CHAPTER ONE

Reframing School Culture

Enduring Understanding

- The nature of what it means to be a teacher changes in schools focusing on building leadership capacity.

Organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization.

(Senge, 2000, p. 14)

Capacity-building principals align their actions to the belief that everyone has the right, responsibility and capability to work as a leader.

(Lambert, 2003a, p. 43)

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Schools that excel typically have capacity-building principals who understand that sharing leadership for teaching and learning improves the quality of student learning and increases their own influence as school leaders as well. Such principals empower teachers, who then see themselves as leaders with influence both within their classrooms and throughout the school. Such schools typically work with district administrators who model and create conditions that foster skillful collaborative leadership. When these conditions are in place, everyone discovers the potential to positively influence student learning through collaborative actions. As Senge and Lambert allude to on page 1, schools and school districts that truly excel focus on learning of all students *and* all adults. In other words, transformative leaders facilitate this kind of community of practice.

In many schools, the principal is seen in a parent role, the mother or father figure, whose job it is to take care of teachers, who then should take care of students. A principal in this kind of role too often tries to be all things to all people, *a hero.* Even when that principal is collaborative in nature, teachers seldom see themselves as responsible for student and adult learning outside of their own classrooms. The culture of schooling needs to be reframed in such a way that all adults accept responsibility for the learning of all children and their own peers. This book is about teachers and administrators who are accepting this responsibility.

> What is needed is a new kind of leadership, principals who are willing to commit to leading for student accomplishment, for organizational health, for professional learning, and for long-range and deep improvements. These leaders work seriously to support the transformation of schooling and teaching and understand the importance of helping to build a learning community that includes all teachers and students. These are not "lone rangers" who depend on charisma and individual genius to transform schools. Rather, they are collaborative learners and teachers who

advocate for democratic principles. They work diligently with their faculty and their community to make bold visions a reality (p. 40). . . . Principals and teachers in schools that are in the midst of change are finding that as they do their work, they are blurring boundaries and forging new connections between leading, learning and teaching. Their schools are leadership dense organizations. (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 46)

In *leadership dense* school districts and schools, certain conditions are present (based on Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996, 2001):

1. All teachers are expected to engage in leadership activities.

2. Leadership includes both the formal and informal functions that occur within a school.

3. Assuming leadership functions does not require that one leave the classroom.

4. The primary focus of teacher leadership is teaching and learning, focused on the learning of all students and adults.

5. Teachers have the time to be reflective practitioners who solve problems around teaching and learning.

6. Professional development is job embedded, long-term, planned, purposeful, differentiated, and systematic.

7. Teacher leaders accept both the opportunities and responsibilities that come with leadership. Teacher leaders hold themselves accountable for student learning.

Building leadership impacts student learning! Research, as reported in Lambert (2003a), supports a direct connection between forging leadership capacity and student achievement:

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- Conzemius and O'Neill (2001) report that when there is a shared responsibility for student learning, every ethnic subgroup improves in academic performance.
- Reeves (2000) contends that the success of the 90/90/90[1] schools is tied to school practice in which teachers are involved in improving practice together within a professional culture.
- Lewis (2002) writes that in schools in which teachers had created strong professional communities with frequent teacher collaboration, reflective dialogue, and shared norms, students were four times more likely to improve academically than in schools with weaker professional communities.

This commonsense finding is reported also by Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) in their meta-analysis of 30 years of research on the effect of leadership on student achievement.

In this chapter, we introduce teacher voices to describe how the lives and work of teachers change in schools focusing on building leadership capacity. Note how the seven conditions listed above are reflected in the teacher writings throughout this chapter.

WHAT I AM BECOMING

The following was written by Elidia Boddie, an elementary school teacher leader:

> Now I feel that our team has changed from meteors to a united cluster of comets that, after they shine, leave tails of change.

