San Diego City Schools

Update Report: August 1999

Written By

Barbara Neufeld and Judy Swanson

With Assistance From

Jessica Evans

Education Matters, Inc.
Cambridge, MA

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION

The 1998-1999 schoolyear in San Diego has been one of dramatic change at all levels of the San Diego City Schools (SDCS). Superintendent Alan Bersin and Chancellor Tony Alvarado put in place an organizational structure and focus that had an immediate impact at the central office and school levels. Through the newly created Institute for Learning, and with the support of the Instructional Leaders (ILs), principals and teachers were directed to implement a set of literacy strategies designed to help all children reach acceptable standards of literacy achievement. The process of initiating and sustaining these strategies was not democratic and many teachers and principals objected to what they called the "top-down" nature of the changes. However, as we wrote in our April 1999 update report, teachers and principals were positive about the focus and content of the strategies.

By the end of the schoolyear, when Education Matters made its second visit to the district, principals and teachers were still positive about the focus and content of the literacy strategies. However, many were frustrated and/or angry about what they saw as the continuing confrontational manner employed by the district's leadership to forward the reform. Teachers and many of the principals with whom we spoke were dismayed by the state of relations between the San Diego Teachers Association (SDTA), and the Superintendent and Chancellor. Stymied by the SDTA in its efforts to create the new school-based staff development positions without relying on seniority as the key selection criterion, the Superintendent and Chancellor created an alternative plan that did not require SDTA approval. They proposed to redesign the existing resource teacher role so that it could accomplish most of the goals of the desired school-based staff developer role. The district had the authority to make this change under the existing negotiated agreement. There was still a sticking point late into the spring, however, about how to insert quality criteria into the selection process. This was resolved with the help of San Diego State University.

At the time of our site visit, just after the resolution, we spoke to teachers who were still frustrated by the district/union stalemate and unsure about how they would proceed. Some teachers who supported the idea of the school-based staff developers said that they were not sure they would apply for the position because they did not want to appear to be taking the side of the district against the teachers. Others said that they were not sure that their colleagues would welcome the resource teachers into their rooms for the same reason. They pondered about how the resource teachers would be able to do their work in what might be a hostile school environment. Even teachers who faulted the SDTA for its position – which seemed to argue for no quality criteria in the selection of the staff developers/resource teachers – did not want to be pushed into having to take sides. Principals wanted a say in the decision about who would be appointed to the role in their schools, but reported being unsure about whether they would have one. Principals also knew that the district intended to remove some of them at the end of the schoolyear if they were deemed unsuitable to lead the new reform agenda. Both teachers' and principals' perception that the Superintendent had the media in his pocket added to their frustration and anger.

In addition to these factors, teachers and principals were exhausted by the increased demands made on them by the reform agenda. As we said earlier, they did not disagree with the direction or content of the reforms, they objected to the top-down process, the speed with which they were to make significant changes, the increased sense that their work was being monitored for compliance more than for support, and, in light of this, the fact that the professional development they had received was insufficient to enable them to effectively implement the new strategies. Some teachers and principals felt that it was unfair for the district to ask them to do work that even the ILs did not fully understand. For example, in their view, not all of the ILs were expert in literacy and ILs were not sure how or whether to implement some of the literacy framework components in all content areas. ILs told us that, in their learning communities, they were studying and learning about literacy. Given that the ILs were learning their role as well as the content of high quality literacy, principals and teachers argued, ILs should be a little more tolerant of mistakes made at the schools.

It was in this complex context that we visited SDCS in May and June 1999. During these visits, we interviewed teachers and principals at Pacific Beach, Wilson and Roosevelt. At Muirlands, we interviewed teachers and one of the vice principals. We also interviewed Superintendent Alan Bersin, Chancellor Tony Alvarado, and the following members of the Institute for Learning: Shirley Peterson, Carol Pike, Maruta Gardner, Kimiko Fukuda, Nancy Howard, Staci Monrreal and Sherry Lawson. During the summer, to clarify issues concerning the Literacy Portfolios, we spoke with Kelly Peacock-Wright. Individuals at the schools, at central office and at the Institute gave generously of their time.

In this report, we highlight three facets of SDCS' approach to reform and their impact on the district's middle schools. As background for the report, we review the main features of the literacy framework that were emphasized during the past school year. Then, we turn to a discussion of the IL role and how it is designed to support the work of principals and teachers. We describe, from the ILs perspective, how they understand their work, what they do when they visit schools, what they see to be the impact of the Literacy Framework to date, and their opportunities to learn what they need to know to fulfill their demanding roles. Then we turn to the views of teachers and principals with respect to implementing, in particular, Read-Alouds and Independent Reading. Embedded in both of these components is a teaching approach called Accountable Talk which, according to the Principles of Learning, refers to the way students engage in discourse to manipulate information:

> In accountable discourse, students take one another's remarks seriously and respond directly to them: using a statement as evidence supporting a proposition; refuting a statement by offering evidence to the contrary; concurring with a statement by offering supporting evidence. Accountable Talk sharpens student thinking by reinforcing their ability to use knowledge to create knowledge. (Rothman, p. 96)

This kind of classroom discourse is a key component of the kind of learning experience envisioned for standards-based reform. Our third area of focus is on the continued

implementation of the Literacy Portfolios. We discuss the portfolios because a) they contribute to the Literacy Framework's goals, and b) we noted some confusions about them that seem to be standing in the way of having teachers use them to full advantage.

Throughout our discussion of the ILs, the literacy strategies and the literacy portfolios, we highlight issues of professional development. In each of these areas, our data strongly suggest that all parties would benefit from better developed and more sustained professional development. We know that the district had a massive professional development program designed for the summer of 1999, so we are aware that the district understands the need for more opportunities for everyone to learn what they need to know. However, we want to highlight some of the consequences of the first year's insufficient professional development to alert the district to the problems that lack created. Some of those problems are issues of knowledge and skill; some are affective and relate to teachers' objections to being held accountable for implementing strategies that they did not have an opportunity to learn.

San Diego has undergone tremendous changes this year. Transitioning to a new administration is always difficult. Transitioning to one that has a mandate to make sweeping and effective changes in year one adds to the feeling of anxiety and turmoil. As we reported earlier this year, given this context, despite glitches in the implementation, significant progress has been made in a relatively short time. In this report, we focus on that progress and on its accompanying challenges.

