content
> coordination. What was the important learning at each grade level? How
> does one grade level prepare a student for the next? What does a grade
> level do that differs from the expectation of other grade levels? The intent
> was to foster an enhanced sense of professionalism by clearly identifying
> the learning objectives at each grade level and communicating those
> objectives to students and parents, i.e., the sixth grade will focus on
> writing clear, complete sentences; the seventh grade will build on sentence
> structure to write clear, complete paragraphs; the eighth grade will
> combine paragraphs to create clear complete essays (Year One Report,
> District One, CB #5).

Increased coherence, particularly as described above in relation to curriculum has great

potential to impact the way a school approaches student learning.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a widely used educational buzz word, however items coded in

this study relating to collaboration were linked to mention of working with others in a

structured team in order to utilize group process leading to a more informed practice.

The Collaboration cluster was further coded when specific mention was made to the

utilization of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), utilization of specific structures

and practices to increase efficiency and effectiveness of collaboration (Efficiency) and

mention of data being used to inform decisions (Data Driven Decisions). Table 17

demonstrates the breakdown of coded items within the Coherence cluster.

Table 17

Collaboration Coding Breakdown

	Collaboration		PLCs		Efficiency		Data Driven Decisions	
Combined Districts								
Six Month Report	22	5.0%	21	4.7%	12	2.7%	26	5.9%
Year One Report	41	6.5%	23	3.6%	27	4.3%	46	7.3%
Combined Reports	63	5.9%	44	4.1%	39	3.6%	72	6.7%
District One								
Six Month Report	19	7.3%	3	1.2%	8	3.1%	18	6.9%
Year One Report	26	7.3%	5	1.4%	14	3.9%	26	7.3%
Combined Reports	45	7.3%	8	1.3%	22	3.6%	44	7.1%
District Two								
Six Month Report	3	1.7%	18	9.9%	4	2.2%	8	4.4%
Year One Report	15	5.4%	18	6.5%	13	4.7%	20	7.2%
Combined Reports	18	3.9%	36	7.9%	17	3.7%	28	6.1%

Collaboration Mini-Vignette

Several CB reports shared very specific efforts to implement meaningful and

impactful collaboration structures.

> [Principal] and her 'guiding coalition' began to envision the school they
> wished to create. They developed a schedule that allowed all the same-
> grade-level teachers to have their students in 'specials' at the same time
> each day. Teachers now had time each day to meet and discuss student
> progress or to remain in their classrooms with those students who were
> struggling with their work. On Tuesday of each week, the teachers meet
> with the principal and the reading coach in a formal grade level meeting.
> An agenda is used and minutes are kept. This process is still in its early
> stages, but it is becoming a part of the school culture. The experienced
> teachers have come along, and the new teachers think this is the only way
> (Year One Report, District One, CB #6).

A collaboration meeting that included school leaders, staff, and parents was described in

a middle school level CB report.

> I visited the school in June following the release of students and sat in on the data team's work of developing next year's goals and programs. It was significant that the principal had turned over the running of this meeting to the vice-principal, showing a willingness to share academic leadership. I was very impressed with the work of this team and of the involvement of staff and a parent. The major academic goal for this school year will be the implementation of a Math intervention program that will hopefully mirror the success of the reading intervention program already in place (Six Month Report, District One, CB #4).

Another CB report described an effort to build a community of practice that included

school leadership and staff in establishing collaborative groups and structures.

> Using Wenger's work on communities of practice, we are taking a softer, less formal approach to professional learning communities. The strategy is to imbed capacity building in the work of the collaborative teams. She created a structure for vertical as well as horizontal collaboration. Teams are setting norms and assessing themselves (Six Month Report, District One, CB #7).

While the theory behind the collaborative approach may vary, there was frequent

reference in CB reports to efforts geared towards establishing, supporting, and

monitoring effective collaboration centered around issues of teaching, learning, and

student achievement.

Professional Learning Communities Mini-Vignette

While both districts were heavily engaged in increasing effective collaboration

structures, District Two in particular was focused on implementing true Professional

Learning Communities (PLCs).

> The training for all staff in PLCs had a huge impact on the high school. It now seems that the administration, the principals, and the staff understand the process and what is expected of them. They have adopted the terminology and the format for meetings and have implemented the norms. The high school has experienced the greatest change as most of the staff has embraced the need for collaboration and answering the four key questions for student progress. The existing academic departments have transformed into PLC teams with the math department serving as a pilot that the others will model and implement during the course of the year. The goal is for all departments to have a functioning PLC team by the end of the year with learning essentials identified and the first two questions addressed. This includes end of course tests and common tests in place. The high school staff has reached a tipping point in their understanding of the importance of addressing the four questions. I have attended the math PLC meetings and they are impressive with efficient use of time and focus on meeting goals" (Six Month Report, District Two, CB #10).

Another CB describes her observations of team meetings and the impact of PLCs on the structure and impact of such meetings. "The staff embraces and practices the meeting success structures outlined in the professional learning communities" (Year One Report, District Two, CB #13). She goes on to further describe the efficiency of observed meetings.

> They are well-run, focused on results of student achievement, and productive. The staff, as a whole, is analytical about deficiencies in student achievement data and not willing to accept failure for any child. I sense their conversations about students have changed and reflect their knowledge from both Reading First and the Idaho Building Capacity project (Year One Report, District Two, CB #13).

Professional Learning Communities is one framework that has been utilized by the IBC project to help facilitate increased effectiveness of collaboration at the district and school level. While District Two CB reports had more coded responses directly to PLCs, CBs from both districts utilized aspects of the PLC framework in the school improvement support provided to the sites they served.

Efficiency Mini-Vignette

It is one thing to establish time and structures that facilitate collaboration. It is

another thing to refine the effectiveness of these implemented collaboration structures.

> Last June I worked with the principal to develop an instructional schedule
> for [School] which allowed collaboration meetings for every grade level
> on Tuesday. Along with this, we developed data binders for each teacher
> to use in their collaboration meetings. These meetings would be preceded
> with an agenda emailed to each grade's team leader with administrative
> bullets on it from the principal and coach. The team leader would then
> add team agenda bullets to it and forward it to the teammates. During the
> meeting the bullets would be addressed with minutes taken by a recorder.
> This recorder then distributes the minutes to the others in attendance.
> These agendas are then referenced at the beginning of the next week's
> meeting for any necessary dialogue. The progress in the worthwhile
> substance of these meetings has been a big triumph. The principal has
> been aggressive in taking charge of these and holding accountability to
> them (Year One Report, District One, CB #9).

A CB serving an elementary site similarly shared about the increased efficiency of

collaboration due to PLC related structures,

> I can see a difference already in the short time that I have been there
> because [School] has established a PLC Leadership Team that meet
> weekly and they have their goals, roles and timelines and they review
> them and plan intervention with staff on their early release days. When I
> am there for their grade level meetings or RTI I try to plant the seed or
> provide staff development to assist with instructional changes (Six Month
> Report, District Two, CB #12).

Statements such as this reflect evidence of impact from the heightened awareness of a

need for improved collaboration, training on specific strategies to increase collaboration

effectiveness, and continued support from the CBs in following through with

collaboration goals.

<u>Data Driven Decisions Mini-Vignette</u>

In discussing efforts to utilize data in all key decision made by individual leaders,

and leadership teams, a CB wrote,

> One of the early successes has been the development of a written 'draft'
> document that clearly outlines the goal expectations of the district, as well
> as outlining the multiple assessments that will be used to measure district
> success and progress on the established goals (Six Month Report, District
> One, CB #1).

Also in relation to data driven decision making, another CB shared,

> I suggested that the use of a growth model might provide additional data
> and give a clearer indicator as to the progress being made by the staff. My
> offer to do a sample data analysis in reading using a growth model
> discussed in our CB training was enthusiastically accepted. They were all
> very excited about this new data pictured and requested training in how to
> develop this growth model in their classrooms and how to use it to set
> goals. A training schedule is now being set for me to work with interested
> teachers (Six Month Report, District Two, CB #10).

Examples were also written in connection with data being used by various teams on a

frequent basis in order to make informed decisions about student progress in intervention.

> Staff now has and utilizes their data binders to monitor student progress.
> It contains CBM from reading, math, and IRI data along with CORE
> surveys. The staff brings them to their grade level meetings and progress
> monitoring is based on current data (Year One Report, District Two, CB
> #12).

Another CB writes about the need for data to continually sit at the center all collaboration

and decision making within the school.

> The work this year centers around building shared knowledge and a
> collective approach to accountability as we keep data the center piece of
> instructional focus groups and grade level team meetings. We are working
> with the concepts of a grade level team having effective processes as well
> as content. The content being data-centered (Six Month Report, District
> One, CB #8).

Data in general was frequently referred to in CB reports, however items coded and reported on in this section were specifically linked to data being used to drive decision making.

Critical Friends ("Coachultants")

Capacity Builders serve in the role of a school improvement coach, but also as an outside consultant. This type of an individual is often referred to as a Critical Friend, as was used as the label for this cluster of responses coded. The term was coined within the group of original Capacity Builders that they serve as a hybrid of the coach and the consultant; a "Coachultant." Items were coded related to this item when a report referred to the Capacity Builder building a trusting relationship with their assigned leaders, allowing them access and permission to serve as a sounding board (Relationship Building). Additionally, items were coded when it was reported that the Capacity Builder was invited to provide "expert" advice in their role as the outside consultant ("Expert" Function). Table 18 demonstrates the breakdown of coded items within the Critical Friends ("Coachultants") cluster.

Table 18

Critical Friends ("Coachultants") Coding Breakdown

	Critical Friends "Coachultants"		Relationship Building		"Expert" Function	
Combined Districts						
Six Month Report	26	5.9%	22	5.0%	28	6.3%
Year One Report	34	5.4%	20	3.2%	50	7.9%
Combined Reports	60	5.6%	42	3.9%	78	7.3%
District One						
Six Month Report	19	7.3%	9	3.4%	14	5.3%
Year One Report	22	6.2%	14	3.9%	17	4.8%
Combined Reports	41	6.6%	23	3.7%	31	5.0%
District Two						
Six Month Report	7	3.9%	13	7.2%	14	7.7%
Year One Report	12	4.3%	6	2.2%	33	11.9%
Combined Reports	19	4.2%	19	4.2%	47	10.3%

Critical Friends ("Coachultants") Mini-Vignette

At times it was clear in CB reports when they were serving as a distinct coach, or

consultant. In other instances, the two roles were very blurred considering this dual role

of operating as a "coachultant." Regardless of the specific role being filled, there were

ample entries in the coded reports of CBs functioning as critical friends to the leaders

they support.

> [Principal] seeks a lot of information and advice from me but takes full
> responsibility for working with his staff. He has not asked me to address
> them directly on any topic which he feels is his area of leadership. I
> appreciate and respect this approach and feel it goes a long way in
> building his capacity as a leader (Year One Report, District Two, CB #10).

Another report mentioned a particular leader utilizing the CB as a sounding board when

preparing for challenging conversations. "There is still work to be done here, but

[Principal] felt comfortable calling me for a 'coaching session' when he was about to have a hard conversation" (Year One Report, District One, CB #8). After describing his experiences in serving as both a critical friend and coach, one CB concluded with the following statement,

> We are exceedingly well served to help school leadership focus on the most important work—helping all children succeed, helping all teachers be effective, and helping leaders attune their efforts in the guiding of their schools (and systems) through the white water of school improvement (Six Month Report, District One, CB #2).

Whether serving in the coach, consultant, or "coachultant" role, the CBs had to first build relationship and trust with their assigned leaders in order to "earn" the opportunity to truly engage with them in the school improvement planning process.

Relationship Building Mini-Vignette

Relationship building was the starting point for majority of the CBs as they set foot in their assigned schools and districts.

> The primary work I initially handled when I began to work with [School] was to build a relationship with a principal who wasn't sure she wanted or needed me. This sense was gone after the first couple of days (Year One Report, District One, CB #9).

Another CB described the beginning phase of capacity building work and the critical entry point for her work as follows, "My initial experience working as a Capacity Builder at [School] was spent watching, listening, and observing the atmosphere of the school and its leadership" (Year One Report, District Two, CB #12). A well established relationship between CB and principal preparing for a time of transition was described in these words, "[Principal] and I developed a relationship that has blossomed into a trusting

relationship. [Principal] and I have discussed her pending retirement and I have provided

some insights which I believe she has appreciated" (Year One Report, District One, CB

#4). Whether working with a new or seasoned administrator, establishing trust was a

critical first step, and continued part of the capacity building process.

"Expert" Function Mini-Vignette

While the CBs are not individuals that know everything about everything, they do

enter their IBC sites with a strong expertise in issues of school improvement, and a

plethora of resources and strategies to share when appropriate. The sharing of this

expertise plays out in a variety of forms, and with an array of individuals.

> One teacher asked for ideas on how to provide feedback to her student
> teacher. I gave a very brief description of the powerful teaching protocol
> and she was excited to learn more. I will be meeting with her this year to
> help her adapt the protocol to enable her to provide specific feedback to
> her student teacher (Year One Report, District Two, CB #10).

The same CB also wrote, "I made a presentation to new teachers about legal issues new

teachers need to understand. All staff was invited and most attended" (Year One Report,

District Two, CB #10). Another CB was able to utilize her expertise in the area of

progress monitoring strategies.

> [School] has had weekly RTI meetings but they have lacked leadership
> and strong Progress Monitoring. I have assisted by providing literature
> about best practices and offering strong technical assistance and resources
> for progress monitoring. All of this is done quietly and with principal
> approval (Year One Report, District Two, CB #12).

The group of CBs represented a wide variety of areas of expertise. Many CBs not only

had the opportunity to share their areas of expertise at their assigned IBC sties, but also

with other CBs, and on occasion other IBC sites when the need and opportunity presented itself.

Organizational Health

As clearly discussed in Chapter Two, trust and overall health within an organization is so critical. Organizational Health was coded in CB reports anytime there was mention made of the internal health of the district or school reflected in the report. This could include relational and structural aspects of the organization. This cluster was further coded when specific mention was made to the Center for Educational Effectiveness surveys that were provided as part of the IBC project, totally focused on issues of organizational health (CEE Data). Additionally, effective leadership was coded for in the reports, as so many decisions made by the leaders of districts and schools impact the health of the organizations they represent (Effective Leadership). Finally, within this cluster trust was specifically coded for in order to dig deeper into the broad topic of organizational health and look at how many times issues of trust came up in CB reports (Organizational Trust). This did not include mention of trust between the CB and the leaders they worked with (already coded for in the Relationship Building item), but was limited to trust within the organization. Table 19 demonstrates the breakdown of coded items within the Organizational Health cluster.

Table 19

Organizational Health Coding Breakdown

	Organizational Health		CEE Data		Effective Leadership		Organizational Trust	
Combined Districts								
Six Month Report	23	5.2%	13	2.9%	50	11.3%	20	4.5%
Year One Report	35	5.5%	23	3.6%	64	10.1%	28	4.4%
Combined Reports	58	5.4%	36	3.4%	114	10.6%	48	4.5%
District One								
Six Month Report	16	6.1%	8	3.1%	35	13.4%	8	3.1%
Year One Report	23	6.5%	12	3.4%	35	9.8%	18	5.1%
Combined Reports	39	6.3%	20	3.2%	70	11.3%	26	4.2%
District Two								
Six Month Report	7	3.9%	5	2.8%	15	8.3%	12	6.6%
Year One Report	12	4.3%	11	4.0%	29	10.5%	10	3.6%
Combined Reports	19	4.2%	16	3.5%	44	9.6%	22	4.8%

Organizational Health Mini-Vignette

Faced with the many challenges of dramatically reforming a system, it can be easy to uncover evidence of educational organizations that are not healthy in their culture and mode of operation.

> First entering [School] in spring 2008, I was struck by the heightened sense of staff skepticism, administrator frustration, and overall fatigue resulting from years of building and district administrator changes. Simply, the sentiment was 'this too will pass,' because that was the track record in the school. In a brief succession of years, principals have changed, superintendents have changed, leadership teams have changed— and the staff has plowed on. Each change introduced new slogans of 'innovation and reform' but the results have remained the same. Building and district professional development was perceived as nothing more than drive-by attempts to motivate a staff who had already resigned itself to 'the problem is the students we have at [School]' (Year One Report, District One, CB #5).

While there were statements such as this, identifying areas for growth, the coded CB

reports provided strong evidence of educational organizations that are becoming healthy

with a focus on improving culture and structure. This same CB went on to later report on

the progress being made towards improved organizational health.

> We began the new school year by identifying the commonalities in our teaching and learning philosophy as evidenced in the quote walk— providing an opportunity to talk with colleagues about substance rather than frustration. We set ourselves on a course to foster a climate and culture of teaching and learning—focusing on good instruction for the benefit of all students, rather than just targeting the needs of the struggling learners (Year One Report, District One, CB #5).

Another CB wrote a beautiful description of a leader very concerned about the health of

his school, and very intentional in efforts to best care for their needs,

> I've been impressed with the principal's improved questioning and shared leadership. He follows up in a timely manner and sincerely values the teacher-leaders' thoughts; he is also not afraid to advocate his thoughts too. The principal has numerous opportunities each day to have meaningful, albeit short, conversations in the halls, lunch room, or in teachers' classrooms during his management-by-walking-around. What I've seen is a leader who can intervene in issues when they are small opposed to dealing with problems that escalated over time. This response is a change in focus exhibited by the principal, and it has influenced his assistant principals too. For example, the principal heard of a beginning teacher's struggle with teaching a subject without curricular materials. He listened, determined the need, followed up by obtaining the materials that the teacher needed to be effective, and then personally delivered these materials to the teacher. This has built trust and I've seen this teacher participate in a meeting more positively since that intervention. This is, I think, emblematic of a leader who understands the 'pulse' of his or her building (Six Month Report, District Once, CB #2).

CB reports recorded a variety of examples such as this one of educational leaders going

to great lengths to improve the culture and organizational health of their schools and

districts.

CEE Data Mini-Vignette

It was interesting to read the CB perspective on how the CEE staff and student

surveys were received and utilized in the sites being served.

> In the spring of 2008 the staff completed the Educational Effectiveness
> Survey and the top three areas of concern were: Effective School
> Leadership; Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning; Focused
> Professional Development. The staff met as a group to share the results
> and develop a plan to address these areas (Six Month Report, District
> Two, CB #12).

Another CB wrote an in-depth explanation of how the CEE survey had a powerful impact

on a high school staff.

> The building teachers had positive experiences in the discussion of the
> staff survey. The staff appreciated the information and was intrigued and
> surprised in some instances bout the outcomes. In the building the survey
> results gave rise to goals for the coming year. The most dramatic reaction
> came from the high school staff. They were interested and concerned and
> seemed to want to improve several areas. Several teachers apologized for
> not taking the survey seriously and promised to give it the proper attention
> next time it was given. All are looking forward to the next survey to see
> how key issues such as working together have improved (Year One
> Report, District 2, CB #10).

The CEE surveys were cited in numerous CB reports as a guiding force in school and

district leaders making informed decisions on where to focus professional development

and school improvement efforts.

Effective Leadership Mini-Vignette

Effective leadership was a focus of many CB reports, and provided many

opportunities to celebrate growth of school and district leaders.

> My work has centered on working with the administrative leadership
> group. The principal, [name omitted], is doing a swell job of directing this

change. He is visible in the building, applying the right combination of push-and-pull, and we are beginning to see changes. For example, during the January-summer period of 2008, the high school has moved to a leadership team opposed to the classical departmental organization. This has not been easy and many times the principal has needed to continue building value in this process (Six Month Report, District One, CB #2).

A particularly encouraging leadership transformation of a principal was described in by a

CB who wrote,

[Principal] has understood her predicament and has made substantial changes in her school that will undoubtedly result in better academic performance. She is holding teachers and students to higher expectations. She has created a schedule in which her grade-level teacher teams meet weekly to discuss relevant curriculum and student issues. This schedule also allows students to receive extra help on a daily basis. She has 'stepped up' as a leader to her staff. Last school year so much was new and different, and nobody really knew what the expectations and the goals were for them or their students. Now she is asserting herself and gaining more respect daily. I am confident she will be successful (Six Month Report, District One, CB #6).

Another CB expressed work in the area of effective leadership as related to impactful

teacher observations.

[Principal] knows that I value regular observations and so we developed a system for her to conduct regular observations with suggestion/compliments. She shares her experiences with me and when I am in the building we do these together and plan the conversations she has with her staff following the observations. She is more aware of the school culture and staff is will-informed of her increasing personal standards and expectations of students (Year One Report, District Two, CB #12).

Even the most effective leader can continue to hone in on their practice, as was evidenced

by coded CB report items related to effective leadership for new and seasoned leaders

alike.

<u>Organizational Trust Mini-Vignette</u>

Issues of organizational trust were presented in a variety of narrative pieces include in CB reports. One such example was a building utilizing CEE data as an indicator for a needed increase in organizational trust.

> However, as this year is rolling out, the need to establish trust even in the building is being brought to the forefront. The CEE data is strong evidence of this. As one examines the Trust/Resistance factors in the building with certified and noncertified staff, the need is glaring. The brighter side is that there are pockets of trust and strength in teaching teams (Year One Report, District One, CB #9).

Another report described an administrator at a new building assignment utilizing the work of Lencioni (2002) as a guide for establishing organizational trust.

> Team-building grew out of the <u>Five Dysfunctions of a Team</u>, Patrick Lencioni's work, and while everyone admits to the area of Trust as being the most challenging aspect of new leadership, the building administrator is building bridges with his staff as he meets regularly with a building leadership team, designs collaboration time with his entire staff, collaboration days that do not impact the instructional venue, but clearly promote team-building and a renewed sense of collegiality (Year One Report, District Two, CB #11).

Another CB described intentional efforts to create a structure that would unite teachers with common goals and provide a space for open collaboration with the goal of increasing levels of organizational trust.