When leadership capacity is fostered, teachers reflect on how they view themselves as teachers and leaders. Linda Lambert writes:

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A teacher leader may be seen as a person in whom the dream of making a difference has been kept alive, or has been reawakened, by engaging colleagues in a true community of practice. Those who have managed to keep their sense of purpose alive and well are reflective, inquisitive, focused on improving their craft, action oriented; they accept responsibility for student learning and have a strong sense of self. That is, they know themselves and their intentions enough so that they are not intimidated into silence by others. When the source of reawakening is outside the school, these individuals may not be able to stay long in their own schools. (2003b, p. 3)

Amy Vanderbosch's and Jennifer Schmidt's reflections exemplify this reawakening.

Amy writes:

It is the compelling passion for my school that has forced me to overcome some of the obstacles I faced as I embarked upon this journey to become a school leader. My fear of standing up for my ideals to those with clout has not dissolved. Instead, the need to speak up for my ideals has become more important than the risks. I have a responsibility to articulate those ideals that are most important for student learning until I am heard. Across the board, in talking about data, collaboration, and communication, the understanding that I have an obligation to lead with credibility, and teach and collaborate with my colleagues, bolsters me constantly. My passion and concerns are not going unheard as in the past.

Jennifer writes:

My willingness to accept leadership roles has been parallel to that of a basketball player's experience with her team and the game, from being introduced to the pastime during required physical education classes, to watching and studying the sport as a fan, then finally joining the varsity team and courageously following

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the coach. At first, I was not even interested in watching. I started out in the teaching profession as many other teachers do, overwhelmed with classroom management, grading papers, and developing my teaching repertoire. The first high school I taught at was fairly large at 2,000 students and over 100 teachers. Being new to the profession and only 22, I had no clue that teachers did anything other than teach. I honestly thought the principal was there to hire, fire, and keep order at the school. Every once in a while I would be assigned to committees, and I was really confused about what we were trying to accomplish. I went to the game only if it was required. I came, dressed out, even attempted to play, but was never a team captain and was often picked last because of poor skills and understanding, which was fine with me. Can't I just teach? Not only did I not want to watch the "game," I did not even know it existed. I had not even begun to grow as a leader.

I entered the master's program during my seventh year as a teacher. In the first year of the program, I was steeped in learning about superstar players and their own approaches to the game. Deborah Meier and Linda Darling-Hammond were best at this teacher leadership challenge, and reading their writing helped me reflect on what is worth fighting for. I learned about leadership by watching the professors, the other students in class, and my own team. Although I often felt like a spectator, I was becoming more of a leader in shaping my own department. Afflicted with acute shyness in large settings, I found that the Math Department was just the right size to try out my emerging leadership skills.

Our Math Department was told that we needed to drop one of our courses for the next year. We had a very successful calculus program with both AB and BC courses structured as yearlong classes, which unfortunately took up many of our allotted sections. As a department, we devised a plan to make the AB course a semester long class, rather than drop it entirely. I taught the Calculus AB class and felt a strong connection to its success and was proud of the students' achievements. When it seemed the Math Department was blindsided by the administration's decision to completely cancel Calculus AB, the group chose me to talk with our principal and assistant principal to discuss alternatives. I would have never done this before my participation in the leadership program—maybe simmered and been angry, but not confronted the principal.

I went armed with ideas on how to best present my case. When it seemed those ideas would not be good enough, I felt defeated and unsupported. We had had a 100% passing rate for two years running. In the summer, I would find out that it would be three years in a row. I asked, "How did this happen? Why was no one in the Math Department asked about how to schedule the classes?" I called the administration on it. Although this sounds ridiculous to people who have never been afraid to confront authority, I was shaking inside when I asked. I found courage and strength in my belief that this issue was too important for me to back down.

My struggles now are between wanting to be on the team to play varsity but feeling warm and comfortable on the bench. As we all know, leadership is not a spectator sport. I still struggle to feel comfortable when speaking up. Even though I struggle to make jump shots, it does not mean I should quit the game. As with all sports, practice makes perfect. I have been attempting to speak up, and my math colleagues have taken notice of this. In fact, when I asked one colleague if she had noticed any growth in me as a leader, her first comment was that I speak up more and allow myself to state my beliefs even if they challenge someone else. She said it was refreshing to see, even though I have disagreed with her a few times.