The Literacy Framework. The mission of the Institute for Learning in San Diego, is "to create and sustain a culture of learning and a focus on instruction and achievement results throughout San Diego school system." The Institute for Learning in San Diego is the west coast branch of the Pittsburgh-based Institute for Learning directed by Lauren Resnick. Members of the Institute, most visibly the ILs and the Literacy Coordinator have made the Literacy Framework their focus this year to improve reading achievement K-12. As we described in our earlier report (April 1999, p.2), the Literacy Framework has five strands.

1. Oral Language, Listening and Speaking
2. Awareness of Sound, Symbol, and Structure
3. Skills Integration
4. Reading and Comprehension Strategies
5. Writing, Vocabulary, and Spelling

The Institute began the implementation of its Literacy Framework with two components of Strand Four: Read Aloud and Independent Reading. Reading Aloud (in which students are read to) and Independent Reading (in which students are the readers). In documents presented to the School Board, these components were described as follows:

> Reading Aloud introduces students to the joys of reading and the art of listening.

Reading aloud provides opportunities to model reading strategies. Through reading aloud students understand that the language of books is different from spoken language, develop understanding of the patterns and structures of written language, learn new words and ideas, and learn about and locate models of particular genres or forms of writing.

> Independent reading by students gives them other opportunities to gain confidence in their ability to read successfully and practice the strategies they have learned in shared reading, guided reading, read aloud and word study. Independent reading allows time for teachers to focus teaching on individual readers as she sits alongside and teaches directly to them. Books from a range of levels are available in the classroom. Students become proficient at selecting books that match their interests and reading level. Teachers provide guidance with book choices, tailor teaching to meet individual needs and meet with individuals to monitor progress.

Key to the successful implementation of the Literacy Framework is the placement of at least one, full-time Staff Developer in each school.

> [The staff developer] would be someone that would work very closely with the teachers at a site, that would model lessons, that would go in and observe and give suggestions, that would even work with groups of kids, so that a teacher can see the kinds of things that we're talking about. (Institute Staff B)

Staff Developers were to be selected from among the district's teachers and put in place early during the 1998-1999 school year. However, given disagreements between the district and the teachers' association about how to select the Staff Developers, there was no implementation of this role during the first year of reform. As a result, the Institute relied on principals to provide teachers with initial professional development pertinent to implementing Read Alouds and Independent Reading. This strategy, which required principals to lead professional development after brief introductions to the read-alouds and independent reading strategies, often resulted in weak learning opportunities for teachers. Later into the school year, the district also trained teachers to take on the role of professional developer. Again, this strategy, while serving the purpose of introducing principals and a set of teachers to the literacy framework, was not sufficient for the task.

First, the training often occurred quite late in the year, and on many occasions those doing the training were described as lacking sufficient experience and expertise with the concepts presented. Second, the training of the trainers was insufficient to develop thorough enough understanding of the ideas to enable prospective trainers to effectively train others. The new trainers were expected to work with teachers before they had had an opportunity to try the strategies in their own classrooms. Furthermore, with no staff development days this year, principals often found themselves without sufficient time to train their teachers. As a result, they presented the new information in an even more abbreviated fashion, often in a staff meeting after school. By the time the new knowledge and skill reached teachers, much of the theory or

rationale for the practice was eliminated.[1] There were few opportunities for teachers to learn from knowledgeable others or get feedback as they experimented with new practices. For a trainer of trainer model to work, each successive group of trainers has to reach a substantial level of expertise before it can effectively train others. SDSC was unable to establish such conditions during the past schoolyear. One principal described her view of the result:

> There's that old staff development story, the original staff developer has the peppermint, and then they hand it to the trainers, and the [next] trainers. By the time it gets to the teachers, there's nothing left of the taste at all. I think that's part of what happened here. [Principal A]

This is not to say that principals and teachers learned nothing of value. It is to say that, absent the staff developers and, therefore, appropriate staff development, principals and teachers had less command of the new knowledge and skill than they and the district would have liked. As a result, teachers varied considerably in the extent to which they were able to incorporate these new practices into their teaching.

Since the fall, the district has expanded its efforts, introducing components of Strands 2, and 5 of the Framework through CORE (Consortium On Reading Excellence) training. This training was part of a grant commitment made the previous year, prior to the district's new administration, under Senate Bill 1086. The focus of this training was Word Study, including phonemic awareness, spelling, and vocabulary.

In our April update report to the Foundation, we wrote:

> Teachers and principals are also working hard and, too often, they are attempting to implement the new strategies without sufficient in-school professional development support. They may know how to implement, for example, the initial Read Aloud strategies; they do not yet know how to improve that strategy so that the kind of talking about books is what the Institute would call Accountable Talk. Teachers need help to get better at what they are learning to do. We imagine as the Institute moves ahead to implement additional components of the Literacy Framework, this need for on-site support will increase. (P.17)

Our spring 1999 site visits confirmed the need for more and more sophisticated professional development. Implementation of the large-scale professional development efforts planned for the summer, coupled with the advent of the school-based resource teachers who will focus on implementation of the literacy framework, may provide teachers and principals with what they

---

[1]The Institute provided teachers with books and other written materials that explained the theories and practices related to the different reading strategies. However, teachers reported that they had little or no time to do the reading and that if they read them, they had no opportunity to discuss them and their implications with their colleagues. In order for teachers to learn from written materials, in our view, the district needs to establish time for teachers a) to do the reading and b) to discuss the implications of that reading with one another.

need.

Before turning to an update on the implementation of the Literacy Framework, we want to examine the critical role of the ILs in tranforming principals into true instructional leaders of their schools. Although the Literacy Framework requires teachers to make genuine changes in their pedagogy, in the end their role remains that of teacher. The reform demands something more of principals; it requires them to shift, fundamentally, what they know and do and how they spend their time. Making sure that such changes occur is largely the responsibility of the ILs.

During the past schoolyear, ILs visited schools and classrooms to monitor the implementation of the Read-Alouds and Independent Reading and to provide feedback to principals about the school's progress. ILs looked for evidence that teachers were stimulating "Accountable Talk" (defined above) in their classrooms. They worked to provide principals with strategies to use to ensure better teacher implementation. ILs are the visible incarnation of reform at the schools, embodying the Superintendent's and Chancellor's hopes and demands for changes in instruction that will lead to students' achievement of high standards. ILs shoulder the burden of simultaneously designing, learning and implementing their role while holding principals accountable for quality implementation of their expectations. It is under the attentive eyes of the ILs that principals and teachers work to implement the new literacy strategies.

II. DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER ROLE: FOCUS ON IL WORK WITH PRINCIPALS

Central office administrators and principals in San Diego agree that, until recently, principals were held accountable for managing their schools. Of course they were concerned with the instructional program and made efforts to improve children's opportunities to learn. However, they were not held directly responsible for the quality of instruction in their schools.[2] As a result, most principals did not a) spend much time in classrooms, b) have an instructionally focused framework for considering what kind of teaching and learning were going on in classrooms, or c) routinely make suggestions to teachers about how to improve their practice. No one from central office – neither assistant superintendents nor the curriculum staff – asked them to talk about the quality and variation in curriculum and instruction in their schools. So, with the advent of the Institute for Learning and the implementation of the IL role at the start of the 1998-1999 school year, everything changed. As one IL put it,

> Probably the biggest change for the principals is that when we go out to visit them in schools, which is about four times a year, our conversation, our actions, everything we do centers around instruction and student achievement. And that's a big paradigm shift for them. Up until last year, when the assistant superintendent came out to the school, which might have been once or twice a year, it was largely about operational issues, parent complaints. Rarely did the

[2]Implementation of the district's accountability system placed greater responsibility on principals for increasing student achievement. It did not, however, require explicit, observable changes in their roles.

assistant superintendent go into a classroom. [IL-A]

As we wrote in our April 1999 update report, during the fall of 1998, principals were getting used to the new roles and responsibilities defined by the Institute for Learning and monitored and supported by the ILs. Principals varied in their responses to the changes, but agreed that they wanted to become more competent at leading the literacy focus at their schools. Some appreciated the ILs focus on instruction; some were unhappy about the top-down organization and implementation of the reform and some were made anxious by IL feedback letters that included negative comments about them and their schools and made concrete suggestions for changes that the IL would like to see on the next site visit. This range of feelings did not alter the fact that principals were pleased with the literacy focus and its approaches to helping students improve their literacy knowledge and skill.

As the 1998-1999 school year advanced, ILs continued to visit schools to monitor and support implementation of the Literacy Framework. They continued to a) observe in classrooms, b) coach principals on how to give feedback to teachers, and c) elaborate their expectations for principals' involvement in observing and coaching teachers. By the time of our early May and June 1999 site visits, principals were more used to the new emphases and interactions. ILs had visited schools at least three or four times and the literacy emphases were better established than in the fall. ILs expressed greater clarity about their own roles and about the ways in which their work was affecting principals. They understood that the reforms and their role in supporting implementation were placing great demands on principals. They thought that the demands were appropriate, but recognized that they might feel overwhelming to principals. Principals with whom we spoke varied, once again, in their view of the reform and how it was being implemented. Some continued to applaud the focus and process; some described themselves as depressed and demoralized by the way in which the district was moving forward; and some were in the middle, pleased with the focus, a bit overwhelmed, but neither depressed nor angry about the process.

In this section of the report, we focus on the ILs' views of their role – what it involves and what they do – as it relates to their work with principals. We describe their role to illuminate what their work means for principals, in particular, and to emphasize how intensely and quickly the shift to this new principal role has occurred. As a result of the ILs' focus, principals are engaging in new kinds of conversations that demonstrate the dramatic shift in the district's attention to instruction. ILs are asking principals to know and do things they had never before contemplated. Their requirements are expected to change the ways in which principals work with their teachers and with their supervisors. We begin with a brief discussion of how the ILs describe gaining the confidence and cooperation of the principals with whom they work. Then we turn to their perspectives on the focus of their school visits.

Establishing Relationships with Principals

ILs know that to do their job well, they will have to establish trust between themselves and the

25 principals with whom they work. This is no small task. ILs are still new at their jobs, and have to learn the role as they implement it. All of them are responsible for a set of K-12 schools; most do not have experience working across that range of school levels. All of them are responsible for advancing the literacy strategies emphasized by the Institute for Learning; most were not literacy specialists before they began as ILs. Their job requires them to support principals as they learn their new roles and responsibilities; it requires them to evaluate the same principals in order to help the district determine which ones are capable of leading their schools to improved teaching and learning. How do the ILs deal with these complex facets of their roles?

First, they report that they do not pretend to be what they are not. ILs who were not well-grounded in literacy strategies have learned a great deal about literacy in their own professional development and point out to principals that they must do the same.

> I'm not a literacy expert, and that's an advantage sometimes. When I speak to principals, when I deal with my learning community of 25 principals, I can say to them, "I know how you feel. Some of you are stronger in literacy than others. Some of you have more information and knowledge than others. And guess what? So do I. And we are all going to learn this stuff together. And we're going to read, and we're going to learn from each other, and the kind of message that you need to portray to your teachers is the one that I'm portraying to you. Don't hold yourself out to be the one who has the answers to everything." [IL-B]

> With the focus on literacy it would be helpful for ILs to have an understanding of what the framework is, and what our components look like. But we don't have to be the expert. [Neither do the principals.] We [all] do have to have a sense of how curriculum communication works, the kinds of support that teachers need, and be able to deliver that to the teachers. [We need to] be able to recognize what's occurring through the instructional program that [principals] have in place at their school, and really dissect that, to be a benefit to teachers. To know good instruction, when we see it. And when it's not there, what to do about it. [IL-C]

Second, ILs work to establish strong, trusting relationships with principals. This is challenging given the context in which they simultaneously a) require principals to implement a new role and a set of new literacy strategies and b) evaluate as well as support principals in doing this work.

> I've heard Tony [Alvarado] say one of the most important things is to know how to work with people. Those people skills are so important, because if you know all about instruction, if you know all about how to teach reading, but don't have the ability to motivate the principal, and to coach the principal into doing certain things at the school, nothing is going to change. [IL-D]

> We've got to know every one of the principals the same way we expect the

> principals to know the teachers, and we have to be pretty individual in how we approach them. Elaine Fink [from New York] is very clear. She says it's all about relationships. So how do you build these strong relationships with people at the same time you're really pushing them pretty hard? And telling them, "You've got to get better." Our challenge is developing these very strong personal relationships, and yet, pushing, and making it clear that their best isn't going to be good enough any more. That's not the name of the game anymore. And that's hard. [IL-E]

ILs know that establishing the kinds of relationships they hope for is a work in progress. They are not yet established.