> Professional Goals at the personal level—to be coordinated through the building's instructional coach, each teacher would identify his/her professional goals for the school year. Those with similar goals would be teamed together to assist one another in meeting the goal. Likewise, each staff member would identify his/her perceived strength in the classroom. Matched with the goal statements, individual teachers would be scheduled to observe a colleague in the classroom according to his/her identified need. The objective was to create a sense of openness and collaboration within the building (Year One Report, District One, CB #5).

Efforts focused on increasing organizational trust were frequently coded in CB reports. The work of substantial and sustainable school improvement is tremendously challenging, with a critical starting point often residing within the building of organizational trust.

Focused School Improvement

There are many different terms that are used to describe what was categorized for this study as Focused School Improvement, including strategic plan and theory of action. The intent was to code items in CB reports that referred to an intentional, focused effort within the realm of school improvement. This cluster was further coded when specific mention was made of the *9 Characteristics of High-Performing Schools (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007)*, the research meta-analysis used to guide Idaho school improvement further discussed in Chapter Two (9 Characteristics). Additionally, each of the pilot districts had a number of specific school improvement related initiatives. For example, both districts had schools participating in the Reading First program. District One had a leadership academy initiative modeled after the Principal Academy of Leadership program described in Chapter Two. District Two had a district wide initiative to implement a new instructional and observational protocol. These types of specific school improvement initiatives were coded in the secondary round of coding (SI Initiatives). Finally, within this cluster items that specifically mentioned instruction were coded (Instruction). Table 20 demonstrates the breakdown of coded items within the Focused School Improvement cluster.

Table 20

Focused School Improvement Coding Breakdown

	Focused School Improvement		9 Characteristics		SI Initiatives		Instruction	
Combined Districts								
Six Month Report	34	7.7%	5	1.1%	22	5.0%	27	6.1%
Year One Report	39	6.2%	7	1.1%	27	4.3%	65	10.3%
Combined Reports	73	6.8%	12	1.1%	49	4.6%	92	8.6%
District One								
Six Month Report	19	7.3%	2	0.8%	11	4.2%	20	7.6%
Year One Report	18	5.1%	0	0.0%	14	3.9%	40	11.2%
Combined Reports	37	6.0%	2	0.3%	25	4.1%	60	9.7%
District Two								
Six Month Report	15	8.3%	3	1.7%	11	6.1%	7	3.9%
Year One Report	21	7.6%	7	2.5%	13	4.7%	25	9.0%
Combined Reports	36	7.9%	10	2.2%	24	5.2%	32	7.0%

Focused School Improvement Mini-Vignette

When addressing the efforts of a district to narrow in and focus on a clear vision

for district and school improvement, one CB wrote, "Overall, I believe we have come a

long way in helping [District One] staff become more focused, effective and efficient in

efforts to improvement student performance in the district" (Year One Report, District

One, CB #1). Another CB shared about helping to keep stated district initiatives as the

focus.

> Educators have so many demands on their time, and often progress on new
> initiatives gets bogged down and people get distracted as the next new
> idea comes along. However, there is a true imperative in [District Two] to
> create a new teacher evaluation 'tool' (Year One Report, District Two, CB
> #6).

A specific example of a recognized need for a theory of action followed by the principal

and CB working together to create such a plan was described as follows,

> We developed a plan that would allow frequent teacher collaboration
> meetings, time for teachers and paraprofessionals to work with students in
> small groups and individually. She explained to her staff the extent of
> their academic problem and the rut in which they found themselves. A
> few teachers were unhappy with her description and were upset that she
> believed they were not 'teaching' their students. She explained that she
> understood they were trying to do their jobs and were sincere in that
> endeavor, but the problem was that she, as their leader, had not had a plan
> and had not explained in great detail how they were to go about 'teaching'
> their children. They needed a plan (Year One Report, District One, CB
> #6).

It was encouraging to observe so many coded responses in CB reports that addressed the

need for, and intentional efforts of schools and districts to really narrow, and focus their

school improvement efforts.

9 Characteristics Mini-Vignette

While the *9 Characteristics of High-Performing* Schools (Shannon & Bylsma,

2007) was adopted as the guiding research for school improvement in Idaho, it was not

mandated that all CBs "force" this framework upon the leaders they were assigned to

support. Rather, the 9 Characteristics were to be infused into their work as appropriate.

While many used this document in pieces as they fit with current efforts, a few did use

the document as an overall driving force in their work.

> Prior to the survey I conducted an in-service teaching them about the
> importance of the 'Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools' so
> they could see the correlation between the survey and these descriptors. I
> asked them to post the descriptors in their classrooms and now the

conversations usually revolve around them (Year One Report, District Two, CB #12).

Another CB described his use of the 9 Characteristics as an organizing force for school improvement at his assigned sites as follows,

> As a matrix for understanding effective schools, the 'Nine Characteristics' will be used extensively in communicating effective instruction, understanding the shared focus and responsibility of all the shareholders, building working teams to assist the learner, and creating an environment that will sustain school improvement (Six Month Report, District Two, CB #11).

The actual document of the 9 Characteristics was not frequently coded in CB reports. It was however clear that this meta-analysis was a critical framework for several CBs, as evidenced by coded responses from CB reports.

School Improvement Initiatives Mini-Vignette

Individual schools and districts were engaged in a number of specific school improvement initiatives that were reflected in CB reports. For example,

> The high school is also discussing plans for the design and implementation of a senior project combined with an advisory program. A leadership team was formed to begin design. As CB I was asked if I would sit in on these meetings to serve as a resource and support. I am also working with the principal to design an evaluation template that the committee can use to review other districts' senior projects and to select the pieces they wish to incorporate in their plan. I was also able to provide them information on the senior project requirement for 2012 seniors. They are in the process of reviewing other district programs. I provided them with a matrix to help make comparisons of various senior project programs (Year One Report, District Two, CB #10).

Another site used the CEE survey and other data to set a school level school improvement initiative to establish a culture of engaged learning.

The school's Leadership Team identified creating a culture of engaged learning as an immediate target. Strategies addressing the concerns include a new walk-thru form for the Administrative Team to use—setting a minimum of three walk-thrus per teacher per school year in addition to a formal evaluation. Additionally each staff member will identify a professional goal to impact teaching and learning in his/her classroom for the school year. The goal will be logged with the Instructional Coach, be a point of reference during the formal evaluation with the Administrative Team, and addressed through professional development in coordination with the Professional Development Team (Six Month Report, District One, CB #5).

A wide variety of individual school improvement initiatives were evidenced in coded CB reports. While there was variation in these individual school or district level initiatives, CB reports often clearly linked these initiatives to the larger goals and work of the IBC project.

Instruction Mini-Vignette

It was nothing short of thrilling to read the numerous CB report sections addressing issues directly related to an increased focus on improving instruction.

The tone of conversations have changed in the year I have worked with the leaders—at first it was centered on organizational climate (and while that is important) but now it is much more focused on instructional quality and student achievement (Year One Report, District One, CB #2).

Another CB wrote about utilizing visitations to other sites as an impetus to increased self reflection and changes to instructional practices.

I believe I can have the most significant impact by talking with teachers as they meet to discuss their challenges, successes, and plans. Additionally we are planning visits to other schools both in and outside the district to view instruction and collaborative team meetings. We have made visits previously as described above which have 'jump-started' changes in the school. These changes are yielding benefits now. We want to continue

these kids of visits and continue to build our success. I believe we are moving in the right direction (Six Month Report, District One, CB #6).

A specific description was provided in relation to a shift in perspective regarding a district adopted reading program and its impact on one school in particular.

Teachers had a successful July retreat that focused on best practices of teaching Open Court. This was a particularly important event that moved the staff and principal from a sense of forced fidelity to Open Court to their coined term, 'fidelity plus' in which they learned how to accomplish program consistency with student-centered expansion of key skills from mater teachers from the [Valley] area (Year One Report, District One, CB #7).

The same report goes on to further discuss implications of an increased focus of leadership on effective instruction.

She has become clearer in her mind regarding what she sees as quality instruction and has grown less tolerant of practices she observes in some classrooms. Her dissatisfaction will serve her well as she leads teachers to develop a shared vision of quality instruction (Year One Report, District One, CB #7).

One CB report described in great detail a substantial effort within one school to narrow their focus on improving instruction through increased student engagement.

We addressed these challenges by continuing the work and concepts of Reading First professional development and from the book study of Whatever it Takes, which deals with professional learning communities. We studied alterable variable to increase student achievement. The first one being, active engagement of all students. A professional development training was provided by the CB, principal and literacy coach which demonstrated engagement strategies. Observations were conducted using a tool that was familiar to the staff in order to communicate how the concept of student engagement could be measured. Another variable we addressed was building strong coalitions within the system to meet the needs of all learners. We did this through the concept of instructional focus groups. We started with the third grade teachers who then provided the training to the whole staff this fall (Six Month Report, District One, CB #8).

Of all the categories coded, it was of particular interest to the researcher to see the increase in items coded in relation to the instruction category from the six month reports to the year one reports. CBs reported a wide variety of plans, activities, and culture shifts within districts and schools regarding instruction. Improved instruction is at the core of effective school improvement efforts, as evidenced by coded responses in CB reports.

Effectiveness of the Outside Consultant (Capacity Builder)

In addition to the staff and student perceptual surveys conducted by the Center for Education Effectiveness (CEE) and already thoroughly discussed, CEE also conducted a survey designed to measure the effectiveness of the CB, primarily from the perspective of the leaders they were assigned to work with. Figure 17 provides a demographic breakdown of the positions held by the respondents of the 101 CB 360 surveys submitted. 27 surveys were submitted by district leaders/administrators, 26 by school improvement team members, 18 by the project supervisor, 19 by CBs themselves, and 11 surveys were submitted by individuals who coded themselves as other.

Who Responded?

District Leader / Administrator, 27, 26%

Other, 11, 11%

CB(s), 19, 19%

School Improvement Team Member, 26, 26%

Supervisor, 18, 18%
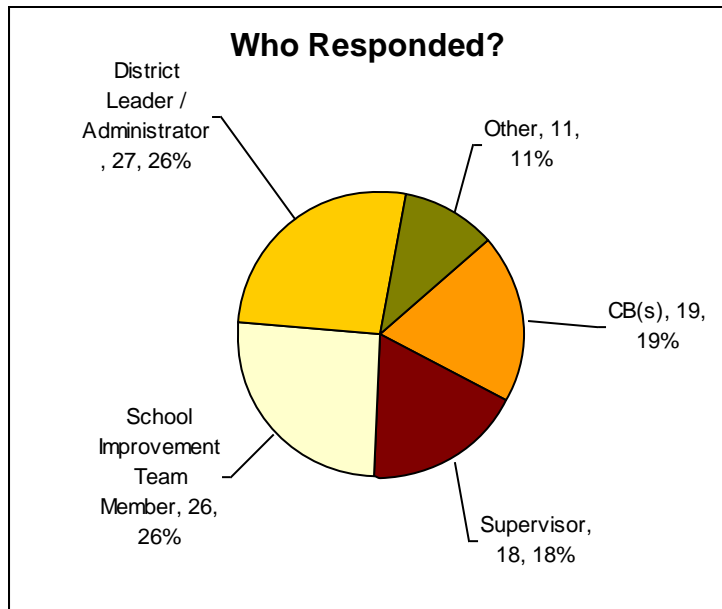
Figure 17. Demographic Positions of CB 360 Respondents

Figure 18 provides a demographic breakdown of the levels served by the individuals that submitted the 101 CB 360 surveys. 43 represented elementary sites, 15 middle or junior high sites, 15 high school sites, 10 central administration sites, and 18 surveys were not coded in relation to an individual serving a particular site level.

Respondents-Level Served

Elementary, 43, 42%

Middle School or Jr. High, 15, 15%

High School, 15, 15%

Central Administration, 10, 10%

I am not assigned to a specific school, 18, 18%
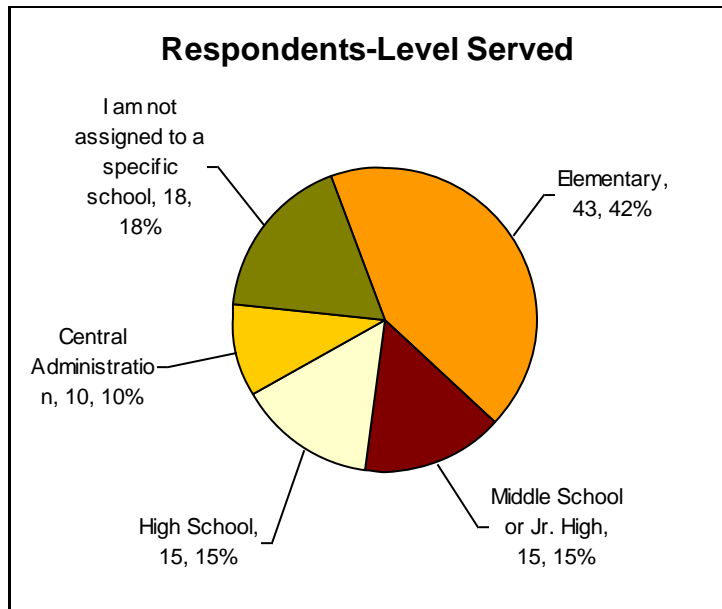
Figure 18. Demographic Level Served of CB 360 Respondents

The entire CB 360 roll up report, displaying a combined view of the 101 surveys submitted on behalf of the thirteen CBs that served nineteen pilot IBC sites, can be viewed in Appendix C. The summary report is categorized into five key areas:

- School Improvement Skills

- Management of Responsibilities

- Advocates/Facilitates the School Improvement Process

- Trust Building

- Communication Skills

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on a series of questions related to each of the five key areas surveyed, based on a likert scale with the following options:

- Almost Always True

- Often True

- Sometimes True

- Seldom True

- Almost Never True

- Missing

Figure 19 provides a summary look at CB 360 survey results, demonstrating a very

positive overall view of the perceived effectiveness of the CBs, as measured within

survey categories, and when combining responses from all respondents for all CBs.
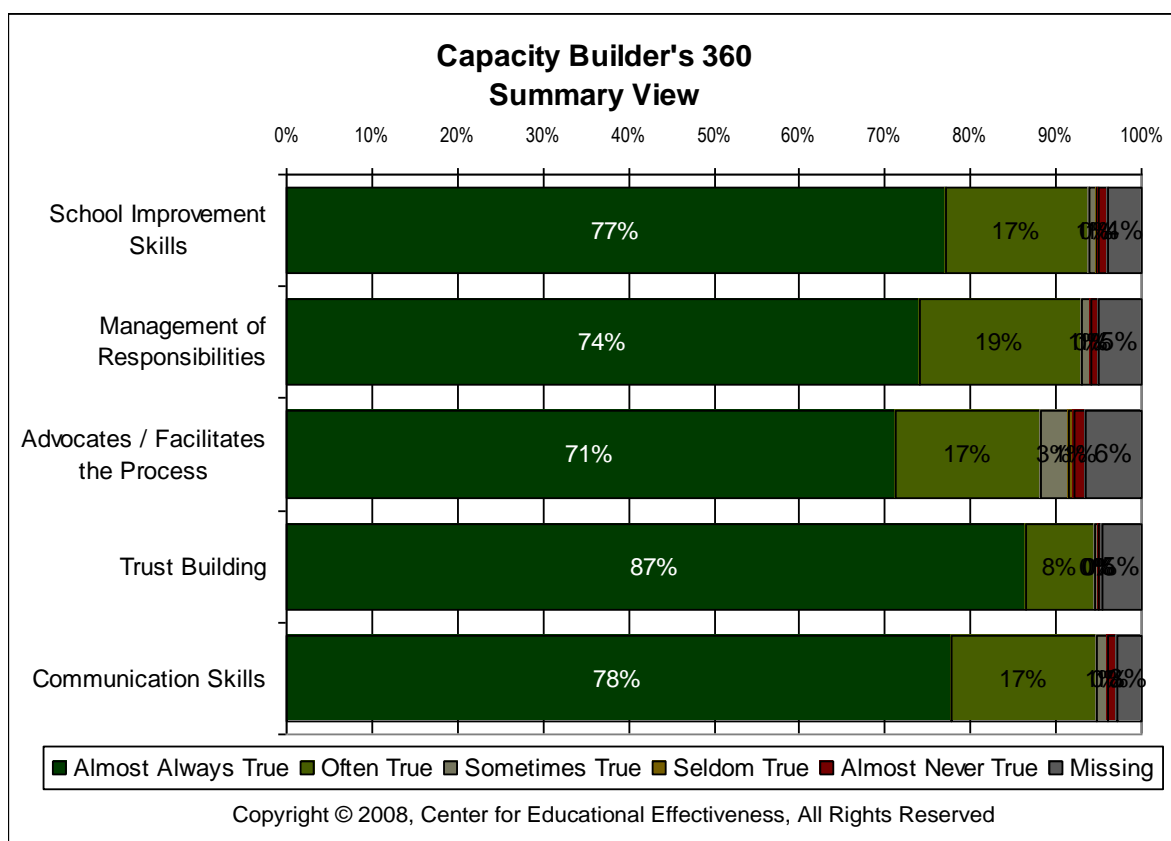
Figure 19. Summary View of CB 360 Survey Results

The following sections will provide additional information and observations of CB 360 survey results when broken down into the five categories measured by the survey. Results will be provided for each question in each category, and narrative observations will be made on the most positive and least positive indicator when looking at the percentage of responses marked as Almost Always True, the highest rating on the survey likert scale. Additional discussion will be provided on these observations in Chapter Five.

School Improvement Skills

Eight different questions were asked in the CB 360 survey in relation to school improvement skills demonstrated by the CBs during their first year of work in the IBC project. Figure 20 provides the overall view of responses to questions clustered in the school improvement skills category.
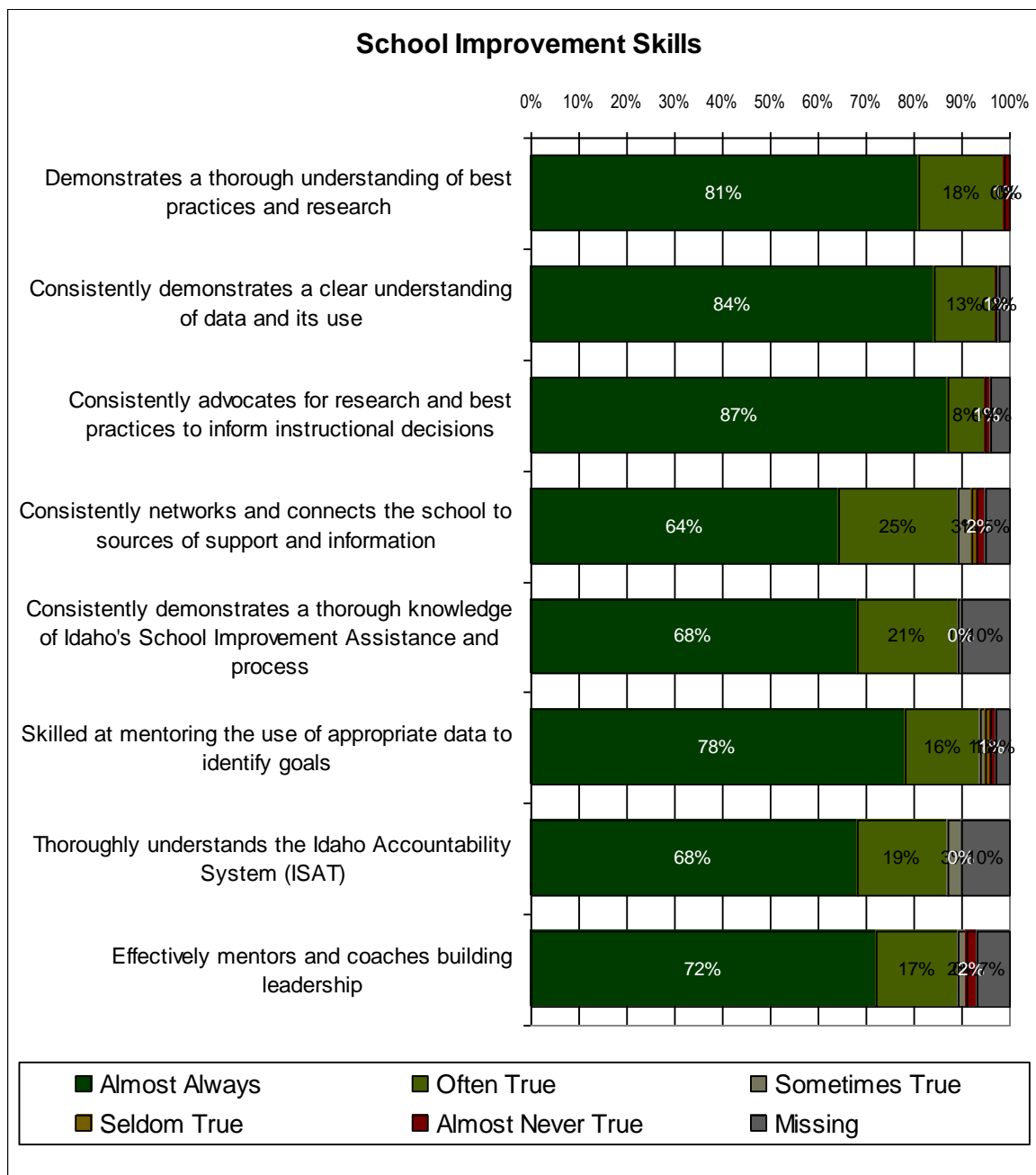
Figure 20. School Improvement Skills: Overall View