Reflective Questions

- Beyond the confines of your classroom, what are you becoming?
- What specific modeling and support are there for teachers in your workplace to develop as leaders?

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?
CHANGING THE NATURE OF WORK

Able people—wise people—take jobs where they are entrusted with important tasks. Create a school without collegial trust and the authority to carry out improvements

and you will create a third-rate school. Its faculty will be placeholders, not wise people. (Barth, 1990, p. xii)

In a leadership dense school, the work of being a teacher and administrator changes:

- The school community is more clearly focused on maximizing learning for *all* students.
- School leaders experience having a significant voice over the workings of the school, know their voices are valued, and more actively listen to the voices of colleagues, parents, and students.
- School leaders create a culture of evidence based on regular collection, analysis, and use of data to improve instructional practice.
- Leadership capacity is fostered as a result of job-embedded, high-quality, professional development that leads to growth as a teacher and as a leader.
- School leaders improve the quality of life and learning for adults and students at school and in the district.

Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hann (2002) write about parallel leadership. They argue that if schools are going to transform teaching and learning, a relationship must exist between teacher leaders and administration that builds the knowledge-generating capacity of schools. The collective action of teachers and administrators should be built on mutual respect, shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression.

As the teacher leaders write in each of the sections below, life is not the same when you become aware of the impact your actions have on the learning of students and adults throughout the school. You can understand that how they view their work has changed and that students will benefit.

Kristin Pfotenhauer-Sharp writes about the importance of focused staff collaboration. A letter from a middle school team of teacher leaders to their new principal demonstrates the courage that comes with expecting your voices to matter.

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Facilitating professional development for a number of years now, I have often been frustrated with the lack of focus. The principals I have worked with have often relied on the "tyranny of the urgency" that is on addressing pressing issues with little or no regard for the long-range needs of improving teaching and learning. So although my organization and facilitation skills have improved, it has never been very satisfying. Working with the current school leadership team and the Action Research Team and chairing the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation process is enabling me to support a focused staff development plan.

Part of the WASC process involves developing an action plan for the next three to six years. I recently designed and facilitated the meetings that produced the draft of this plan.

The school staff looked at data, determined critical academic needs, and evaluated our program in relation to the WASC criteria. This was done in five interdepartmental focus areas: vision, culture, and leadership; assessment and accountability; curriculum paths; powerful teaching and learning; and student support. Then departments shared the strengths and growth needs from each area and came to consensus on three to five of these growth needs. Evening meetings were held with parents in which they read the focus group drafts, added their input, and brainstormed their own list of growth needs. A student retreat was also held. Students looked at data and shared the strengths and weaknesses, used a "big paper/chat room" activity to write their ideas to the WASC criteria, and brainstormed their list of growth needs.

Overall, I felt good about the end result. What I liked best was that we were able to include a community feedback loop with our families of English Language Learning (ELL) students.

Reflective Questions

- What is the vision for schooling in your district and school?
- How does this vision drive practice in your district and school?

The following letter to their new principal was written by Liv Barnes, Katie Dequine, Kerstin Ericsson, Kathleen McCowan Sandidge, Peter Stapes, and Amy Vanderbosch. A

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much beloved principal had recently left, and a new princi-
pal was assigned. The school was designated "Program
Improvement" due to low test scores. A group of teachers
were leading a staff effort to improve student learning and to
raise those scores. The new principal had questioned their
strategies for doing so. The team talked at length about how
to work constructively with the principal. They hoped that,
if they spoke up as a team, he would respond in a positive
manner, which he in fact did.

September 25

Dear Bob, [not his real name]

We are hoping to use this letter to address some recent concerns of
the team. While we recognize the extraordinary pressure that you
and we are facing in light of our Program Improvement (PI) desig-
nation, we are uneasy about the redirection of our Leadership
Team's focus.