Finally, as they work to establish new and trusting relationships, ILs are aware of the increased demands they place on principals. Not only do principals have to learn more about instruction, they must initiate new kinds of interactions with their teachers. In the old days, principals could concentrate on developing collegial, non-demanding relationships with most of their teachers. Now, they must take on a direct leadership role that demonstrates their positional authority. This can be quite difficult.

> I think the biggest challenge for all of our principals at the secondary level is that they can no longer just let teachers do their own thing. And secondary teachers have for years just done their own thing, and some of it was good, and most of it was very well intentioned. But, we're no longer saying that's okay, because [we know] if you keep doing what you've been doing, you're going to get the results you've been getting. That is not okay. If you can show me that what you've been doing has produced great student achievement, I'll leave you alone. But no one can, not for all their kids. I think that's been the biggest change. We've tinkered with reform as far as structural and procedural things, but we haven't tinkered with reform in the classroom [before]. We haven't tackled that tough piece before in this global way. That's the big difference. [IL-B]

Creating trust and providing support while insisting that principals take on new roles is challenging for the ILs.

> It's [finding] that balance between motivating and keeping principals at least feeling like they're making a difference and yet never accepting that good is good enough. How do you do that without just absolutely devastating many of our principals who have always felt like they were just fine. And all of a sudden now this year bang! We say, "Hi. How are you? We've known each other for a long time, and oh, by the way, the test scores don't look so great, and let's talk about
>
> how we're going to get them better. Let's go to classrooms, and tell me how you're going to get these teachers better? " This is a very different way of operating. And so how do you move from kind of a soft supportive way of being

> to being much more direct in our conversations -- not unprofessional and not unkind – but just much more directed toward "How are we going to get better?" How do we do that without just totally putting certain principals in a frenzy? [IL-D]

ILs know that they still have a long way to go. Their role in evaluating principals in light of the new expectations adds to the complexity of the task of creating strong and trusting relationships. Principals cannot yet know what their IL's evaluation will mean for their futures.

Conducting School Visits

ILs visit each school at least three times a year. The purpose of the visits, which last three to four hours, is for the IL, along with the principal and, perhaps, vice principals, to visit classrooms and conference with the principal and/or teachers about the teaching they have seen and the progress of implementation of the literacy strategies. ILs look for the specific reading strategies that were the focus of year one to assess the effectiveness of their implementation and identify needed improvements. These interactions are designed to strengthen principals' knowledge and skill with respect to the components of the Literacy Framework so that they can better support teachers in its implementation. They are designed to provide principals with coaching skills they can use to move their teachers forward. They are also designed to give principals a framework with which to observe classrooms and conference with teachers when the IL is not on the scene.

ILs understand that the work they demand of principals during and between visits is different and difficult. The questions they ask, highlighted below by one of the ILs, suggest the depth and breadth of knowledge that principals are expected to have now. They reflect the district's belief that teachers' practice and knowledge is central to increasing student achievement. And, they suggest why principals feel, at times, that they are being interrogated rather than supported.

> It's not easy to have someone who comes in to ask you, as principal, "So tell me about this teacher. What are the strengths? What are the weaknesses? Tell me about the kids in here. Who are the Q-1 and Q-2 kids? What is that teacher doing to insure that these children at the low end are going to get it? How do you know that the teacher is doing that? Tell me what evidence you have over time that these kids are getting better? Do you talk to them? What are the questions that you pose to the children, to check to see if they're getting it or not? What kind of written feedback do you give this teacher? Do you meet with the teacher? Tell me the kinds of questions that you're asking the teacher? What's the change that you've seen, if any? And what are you going to do if that teacher isn't changing and willing to change?" Those are really harsh questions. And, because we're going classroom by classroom, they've got to know every teacher, and they've got to know the kids, especially the Q-1, Q-2 kids, because we uniformly ask the principals, "Who are the Q-1, Q-2 kids? How do you know what their progress is? Are these teachers getting out to see other teachers in other schools? Are they

> studying?" [IL-E]

In order to answer the ILs important questions and conduct such observations and conversations on their own, principals need to know more about their teachers and students and more about instruction and how to talk about it. Talking about instruction is difficult for many of the principals who, as we noted earlier, are not used to having such conversations.

> Sometimes principals still are uncomfortable about how they say things to teachers. They couch their words so that the teacher isn't too clear about what they need to do. One principal I work with knows how to do this. ...Take something like the purpose of the lesson. He lets the teachers know, "Now when I come in to observe that's what I'm going to look for, because it's important." He goes in. If he sees it fine. If he doesn't, he comments on that. If they have stated the purpose, but he has suggestions on how they can make it better, that's what he'll do. And that's the kind of thing we want to see happening. [IL-D]

ILs believe that as principals and teachers study and learn about literacy together, their conversations about instruction will become richer and more productive.

Principals, like the ILs, need to develop people skills and explicit strategies that will help them provide constructive feedback that teachers can hear and respond to. After all, teachers can thwart the principal's best efforts if they choose to obstruct the change process. And, principals who are unskilled in providing good feedback to teachers will have little success in helping them improve or in gaining their buy-in to the reform agenda.

In addition to learning more about literacy in general, ILs realize that, at the secondary level, principals need to know about reading in the content areas.

> The biggest challenge for a principal? How do you help a content area teacher with kids who can't read? How do you know what to look for in good instruction for a content area teacher? That's a big change for the principals. [That's] the kind of support we need to train the principals in: what to look for when they go into classrooms. [IL-B]

ILs use their school visits to engage principals and teachers in conversations focused on literacy strategies. Their purpose is to monitor the progress of the reform and to ensure that principals know how to do this work on their own . How do the ILs accomplish these goals? Fundamentally, ILs report using two strategies. First, they model for principals the behaviors they want to see and, second, they observe principals attempting the strategies and offer feedback.