Figure 21 provides an analysis of responses when broken out by the different

groups of respondents: district/school administration, school improvement team

members, IBC supervisor, CBs themselves, and those who identified themselves as other.
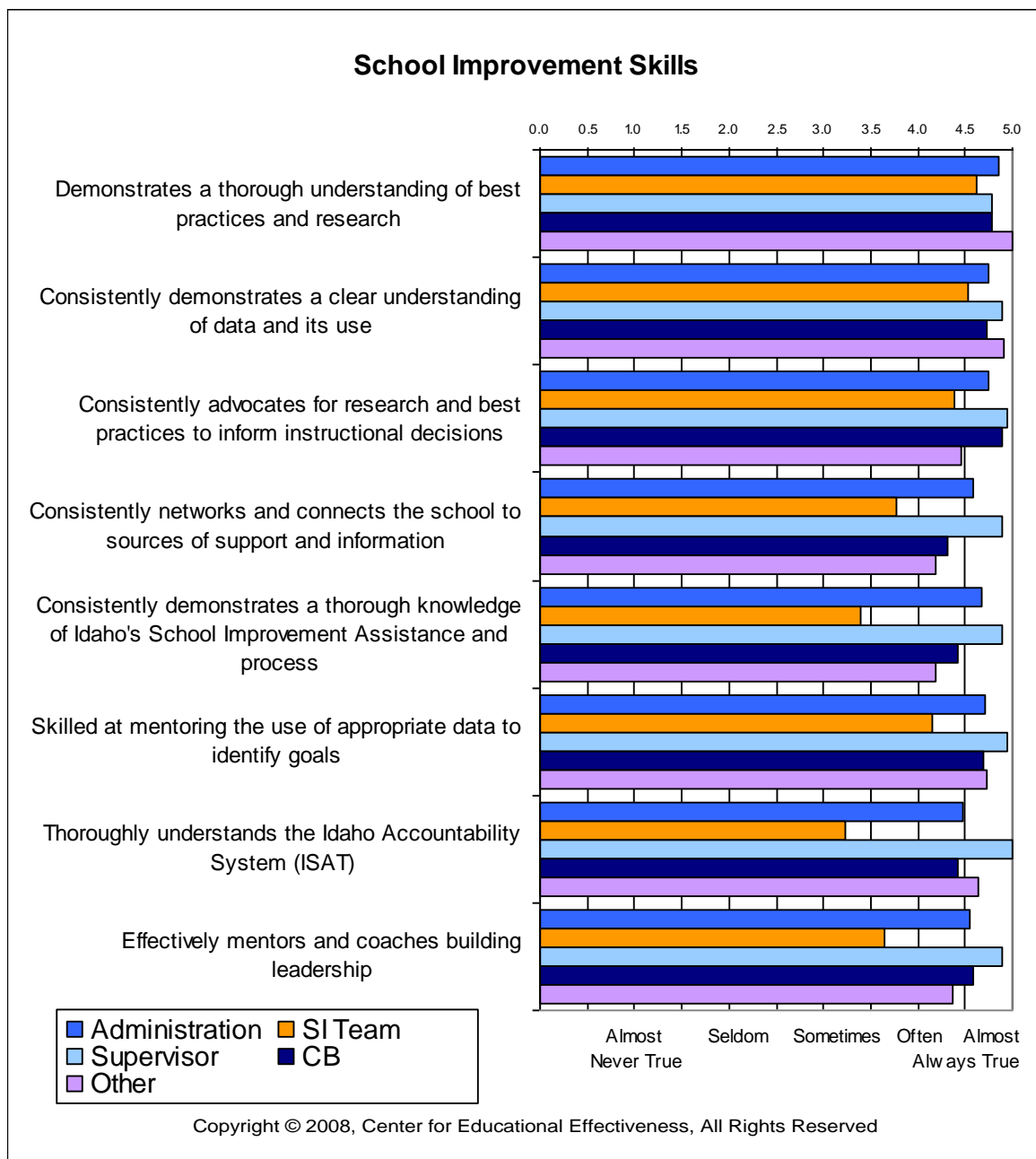
Figure 21. School Improvement Skills: Differing Perspectives

Figure 22 provides a gap analysis. The bars on the left hand side of the middle black line (0.0) demonstrates the CB overrating themselves in relation to other groups that responded to the survey. The right hand side of the middle black line (0.0) demonstrates the CB underrating themselves in relation to other groups that responded to the survey.
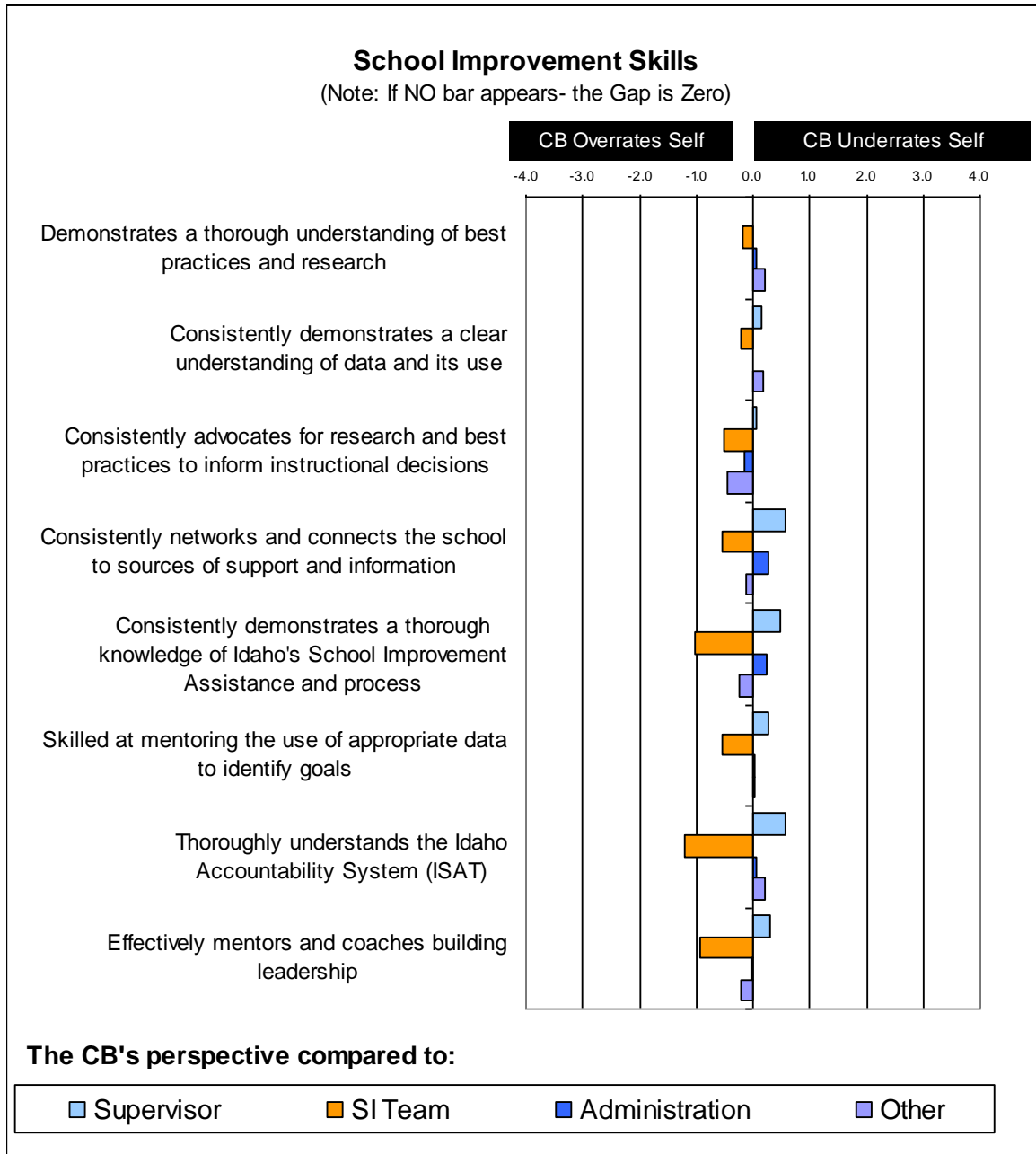
Figure 22. School Improvement Skills: Gap Analysis

The general trend in the gap analysis figures provided was that the CB overrated in comparison to school improvement team members, and underrated in relation to administrators and the IBC supervisor.

The item most positively rated in the school improvement skills category was: Consistently advocates for research and best practices to inform instructional decisions, with 87% indicating that this is Almost Always True of the CB. This same level of ranking was marked 64% of the time for the indicator: Consistently networks and connects the school to sources of support and information.

Management of Responsibilities

Six questions were asked on the CB 360 survey that dealt with how well the CB managed responsibilities in their capacity building work. Utilizing the same report features as explained above, Figure 23 provides the overall view for responses included in the management of responsibilities category, Figure 24 provides the differing perspectives, and Figure 25 displays the gap analysis.
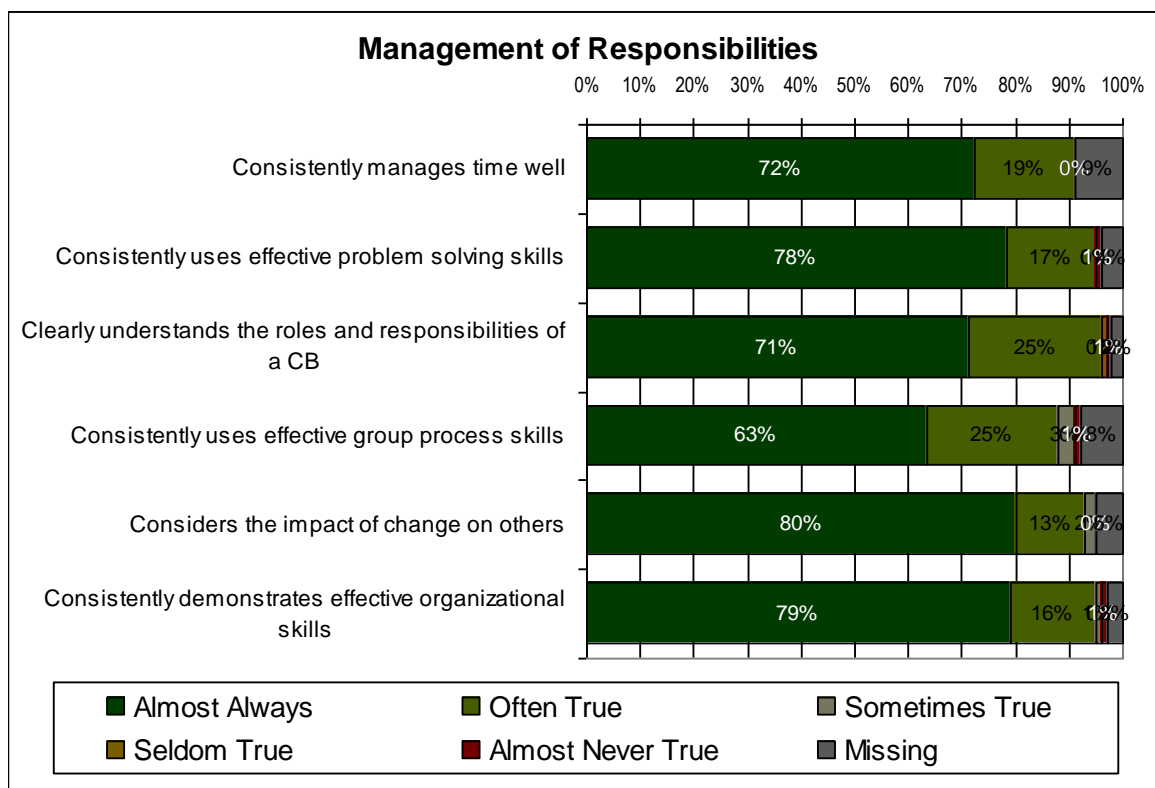
Figure 23. Management of Responsibilities: Overall View
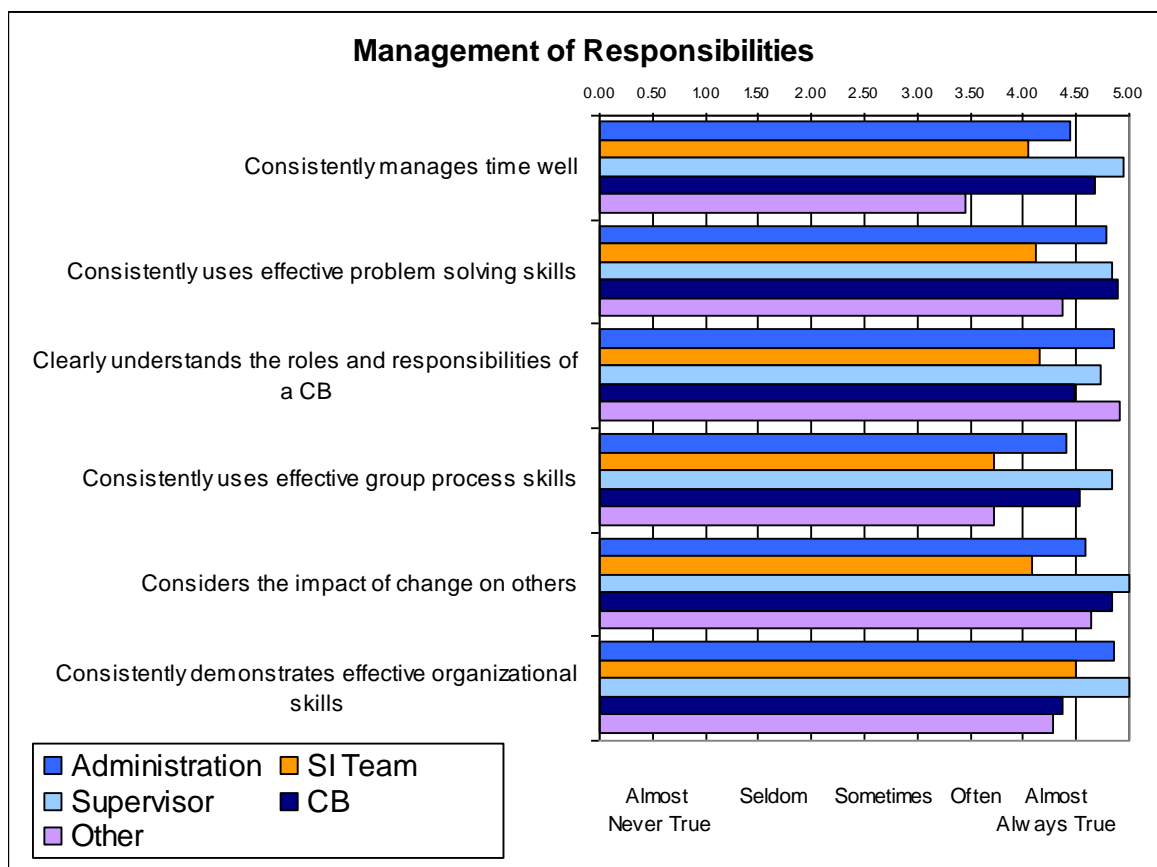
Figure 24. Management of Responsibilities: Differing Perspectives
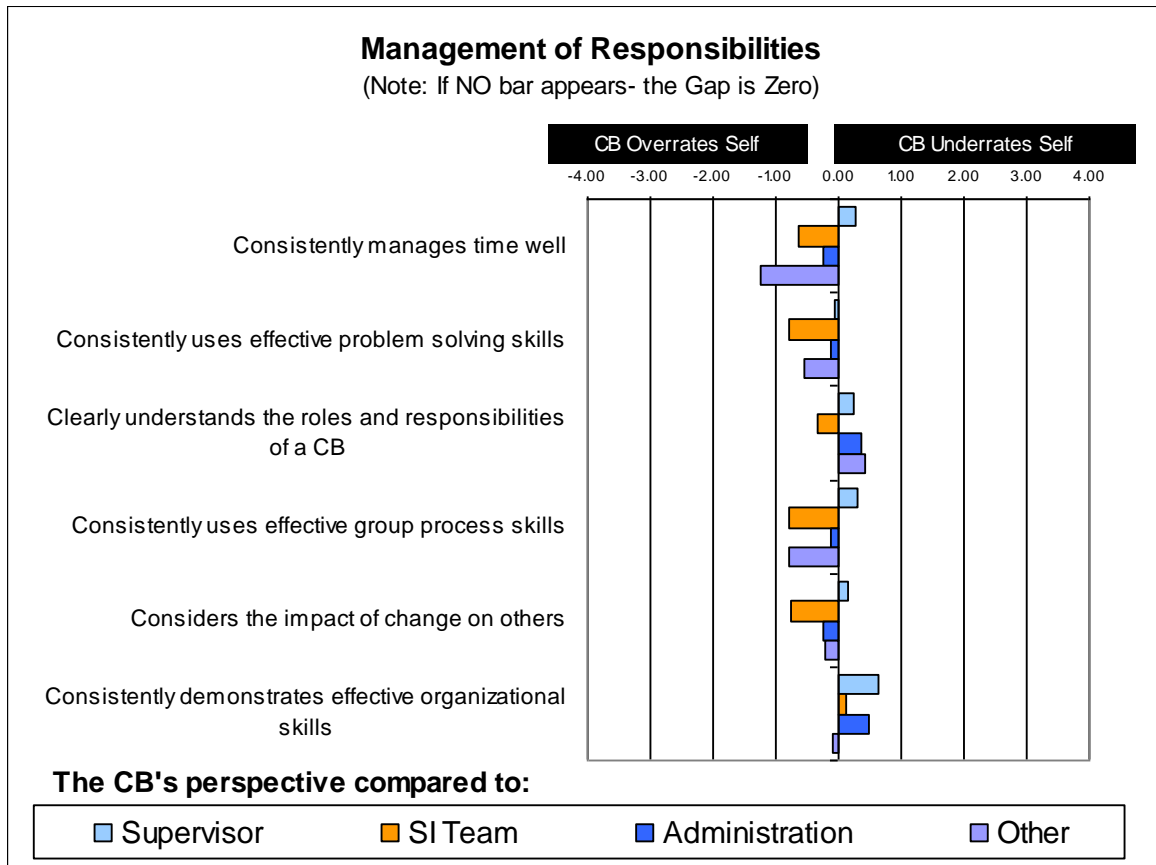
Figure 25. Management of Responsibilities: Gap Analysis

The most positive item responded to in this section of the survey with 80% indicating that this was Almost Always True of the CB: Considers the impact of change on others. Only 63% used this descriptor when responding to the statement: Consistently uses effective group process skills.

Advocates/Facilitates the School Improvement Process

Ten questions were included in the advocates/facilitates the school improvement

process section of the survey. This section contains more questions than any other survey

section. Figure 26 provides the overall view for responses included in this category,