The members of our Leadership Team represent all facets of our
staff and have spent many hours creating a mission and objectives.
We have concentrated our efforts and meeting time on enhancing
our school culture. We know that school culture has a great impact
on student learning. At this point, the team is ironing out details for
an improved and unified discipline plan, a system for peer coach-
ing, and greater attention to our target student population. All three
of these areas directly impact instruction in the classroom and
therefore student achievement. It has always been the intent that
the Leadership Team address problems that the staff feels are
important. It is our hope that we work together as school leaders
to solve those problems.

We feel a push to address the implications of our school being
labeled Program Improvement. Our staff feels the same pressure
that you do, if not more. Our professionalism is being called into
question, and we must endure this PI process for years to come.

A strong school culture will improve student achievement. We
feel strongly that our original course of action will help us reach our
goals, as well as sustain them far into the future. It is our hope to
refocus the efforts of the Leadership Team toward improved school
culture in this tumultuous time. We also feel honored to be a part

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of rewriting the school plan and hope to support your philosophies in this venue.

We welcome your feedback on our thoughts.

Respectfully,

Liv Barnes
Katie Dequine
Kerstin Ericsson
Kathleen McCowan
Peter Stapes
Amy Vanderbosch

Reflective Questions

- Whose voices are valued in your workplace? What impact do these voices have?
- What specific evidence do you have that your voice is valued in your workplace?
- How do you use your voice in your school and/or district?

The following was written by Christina Filios, Fawn Myers, and Theresa Sage about the impact teacher leaders can have when they help create a culture of evidence at their school.

Over the last semester, we learned about Schmoker's suggestions for becoming a leader with vision. Schmoker (2001) emphasized the importance of having staff work with student data to develop a vision and action plan. As we looked at our school data, our team confirmed the existence of a large achievement gap between White and Hispanic students. We decided to make this the focus of our action research project (ARP), and we challenged ourselves to present this data to our staffs. Fawn and Theresa planned a staff meeting during which they used data to help guide their colleagues' thinking about restructuring at the middle school. Christina analyzed graduation rates, drop-out rates, and test results with the

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School Site Council, helping to expose parents and students to the numbers as well.

As we've developed as teacher leaders and a team, our work on our action research has acted as a springboard to effect changes at our schools and the district. Our initial data collection revealed the achievement gap, which led us to research the efficacy of our programs for English Language Learner I, II, and III students. Since our ARP was focused on such a specific population, we found ourselves broadening our vision for equity to a larger district scope.

It is imperative that school leaders use student and other relevant data to guide and improve practices around teaching and learning. Chapter 4 focuses on the impact inquiry can have on a school's culture and on student learning.

Reflective Questions

- In what ways are teachers actively engaged in data collection, analysis, reflection, and implementation at your workplace?
- What evidence do you have for the impact of this engagement?

Professional Growth

This continuing dialogue, face to face, over and over, is a powerful educative force. It is our primary form of staff development. When people ask me how we "'train"' new teachers, I say that the school itself is an educator for the kids and staff; it's its own staff development project. (Meier, 1995, p. 109)

The following was written by Robert Hatcher after reading Deborah Meier's book *Power of Their Ideas* (1995). Robert reflected that when staff conversation is about evidence, cause and effect, hypothesizing, reflection, and passion, it crosses curriculum barriers. It encourages richer conversations that

overlap subject-specific ones. Using habits of mind as a general structure of a school shifts the focus to thinking about the greater world of ideas. Then he wrote the following specific example. [Teacher names have been changed.]

As part of our action research project, I presented several literacy strategies to a cross-disciplinary group of teachers. Paula, the physical science teacher, with many English Language Learning (ELL) students in her classes, said that long ago she had used the KWL strategy (what we KNOW, what we WANT to know, what we LEARNED). Minh, in the Math Department, remembered it from SDAII training, but was skeptical about its use in mathematics. Paula explained how she used the KWL at the opening of a new chapter. She said it was difficult to get students to generate the "what we know" and the "want to know" lists so she had abandoned its use. Mary, from the English Department, said she found that her ELL students were more likely to participate when they could use the book for support in generating ideas.