> Normally, when I go to a school, I go and observe the teacher. We step outside and the principal and I and the VP talk about it. This time I went in and observed the teacher. The teacher then came to the principal's office and the principal and

> myself and the VP discussed with the teacher what we saw. And I let the principal know ahead of time that I was going to give suggestions. The teacher did a read-aloud. I was really working on the suggestions of trying to get away from so much recall of facts. A lot of the questions she asked the kids had to do with facts of the story, and the question she gave for the kids to engage [with] in the partner talk wasn't at a high level. So what did she get? She got really silly responses. And she recognized that. We talked about how important it is to plan for the read-aloud. And she thought she'd done planning, but she hadn't thought about preparing for the questions ahead of time and using Post-its in the book. So we talked about that, and she could recognize, "Yes." That was what she should do the next time. And then I gave her a lot of positives. [IL-D]
>
> And what we do is we go into a classroom, probably for an average of I'd say 15 minutes. And then we come out of that classroom and we talk about positive indicators that the principal and VP's are seeing and any next steps that they would give that particular teacher in a coaching mode to help move their practice forward. In that conversation, I also tell what I see. And principals, I believe, are finding it quite helpful in focusing their lens and getting better at what to look for. At the beginning of this year, I can tell you that principals' observations were very general. And they were having trouble moving to more specific indicators that would really help to move a teacher's practice. I still see people all over the continuum with that, but people are getting much better at giving that specific feedback. [IL-A]

ILs know that, at the end of the first year of implementation, most principals are not yet accomplished in diagnosing the strengths of a lesson, discerning what the teacher's next steps should be, and conveying that information in a positive manner to the teacher. Modeling these strategies during the three school visits cannot provide principals with the depth and breadth of professional development they need for this work. However, ILs note that principals have made progress and that such work with teachers will be a focus of ongoing principal professional development. They also point out that the school visits are just one part of a systematic professional development program for principals that includes principal conferences, support meetings and interschool visits.

By visiting so many schools and classrooms, ILs become well aware of the range and depth of implementation of the literacy strategies. They can use this knowledge to inform the kinds of professional development made available to principals who will need to help their teachers. For example, ILs have learned that teachers are still having trouble implementing Accountable Talk and giving up their role as directors of learning. In fact, this observation is the most dominant finding across the ILs we interviewed.

> **I think one of the biggest things that everyone is struggling with is the issue of Accountable Talk in the read-aloud or whatever strategy the teacher is using, where the teacher is able to give up that directed conversation with the**

one-on-one, and have students talking to students. The emphasis in the past has been put on keeping discipline and control and managing. And the fear that if I let the kids talk, then I've given that up, and I don't have that control, and I'd be criticized for it. They also feel that they want to hear the right answers from the students. I think it's probably some of that, and then just not trusting that students are capable of doing that kind of talking independently, and that that is the way in which they gain the meaning of what is being taught. [IL-C]

We see a lot of still sage-on-the-stage teaching. Because that's all we've known for so many years. So how do we help teachers become more as facilitators rather than sage-on-the-stage? How do we get teachers to have students to have conversations with each other and to build on each other's conversations, rather than a teacher asking a question, students responding? Teachers asking a question, another student responds. So we're trying to train principals to train teachers to use techniques such as to say, "Mary, what did you think about what Johnnie just said?" And references to text instead of "I think this is stupid," based on what? Guiding questions to teachers so that they lead students into another way of thinking. [IL-B]

If I think generally of the areas that we need to work on, it still probably is allowing the kids to do more of the talking, and the teacher to not be so directed in the lessons. I would like to see the teacher set the stage, know what the purpose is for the lesson, know the different steps they need to go through, but within that allow the students time to give their input to dialog with each other, and to report it out. That's probably what my staff development needs to really work on. I see that in all schools. [IL-D]

ILs have also learned that, even when teachers are implementing components of the reform, they do not always understand the underlying rationale for them. As a result, they don't use them well. As we noted earlier, weak professional development is the likely cause of this kind of implementation.

One of the things that I've noticed across the board -- elementary through senior high -- is that many teachers do not see the purpose in the read-alouds. They don't see how it connects to the rest of what they teach. Their book selections don't necessarily match anything in particular that they're teaching. Their quality talk that goes along with that is still very teacher directed. It's as though I've done my read-aloud. I'm done, close the book, and now I can get on with what I really do. ...[They don't see that] read-aloud isn't a stand alone, but that it really is powerful when it's connected to creating an opportunity for students to see you model some of the strategies you would hope that they would use in independent reading. [IL-F]

See the independent reading at the secondary level, a lot of people just say,

> **"Well, yes, I've got kids doing the reading." But they're not doing the conferencing piece. At the high school level, they're definitely not doing the conferencing piece. At the middle school it's still the same struggle.** They're looking at the language arts classes, and we have to look at what's the purpose of conferencing at the secondary level? Well the purpose of conferencing is for the teacher to know each student as a reader. To know what level they are, what their interests are, what their strengths and weaknesses are. Well that takes some ongoing time, and if you've got English classes going at 30, 35 kids, and you see five English classes a day, there's no way an English teacher at the secondary level is going to make conferencing work that way. At the middle level [most schools] have two blocks of language arts, social studies, humanities block, but they're still not at 20 to 1. They are large, but at least they see them for two-hour blocks. And it seems to be the logical place to put conferencing and knowing students as a reader. [IL-B]

IL visits are designed to be the prime approach through which principals learn what they need to know to lead implementation instruction at their schools. We have too few principals in our sample to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the approach across the middle schools, but we know there is variation. One principal in our sample had little to say about the ILs visits; one focused on her support for removing weak teachers; and one gave an example of how helpful the IL's suggestions can be.

> During the last formal visit, we [the IL and principal] walked around the school and we went into a teacher's classroom [where the teacher] was doing Read Aloud. She was doing Accountable Talk and really doing a good job. We left the classroom and the IL said to me, "OK, now what would you do to encourage that teacher to take it to the next step of interaction with Accountable Talk?" And I said I didn't know the answer. And so, she told me the answer. What she said was that what the teacher was doing while she was reading a book was dialoging with the students throughout the book. But it was a teacher student driven dialogue. It was not student to student. So what the IL suggested is that we work on, instead of it always being an answer to the teacher, that we pair the students and actually get them talking to one another. Once she told me that answer, I went back to [this teacher] and I said, "I learned something today." I talked to [the teacher] about it. It was kind of an "aha" for both of us. So [the teacher] and I put together a staff development program for the staff where we developed a continuum for Accountable Talk and the different levels of effectiveness for Accountable Talk. And we talked about how we can all, we as a staff, can get to the next levels of effectiveness for Accountable Talk. That would have never happened in the past. [Principal C]

This example suggests the potential power of the IL role to influence principals' capacity to lead instructional improvement in their schools. Such close work with principals and teachers, as we said earlier, provides ILs with information about what principals can do and also provides them

with information about the progress of implementation schoolwide. This enables them them to identify areas in need of further professional development.