Figure 27 provides the differing perspectives, and Figure 28 displays the gap analysis.
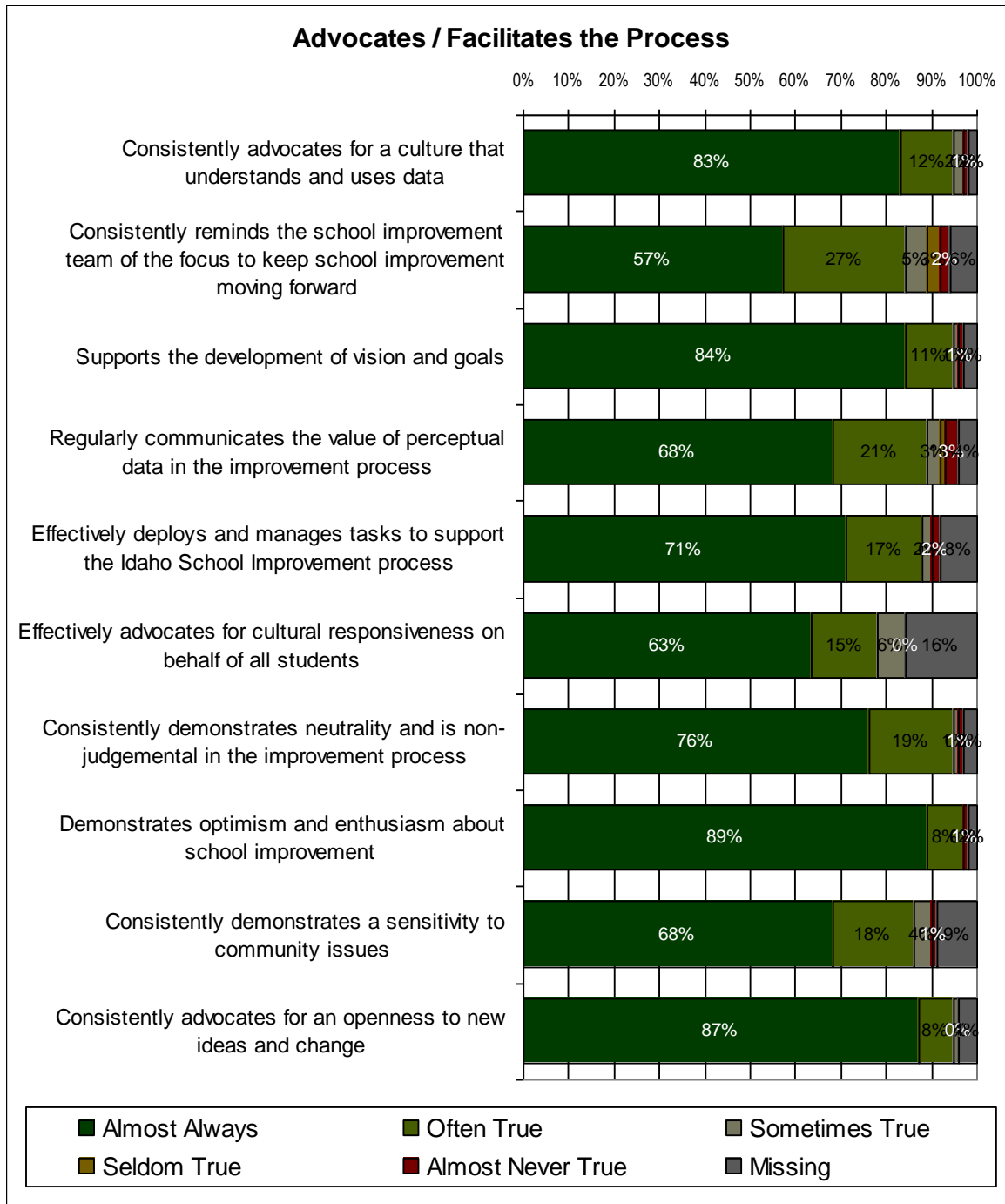
Figure 26. Advocates/Facilitates the School Improvement Process: Overall View
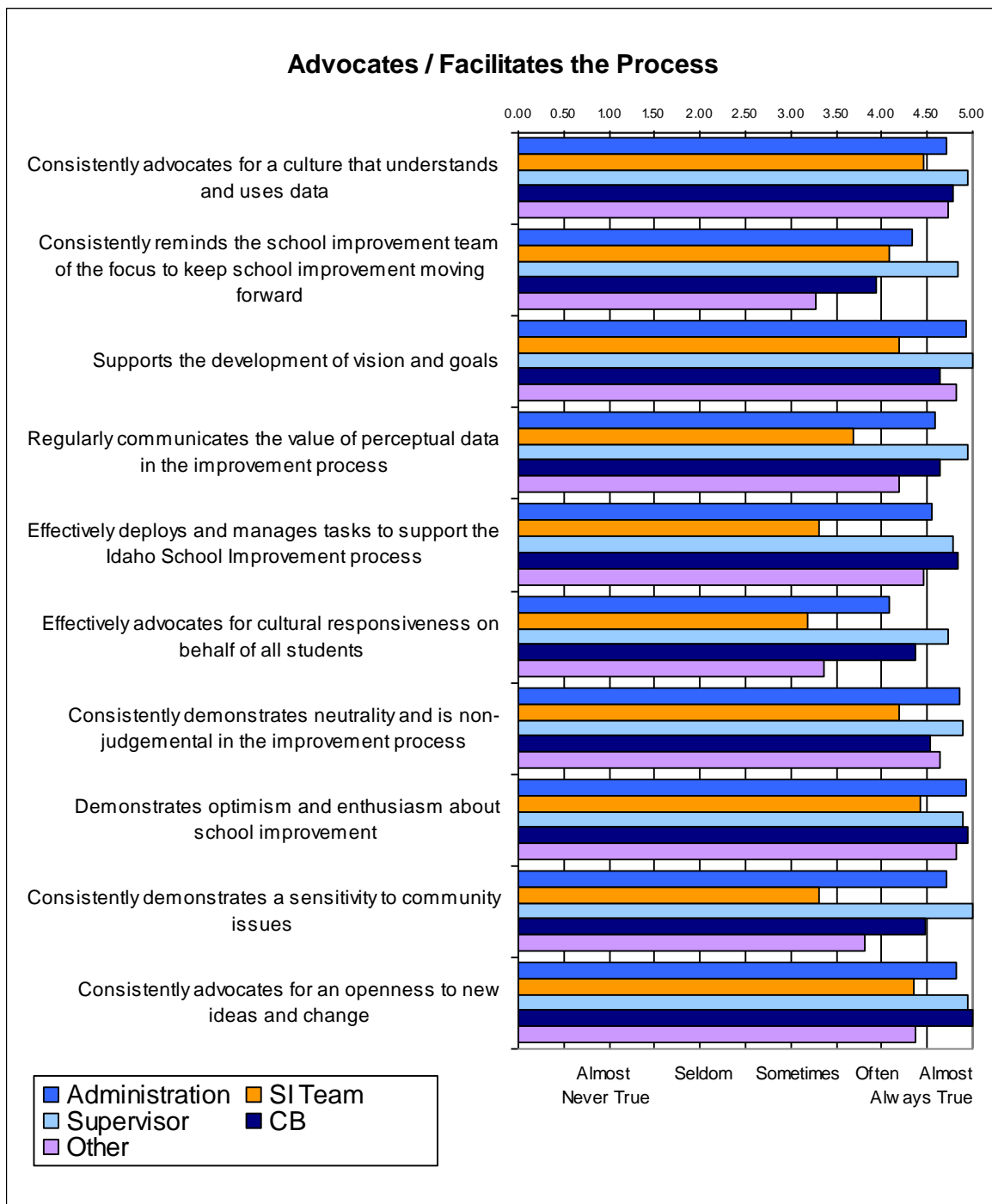
Figure 27. Advocates/Facilitates the School Improvement Process: Differing Perspectives
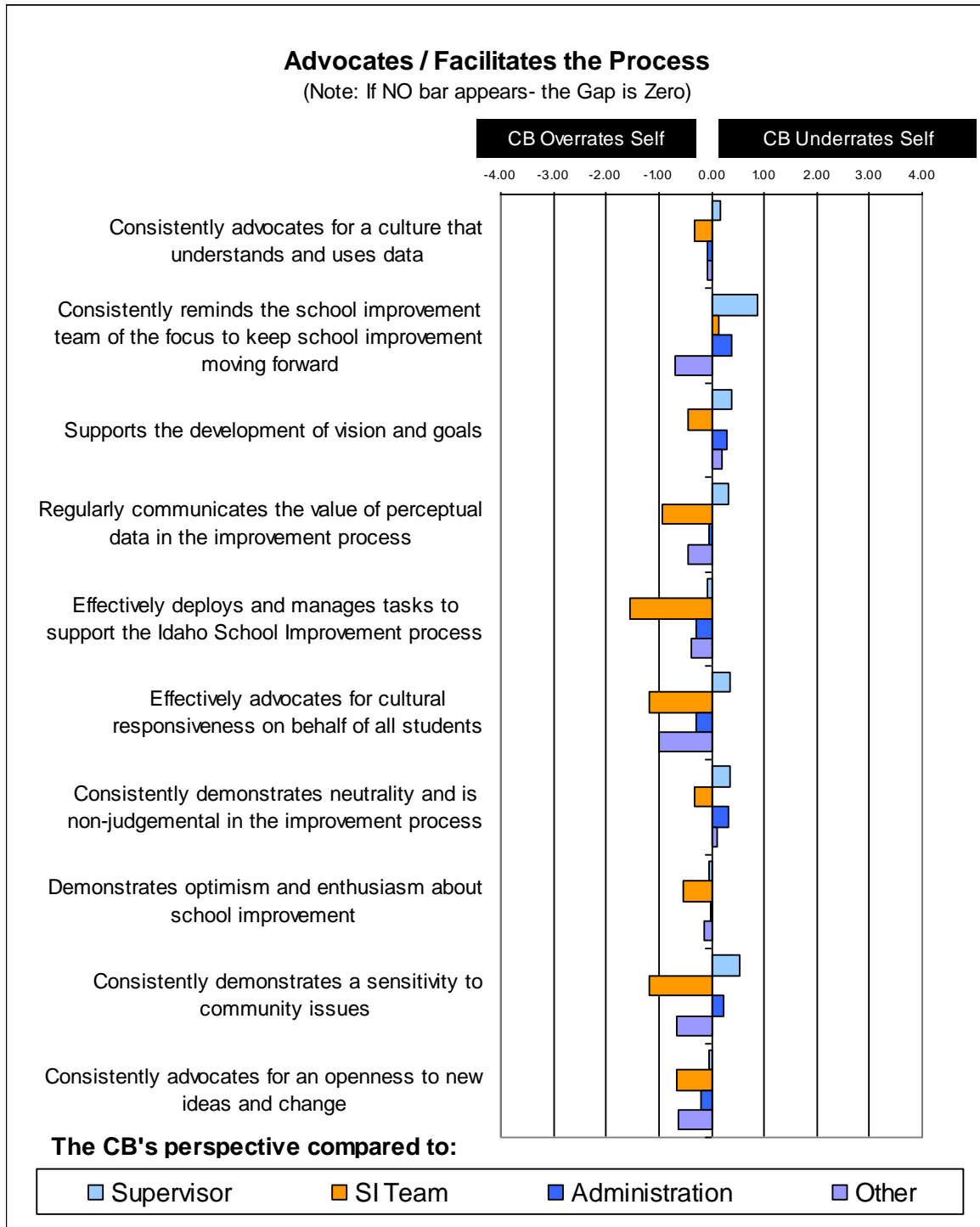
Figure 28. Advocates/Facilitates the School Improvement Process: Gap Analysis

Demonstrates optimism and enthusiasm about school improvement was the most positively ranked item within this survey section with 89% of respondents rating this as Almost Always True of the CB. Only 57%, the overall lowest ranked item in the survey, could respond Almost Always True in response to the item: Consistently reminds the school improvement team of the focus to keep school improvement moving forward.

Trust Building

This survey section consisted of five questions with the overall view for trust building responses provided in Figure 29, Figure 30 provides the differing perspectives, and Figure 31 displays the gap analysis
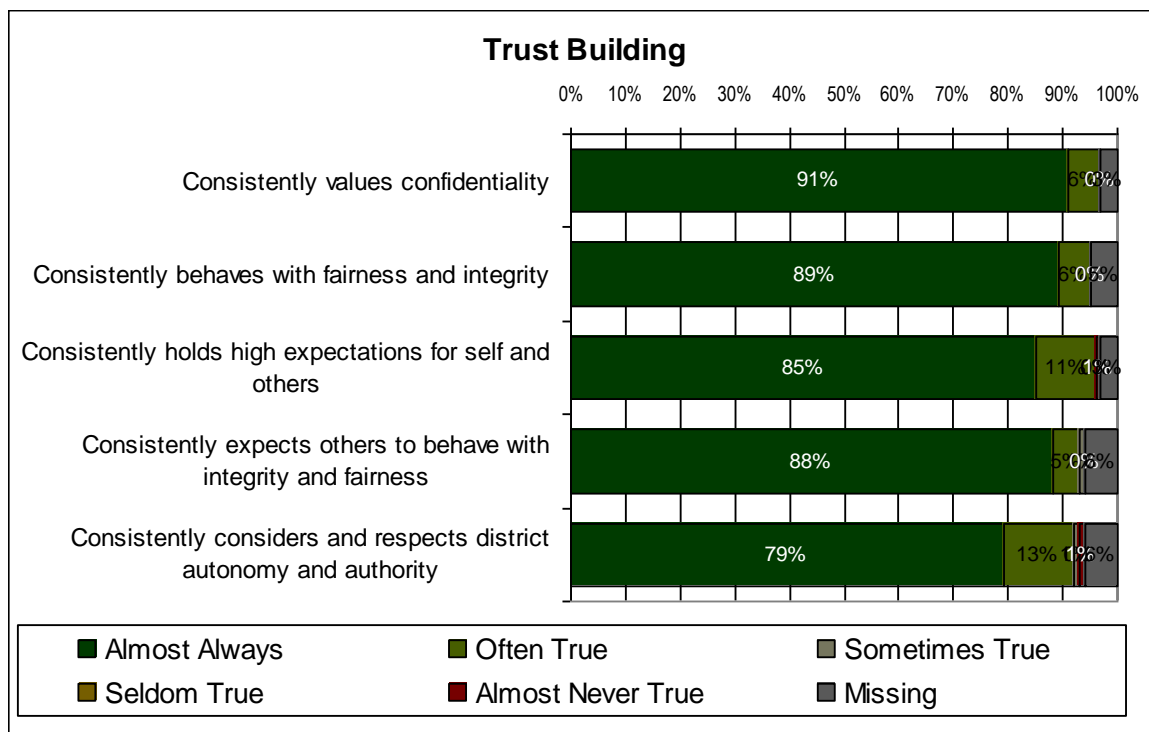
Figure 29. Trust Building: Overall View
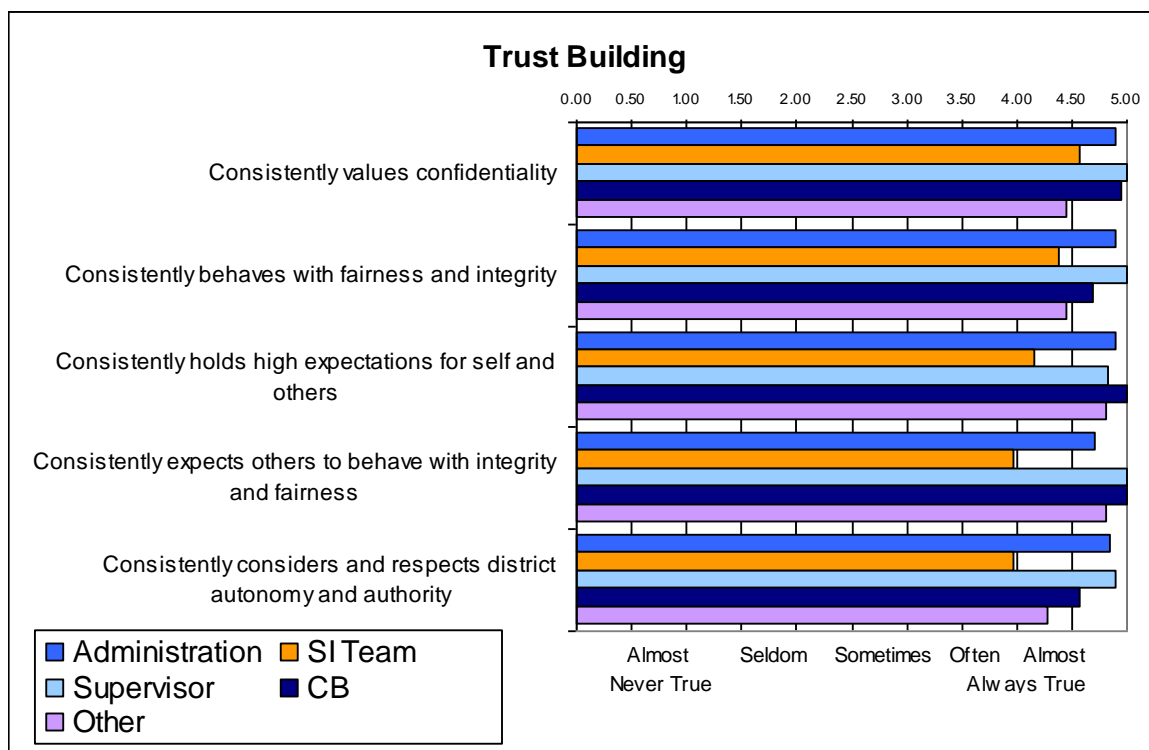
Figure 30. Trust Building: Differing Perspectives

Trust Building

(Note: If NO bar appears- the Gap is Zero)

| CB Overrates Self | CB Underrates Self |

-4.00   -3.00   -2.00   -1.00   0.00   1.00   2.00   3.00   4.00

Consistently values confidentiality

Consistently behaves with fairness and integrity

Consistently holds high expectations for self and others

Consistently expects others to behave with integrity and fairness

Consistently considers and respects district autonomy and authority

The CB's perspective compared to:

□ Supervisor   ■ SI Team   ■ Administration   □ Other

Figure 31. Trust Building: Gap Analysis

The highest ranked item in the trust building category is also the highest ranked item in the entire survey: Consistently values confidentiality, with 91% of respondents stating this is Almost Always True of the CB. 79% selected Almost Always True as their CB descriptor in response to the item: Consistently considers and respects district autonomy and authority.

Communication Skills

The final category of the CB 360 survey, communication skills, was comprised of

five questions. Figure 32 provides the overall view for responses included in the

communication skills category, Figure 33 provides the differing perspectives, and Figure

34 displays the gap analysis.
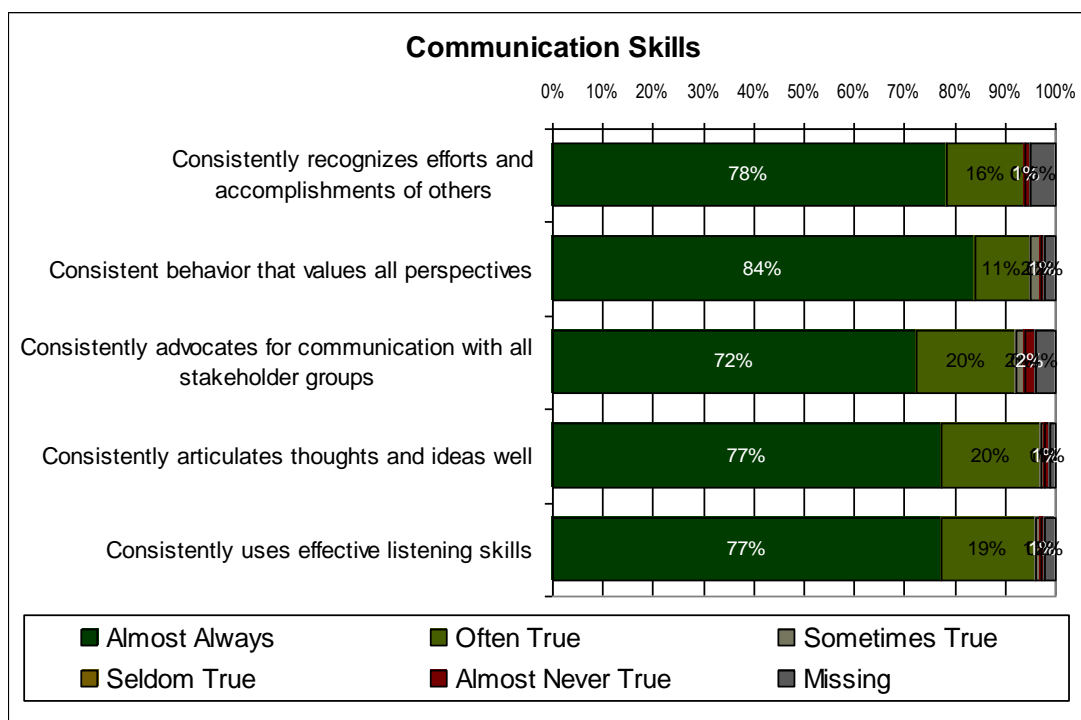
Figure 32. Communication Skills: Overall View
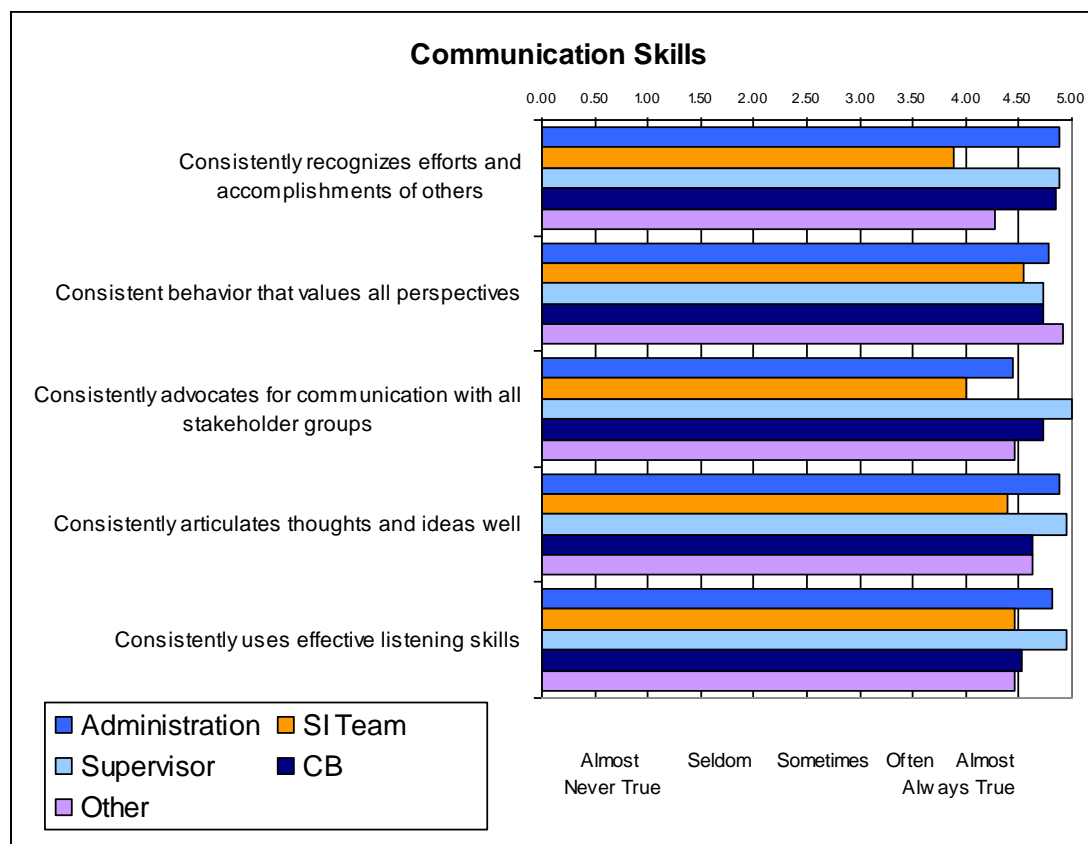
Figure 33. Communication Skills: Differing Perspectives
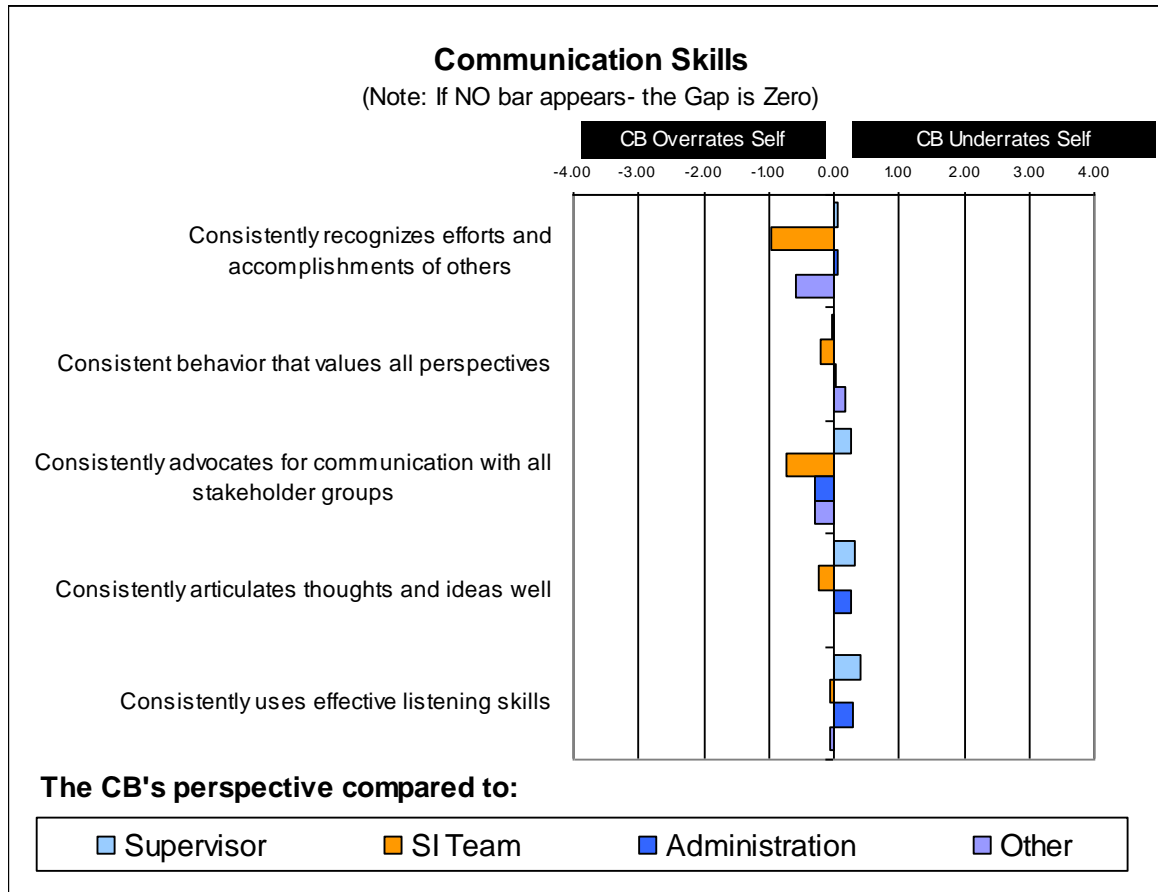
Figure 34. Communication Skills: Gap Analysis

Almost Always True was used as the CB descriptor in 84% of responses for the item: Consistent behavior that values all perspectives. Only 72% used the same descriptor in relation to the item: Consistently advocated for communication with all stakeholder groups.