I encouraged them to talk about ways that this strategy might be useful. Minh suggested table groups of four as a method for developing the "what we know" list. Paula then said that the groups could open their books, search through the chapter, and make a list of what they wanted to learn. Minh suggested that, for the sake of time, each group could list five things to learn. Paula agreed and said she would have her groups rank their top three ideas. Paula suggested a short action research project on the use of KWL tracking the ELL and at-risk student participation.

At our next meeting, these teachers shared their efforts to date. In algebra classes, Minh found the KWL activity highly successful in getting his students to feel more connected to the content about to be studied. Paula reported more students expressing interest in learning about the new topics. She was pleased to see table groups claim ownership of the ideas as they were studied during the following week. Mary talked about how she had spent time in class asking students to reflect in small groups on what they had learned and paid close attention to how her ELL students approached this. During the third meeting, Paula and Minh discussed how to fine-tune the KWL activity for the next chapter.

This renewed interest in a literacy strategy brought together four teachers, including me, from different content areas in conversations focused on increasing student engagement and learning. It led

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to informal evidence gathering and a focus on effective strategies for at-risk students. It is clear that these teachers have developed a new cross-disciplinary relationship. What will sustain the teacher interest and pursuit of such work is now dependent upon leadership, the maintenance of the focus that has begun, and the allocation of that precious resource, time.

Reflective Questions

- What evidence do you have that the professional development plan at your workplace has a positive impact on teacher and student learning?
- In what ways has previous professional development been built upon over time?

WHY DO IT? IT IS ABOUT QUALITY OF LIFE AND LEARNING!

I think that the problem of how to change things from "I" to "we," of how to bring a good measure of collegiality and relatedness to adults who work in schools, is one that belongs on the national agenda of school improvement— at the top. It belongs at the top because the relationships amongst adults in schools are the basis, the precondition, the *sine qua non* that allow, energize, and sustain all other attempts at school improvement. Unless adults talk with one another, and help one another, very little will change. (Barth, 1990, p. 32)

Teachers ask, "What's in it for me?" "Why should I want to work in a school that builds my leadership capacity?" "Why can't I just be left alone to teach in my classroom?" The answer is that in such schools teachers experience trust, respect, intellectual stimulation, and increased job satisfaction; they feel

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more professional. Fawn Myers writes about how she has learned to be more in charge of her work life.

The best metaphor I can think of to describe my growth as a leader is jack-in-the-box. I liken this to the tightly coiled toy figure of the jack-in–the-box being wound by external forces and finally springing into action: Voila! An energetic teacher leader! External requests by my leaders would wind me up, and I would leap up for a new challenge. Because of personal life circumstances such as the adoption of a child, the bearing of three more children, and the increasing demands of rearing my growing brood, at times I would pull myself back into the box and close the lid.

By spring of my first year at Britton (my sixteenth year of teaching), I was invited to be part of a brainstorming team to establish a new structure for our English Language Learners. I agreed to be part of the team and volunteered to teach within the new structure. At this point, I was fully aware that I had sprung from the box, but the decision was a conscious one on my part. I began teaching within this new structure in the fall of 2002, the same semester I began the MA program. Our team was asked to gather data about our site. Theresa and I chose to present the data to our whole staff, demonstrating an achievement gap between our White and Hispanic students. I grew as a result of the process of gathering data, analyzing it, and establishing norms for discussing it. I felt empowered. For the first time professionally, I did not feel that the crank was being wound by an external leader. I was in charge in choosing when to leap and in what direction.

The following was written by Joan Gotterba:

The 2003 Fall Forum of the Coalition of Essential Schools had just been brought to a close with a thought-provoking discussion between Deborah Meier and Linda Darling-Hammond. The sounds of their voices and the significance of their ideas replayed in my mind as our group squeezed into the hotel elevator. A young man looked at us and wondered out loud who would be the next leaders to carry on the mission of sustainable change in our schools. Who indeed, I thought, for if not us, then who?