Other Opportunities for Principals to Learn. No one thinks that principals can learn all that they need to know from the ILs school visits. Therefore, the district has organized additional strategies designed to enhance principals knowledge and skill with respect to the components of the Literacy Framework. ILs talked to us briefly about the Learning Community Meetings, Principal Conferences and informal opportunities for principals to learn. We do not know much about each of these, but note them to indicate their potential for assisting principals in taking on their instructional leadership role.

Learning Communities are comprised of the 25 K-12 schools associated with each IL. This configuration replaces the K-12 cluster pattern that was comprised, for the most part, of a high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools. The Learning Community structure is designed to establish new relationships and ways of interacting by creating a diverse set of principals and schools that can learn from one another in formal and informal settings. Learning Communities meet regularly under the leadership of the IL. During the 1998-1999 schoolyear, the principals in each community began to know one another. Many had had little prior contact. As a result of the dismantling of the cluster organization and the establishment of the Learning Communities by a directive, ILs knew that it would take time to develop a genuine feeling of community. One of the ILs described the goal for the Learning Communities as follows:

> What we envision is 20 to 25 principals who know each other, know the work that each is undertaking, [and] are able to support each other by informal groupings, to have an opportunity to be with schools from an area where they may not have had contact before. [This can happen] because the Learning Communities have schools from all over the city – there are high performing schools and low performing schools within that community. [The hope is] for trust to develop among the group, so that they can talk honestly about their challenges and their needs and the type of support that they need, and can offer to others. [IL-C]

Although ILs recognize that they do not yet have true learning communities, they say that by the end of the schoolyear, principals appeared to be able to talk more openly in their meetings. Some reported making informal contacts with Learning Community colleagues in order to discuss issues they had in common. Principals are not discouraged from having similar conversations with colleagues in their former clusters since they are still connected through the feeder patterns.

In the next schoolyear, ILs plan to reconfigure some principal meetings so that they are not always K-12 and principals will get the chance to work with grade level colleagues.

> Next year we're going to do a full K-12 principals' conference one day a month, and then about every six weeks, we'll have a half-day instructional conference with each of the different levels on a different day of the week. That will enable

> all ILs to be with all of the levels. I think that's going to be a huge improvement. [IL-A]

ILs described one other formal learning forum, the Principal Conferences. These conferences have covered topics such as: implementing a literacy block, word study, read alouds, literature circles, the CORE program, and the connections between the literacy focus and standards. Principals have indicated that there are other items about which they would like to learn more.

> Principals want to know how, [after] you go in and observe instructional practices, and then go back and conference with that teacher, they wanted information on good questioning techniques [to use with teachers]. [They wanted] ways to work with individuals that would hit the critical concerns, but not sound like criticism. ILs want to be able to ask the precise questioning to get to the heart of whatever the concern is, and then be able to give good feedback so that positive things happen rather than someone takes it negatively, and then we get: my heels are entrenched, and I'm not going to budge. [IL-F]

> I think some of them first of all weren't used to writing out observations on a regular basis, and the two hours mandate to be in classrooms was much more of a challenge for secondary people than elementary. So they were asking "What do other people do?" How to be more specific than broad, and certainly continue to give praise and talk about the good things that were there, but also get down to the fact that there was something probably that you needed to ask a question about or that you needed to give a suggestion for improvement. [IL-C]

In addition to such formal meetings, ILs would love to have principals, for example at the middle level, form study groups and read and discuss books. They would also like principals to lead such study groups at their schools, as one IL noted:

> I would like every mid-level [school] to have an official study group, like on the *Mosaic of Thought*. Then they report out to the staff, and then the school decides, "Well why don't we get this book for a certain number of our teachers." So it's not just eight teachers that are studying it. I mean there is so much more that we all need to learn about how kids learn, and how we can help teachers learn. [IL-D]

A Word About Workload. The ideas and ideals suggested by the ILs are exciting. The IL school visits coupled with the other formal and informal learning opportunities have the potential to provide principals with the knowledge and skill they need to implement their new roles. Those new roles, in which principals spend at least two hours each day observing in classrooms and conferencing with teachers have the potential to change teachers' work with students and, therefore, students' opportunities to learn at high levels.

However, at the present time, principals are being asked to implement the new strategies and

spend their time differently in a context in which nothing has been removed from their set of responsibilities. Principals as well as ILs agree that this situation creates problems. They know that something about the principals' workload has to change if they are to take on their new roles and responsibilities.

> This first year has been a very difficult one for principals, because as they are recreating their role, some willingly and some not as willingly, they are left with the fact that, "All this other stuff that has constituted my role is still there. And I couldn't necessarily manage instruction before, because I had all of these things to do, but now I need to make this a commitment, and I'm willing to do that." They struggle with all of the other operational demands that have been created over time and embedded in the system. And even if we said, "Don't worry about it." It still leaves them with the pink flyer that comes to them, saying, "Here's a due date." And they are conscientious; they want to do a good job; they don't want to get in trouble. So they have us saying, "Instruction is the most important thing," yet they are on their own to figure out how to manage everything. Over time it will shift, but for the first year or two, I think it's probably quite demanding on their time. [IL-F]

> We say you need to be in classrooms two hours a day, and that is an important piece of their job. But we also remember all of the other things that they have to do [because we were principals]. That understanding of having to deal with their parents, with their teachers, with their students, with their classifieds, with the district. It's a tough, tough job to be a principal nowadays, and we've made it tougher. I think we've made it better because we've provided focus, and we've given principals the green light, and the encouragement and the support to move forward with the important piece of instruction that they didn't have before. They knew they needed to do that, but where was the support for it? Now the support is there for it, not enough, but it's there. [IL-B]

Principals need to do a lot more instructionally focused work and they need to know more about literacy and instruction in order to do it. Furthermore, they need to have time in which to do this work. By the end of the 1998-1999 school year, principals were taking on this additional work with nothing having been removed from their former job responsibilities. In our view, if principals are to implement their new roles without succumbing to exhaustion and burn-out, it is important for the district to move swiftly to relieve them of some of their non-instructional obligations.

ILs Learning Opportunities and Challenges

As they have developed and implemented their role this year, ILs have learned a great deal by reading, visiting New York and Pittsburgh, meeting with one another and with knowledgeable consultants and debriefing with Tony Alvarado. ILs have learned a great deal about literacy, schooling at all levels, the implementation of reform and how to work with principals. Meeting

among themselves, they have worked hard to develop common agreements about the work they want to see at the schools. Interviewing the ILs reveals that they share a common language and set of understandings; they seem to have agreed upon standards for the work they want to have done at the schools.