Summary

This chapter has provided a description of the research process and development of the Idaho Building Capacity project. A breakdown of the findings from data analyzed through primary and secondary qualitative coding, the generating of mini-theories, and vignettes that have resulted from this study have also been presented. Finally, results from an outside survey, conducted to shed light on the perceived effectiveness of Capacity Builders, have been outlined. Chapter Five will provide conclusions and discussion on data results, as well as offer recommendations for further refinement and study in the area of school improvement delivered through a statewide system of support.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

While Chapter Four outlined the findings of this study, this chapter will provide discussion on the data sets analyzed. This discussion will be provided for both the CB report coded data, and the perceptual CB effectiveness data generated from the CB 360 survey, and reflects the possible explanations for data trends and observations from the perspective of the researcher. Following the study discussion, Chapter Six will offer conclusions and recommendations resulting from this project.

There were identifiable trends that emerged from the qualitative coding process completed on CB reports collected at both the six month and year marks of the IBC project. A sample of these reports was analyzed by two outside raters, both experts in the field of school improvement, and familiar with the IBC project. The information gleaned from this analysis was linked back to the literature and developed into mini-theories utilized to help explain perceptual evidence of early impact related to the IBC project. In addition to the CB report data, the CB 360 perceptual survey provided an additional data point when measuring the perceived impact of CBs, the outside consultants charged with delivering school improvement technical assistance to pilot schools and districts identified by the State as needing improvement.

This discussion will be organized in two major categories. Discussion will first be offered based on observations from the qualitative analysis conducted on CB reports submitted six months into the project, and at the end of year one services to the nineteen district and school pilot IBC sites, providing perceptual evidence of IBC pilot study

impact. The second area for which discussion will be provided is on the perceived

effectiveness of the outside consultant (Capacity Builder), as measured by the CB 360

Survey conducted by the Center for Educational Effectiveness, representing the

perceptions of district and school administrators, school improvement leaders, and IBC

project leadership.

Perceptual Evidence of IBC Pilot Study Impact

Data and observations were outlined in Chapter Four based on the qualitative data

analysis derived from CB narrative reports and a perceptual survey designed to measure

CB effectiveness, administered by the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE). This

section will first provide discussion related to the CB narrative reports. IBC project

services, as delivered by CBs, appear to be making an impact on school improvement

efforts in the pilot districts and schools. This early evidence of impact will be discussed

first in relation to the CB reports submitted at the six month, mid-point mark of pilot year

services, which resulted in the following three most frequently identified items:

1. Effective Leadership

2. Focused School Improvement

3. Coherence

Early evidence of impact will then be discussed in relation to the CB reports submitted at

the end of year one services, which resulted in the following three most frequently

identified items:

1. Instruction

2. Effective Leadership

3. "Expert" Function

Additional discussion will be provided on items that were not frequently addressed in CB reports, and the differences between data results for District One and District Two.

Subsequently, CB report data sets will be discussed in relation to the mini-theories that were created. Evidence of early impact was categorized into five categories which guided the creation of mini-theories used to make sense of the qualitative data gathered from the CB narrative reports:

- Coherence

- Collaboration

- Critical Friends ("Coachultants")

- Organizational Health

- Focused School Improvement

Discussion will be provided in each of these categories, highlighting frequently identified items, addressing those items that were not frequently addressed in CB reports, and discussing any significant differences between District One and District Two data results.

CB Six Month Reports

The eighteen six month CB reports analyzed during this study resulted in 433 coded items. The item most frequently identified in the six month reports was Effective Leadership. This comes as no surprise in that majority of CBs expressed issues of leadership as the natural starting point for capacity building work. The review of literature provided in Chapter Two, and the CB reports reflected the belief that effective leadership is at the core of a reform process. A substantial and sustainable school improvement effort depends on a strong leader that is prepared to guide a district or school through an improvement process. As the CBs formed trusting relationships with their assigned leaders, this relationship opened a space for the CB to serve as a confidant and critical friend, encouraging leaders to be open and honest about their challenges with leadership and allowing the CBs to provide guidance and support.

Focused School Improvement was the second most frequently identified item. As districts and schools entered the IBC project, they naturally engaged in frequent conversations that kept the focus on moving forward with school improvement efforts. The weekly contact with CBs provided an avenue for the leader to be accountable for following through with stated goals and objectives related to school improvement. While many schools and districts were already engaged in a process of narrowing and focusing their school improvement efforts, it was apparent in the data that CBs were a positive force in maintaining focus and following through with school improvement efforts.

The third frequently identified item in the six month reports was Coherence, which has been an intentional focus of the IBC project. Many systems reflect a series of

independently functioning silo type forms of organization rather than coherent systems that effectively function and communicate from top to bottom. The project has focused on coherence at three levels; between the state and districts, districts and schools, and school leadership with their building staff. CBs reported a variety of ways in which they were able to intentionally work on increasing levels of coherence in the pilot districts and schools, particularly in the first six months of the IBC project as CBs worked with leadership to informally assess systems, identify needs, and create plans towards the goal of increased student learning and instruction.

While Effective Leadership was the overall item most frequently identified in the combined six month reports, and for the District One six month reports, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) was the most frequently identified item for District Two. PLCs were selected by District Two as the major focus for school improvement reform efforts as the IBC project began, thus CB six month reports reflecting District Two sites frequently mentioned activities and progress made towards the establishment of PLCs, an effort that is still a driving force in continued improvement efforts in District Two.

Two items that were least frequently mentioned in both six month and year one reports were the 9 Characteristics of High-Performing Schools (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007) and State, in relation to state coherence. While the 9 Characteristics of High-Performing Schools has been adopted as the research base and framework for Idaho school improvement, it is suspected that majority of CBs took pieces from the report and applied these concepts to already existing improvement efforts, attaching this research to existing knowledge structures of improvement rather than adding one more new and

different initiative. Several CB reports mentioned using the entire framework, but overall

the 9 Characteristics of High-Performing Schools were not frequently identified as a

driving force in CB work. An effort towards improving coherence between the state and

district was also not a frequent item mentioned in CB reports. This in part may be due to

the fact that the pilot project only served two district sites. It is anticipated that if this

analysis is repeated that items related to state coherence will be more frequently

mentioned in CB reports, due to the fact that more district offices will be represented,

giving CBs increased opportunities to address issues of improved coherence between the

State and Idaho districts.

CB Year One Reports

The fact that Instruction was the most frequently identified item in CB Year One

reports reflects that CBs in partnership with superintendents and principals were able to

access teacher leaders and instructional teams in an effort to directly address improving

student learning and instruction. Effective Leadership was still frequently identified,

dropping to the second most frequent item. While CBs were still focused on supporting

the continued growth of effective leadership practices, they were able to also begin

working with instructional leadership teams and teachers to assist in improving structures

and processes for analyzing and refining instructional practices. The project provided

substantial and frequent training and tools related to effective instruction, and CB reports

provided encouraging examples of these efforts being implemented with teachers,

providing early evidence of improved instruction. Supporting distributed leadership that

keeps the continued improvement of instructional practices at the center of reform efforts

at all levels will be a continued focus of the IBC project.

The third most frequently identified item in the Year One CB reports was the

"Expert" Function, which was used to represent report sections describing the CB

utilizing their skills as the outside consultant, with the application of specific areas of

expertise. As CBs continued to build trust in the first year of services, it appears that

leaders became more open and comfortable with utilizing the CB as an outside expert.

The number of identified responses for the "Expert" Function almost doubled from the

time of the Six Month reports to the Year One reports.

Like the combined district results, Instruction was the most frequently identified

item in District One CB reports. The most frequently identified item for District Two

was the "Expert" Function. One possible reason for this could be that the CBs assigned

to District Two were able to provide a requested district wide, multi-session training in

the area of implementing a new instructional model and linked observation protocol.

These efforts were consistently mentioned in District Two CB Year One reports,

increasing the frequency of the "Expert" Function being identified.

Combined Data Set Mini-Theories

Five mini-theories were derived from the data analysis clusters established from

the literature review supporting this study, and the observed work of school improvement

as delivered by the IBC project, a cornerstone of Idaho's statewide system of support.

The findings related to each of these mini-theories: Coherence, Collaboration, Critical

Friends ("Coachultants"), Organizational Health, and Focused School Improvement; as

outlined in Chapter Four will be discussed in the following sections. Discussion will be

provided as to possible explanations for the analysis results, and possible meaning behind

the observations drawn from data sets.

Coherence

As previously discussed, Coherence was a frequently identified item, especially in

the Six Month reports and at the district level, closely followed by mention of school

related coherence. Issues of state level coherence were not as frequently mentioned in

CB reports. Increased levels of coherence at all levels will continue to be a focus of the

IBC project. As the fluidity of systems and communication improve, spaces open within

which the challenging work of school improvement can occur. The CBs are positioned

as an outside voice, within the system, able to provide observations and suggestions for

improvement on a variety of topics, including system coherence.

Collaboration

Identified items within the Collaboration cluster demonstrated that many IBC

sites are intentionally working on establishing or improving collaboration structures,

especially in relation to improved efficiency and effectiveness. District Two had a

particular focus on the utilization of the PLC structure. Analysis from CB reports

demonstrated that both districts are moving towards more formalized collaboration

structures. This improved structure and apparent effectiveness in collaborative efforts

were also evidenced by increased observation of data driven decision making. As teams become more skilled at effectively collaborating, they become less distracted by the "how" of collaboration, and are able to focus on the "what" of collaboration, with the "what" focused on student learning and achievement. The IBC project will continue to provide CBs with collaboration related tools and strategies, and encourage the continued refinement of collaboration practices that hone in on discussion and data-driven decisions to impact student learning and achievement.

Critical Friends ("Coachultants")

It was apparent from the data analyzed that there was a greater focus in the first six months on the building of relationships between the CBs and their assigned leaders, which moved into increased opportunities for the CBs to share their areas of expertise within the second phase of the project. Identified responses consistently reflected the CBs serving as critical friends, or "coachultants" throughout the entire year of services. It is projected that relationship building will naturally continue to be a critical aspect of the first phase of CB work, followed by an increase in the CBs serving in the outside expert role as trust and openness increases. The ability to build relationships and establish trust is a critical skill for CBs to possess. This will continue to be a skill sought after in the CB hiring process. IBC leadership will continue to evaluate CB training opportunities to make sure that CBs are adequately prepared and supported in their efforts to serve as critical friends in the dual roles of coach and outside consultant.

Organizational Health

Within the area of Organizational Health, the most frequently identified overall item was Effective Leadership, as previously discussed. A substantial part of CB training, and focus of CB work will continue to be working with and supporting school and district leaders. As the IBC project strives towards substantial and sustainable school improvement, school and district leaders must be provided with opportunities for self reflection and support in developing their ability to serve as instructional leaders equipped to tackle the tremendous challenges that come with school reform.

There was also an increase in identified items related to CEE data from the Six Month to the Year One reports. It is anticipated that this will continue to be the trend as CBs provide continued training and support on utilizing CEE data to drive school improvement decisions and action.

Data analysis remained consistent in the area of organizational trust. Trust is something that is not only initially built, but also must continue to be fostered. This on-going focus to build and maintain organizational trust was reflected in both the Six Month and Year One CB reports for both districts.

Focused School Improvement

Another area frequently identified was Focused School Improvement, and Instruction, a secondary item within this cluster. The analysis results demonstrated positive evidence related to the project goal of assisting districts and schools in narrowing and clearly defining their school improvement efforts. Numerous CB reports shared

examples of CBs working with leaders to focus their school improvement efforts and clarify plans, roles, and expectations linked to achieving district and school goals.

There were also a significant number of items identified in relation to specific school improvement goals of a local nature at the individual school and district level. It was encouraging to see these individual markers included in CB reports. It has been a premise of the IBC project that this is not a cookie-cutter approach to school improvement, but really is a model for school improvement that accounts for the needs and plans of individual sites being served. This individualized approach actualized was evident in the number of identified responses that were unique to individual IBC sites.

Finally, there was a significant increase from the Six Month to the Year One reports for the Instruction indicator. This indicator was of particular interest to the researcher in that the IBC project was designed to begin with support for district and school leadership, with a goal of then moving into work with teachers and collaboration teams on improving teaching, learning, and eventually student achievement. The increase in identified responses related to Instruction provides early evidence that the CBs are indeed creating opportunities to do such work that is directly related to improving instruction. This will continue to be the bottom line focus and goal of the IBC project, to positively impact student learning and achievement.

Effectiveness of the Outside Consultant (Capacity Builder)

The CB 360 survey conducted by CEE, an external evaluator, demonstrates that the CBs are providing effective services to IBC school and district sites. Responses were

overwhelmingly positive in all five areas surveyed: School Improvement Skills, Management of Responsibilities, Advocates/Facilitates the School Improvement Process, Trust Building, and Communication Skills. The survey did provide project leadership with information pertaining to areas where CBs could continue to improve upon the perceived skills and services being provided. This information will be discussed in the sections below, and will be used by IBC project leadership to guide decisions linked to future training opportunities for CBs.

School Improvement Skills

The highest ranked item within the School Improvement Skills section of the survey reflected the belief that CBs consistently advocate for the use of research and best practices to inform instructional decisions and that they bring a thorough understanding of best practices and research to their school improvement work. This likely reflects the inherent talent and expertise of the CBs, and the substantial amount of project effort and training provided to CBs in the area of research based instructional practices. It demonstrated that this training is indeed being utilized by the CBs in their work with districts and schools. The perceptual survey also reported that CBs demonstrate a clear understanding and utilization of data, a conclusion reinforced in the CB reports that frequently mentioned work related to data driven decision making.

There is room for continued growth in the area of CBs assisting sites in networking and connecting to sources of support and information, as well as demonstrating a thorough knowledge of Idaho's school improvement assistance process.

We are in a time of such tremendous educational change with continual adaptations made to expectations, regulations, and available support programs. IBC project leadership will act upon this information by planning future CB trainings to include networking plans, and additional training on issues related to Idaho school improvement compliance and technical assistance.

Management of Responsibilities

Perception survey results suggest that CBs effectively consider the impact of change on others, and demonstrate effective organizational skills. Recognizing and effectively maneuvering the people side of change has been a consistent focus in CB training and collaboration. For example, planning for and overcoming resistance has been cited as a frequently used skill in the work of school improvement reform, as intentionally presented and supported by IBC project leadership. Survey results suggested that within Management of Responsibilities, CBs may benefit from additional training in effective group process skills, an area that project leadership will consider in planning future IBC training.

Advocates/Facilitates the School Improvement Process

The perception survey report indicated that CBs as a whole demonstrate optimism and enthusiasm about school improvement. As previously discussed, there is often a negative association with a school or district being classified as needing improvement. CBs are encouraged to approach the work of school improvement as an opportunity to

reflect upon current structures and practices, with a focus on positively supporting efforts that will demonstrate unified progress toward growth and improvement.

Also ranked high on the perceptual survey was the CB consistently advocating openness to new ideas and change. Change is seldom easy, and is often accompanied with anxiety, fear, and discomfort. It is critical that CBs continually support the leaders with whom they work in approaching change with an open mind and positive outlook related to the possibilities that exist within the school improvement process.

The lowest ranked item in the Advocates/Facilitates the Process section of the perceptual survey was that of the CB consistently needing to remind the school improvement team of the focus to keep school improvement moving forward. Project leadership intends to do additional inquiry to discover the possible meaning behind this report item. Whereas all IBC participating sites have a great need for rapid and substantial improvement, research indicates that it is imperative that school improvement efforts be focused and continually moving forward. This finding in the perceptual survey was counter to the information provided in CB reports, which cited Focused School Improvement as a frequent component of IBC work.

Trust Building

The items listed in the Trust Building category rank among the highest in the perceptual survey. The highest ranked item overall was that the CB consistently values confidentiality, closely followed by the CB consistently behaving with fairness and integrity. With project success so dependent on the work of the CB, the researcher was

pleased to see that the CBs are well respected and trusted. Many skills can be taught and resources can be provided, but building positive relationships based on integrity and trust is dependent on individual CB personality and people skills. These abilities will continue to be heavily considered during the CB hiring process, and emphasized as critical aspects of CB work.

Communication Skills

CB communication skills overall were scored very positively in the perceptual survey. The highest ranked item in this section was the CB demonstrates consistent behavior that values all perspectives. This can be a challenging thing to do when working in a context that contains many differing perspectives, and is something that many CBs report intentionally working to achieve. An item identified for continued growth in this category is helping the CBs to consistently advocate for communication with all stakeholder groups. CBs have requested additional training and support in how to communicate with and better include groups such as school boards, parents, and community members in reform efforts. The data from this study has been used by IBC project leadership to begin planning upcoming CB training that will provide resources and strategies to incorporate all stakeholders in the school improvement planning process.

Summary

Perceptual evidence gathered and analyzed in this study provides evidence of early impact related to the work of the CBs as agents of support for school improvement

in the IBC project. Effective Leadership, Focused School Improvement, and Coherence were areas of particular focus during the first six months of capacity building work, with a shift in the second half of year one services to a focus on Instruction, Effective Leadership, and utilizing the "Expert" skills of the CBs. This chapter has provided initial discussion on the findings of this study, to be followed by conclusions and discussions presented in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will provide overall conclusions resulting from this study and recommendations for further refinement of the IBC project. Additional recommendations will be identified for continued, more specific study in the area of school improvement, particularly in connection with school improvement related technical assistance as delivered through statewide systems of support.

Conclusions

This study has examined the establishment of the Idaho Building Capacity project and its relationship to the first research question which looked at how does Idaho develop and implement an effective, comprehensive statewide system of support that will provide technical assistance to schools and districts at all levels of needs improvement status. The CB reports and the CB 360 Survey were studied with the goal of identifying early evidence of impact related to the IBC pilot project and how pilot districts and their schools have integrated project efforts from the statewide system of support into their local improvement process.

The following conclusions, based on the experiences and lessons learned from this study are as follows:

1. Educational leaders being served perceive the project and their assigned outside coach and consultant, the CB, to be a highly effective support in developing and implementing school improvement reform.

2. IBC capacity building work, from the perspective of the CBs, begins with assisting superintendents and principals in addressing issues of effective leadership, focusing school improvement efforts, and improving system coherence.

3. Effective leadership was the area most frequently addressed by CBs in their IBC work and is a critical aspect of school improvement reform.

4. As trust is developed between CBs and leaders through IBC work, CBs perceive that they are able to share more of their expertise and increase their effectiveness as school improvement coaches and outside consultants, also referred to as "coachultants."

5. The IBC project appears to be positively influencing the enhancement of collaborative structures that support teachers in improving instruction.

Recommendations

The process of gathering and analyzing data for this study has resulted in the following recommendations:

1. The IBC project appears to be making a positive impact by effectively supporting administrative leaders and teachers, and influencing school improvement efforts in the schools and districts being served and should continue to be funded, expanded, and refined.

2. The IBC project should continue to be expanded as the State of Idaho increases capacity to regionally serve all schools and districts that are eligible

for technical assistance services provided through the statewide system of support.

3. Results from this study should be utilized by IBC project leadership as a guide for future CB training, including the following topics: connection to additional school improvement resources, continued explanation of Idaho school improvement processes, effective group process skills, strategies for continually moving school improvement teams forward in the reform process, and communication strategies that will assist leaders in efforts to include all stakeholders in the school improvement process.

4. The State of Idaho should initiate further evaluation of the IBC project in order to continue measuring project effectiveness, and inform continued project improvement.

5. The nationwide community of educational researchers should conduct further research on the effectiveness of statewide systems of support and their direct impact on student achievement.

These areas of recommendation will be discussed in the following sections, highlighting the rationale behind the recommendation, the anticipated impact on the IBC project, and any progress towards recommended efforts since the pilot study, if applicable.

Continued Expansion of the IBC Project

Since the time of the pilot study, the IBC project has continued to evolve. Beyond the pilot study, schools and districts were asked to apply for participation in the

IBC project. Districts and schools serving large numbers of at-risk students, coupled with limited local resources continue to receive high priority in the selection process. In addition to the application, districts and schools are asked to participate in an on-site visit with a Regional IBC Coordinator in order to determine perceived readiness to benefit. Beyond the pilot study, superintendents and principals were required to submit application for participation in the Idaho Building Capacity project together; an attempt to obtain school level buy-in prior to the start of the project. Regarding the selection of additional CBs, beyond the pilot a public request for application was posted, followed by a traditional interview and hiring process.