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I came to the Fall Forum to help facilitate two sessions, one called "Understanding by Design" and the other "Teacher Leadership: Stories from the Heart," and to listen to speeches, discussions, and presentations. Since my return to Peterson Middle School, I have told the story of my experiences and thoughts to my family, my master's team, the master's cohort, my students, to colleagues informally at a Math Department meeting, at a faculty meeting of over 70 teachers and administrative staff, and at a district meeting of math teachers from all three Santa Clara Unified School District middle schools. In listening to the discussions that followed, I know that I am impacting the shape of things to come.

In order for sustainable change to occur in a school, a systematic approach, rather than a piecemeal one, needs to be taken. In listening to the discussions that have followed my story, this seems to be the part that scares people the most. Some who see the need for change caution against doing too much too fast. To this, I point out that we are changing already. We are experiencing:

- A new administrative team
- An imminent remodel due to earthquake retrofitting
- Ongoing task force and staff meetings to craft new vision and mission statements
- District performance-based assessments in English, science, and math
- Growing movements of Critical Friends and Backwards Design
- Five teachers in the Master's in Collaborative Leadership program at San Jose State University understanding the need for change
- Teachers attending conferences, such as five who just returned from a National Middle School Association conference in Atlanta, who are also telling their stories for change

We are in a period of *transition,* and I find the chances for change invigorating. Instead of taking a backseat, as I might have in the beginning of my career, I find myself involved in more activities than I ever thought possible to help guide the school in improving learning, teaching, and assessment. While I was in my twenties, I recall thinking that I would have absolutely no impact on decisions; it was a waste of time to even try. I now find myself Math Department chair, a mentor for Backwards Design, a

member of the principal's task force for creating a new vision statement, a member of a district committee for reviewing district math standards and writing enduring understandings based on the standards, and a teacher leader working with my team on our action research. I have become more of a risk taker as I have become more knowledgeable.

The story that I have told my colleagues starts with looking at a map of our school. "What we have now is a sixth grade school and a junior high. What we could have are villages that do not need to be the same." At this point in my story, I could see two reactions on the faces of my colleagues. Some considered the possibilities while others formed the word *but* and half-raised their hands. I continued by asking, "What are we the most proud of at Peterson?"

I told my story to my students and had them write and draw what the perfect middle school would look like to them. Many wrote of the frustration of surviving in an environment that is crowded with over 1,300 students. I talked to several teachers who are often resisters. They told me the ideas are great, but that it would be an incredible amount of work. I am thrilled that I was able to start the conversations.

In response to my story, the Math Department spent time at the last meeting talking about things that we can do right away to help all students feel like they belong and can be successful. They decided to organize quarterly meetings of teachers who share common prep periods. The goal would be first to become acquainted (in a school of our size, we still don't know each other well) and then to plan activities for students. Instead of complaining that we have little common planning time, the math teachers decided to reach out across disciplines and grade levels.

Presenting at the Fall Forum[2] seemed like it would be the capstone of my Master's in Teacher Leadership experience. I realize now that it was the gateway to the next phase. It gave me a story to share. My story encompasses my experiences in life and education, as to what research shows is best for students, using data-based decision making and building a collaborative culture. I've learned by telling and reshaping the story as I listen to how others respond. My school is already changing. It needs teacher leaders to reorganize and revitalize the whole school. In gently telling my Fall Forum story, I have started the conversation.

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Reflective Questions

- What opportunities exist for teachers to participate in the bigger vision of your school?
- What happens in your workplace when teachers take risks in front of and with their peers and formal leaders?
- Think of a time when teacher leaders effectively led a collaborative effort that positively impacted student learning. What did these leaders do that led to the positive result?

FOSTERING RESILIENCY: A LENS FOR REFRAMING CULTURE

Resiliency: the ability to bounce back successfully, despite exposure to severe risks

All people want to live in and work in communities that nurture them. These places are, as in the theme song from the television program *Cheers,* places where "people know my name." Based on research by Emily Werner and Ruth Smith (1992) and the writings of Bonnie Benard (1991) and Marty Krovetz (1999), we know that people thrive in communities that (1) know them well, (2) hold high expectations for them and support them to meet these expectations, and (3) value their meaningful participation. When schools and school districts focus time and resources on building the teaching and leadership capacity of all adults, decisions and daily practice can be based on consistently asking if what is proposed and/or what is practiced will actually address each of the three factors of resiliency for the students and adults in the school. *Collaborative Teacher Leadership* is about fostering such schools.