ILs have been helped in their work by strong leadership from the Chancellor, Tony Alvarado, and from the opportunity to see the kinds of practices they are trying to put in place in action and effective in other urban schools. ILs and others in the district have a concrete vision of what classrooms and practice can look like and evidence of high student achievement when those practices are in place. They have available concrete examples of what they are attempting. This is powerful and it is unlike the situation in which they worked prior to the current reform agenda. In the past, central office, principals and teachers were working toward the implementation of standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment without any concrete examples of what such practices looked like and without any proof that their implementation would lead to higher student achievement. As a result, they did not know quite what they were trying to achieve. The fact that ILs and others can visit New York schools and talk to principals, teachers, staff developers and central office instructional managers about their work gives them a terrific advantage as they help principals and teachers develop comparable knowledge and skill.

ILs' comments suggest that they have learned a great deal, need to know more, and find some aspects of their role more challenging than others. One of the challenges concerns translating knowledge and skill about content and reform into coaching strategies that enable others to take on such work. For example, ILs need to learn how to do the work of reform, not merely understand it as these two IL comments reveal.

> One of the most challenging areas of vulnerability for the seven of us is just this whole notion of how you coach somebody to get better. Knowing enough to even be able to be a resource to a principal, from our point of view, and then helping the principal to know enough about instruction to be a resource to the teacher, to give [teachers] some guidance about where to go next, that's really very very complex. [It's challenging to] try to get the coaching [knowledge] from New York and coaching from Pittsburgh, [to then] try to make it make sense for us in San Diego, and then go out to our middle schools in particular, and try to then coach the principals at the middle schools, many of whom admit they have not been instructional leaders. [IL-E]

> I do need to know about read-aloud and guided reading. I need to know about instructional strategies and pedagogical skills et cetera. I mean that whole area, but what's more important is, once you see all of that, then how do you translate that into what you're going to say to the teacher or what you're going to say to the principal? [IL-D]

ILs also report that they need more time for their own learning than what they have available.

> I've been doing a lot of reading. I've grown a lot, because a lot of this stuff is new to me, and so I've been doing a lot of professional reading that I haven't done before, and that's been helpful. Going to Pittsburgh with the Institute in Pittsburgh and interacting with the folks there has been very very helpful, and going to New York. My visit to New York in November was great, seeing those principals and visiting those schools and interacting with Elaine and those folks there was great learning. And the third focus for me has been the team. My colleagues who have different experiences. I've learned a lot from them,... But there's not enough time in the day. We have too many schools, too many committees. When we signed on to do this, we were going--the focus was going to be schools. And it still is, but we have other duties pulling on us. [IL-B]

ILs talk about time in two ways. First, they think they need more time to do the work required at their 25 schools because that work takes more time than they envisioned at the outset. Second, they have found some of their time eroded by requests for their participation on district committees. This committee work is important, they agree, because the committees are trying to develop policies and strategies that will align all district activities with the goals of the Institute. However, time spent on committees is time not spent directly on issues of instruction. We know that there are plans underway to reduce the ILs' committee time. It might be useful to consider increasing the number of ILs, as well, to enable them to spend more time with principals and teachers. Although the first year of the reform was quite difficult and demanding, there is no reason to think that the ILs' work load will decrease as the Institute moves forward with implementing other components of reform.

In the context of the need for more time, of all the hard work and the mixed emotions that have accompanied the efforts by central office, ILs, principals and teachers, it is important to remember that everyone has accomplished a great deal. Where it matters most, at the classroom and student levels, there is evidence that literacy instruction is improving. This, after all, is the goal of the reform initiative.

> I think it's been a tremendous growth year. From September to now, the difference in what I'm seeing at all of the schools K-12 I think has been very strong. Kids actually are reading. Kids have books in their hands. The centers that classrooms have are a lot less cut and paste and coloring and more reading and writing, which is what we want. When I go into classrooms, I actually see kids angry because they didn't get their conferencing time with their teacher, because the teacher got busy with somebody else. They didn't get their time; they wanted to talk about their book with the teacher. I didn't see that before. I didn't see that in October. I see that now. And it's not just [being put on] for me. They're ready to talk about their book, and when the teacher couldn't talk to them, I talked to them, and when I asked kids about what's going on, and why they're doing what they're doing, and what they're doing, they can talk about it so much better now than they could in October. So it is making a difference. [IL-B]

To examine the progress with the Literacy Framework from the perspective of teachers and principals, we turn next to a consideration of the current status of Read Alouds, Independent Reading, Accountable Talk, and Word Study in our sample schools.

III. THE STATUS OF THE LITERACY FOCUS AT THE SCHOOLS

Literacy work at the schools has focused on implementing two specific approaches[3]: Read Alouds and Independent Reading. We defined these approaches at the beginning of this update report (see pp. 3-4). We wrote about their early use in our April 1999 report which reflected implementation as of December 1998. At that time, we noted that some schools had created a range of organizational structures to enable them to include this reading approach. For example, teachers at Wilson Academy use the advisory period to focus on literacy skills, in particular, Read Alouds and Word Study. At Muirlands, the staff designated Wednesday's Advisory for Read Alouds. At other schools, Read Alouds had become, for the most part, the responsibility of language arts teachers, many of whom told us that this has always been part of their teaching.

Now, we want to review their status at the end of the 1998-1999 school year. In addition, we want to present information on Accountable Talk, an approach that should be used in all aspects of the educational program, and on Word Study, another component of the Literacy Framework that had some attention in the spring. Finally, we consider the role of professional development in helping teachers learn what they need to know to further implement these literacy approaches.

Our overall conclusion is that teachers continue to work hard to implement the literacy approaches and they find them beneficial. Some have found creative ways to integrate them into their teaching; others, as the ILs noted, think of them as additional approaches that are taught apart from the ongoing curriculum. This is not surprising given the range of teacher knowledge and skill at the start of the schoolyear and the absence of the school-based staff developers who would have been able to help teachers learn to use the approaches.

Read Alouds

In the spring we found most language arts teachers feeling quite comfortable with Read Alouds and we learned of some interesting approaches teachers had developed to integrate Read Alouds into their curriculum. The following teacher demonstrates such an integration.