Regional Expansion

Many states utilize some form of regional educational service centers designed to provide a variety of services, including school improvement support, to districts and schools throughout the state, a concept more deeply discussed in Chapter Two. Whereas Idaho does not currently have any such structure, a plan was designed to establish school improvement support centers at Idaho institutions of higher education. Within the pilot, a model for such a center was built at the University with whom an original school improvement technical assistance contract had been established, with the goal of then replicating this model at other Idaho Universities.

Potential IBC Regional Support Centers were identified in the Northern and Southeastern regions of the state based on their University status, regional locations, and connection to Educational Leadership programs. A long-term goal has been established

for the eventual partnership between the statewide system of support and reform efforts in programs preparing future principals in Idaho. Initial contact was made with possible partners in the proposed sites for Regional Support Centers, leading to the development of contracts between the Idaho State Department of Education and the Universities slated to serve as sites for Northern and Southeastern IBC Regional Support Centers. Regional Coordinators were hired, new CBs were recruited, and a process began to replicate the pilot project efforts through the newly established Regional Support Centers.

While these regional centers were being developed, an official district/school IBC application (see Appendix I) was created and distributed in September, 2008. Information regarding the IBC project, including application materials was presented during state school improvement workshops provided regionally, at the annual Federal Program Director's state fall meeting, through the weekly e-newsletter sent out from the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and posted on multiple internet sites. In addition to the application, a performance agreement (see Appendix J) was created, clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of the State, the Regional Support Centers, the District, and the School participating within the IBC project. An application for Capacity Builders (see Appendix K) was developed and recruitment of new CBs began in each region. CBs were selected and matched with new sites to be served in each region.

Sites served in the pilot assumed the title of IBC Cohort I, which continues to serve the original 19 sites, shifted into Year 2 services in January 2009. Cohort II began Year 1 services to 14 new districts and 19 new schools, in February 2009, for a total of 33

sites, achieving the goal of statewide regional distribution. This expansion resulted in a grand total of 52 sites in Idaho currently being served by the IBC project in 2009.

This project has achieved a rapid statewide expansion, but there are still many schools and districts that qualify for services, but are not being served. Based on Spring 2009 ISAT results, updated statewide AYP determinants will be made, and a new round of IBC applications will be accepted in the Fall of 2009. The state must continue to develop their internal capacity and bring to scale their ability to serve *all* that are eligible for IBC level technical assistance.

Implications for Continued CB Training

Information gleaned from the CB reports, and from the perceptual survey suggests a number of areas for continued project improvement and future CB training, including the following areas of focus:

- Increased utilization of *The 9 Characteristics of High Performing Schools* as a framework to guide school improvement reform

- Additional strategies for supporting coherence between the State and districts

- Continued opportunities for networking and connecting IBC sites to sources of school improvement support and information

- Continually increasing/updating the knowledge base of Idaho school improvement requirements and support structures

- Additional training on effective group process skills

- Additional focus/strategies for continually reminding school improvement

  teams of the focus to keep school improvement moving forward

- Continuing to advocate for communication with all stakeholders and

  providing strategies that support the inclusion of all stakeholders in the school

  improvement process

Project leadership will continue to explore how CBs can best provide support to school

and district leaders engaged in the school improvement process, and develop CB training

and collaboration that will facilitate continued CB growth in their capacity building

skills. This study has provided direction as to areas demonstrating evidence of early

impact, and areas where the project can continue to grow in effectiveness. The results of

this study will be used to inform future CB training.

Further Evaluation of the IBC Project

While the IBC project is indeed off the ground and running as Idaho's established

statewide system of support, there is much research to be done. As discussed in Chapter

Three, the paucity of empirical studies nationwide in this area is very revealing of the

dramatic need for further study. With limited staff and time, the IBC project has been

primarily focused on establishing the project and providing effective services during this

pilot study in Idaho. An opportunity to step back and deeply analyze initial efforts,

effectiveness of the project, and areas in need of refinement is needed. Information

learned from this study will be critical in continuing to grow and refine the

comprehensive statewide system of support in Idaho, and most important the

effectiveness of such technical assistance on improving struggling school and district systems, and thus student achievement in Idaho.

Further Study on Statewide Systems of Support

The nationwide need for improvement in student learning and achievement suggests that there is still much work to be done in the arena of school improvement. Federal and state governments continue to provide funding and support for school improvement efforts, most recently at a funding level unprecedented in our nation's history. Resources must be spent wisely, as the future of our nation's children is at stake. Further studies must be conducted that deeply explore through both quantitative and qualitative measures the effectiveness of established and emerging statewide systems of support and their effect on student achievement.

Summary

While Idaho has covered much ground in the recent past, there is still much to be completed in order to fully implement and refine their emerging statewide system of support. This study was designed to explore the research on statewide systems of support and the development of the IBC pilot project. Additionally, early evidence of impact through perceptual data sources was explored in order to inform the continued refinement of the IBC project. This cornerstone of Idaho's statewide system of support has been designed to deliver meaningful school improvement technical assistance that will ultimately result in improved schools and districts throughout Idaho; as ultimately

evidenced by increased student learning and achievement. This study has been conducted

for the benefit of Idaho students and the quality of education delivered to them on a daily

basis, an effort that will continue to drive the work of this researcher, and school

improvement in Idaho.

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APPENDIX A

IBC Narrative Reports

Data Collection Prompts

Idaho Building Capacity
Pilot Project Phase I Reports (half way into project, August 2008)
Guiding Questions for Capacity Builders

1. Place your name and assigned school/district at the top of your report. If you are assigned to multiple sites, please submit an individual report for each site that you are serving.
2. Briefly describe the school/district to which you are assigned. What are some of the strengths and challenges faced by your school/district?
3. As you embarked upon your capacity building work, what challenges have you faced? How have you attempted to deal with these challenges?
4. Reflecting on Phase I, describe at least one moment of successes you experienced, or observed in your assigned school/district.
5. As you now enter into Phase II of your capacity building work, briefly discuss your goals, plans, challenges, strategy, etc. for supporting the work of school improvement and increased student achievement.
6. Please comment on the effectiveness of the support and professional development you have been given as a capacity builder, and provide input as to how this support and training can be enhanced and improved upon in the future.

Idaho Building Capacity
Pilot Project Year I Final Reports (1 year into project, January 2009)
Guiding Questions for Capacity Builders

1. Your name and the IBC site being served.
2. Describe and summarize your overall experience of working with your assigned IBC school or district over the last year. What challenges have you faced and what triumphs have you experienced?
3. While we are all striving towards increased student achievement, what other forms of <u>evidence</u> do you see that demonstrate improvement in your assigned school or district? (Ex. Higher functioning grade level teams as evidenced by agendas, minutes, action goals, assigned persons responsible and documented follow up from all team meetings.)

APPENDIX B

Capacity Builder Effectiveness Survey

Capacity Builder 360 v2.0

Multi-source feedback on *performance and effectiveness* of Idaho's Capacity Builders within a School Improvement

Assistance program.

Another in the EES™ suite of formative surveys.

This survey will enable Capacity Builders (CB's) to view their performance and skills as perceived by themselves, a sampling of building staff, SIP team members, peers, district leader(s) and their direct supervisor(s). This data is intended to be formative in nature and is highly useful to inform professional development and goal-setting for Capacity Builders.

This survey is confidential and anonymous. Your individual responses will never be viewed by the respondent or any public employee. The aggregate of all responses will be sent to the Capacity Builder you are responding about.

Marking Instructions

→ Use pen or pencil
→ Make solid marks that fill in the response completely
→ Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change
→ Leave BLANK any questions you don't have an opinion on

CORRECT:

VERY IMPORTANT! . . .

Name of CB being described

	Almost Always True	Often True	Sometimes True	Seldom True	Almost Never True	Does not apply
Demonstrates a thorough understanding of best practices and research	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently manages time well	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently advocates for a culture that understands and uses data	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently uses effective problem solving skills	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently demonstrates a clear understanding of data and its use	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently values confidentiality	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently advocates for research and best practices to inform instructional decisions	O	O	O	O	O	O
Clearly understands the roles and responsibilities of a CB	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently reminds the school improvement team of the focus to keep school improvement moving forward	O	O	O	O	O	O

	Almost Always True	Often True	Sometimes True	Seldom True	Almost Never True	Does not apply
Consistently networks and connects the school to sources of support and information	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently uses effective group process skills	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently behaves with fairness and integrity	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently holds high expectations for self and others	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently expects others to behave with integrity and fairness	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently recognizes efforts and accomplishments of others	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently demonstrates a thorough knowledge of Idaho's School Improvement Assistance and process	O	O	O	O	O	O
Supports the development of vision and goals	O	O	O	O	O	O
Considers the impact of change on others	O	O	O	O	O	O
Regularly communicates the value of perceptual data in the improvement process	O	O	O	O	O	O
Effectively deploys and manages tasks to support the Idaho School Improvement process	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistent behavior that values all perspectives	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently advocates for communication with all stakeholder groups	O	O	O	O	O	O
Skilled at mentoring the use of appropriate data to identify goals	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently articulates thoughts and ideas well	O	O	O	O	O	O
Thoroughly understands the Idaho Accountability System (ISAT)	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently uses effective listening skills	O	O	O	O	O	O
Effectively advocates for cultural responsiveness on behalf of all students	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently demonstrates neutrality and is non-judgemental in the improvement process	O	O	O	O	O	O
Demonstrates optimism and enthusiasm about school improvement	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently considers and respects district autonomy and authority	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently demonstrates effective organizational skills	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently demonstrates a sensitivity to community issues	O	O	O	O	O	O
Effectively mentors and coaches building leadership	O	O	O	O	O	O
Consistently advocates for an openness to new ideas and change	O	O	O	O	O	O

What is your relationship to the CB being described?
- O I am the CB being described
- O I supervise this CB
- O I am a SIP team member
- O I am a district leader
- O Other

What level of school (or students) do you work with?
- O Elementary
- O Middle School
- O Junior High
- O High School
- O Other

APPENDIX C

CB 360 Survey Roll Up

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, INC.

Idaho Building Capacity

State Wide System of Support for School Improvement

Capacity Builder's 360
Multi-Source Feedback Data

Site:	Capacity Builders's 360 - Rollup
Date Surveyed:	1/23/2009
Sample Size N=	101

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, INC.

The Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc.

The Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) is a service, consulting, and research organization dedicated to the mission of partnering with K-12 schools to improve student learning.

NOTICE

The Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. (CEE) makes substantial effort to ensure the accurate scoring, analysis, and reporting of the results of the Educational Effectiveness Survey. However, CEE makes no warranty of any kind with regard to this material, including, but not limited to, the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. CEE shall not be liable for errors contained herein or for incidental or consequential damages in connection with the furnishing, performance, or use of this material.

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Getting the Most from Your Results Report

Using the information from your CB-360 report requires thoughtful reflection and an intentional process. As you prepare to step into this process, consider the following suggestions to help you get the most from your data.

Most importantly- Thank you for your commitment to the Building Capacity Program and to the students of Idaho.

• **This data is confidential to you.** Remember that this document is an aggregate of individual reflections about your demonstrated skills to facilitate the improvement process.

• **Use data to support the practice of self-reflection**. Leaders need support in nurturing the art of self-reflection. This report allows the CB to reflect upon his/her perceived professional skills and behavior from the perspective of self, and those you serve.

• **Use to start conversations about what matters.** This data is intended to start conversations between you and your team and/or supervisor about your skills within the Building Capacity Program.

• **Create awareness about what is essential for facilitating school and district improvement.** Are we continually growing and learning as individuals and as a program?

• **Identify professional development goals.** This results report is one piece of data you may use to identify areas you want to focus on in a professional development plan. Triangulating with other data is highly recommended in decision-making for professional development.

• **Conversations with the respondents.** How are you going to step into conversations with your supervisor and the other respondents about their perception (s) of you and any "gaps" in those perceptions? Where do they agree with you, where do they disagree with you and why? Asking for concrete examples is very informative to your professional growth.

• **Conversations with critical friends or a professional learning community.** Do you have access to a group of professional peers? How might you share this information, access reflections and identify resources with such a group?

The Overall Summary Chart

Combines all attributes (questions) for each characteristic and all responses for each attribute (a roll-up of responses) and displays a bar chart for the aggregate of each. When you view this chart, consider:

- This is the 10,000 foot view.

- Look at the overall relationship between the characteristics and their bar charts.

- This chart allows you to view the positive response value, the negative response value and the "in-between" response value.

- Remember – green is good! The 2 greens ("Almost Always True" and "Often True" are the positive perceptions.

- Ivory ("sometimes true") is the "land of opportunity" – these people represent the easiest persons to bring to the positive side – give them more information and bring them into the process. If you ignore the ivory – they usually become disconnected and move to the negative.

- Orange and red are the two negative perceptions – often times they reflect "history" – something that happened years ago, or something in a person's personal life. Don't spend a lot of time and energy here, it may be out of your ability to influence. Do pay attention to significant amounts of negative!

- Grey – "No Opinion or N/A". Ask why?

- In response to "where am I?" Ask "where do I want to be?"

Summary View
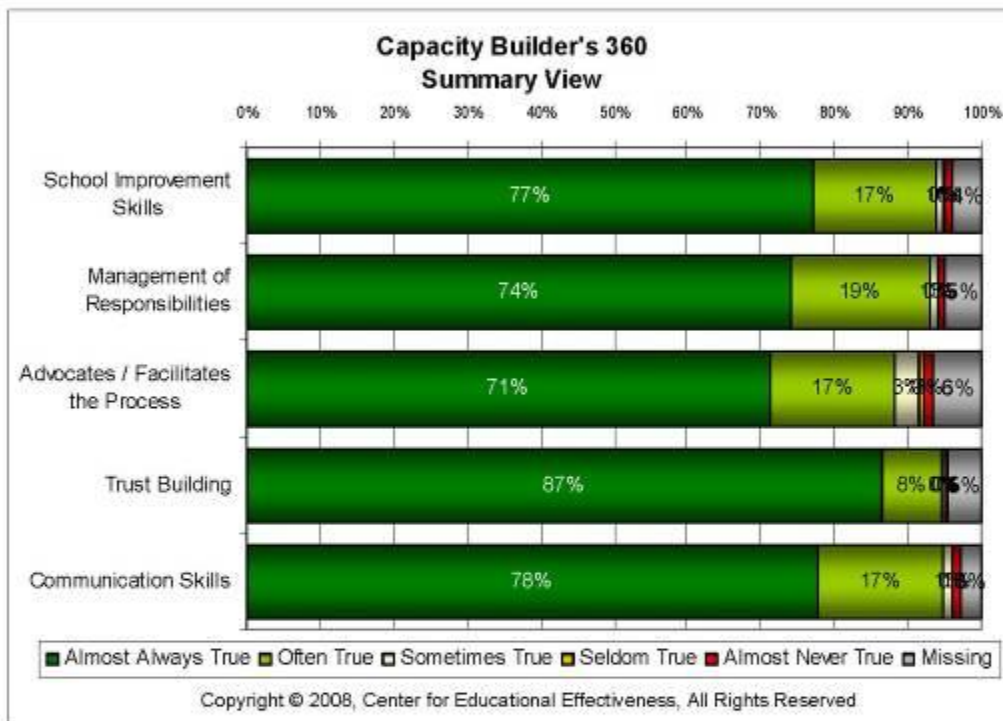
Interpreting Your Data:

- Overall results from all responses for each item in the characteristic
- Disaggregated view of responses by perspective
- Gap Analysis: View of Gaps between the CBs self-reflection and other perspectives

School Improvement Skills: Overall View

A Capacity Builder promotes the success of every student by providing expertise in the skills which are critical to the success of the Idaho Building Capacity Program

School Improvement Skills

Item	Almost Always	Often True	Other
Demonstrates a thorough understanding of best practices and research	81%	18%	0%
Consistently demonstrates a clear understanding of data and its use	84%	13%	0%
Consistently advocates for research and best practices to inform instructional decisions	87%	8%	
Consistently networks and connects the school to sources of support and information	64%	25%	3% 2% 5%
Consistently demonstrates a thorough knowledge of Idaho's School Improvement Assistance and process	68%	21%	1% 10%
Skilled at mentoring the use of appropriate data to identify goals	78%	16%	1% 2%
Thoroughly understands the Idaho Accountability System (ISAT)	68%	19%	1% 10%
Effectively mentors and coaches building leadership	72%	17%	2% 7%

Legend: Almost Always | Often True | Sometimes True | Seldom True | Almost Never True | Missing

School Improvement Skills: Differing Perspectives

School Improvement Skills: Gap Analysis

Self-reflection is a skill that is developed over time and with experience reflecting on performance and activities through the lenses of your supervisor, your staff, and your peers and "others".

CRITICAL PROMPT: Do I consistently over or underrate myself on these items? Is there a pattern relative to specific roles? E.g. Between my view and my SI Team?

School Improvement Skills
(Note: If NO bar appears- the Gap is Zero)
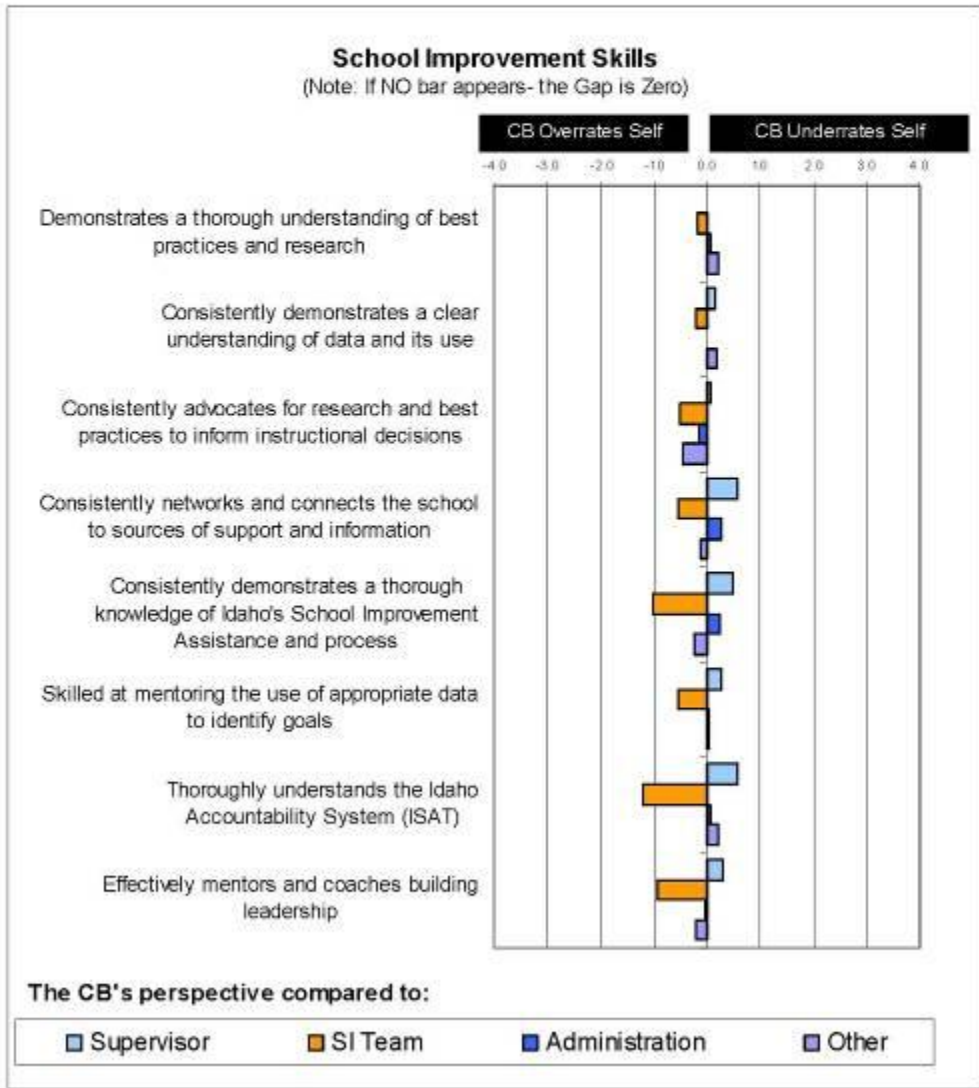
Management of Responsibilities: Overall View

A Capacity Builder manages the responsibilities critical to the success of the program and the facilitation of improvement in their building or district

Management of Responsibilities

| | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

Consistently manages time well — 72% | 19% | 0 9%

Consistently uses effective problem solving skills — 78% | 17% | 4%

Clearly understands the roles and responsibilities of a CB — 71% | 25% | 0 %

Consistently uses effective group process skills — 63% | 25% | 8%

Considers the impact of change on others — 80% | 13% | 5%

Consistently demonstrates effective organizational skills — 79% | 16% | 2%

| ■ Almost Always | □ Often True | □ Sometimes True |
| ■ Seldom True | ■ Almost Never True | □ Missing |

Management of Responsibilities : Differing Perspectives

Self-reflection is a skill that is developed over time and with experience seeing performance and activities through multiple perspectives.