Barbara Friedenbach writes:

When grappling with challenging situations (e.g., Jacob, the defiant student who does not engage in learning, or Travis, who seems

unable to learn to read), a resilient learning community will expect me to improve my teaching practice as I search for a solution. It will expect me, as a professional, to be able to work through the challenge. When I have difficulty doing so, a resilient community will offer support to empower me. And in the end, when I am able to grow from the experience, I will have gained many things: (1) a strategy for solving similar issues, (2) greater confidence in my own teaching abilities, and (3) satisfaction that comes from seeing myself and my students succeed.

Lisa Blanc writes:

As a school leader, parent, and teacher, my fundamental belief is that the primary purpose of schooling is to develop resilient, literate children who grow up to be healthy, caring, and responsible adults. I want *all* students to be expected to use their hearts and minds well, regardless of their diverse backgrounds and needs. Each child is an individual and cannot be passed along an assembly line and stamped with a uniform quality seal. In order for teachers and leaders to empower students to use their hearts and minds well, we must break from uniformity in teaching and stretch to teach for diversity in ways that help different kinds of learners find productive paths to knowledge as they also learn to live collaboratively together. Schools that embrace student diversity and strive for equity in education for all students build capacity and resiliency in children and adults.

Reflective Questions

- What evidence do you have that your school fosters resiliency for its students? How do you know that adults know students well, have high expectations for them, support them to meet these expectations, and value their voices?
- What evidence do you have that your school fosters resiliency for its adults? How do you know that adults know adults well, have high expectations for them, support them to meet these expectations, and value their voices?

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APPLYING THE CONCEPTS IN YOUR WORKPLACE

At the end of each chapter, we include a short reflection on how you can use the ideas in this chapter to build the leadership capacity of yourself and others in your workplace.

1. Read, read, read, especially the books by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), Lambert (2003a), and Krovetz (1999).

2. Encourage and lead your school leadership team to use the tools in these three books to assess the culture of your school.

3. Start a teacher reflection group that focuses on reading these and other books and articles together. Establish norms and practices of trust so that participants can reflect on and share "what they are becoming."

4. Use the writings and reflective questions in this chapter to start conversations. We hope that a primary value of this book will be that groups of people will read it together and use the writing of these teachers to reflect and create opportunities to grow as leaders.

5. Discuss ways to bring more focus to the goals for the school and to professional development. Use your voice(s) to talk with others in a constructive way about making professional development high quality and job embedded.

6. Use student data to lead conversations that focus on how best to improve the quality of learning for all students.

7. Use every opportunity to build leadership capacity. Staff meetings, department meetings, and grade level meetings should focus on professional development and building leadership capacity.

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ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. In diagnosing your own school culture, what opportunities exist to build leadership capacity?

2. In what specific ways does this occur?

3. What evidence do you have to demonstrate positive impact on student learning?

4. How did the professional lives of the teachers whose writings are included in this chapter change as their leadership capacity was developing and as they stepped forward within their school communities?

RESOURCES

Tools

There are excellent tools to evaluate school culture in Linda Lambert's book (2003a).

Case studies of schools that are focused on fostering resiliency can be found in Marty Krovetz's book (1999).

The Healthy Kids Survey developed by WestED can be found at www.wested.org/hks

Organizations

Department of Educational Leadership in the College of Education at San Jose State University: www2.sjsu.edu/edleadership/

Coalition of Essential Schools: www.essentialschools.org

Resiliency

Search Institute: www.search-institute.org

E-mail Bonnie Benard: bbenard@wested.org

Resiliency in Action: www.resiliency.com

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ENDNOTES

1. 90/90/90 means that 90% or more of the students live below the poverty line, 90% or more of the students are from minority populations, and 90% or more of the students read at or above grade level.

2. The Fall Forum is the name of the annual national conference of the Coalition of Essential Schools.