Management of Responsibilities
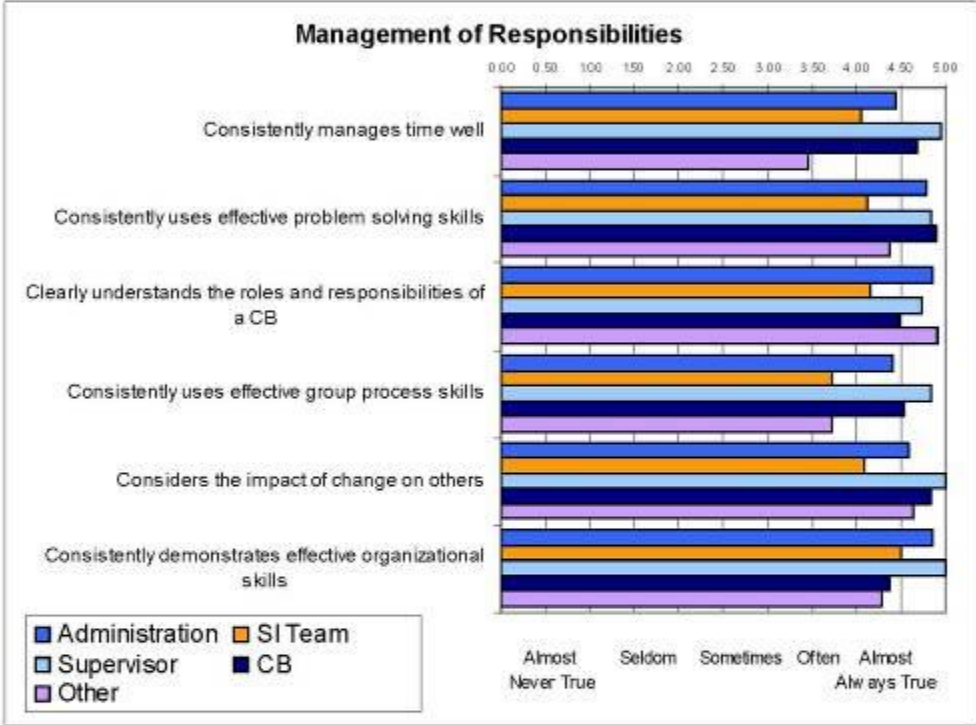
Management of Responsibilities : Gap Analysis

CRITICAL PROMPT: Do I consistently over or underrate myself on these items? Is there a pattern relative to specific roles? E.g. Between my view and my staff?

Management of Responsibilities
(Note: If NO bar appears- the Gap is Zero)

CB Overrates Self | CB Underrates Self

-4.00 -3.00 -2.00 -1.00 0.00 1.00 2.00 3.00 4.00

Consistently manages time well

Consistently uses effective problem solving skills

Clearly understands the roles and responsibilities of a CB

Consistently uses effective group process skills

Considers the impact of change on others

Consistently demonstrates effective organizational skills

The CB's perspective compared to:

□ Supervisor　　□ SI Team　　■ Administration　　□ Other

Advocates / Facilitates the Process: Overall View

A Capacity Builder brings positive attitudes to the facilitation of the processes and then demonstrates those attitudes through advocacy of the capacity building process

Advocates / Facilitates the Process : Differing Perspectives

13

Advocates / Facilitates the Process : Gap Analysis

Advocates / Facilitates the Process
(Note: If NO bar appears- the Gap is Zero)

CB Overrates Self | CB Underrates Self

-4.00 -3.00 -2.00 -1.00 0.00 1.00 2.00 3.00 4.00

Consistently advocates for a culture that understands and uses data

Consistently reminds the school improvement team of the focus to keep school improvement moving forward

Supports the development of vision and goals

Regularly communicates the value of perceptual data in the improvement process

Effectively deploys and manages tasks to support the Idaho School Improvement process

Effectively advocates for cultural responsiveness on behalf of all students

Consistently demonstrates neutrality and is non-judgemental in the improvement process

Demonstrates optimism and enthusiasm about school improvement

Consistently demonstrates a sensitivity to community issues

Consistently advocates for an openness to new ideas and change

The CB's perspective compared to:

☐ Supervisor   ☐ SI Team   ■ Administration   ☐ Other

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Trust Building: Overall View

A Capacity Builder demonstrates behavior to build trust in the organization they are serving.

Trust Building

Consistently values confidentiality	91%
Consistently behaves with fairness and integrity	89%
Consistently holds high expectations for self and others	85%
Consistently expects others to behave with integrity and fairness	88%
Consistently considers and respects district autonomy and authority	79%

■ Almost Always ■ Often True □ Sometimes True
□ Seldom True ■ Almost Never True ■ Missing

Trust Building: Differing Perspectives

Trust Building

Consistently values confidentiality

Consistently behaves with fairness and integrity

Consistently holds high expectations for self and others

Consistently expects others to behave with integrity and fairness

Consistently considers and respects district autonomy and authority

■ Administration ■ SI Team
□ Supervisor ■ CB
□ Other

Almost Never True | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Almost Always True

Trust Building: Gap Analysis

Trust Building
(Note: If NO bar appears- the Gap is Zero)

CB Overrates Self | CB Underrates Self

-4.00 -3.00 -2.00 -1.00 0.00 1.00 2.00 3.00 4.00

Consistently values confidentiality

Consistently behaves with fairness and integrity

Consistently holds high expectations for self and others

Consistently expects others to behave with integrity and fairness

Consistently considers and respects district autonomy and authority

The CB's perspective compared to:

☐ Supervisor ☐ SI Team ☐ Administration ☐ Other

Communication Skills: Overall View

A Capacity Builder promotes effective communication with the organization they serve through demonstrating effective communication skills

Communication Skills

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

- Consistently recognizes efforts and accomplishments of others — 78% | 16% | 5%
- Consistent behavior that values all perspectives — 84% | 11% 2%
- Consistently advocates for communication with all stakeholder groups — 72% | 20% | 2% 4%
- Consistently articulates thoughts and ideas well — 77% | 20% | 1%
- Consistently uses effective listening skills — 77% | 19% | 1%

Legend: ■ Almost Always ☐ Often True ☐ Sometimes True ☐ Seldom True ■ Almost Never True ☐ Missing

Communication Skills: Differing Perspectives

Communication Skills

0.00 0.50 1.00 1.50 2.00 2.50 3.00 3.50 4.00 4.50 5.00

- Consistently recognizes efforts and accomplishments of others
- Consistent behavior that values all perspectives
- Consistently advocates for communication with all stakeholder groups
- Consistently articulates thoughts and ideas well
- Consistently uses effective listening skills

Legend: ■ Administration ■ SI Team ☐ Supervisor ■ CB ☐ Other

Almost Never True Seldom Sometimes Often Almost Always True

Communication Skills: Gap Analysis

Communication Skills
(Note: If NO bar appears- the Gap is Zero)

CB Overrates Self | CB Underrates Self

-4.00 -3.00 -2.00 -1.00 0.00 1.00 2.00 3.00 4.00

- Consistently recognizes efforts and accomplishments of others
- Consistent behavior that values all perspectives
- Consistently advocates for communication with all stakeholder groups
- Consistently articulates thoughts and ideas well
- Consistently uses effective listening skills

The CB's perspective compared to:

☐ Supervisor ☐ SI Team ☐ Administration ☐ Other

Demographics – Who Responded?

Who Responded?

- District Leader / Administrator, 27, 26%
- Other, 11, 11%
- CB(s), 19, 19%
- Supervisor, 18, 18%
- School Improvement Team Member, 26, 26%

Respondents-Level Served

- I am not assigned to a specific school, 18, 18%
- Elementary, 43, 42%
- Central Administration, 10, 10%
- High School, 15, 15%
- Middle School or Jr. High, 15, 15%
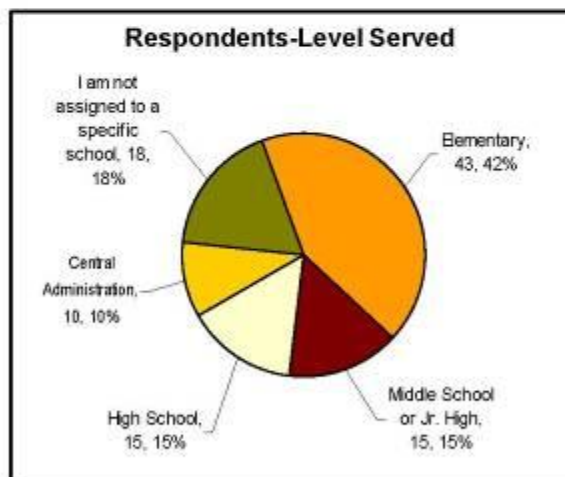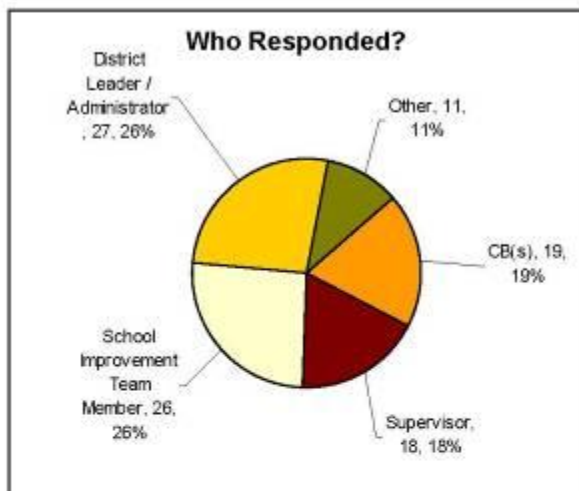
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APPENDIX D

Inter Rater Reliability Congruence Check

Congruence Check by Primary and Secondary Identified Items						
CB Report #1						
Code	Researcher	Rater #1	Rater #2	Items Identified By 1 Rater*	Items Identified By 2 Raters	Items Identified By 3 Raters	**Items with 2/3 or 3/3 Congruence**
	Total = 19	Total = 21	Total = 17	4/23 (17.39%)	4/23 (17.39%)	15/23 (65.22%)	**19/23 (82.61%)**
FSI	X	X	X			X	X
RB	X	X	X			X	X
OT	X	X	X			X	X
EL	X	X			X		X
FSI	X	X	X			X	X
Coh	X	X	X			X	X
Di			X	X			
Sc	X	X			X		X
DD	X	X			X		X
Clb	X	X	X			X	X
In	X	X	X			X	X
OH	X	X	X			X	X
EL	X	X	X			X	X
FSI	X	X	X			X	X
CF	X	X	X			X	X
Ex	X	X	X			X	X
OH		X		X			
Clb	X	X	X			X	X
In	X	X			X		X
Ef	X	X	X			X	X
Ef			X	X			
PLC	X	X	X			X	X
CF		X		X			

Congruence Check by Primary and Secondary Identified Items						
CB Report #2						
Code	Researcher	Rater #1	Rater #2	Items Identified By 1 Rater*	Items Identified By 2 Raters	Items Identified By 3 Raters	**Items with 2/3 or 3/3 Congruence**
	Total = 16	Total = 14	Total = 16	5/21 (23.81%)	7/21 (33.33%)	9/21 (42.86%)	**16/21 (76.19%)**
RB	X	X	X			X	X
OH	X	X	X			X	X
Ex			X	X			
Sc	X	X			X		X
EL		X		X			
CF	X		X		X		X
CF	X	X	X			X	X
Coh			X	X			
Di	X	X	X			X	X
OH		X		X			
Sc	X		X		X		X
EL	X		X		X		X
In	X		X		X		X
Clb	X	X	X			X	X
DD	X	X	X			X	X
Ef	X	X			X		X
Ef	X		X		X		X
PLC	X	X	X			X	X
Coh		X		X			
EL	X	X	X			X	X
In	X	X	X			X	X

*It is important to note that ALL items identified by the researcher were corroborated by at least one outside rater. Items that were identified by only one rater are summarized below.			
	CB Report #1	CB Report #2	Report Total
Researcher	0	0	0
Rater #1	2	3	5
Rater #2	2	2	4

Congruence Check by Coding Clusters							
CB Report #1							
Cluster	Resear-cher	Rater #1	Rater #2	Items Identified By 1 Rater*	Items Identified By 2 Raters	Items Identified By 3 Raters	**Items with 2/3 or 3/3 Congr-uence**
Coherence	2/3	2/3	2/3	1/3	1/3	1/3	2/3
Collaboration	5/6	5/6	5/6	1/6	1/6	4/6	5/6
Critical Friends (Coachultants)	3/4	4/4	3/4	1/4	0/4	3/4	3/4
Org. Heath	4/5	5/5	3/5	1/5	1/5	3/5	4/5
Focused School Improvement	5/5	5/5	4/5	0/5	1/5	4/5	5/5

Congruence Check by Coding Clusters							
CB Report #2							
Cluster	Researcher	Rater #1	Rater #2	Items Identified By 1 Rater*	Items Identified By 2 Raters	Items Identified By 3 Raters	**Items with 2/3 or 3/3 Congruence**
Coherence	3/5	3/5	3/5	2/5	2/5	1/5	3/5
Collaboration	5/5	4/5	4/5	0/5	2/5	3/5	5/5
Critical Friends (Coachultants)	3/4	2/4	4/4	1/4	1/4	2/4	3/4
Org. Heath	3/5	4/5	3/5	2/5	1/5	2/5	3/5
Focused School Improvement	2/2	1/2	2/2	0/2	1/2	1/2	2/2

Congruence Check by Coding Clusters							
Combined CB Reports							
Cluster	Researcher	Rater #1	Rater #2	Items Identified By 1 Rater*	Items Identified By 2 Raters	Items Identified By 3 Raters	**Items with 2/3 or 3/3 Congruence**
Coherence	5/8	5/8	5/8	3/8	3/8	2/8	5/8
Collaboration	10/11	9/11	9/11	1/11	3/11	7/11	10/11
Critical Friends (Coachultants)	6/8	6/8	7/8	2/8	1/8	5/8	6/8
Org. Heath	7/10	9/10	6/10	3/10	2/10	5/10	7/10
Focused School Improvement	7/7	6/7	6/7	0/7	2/7	5/7	7/7

APPENDIX E

Inter Rater Reliability Summary

CB Report #1

	Total Identified Items	Items Matched to Researcher	% Matched to Researcher	Additional Codes
Researcher	19	--	--	--
Rater #1	21	19	100%	2 (Researcher + 0)
Rater #2	17	15	78.95%	2 (Researcher + 4)

CB Report #2

	Total Identified Items	Items Matched to Researcher	% Matched to Researcher	Additional Codes
Researcher	16	--	--	--
Rater #1	14	11	68.75%	3 (Researcher +5)
Rater #2	16	14	87.50%	2 (Researcher + 2)

Reports Combined

	Total Identified Items	Items Matched to Researcher	% Matched to Researcher	Additional Codes
Researcher	35	--	--	--
Rater #1	35	30	85.71%	5 (Researcher +5)
Rater #2	33	29	82.86%	4 (Researcher + 6)

Average % of Congruence between Researcher & Outside Raters: 84.29%

APPENDIX F

District 1 Coded Data Matrix

District 1 Coded Data Matrix

Primary Coding	Secondary Coding	Codes	D1 Dist Office 1 - 6 Months	D1 Dist Office 1 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 1 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 1 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 2 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 2 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 3 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 3 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 4 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 4 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 5 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 5 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 6 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 6 - 1 Year	D1 Jr High 1 - 6 Months	D1 Jr High 1 - 1 Year	D1 Jr High 2 - 6 Months	D1 Jr High 2 - 1 Year	D1 Alt High Sch 1 - 6 Months	D1 Alt High Sch 1 - 1 Year	D1 High Sch 1 - 6 Months	D1 High Sch 1 - 1 Year	Total For All District 1 Sites	Percentage Per Code	Total for All District 1 Sites - 6 Months	Percentage Per Code - 6 Months	Total for All District 1 Sites - 1 Year	Percentage Per Code - 1 Year
Coherence		Coh	3	4	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	2	1	2	2		7	1	3	5	6	43	7.0%	17	6.5%	26	7.3%
	State	St	1	1				1					1								1	1		1	7	1.1%	3	1.2%	4	1.1%
	District	Di	1	2	1		3	2					4	1	2	2	1	2	1	5	1	3	3	5	39	6.3%	17	6.5%	22	6.2%
	School	Sc			2	1	5	1	2	4	1	1		1	2	1	2	2	1	6		2	1	1	36	5.8%	16	6.1%	20	5.6%
Collaboration		Clb			3	2	1	3	4	4	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	3	1	6	2	3	1	1	45	7.3%	19	7.3%	26	7.3%
	PLCs	PLC				1	1		2	2		1												1	8	1.3%	3	1.2%	5	1.4%
	Efficiency	Ef	1	1		1	1		3	2	1	2			1		3	1	1	1	2			1	22	3.6%	8	3.1%	14	3.9%
	Data Driven Decisions	DD	2	4		1	1	2	3	3	2	1		2	1	3	3	4	3	1	1	1	2	4	44	7.1%	18	6.9%	26	7.3%
Critical Friends ("Coachultants")		CF	1	1	1	1	3	2		4	2	2	3	3	1	2	3	1			3	4	2	2	41	6.6%	19	7.3%	22	6.2%
	Relationship Building	RB	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		1			1	2	1	1			1	2	23	3.7%	9	3.4%	14	3.9%
	"Expert" Function	Ex	4	1	2	1	2	2	3	4			2	1		1		1			1	4		2	31	5.0%	14	5.3%	17	4.8%
Organizational Health		OH	1	4		1	1		2	1	2	1			2			1	4	11	1	3	3	1	39	6.3%	16	6.1%	23	6.5%
	CEE Data	CEE	1	3				1						2				1	4	1	1	1	2	3	20	3.2%	8	3.1%	12	3.4%
	Effective Leadership	EL	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	5	3	2	4	2	1	3	2	3	1	2	4	7	10	3	70	11.3%	35	13.4%	35	9.8%
	Organizational Trust	OT		2		1	1		1		1				1	4		2		6	2	3	2		26	4.2%	8	3.1%	18	5.1%
Focused School Improvement		FSI	4	2	1	3	3	3		1	1				1		1	1	2	3	1	3	5	2	37	6.0%	19	7.3%	18	5.1%
	9 Characteristics	9							1														1		2	0.3%	2	0.8%	0	0.0%
	SI Initiatives	SII		3	1		1	1	2	5							2	1	2	1	2	3	1		25	4.1%	11	4.2%	14	3.9%
	Instruction (PTL)	In		1	3	2	5	4	1	5	1	2	1	2		2	2	2	3	11	2	4	2	5	60	9.7%	20	7.6%	40	11.2%
All Codes - Per District 1 Site - Per Timetable			23	34	19	19	33	28	28	42	16	14	19	15	14	24	21	31	24	62	24	47	41	40	618		262		356	
Percentage - Per District 1 Site - Per Timetable			3.7%	5.5%	3.1%	3.1%	5.3%	4.5%	4.5%	6.8%	2.6%	2.3%	3.1%	2.4%	2.3%	3.9%	3.4%	5.0%	3.9%	10.0%	3.9%	7.6%	6.6%	6.5%						
All Codes - Per District 1 Site			57		38		61		70		30		34		38		52		86		71		81							
Percentage Per District 1 Site			9.2%		6.2%		9.9%		11.3%		4.9%		5.5%		6.2%		8.4%		13.9%		11.5%		13.1%							

APPENDIX G

District 2 Coded Data Matrix

District 2 Coded Data Matrix

Primary Coding	Secondary Coding	Codes	D2 Dist Office 2 - 6 Months	D2 Dist Office 2 - 1 Year	D2 Elem 1 - 6 Months	D2 Elem 1 - 1 Year	D2 Elem 2 - 6 Months	D2 Elem 2 - 1 Year	D2 Elem 3 - 6 Months	D2 Elem 3 - 1 Year	D2 Elem 4 - 1 Year	D2 Jr High - 6 Months	D2 Jr High - 1 Year	D2 Middle Sch 1 - 6 Months	D2 Middle Sch 1 - 1 Year	D2 High Sch 1 - 6 Months	D2 High Sch 1 - 1 Year	Total For All District 2 Sites	Percentage Per Code	Total for All District 2 Sites - 6 Months	Percentage Per Code - 6 Months	Total for All District 2 Sites - 1 Year	Percentage Per Code - 1 Year
Coherence		Coh	1	1	3			2		3		2		6		4		22	4.8%	16	8.8%	6	2.2%
	State	St		1										1		1	1	4	0.9%	2	1.1%	2	0.7%
	District	Di	1	1	2	3		1		1		2	3	3	1	5		23	5.0%	13	7.2%	10	3.6%
	School	Sc	1		2	2		2		4	1	2	4	2	1	1		22	4.8%	8	4.4%	14	5.1%
Collaboration		Clb	1	1	1	2		3		2	2	1	1		1		3	18	3.9%	3	1.7%	15	5.4%
	PLCs	PLC	4	2	3	4	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	4	4	36	7.9%	18	9.9%	18	6.5%
	Efficiency	Ef	2	1			1	3	1	3	2				2		2	17	3.7%	4	2.2%	13	4.7%
	Data Driven Decisions	DD	1	1			2	7	2	5	2			2	2	1	3	28	6.1%	8	4.4%	20	7.2%
Critical Friends ("Coachultants")		CF			1	2	1	4	1	3	1			2	1	2	1	19	4.2%	7	3.9%	12	4.3%
	Relationship Building	RB	1		2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		3	1	4	1	19	4.2%	13	7.2%	6	2.2%
	"Expert" Function	Ex	2	2		1	4	11	3	9	1			2	6	3	3	47	10.3%	14	7.7%	33	11.9%
Organizational Health		OH	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2		1	1	1	19	4.2%	7	3.9%	12	4.3%
	CEE Data	CEE				1	3	1	3	1				1	2	2	2	16	3.5%	5	2.8%	11	4.0%
	Effective Leadership	EL	1		1	6	3	9	1	7		3	4	2	1	4	2	44	9.6%	15	8.3%	29	10.5%
	Organizational Trust	OT	1		3	3	1	1	1			2	5	2		2	1	22	4.8%	12	6.6%	10	3.6%
Focused School Improvement		FSI	2	2	3	2	1	4	1	2		2	2	3	5	3	4	36	7.9%	15	8.3%	21	7.6%
	9 Characteristics	9			2	2		2		2		1	1					10	2.2%	3	1.7%	7	2.5%
	SI Initiatives	SII	1	2			2		3	1	2			3	3	2	5	24	5.2%	11	6.1%	13	4.7%
	Instruction (PTL)	In			1	1	3	12	1	6				1	5	1	1	32	7.0%	7	3.9%	25	9.0%
All Codes - Per District 1 Site - Per Timetable			20	15	25	31	23	68	18	55	16	21	24	34	34	40	34						
Percentage - Per District 1 Site - Per Timetable			4.4%	3.3%	5.5%	6.8%	5.0%	14.9%	3.9%	12.0%	3.5%	4.6%	5.2%	7.4%	7.4%	8.7%	7.4%	458		181		277	
All Codes - Per District 1 Site			35		56		91		73		16	45		68		74							
Percentage Per District 1 Site			7.6%		12.2%		19.9%		15.9%		3.5%	9.8%		14.9%		16.2%							

APPENDIX H

Combined Districts Coded Data Matrix

Districts Combined Coded Data Matrix

Primary Coding	Secondary Coding	Codes	D1 Dist Office 1 - 6 Months	D1 Dist Office 1 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 1 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 1 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 2 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 2 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 3 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 3 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 4 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 4 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 5 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 5 - 1 Year	D1 Elem 6 - 6 Months	D1 Elem 6 - 1 Year	D1 Jr High 1 - 6 Months	D1 Jr High 1 - 1 Year	D1 Jr High 2 - 6 Months	D1 Jr High 2 - 1 Year	D1 Alt High Sch 1 - 6 Months	D1 Alt High Sch 1 - 1 Year	D1 High Sch 1 - 6 Months	D1 High Sch 1 - 1 Year	D2 Dist Office 2 - 6 Months	D2 Dist Office 2 - 1 Year	D2 Elem 1 - 6 Months	D2 Elem 1 - 1 Year	D2 Elem 2 - 6 Months	D2 Elem 2 - 1 Year	D2 Elem 3 - 6 Months	D2 Elem 3 - 1 Year	D2 Elem 4 - 1 Year	D2 Jr High - 6 Months	D2 Jr High - 1 Year	D2 Middle Sch 1 - 6 Months	D2 Middle Sch 1 - 1 Year	D2 High Sch 1 - 6 Months	D2 High Sch 1 - 1 Year	Total For All Sites	Percentage Per Code	Total for All Sites - 6 Months	Percentage Per Code - 6 Months	Total for All Sites - 1 Year	Percentage Per Code - 1 Year
Coherence		Coh	3	4	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	2	1	2	2			7	1	3	5	6	1	1	3		2		3	2		6			4		65	6.0%	33	7.5%	32	5.1%
	State	St	1	1				1					1													1	1		1			1					1	1	1	11	1.0%	5	1.1%	6	1.0%
	District	Di	1	2	1		3	2					4	1	2	2	1	2	1	5	1	3	3	5	1	1	2	3		1		1		2	3	3	1	5		62	5.8%	30	6.8%	32	5.1%
	School	Sc			2	1	5	1	2	4	1	1		1	2	1	2	2	1	6		2	1	1	1		2	2		2		4	1	2	4	2	1	1		58	5.4%	24	5.4%	34	5.4%
Collaboration		Clb			3	2	1	3	4	4	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	3	1	6	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	2		3		2	2	1	1		1		3	63	5.9%	22	5.0%	41	6.5%
	PLCs	PLC			1	1			2	2		1													1	4	2	3	4	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	4	44	4.1%	21	4.7%	23	3.6%
	Efficiency	Ef	1	1			1	1	3	2	1	2				1						1				3	1	1		1	2			1	2	1		2		39	3.6%	12	2.7%	27	4.3%
	Data Driven Decisions	DD	2	4		1	1	2	3	3	2	1		2	1	3	3	4	3	1	1	1	2	4	1	1			2	7	2	5	2		2	2	1	3		72	6.7%	26	5.9%	46	7.3%
Critical Friends ("Coachultants")		CF	1	1	1	1	3	2		4	2	2	3	3	1	2	3	1			3	4	2	2			1	2	1	4	1	3	1		2	1	2	1		60	5.6%	26	5.9%	34	5.4%
	Relationship Building	RB	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1		1			1	2	1	1			1	2	1		2	1	1	1	1	1	1		3	1	4	1		42	3.9%	22	5.0%	20	3.2%
	"Expert" Function	Ex	4	1	2	1	2	2	3	4			2	1		1				1		1		4			2	2	2		1	4	11	3	9	1	3	6	5	78	7.3%	28	6.3%	50	7.9%
Organizational Health		OH	1	4			1	1		2	1	2	1				2				1	4	11	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	58	5.4%	23	5.2%	35	5.5%
	CEE Data	CEE	1	3				1									2				1	4	1	1	1	1	2	3				1	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	36	3.4%	13	2.9%	23	3.6%
	Effective Leadership	EL	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	5	3	2	4	2	1	3	2	3	1	2	4	7	10	3	1		1	6	3	9	1	7		3	4	2	1	4	2	114	10.6%	50	11.3%	64	10.1%
	Organizational Trust	OT		2		1	1		1			1					1	4				2			6	2	3	2		1				2	5	2		2	1	48	4.5%	20	4.5%	28	4.4%
Focused School Improvement		FSI	4	2	1	3	3	3		1	1				1		1	1	1	2	3	1	3	5	2	2	2	3	2	1	4	1	2	2	2	3	5	3	4	73	6.8%	34	7.7%	39	6.2%
	9 Characteristics	9							1																	1			2	2		2		2		1	1			12	1.1%	5	1.1%	7	1.1%
	SI Initiatives	SII			3	1			1	1	2	5									2	1	2	1				1	2			2		3	1	2		3	3	49	4.6%	22	5.0%	27	4.3%
	Instruction (PTL)	In			1	3	2	5	4	1	5	1	2	1	2		2	2	2	3	11	2	4	2	5			1	1	3	12	1	6		1	5		1	1	92	8.6%	27	6.1%	65	10.3%
All Codes - Per Site - Per Timetable			23	34	19	19	33	28	28	42	16	14	19	15	14	24	21	31	24	62	24	47	41	40	20	15	25	31	23	68	18	55	16	21	24	34	34	40	34	1076		443		633	
Percentage - Per Site - Per Timetable			2.1%	3.2%	1.8%	1.8%	3.1%	2.6%	2.6%	3.9%	1.5%	1.3%	1.8%	1.4%	1.3%	2.2%	2.0%	2.9%	2.2%	5.8%	2.2%	4.4%	3.8%	3.7%	1.9%	1.4%	2.3%	2.9%	2.1%	6.3%	1.7%	5.1%	1.6%	2.0%	2.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.7%	3.2%						
All Codes - Per Site			57		38		61		70		30		34		38		52		86		71		81		35		56		91		73		16	45		68		74							
Percentage Per Site			5.3%		3.5%		5.7%		6.5%		2.8%		3.2%		3.5%		4.8%		8.0%		6.6%		7.5%		3.3%		5.2%		8.5%		6.8%		1.5%	4.2%		6.3%		6.9%							

APPENDIX I

IBC Cohort II District/School Application

Idaho Building Capacity Project

School / District Cohort II Application

Project Summary
The Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project is a statewide system of support for Idaho Title I schools and districts that are in needs improvement status (Year 1 and beyond). The project will provide on-site technical assistance designed to assist schools and districts in building their own internal capacity to sustain school improvement efforts. A key component of the IBC project is the utilization of Capacity Builders (CBs), distinguished educators that are trained by the state to facilitate the work of school improvement. Applications are submitted by individual schools, with a required commitment on behalf of the district to also participate in the project.
Each selected school and the district that the school is in will receive the services of a capacity builder. During year one of participation the CB will work in the school/district for up to 8 hours a week with decreasing support over three years. CBs work with school and district leaders to develop a plan of how the CB will be utilized to support the work of school improvement at each individual assigned site. This is not a cookie-cutter approach to school improvement, but rather an approach focused on the individual needs and challenges of each individual site being served. In addition to the CB services, participating schools will be provided with professional development opportunities, resources, and self evaluation tools.
Schools/districts that serve large numbers of at-risk students and have limited local resources will receive a high priority in the selection process. In addition to completion of this application schools/districts may be asked to participate in an on-site visit with a Regional IBC Coordinator in order to determine readiness to benefit. If you have questions, please contact Lisa Kinnaman at lisakinnaman@boisestate.edu.

Application Submission Information
IBC Cohort II applications are due by 5:00pm on **October 31, 2008**. Applications will be reviewed by a team of reviewers. Schools / districts will be selected and matched with a Capacity Builders by early December, and services will begin in early **January 2009**. Applications can be submitted by mail, fax, or email to:
Lisa Kinnaman Title I-A School Improvement Coordinator Boise State University, Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies 1910 University Drive Boise, ID 83725-1745 Phone: 208-426-2154 Fax: 208-426-3564 lisakinnaman@boisestate.edu
Additional School Improvement Information is provided in the pages that follow, and is also available online at http://csi.boisestate.edu/improvement.htm.

PART I: To be completed by the Principal and School Leadership Team
Provide a data table that demonstrates at a glance the achievement data of your school.

If available, provide a copy of the mission/vision statement for your school and/or the strategic plan for your school. (You do not need to print a copy of your CIP tool, we have access to this information)

Please respond to the following:

1. In a brief narrative, describe your AYP history. What are the successes of your school? What challenges do you face? What changes have you made in an attempt to respond to your identified AYP challenges? How well did they work? What are your continued plans for addressing your AYP challenges?

2. If you are selected for participation in the IBC project, what do you envision as the role of the Capacity Builder? What are your initial thoughts on how you might utilize the services of the CB in your school?

3. How will you include your staff in the decision to participate in the IBC project; thus encouraging the greatest amount of engagement? How supportive do you think your staff will be to the idea of participating in the IBC project?

4. What outcomes do you expect at your school as a result of participation in the IBC project?

5. Bottom line, why do you think that you should be selected for participation in the IBC project?

PART II: To be completed by the Superintendent and District Leadership Team

Provide a data table that demonstrates at a glance the achievement data of your district.

If available, provide a copy of the mission/vision statement for your district and/or the strategic plan for your district. (You do not need to print a copy of your CIP tool, we have access to this information)

Please respond to the following:

1. In a brief narrative, describe your AYP history. What are the successes of your district? What challenges do you face? What changes have you made in an attempt to respond to your identified AYP challenges? How well did they work? What are your continued plans for addressing your AYP challenges?

2. If you are selected for participation in the IBC project, what do you envision as the role of the Capacity Builder? What are your initial thoughts on how you might utilize the services of the CB at the district level?

3. How will the district office support IBC project work at the school level?

4. What outcomes do you expect at your school as a result of participation in the IBC project?

5. Bottom line, why do you think that you should be selected for participation in the IBC project?

PART III: Required Application Signatures

_____	_____
Principal	Date
_____	_____
Superintendent	Date
_____	_____
School Board Chairman	Date

PART IV: Performance Agreement

Please review the attached Performance Agreement that outlines the agreed upon responsibilities of all participating parties in the IBC project: Idaho State Department of Education, Regional Support Centers, Participating Districts, and Participating Schools. A copy of the Performance Agreement with required School and District signatures must accompany all applications. If selected, Idaho State Department of Education and Regional Support Center signatures will be added and a copy of the complete Performance Agreement returned to participating schools and districts.

APPENDIX J

IBC Cohort II Performance Agreement

The Idaho State Department of Education agrees to:

- Participate in the selection of the Regional Idaho Capacity Building Coordinators.
- Oversee collaboration between Regional Coordinators, schools/districts, and the Idaho State Department of Education (i.e. recruit, select and collaborate with Capacity Builders, selection of schools/districts to be served, professional development).
- Identify and monitor approved Regional Support Centers.
- Identify schools/districts to be served by the Idaho Capacity Building (IBC) project.
- Allocate IBC grant awards of $38,000 per site to selected schools/districts at the beginning of the first year of the project.

_____   _____
Deputy Superintendent - Student Achievement & School Accountability   Date

_____   _____
NCLB Program Director   Date

The School Improvement Technical Assistance Office agrees to:

- Oversee collaboration between Regional Coordinators, schools/districts, and the Idaho State Department of Education (i.e. recruit, select and collaborate with Capacity Builders, selection of schools/districts to be served, professional development).

_____   _____
State School Improvement Coordinator   Date

The Regional Support Center agrees to:

- Serve as a fiscal agent for designated IBC funds and services (i.e. distribution of funds, contracts)
  - Independent contractors serving as Capacity Builders will be paid at a fixed rate of $62.50 per hour excluding travel time.
- Support the work of the Regional Coordinator who will:
  - Collaborate with other Regional Coordinators and the State Department of Education to recruit, train and supervise one Capacity Builder (independent contractor) for each IBC site in the region;
  - Match Capacity Builders to selected schools/districts;
  - Provide professional development to capacity builders and school/district leaders being served by the IBC project; and
  - Oversee the administration of the required staff survey from the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) and the optional student and parent surveys from CEE.
- Support the work of the Capacity Builders who will:
  - Participate in the work of school improvement at the assigned school/district for a maximum of 8 hours per week;
  - Attend required Professional Development;
  - Submit Monthly Service Reports; and
  - Bring any issues or challenges to the attention of the Regional Coordinator.

_____   _____
Regional Coordinator   Date

_____   _____
Capacity Builder(s)*   Date

The District agrees to:

- Spend the entirety of the IBC grant award ($38,000) in contracted services with an approved IBC provider.
- Effectively utilize the Capacity Builders' services and engage in IBC activities.
- Provide a plan as to how the local School Board will be engaged in the IBC project.
- Support principal(s) in creating change that will align with the district vision and result in increased student achievement.
- Provide executive sponsorship by establishing the IBC project as a high priority of the district.
- Appoint a district project contact that will oversee and coordinate the work of the IBC project and school / district leaders (strategic planning, communication, project details, progress monitoring, etc.).
- Support the administration of the required staff survey from CEE and the optional student and parent surveys from CEE.

Superintendent	Date
Chairman of the School Board	Date
District Leadership Team*	Date

The School agrees to:

- Effectively utilize the Capacity Builders' services and engage in IBC activities.
- Lead change that will result in increased student achievement.
- Establish the IBC as a high priority of the school.
- Promote staff participation in IBC activities.
- Administer the required staff survey from the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) and the optional student and parent surveys from CEE by the end of January (surveys will be provided through the Regional Support Centers.

School Principal	Date
School Leadership Team*	Date

* Signature Not Required

APPENDIX K

IBC Cohort II Capacity Builder Application

Idaho Building Capacity Project

Capacity Builder (CB) Application

Project Summary

The Idaho Building Capacity (IBC) project is a statewide system of support for Idaho Title I schools and districts that are in "Needs Improvement Status" (Year 1 and beyond). The project will provide on-site technical assistance designed to assist schools and districts in building their own internal capacity to sustain school improvement efforts. A key component of the IBC project is the utilization of Capacity Builders (CBs), distinguished educators that are trained by the state to facilitate the work of school improvement.

Each selected school and the district that the school is in will receive the services of a Capacity Builder. During year one of participation the CB will work in the school/district for up to 8 hours a week with decreasing support over three years. In collaboration with school and district staff, parents, community members, and with the assistance of outside resources, the CB will facilitate the development and implementation of a comprehensive school improvement plan which builds on the school's strengths and addresses the identified needs. This is not a cookie-cutter approach to school improvement, but rather an approach focused on the individual needs and challenges of each individual site being served. In addition to the CB services, participating schools will be provided with professional development opportunities, resources, and self evaluation tools.

Capacity Builder - Role, Qualifications, and Expectations

Capacity Builders are independent consultants contracted by regional support centers at Boise State University (BSU), Idaho State University (ISU), or University of Idaho (U. of I.) to provide technical services and support to participating schools/districts. As independent contractors, Capacity Builders receive compensation for their services, as well as, reimbursement for mileage, meals, lodging, and other travel-related expenses in accordance with state travel regulations.

The Capacity Builder's role requires a high degree of integrity and diplomacy, an in-depth knowledge of school improvement processes relating to education reform, demonstrated skills, and successful experience in implementing change processes in schools and/or districts, along with strong interpersonal and communication skills.

Successful candidates must have demonstrated ability to work with groups to craft creative solutions, to negotiate workable compromises, and to communicate complex issues to a variety of educational stakeholders. Capacity Builders must be educators who are recognized as leaders, have shown high levels of professional competence, have experience in implementing successful school-based reform, and are representative of Idaho's diverse workforce.

Minimum Qualifications:
In order to be considered as a Capacity Builder, the candidate must meet the following minimum qualifications:
- Idaho State certification (or able to provide proof of other comparable State certification/eligibility to attain certification).
- Minimum of five years experience as an educator in a leadership capacity.
- Experience as an educator, preferably within the last three years and demonstrated success in school or district improvement efforts.
- Knowledge of current educational practice and educational reform and understanding of the federal *No Child Left Behind* mandates.
- Willingness to attend related training sessions offered through the Idaho Building Capacity project.
- Commitment to accept up to a three-year assignment.
- Willingness to travel within the region in which the CB is assigned.
- Computer and software proficiency. CBs will be expected to utilize their own personal computer.
- Can pass a background check.

Process

Interested educators should complete the following information which must be received **no later than November 17, 2008, in order to be considered for assignment beginning January 1, 2009**. Applications received after November 17 will be considered for the following year.

- Letter of Interest. In the letter please describe your experience in working with groups to develop and implement school improvement efforts and/or reform projects, and the specific skills you possess that would enable you to be successful as a Capacity Builder. (Maximum two pages in length, 12pt type.)

- Written references from at least two educators who are familiar with your work. Please use the Capacity Builder Recommendation Form attached. Written references are to be sent directly to the address below and must be received by our office within two weeks of your application. (Two forms attached to application.)

- Resumé citing education, work history and professional experiences that would support involvement in this program. Include the names and contact information of two people who will be submitting reference materials for you.

- Completed CB Skill Inventory. (Attached to application.)

- Submit to:

Lisa Kinnaman
Title I-A School Improvement Coordinator
Boise State University, Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1745
Fax: (208) 426-4907
Email: lisakinnaman@boisestate.edu

Interviews will be conducted in November and December. Through the application / interview process, a CB candidate pool will be developed. Each candidate will be notified via a letter or email of their selection or non-selection as a CB pool participant.

Schools and Districts will be selected for participation in the IBC Project in November. Following the selection of schools and the establishment of the pool of Capacity Builders, CBs will be matched to schools and districts. Successful applicants not assigned to a school or district will remain in the pool of Capacity Builders for possible future assignments.

Training in School Improvement processes and procedures will be provided in early January 2009.

Questions

If you have questions regarding this application or the Idaho Building Capacity Project, please contact:

Lisa Kinnaman	**Katherine Weatherspoon**
Title I-A School Improvement Coordinator	Administrative Assistant
Phone: (208) 426-2154	Phone: (208) 426-4852
lisakinnaman@boisestate.edu	katherineweatherspoon@boisestate.edu

Process

Interested educators should complete the following information which must be received **no later than November 17, 2008, in order to be considered for assignment beginning January 1, 2009**. Applications received after November 17 will be considered for the following year.

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Lisa Kinnaman	**Katherine Weatherspoon**
Title I-A School Improvement Coordinator	Administrative Assistant
Phone: (208) 426-2154	Phone: (208) 426-4852
lisakinnaman@boisestate.edu	katherineweatherspoon@boisestate.edu

Capacity Builder Recommendation Form

Please send this completed form directly to the address below.

Lisa Kinnaman
BSU Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1745

Name of Candidate: _____

Name of person completing this form: _____

Title/Position: _____

Work Address: _____

_____

Work Phone: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Relationship to candidate: _____ **How long have you known the candidate?** _____

Please rate the candidate in the following areas:

O = Outstanding   S = Satisfactory   U = Unsatisfactory   NS = Not Sure

Skill Area / Dimension	O	S	U	NS
Professional attitude/judgment				
Leadership				
Organization				
Written communication				
Motivation				
Sensitivity to others				
Time management				
Oral communication				
Stress management				
Program evaluation and planning				
Diplomacy				
Experience with school and district budgeting processes				
Conflict resolution				
Ability to work with diverse groups				
Ability to analyze and interpret assessment and other data				
Working with parents and community				
Interpersonal				
Facilitation				
Presentations				
Work ethic				
Aligning curriculum/instruction/assessment with standards				
Use of technology				

Please Provide Additional Comments (not to exceed one page)

Capacity Builder Recommendation Form

Please send this completed form directly to the address below.

Lisa Kinnaman
BSU Center for School Improvement and Policy Studies
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1745

Name of Candidate: _____

Name of person completing this form: _____

Title/Position: _____

Work Address: _____

_____

Work Phone: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Relationship to candidate: _____ **How long have you known the candidate?** _____

Please rate the candidate in the following areas:

O = Outstanding   S = Satisfactory   U = Unsatisfactory   NS = Not Sure

Skill Area / Dimension	O	S	U	NS
Professional attitude/judgment				
Leadership				
Organization				
Written communication				
Motivation				
Sensitivity to others				
Time management				
Oral communication				
Stress management				
Program evaluation and planning				
Diplomacy				
Experience with school and district budgeting processes				
Conflict resolution				
Ability to work with diverse groups				
Ability to analyze and interpret assessment and other data				
Working with parents and community				
Interpersonal				
Facilitation				
Presentations				
Work ethic				
Aligning curriculum/instruction/assessment with standards				
Use of technology				

Please Provide Additional Comments (not to exceed one page)

Capacity Builder's Skills Inventory

Contact Information
Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
Home Phone: _____   **Cell Phone:** _____
Email Address: _____

Please rate the yourself in the following areas:

O = Outstanding	S = Satisfactory	U = Unsatisfactory		NS = Not Sure

Skill Area / Dimension	O	S	U	NS
Professional attitude/judgment				
Leadership				
Organization				
Written communication				
Motivational				
Sensitivity to others				
Time management				
Oral communication				
Stress management				
Program evaluation and planning				
Diplomacy				
Experience with school and district budgeting processes				
Conflict resolution				
Working with diverse groups				
Analyzing and interpreting assessment and other data				
Working with parents and community				
Interpersonal				
Facilitation				
Presentation				
Work ethic				
Aligning curriculum/instruction/assessment with standards				
Technology				

Please Provide Additional Comments (not to exceed one page)