> With my regular eighth graders, [I used] pictures books that maybe have vocabulary for third graders. But that meant that everyone understood it, and then I could teach the concept of plot or character development. And since it was so

[3]ILs refer to Read Alouds and Independent reading as "approaches" to literacy. Teachers and principals use both "approaches" and "strategies" to refer to these literacy efforts. In light of the ILs desire to have these terms used correctly, in this report, we use "approaches" to refer to Read Alouds and Independent Reading, for example, and "strategies" to refer to the more discrete activities teachers implement to accomplish each of these approaches.

> short and everyone understood the language, I wasn't trying to teach process and content at the same time. They already understood the content, because vocabulary was very easy. So then I could teach them the process of: How do we discern a scene from this? How do we look at character development? Then, when we read something a little bit harder like *The Cask of the Amontillado* by Edgar Allen Poe, still short, but very dense, very difficult vocabulary, I could say "We know how to find theme. I know this is a little harder, but remember when we [referring back to the simpler book]" That's how I used the read-alouds. [Teacher A]

Teachers who work with second language students report that they have always used Read Alouds to work on comprehension and vocabulary development. Therefore, while they agreed with the use of this approach, they suggest that it was not a new approach to them. From their descriptions of how they use the approach, it is difficult to tell whether they are incorporating the main ideas of Read Alouds into their work.

> Honestly, it hasn't been a major change for me, because teaching ESL, I have always read aloud to my kids, because -- and done the checking for understanding, and always had a purpose, there's always been a purpose to my reading. It's not just, OK, just sit and relax, I'm going to read to you. There's always been something that they know we're going to be discussing at the end, so I know they're not just spacing out. So I use it in different ways. [Teacher EE]

In contrast, one teacher reported that she was inspired by the focus on Read Alouds to devise an approach to help English language learners sharpen their listening and vocabulary skills. She had students fold a piece of paper into eighths. Then while she read, students wrote a few key words or a phrase in each section to remind them of the most important ideas or events in the reading. When finished the students could compare their papers with others to generate discussion and agreement on the key events. They could also use the paper as a guide for reviewing or retelling the story.[4]

Language arts teachers and others who are enthusiastic about the Read-Alouds can talk about their purpose and how they use them. Their words suggest that, while they are reading aloud to students and checking for comprehension – practices that can help students learn – they may not be using Read Aloud approaches to help students develop the skills used by good readers.

> This is the last Read Aloud that we did. The kids had nine squares which they filled in. Each square had a chapter, so they had to pick out something from each

---

[4]We know little about how the Institute wants Read Alouds and other literacy approaches to be used with English Language Learners (ELL). Our concern is that instruction in ELL classes may remain on the level of listening skills and vocabulary development without enabling students to develop the higher order thinking skills they will need to progress. We heard nothing from ELL teachers that distinguished their use of Read Alouds, for example, with low versus high level ELL students.

> chapter, just to show that they were paying attention [while I read]. So this is how I handled the last book. They enjoyed that, and they turned out some real good work. [Teacher J]

> You may notice that one of the things I did today was, first of all, tie in why I wanted to use this particular reading. I asked probing questions. In this case, it was realistic [reading], so their answers were basically factual answers. But when you're doing fiction, often you ask what they think happens next or so on, and, of course, you can in this one also, but I just haven't gotten to a point where I can do that yet. So you're using questioning strategies, you're not just sitting reading to them. You're trying to involve them in the thinking process. [Teacher Q]

> Call of the Wild is a very difficult novel for eighth graders, but it's my favorite novel to teach because there's so much that comes out of it. And were they to read it by themselves, they would not get as much out of it as when I read it to them. So I read the entire novel to them. We stopped, and we talked about things as we were reading. I have a lot of students who have only been out of ESL classes for two years. That novel would be impossible for them, but yet they got all the benefit of the novel. They truthfully could say they had read it, because after I read it, they had to go back. They had to look at the vocabulary. They had to summarize what happened in the chapter. [Read-Aloud] allows them to experience the novel, even though their skills would not allow them to do so on their own, and I think that's really important.[Teacher Y]

> A read-aloud is when the teacher selects a piece to read aloud to the students, and it could be a piece that's exemplary. It could be a piece showing something that she's teaching. I might read an introductory paragraph or two or a page, and then have them continue. But basically it's to teach whatever the teacher decides the class needs. I do it with lots of expression and that sort of thing. And then there's a questioning while you're reading or after you read, you ask, you guide the kids through some questions about it. [Teacher AA]

In our view, teachers using Read-Alouds in these ways are helping students comprehend the text. They are doing this, however, in what seems to be a teacher-directed way. They are not stressing the importance of enabling the students to learn how to read text with high level comprehension on their own.

Some teachers did talk about the ways in which Read-Aloud approaches should enable students to become good, independent readers. The next teacher, for example, stressed the importance of modeling good readers' approaches to the students.

> The Read Aloud is to help students better understand what they're reading. Comprehension. At least, that's my main focus: clarifying, making sure the students are following along, asking "What is this word like?" And also modeling,

> modeling how you read, as you go along: "What do you think this word means? Well, let's look at the context, clues, let's see how it's being used." So, increasing comprehension for the novice. [Teacher R]

Only a few teachers spoke so clearly about the purpose of Read-Alouds. Clarifying their purpose and modeling their strategies may be an area worthy of additional professional development attention in the next schoolyear.

Math teachers have raised concerns from the outset about what role to take with respect to implementing Read Alouds. They note that, if they spend time on them, they will spend less time teaching their math content. If they are supposed to do Read Alouds, they wonder how often and for how long. These teachers point out that their content does not lend itself especially well to this literacy approach. Several math teachers reported that they would try Read Alouds if they could find materials appropriate to their content. What to do about Read Alouds in Math (and also in science) remained a puzzle by the end of the year. Our understanding is that math teachers are not responsible for Read Alouds other than when they support the ongoing curriculum content. One teacher reported finding a reading resource that was appropriate to her curriculum:

> I found this book [about mathematicians] just this year at a math conference. The book just fit the purpose. ...It's really short, and that makes a big difference. I think if we were reading four or five, ten, twenty pages, then it wouldn't be as effective, but it's very effective the way that it is. There are really interesting things about each mathematician that are written, not just born here, raised here, but stories about a) when he was a student in school, b) how the teachers treated him, and c) problem solving everyday things that he did. I think it's not so much the read-aloud, but the material that we use for the read-aloud. [Teacher B]

As these examples suggest, there are teachers who are trying to use the Read Aloud strategies by connecting them to their instructional goals. Overall, such teachers are pleased with the results of their efforts. There are also teachers who are using Read Alouds as add-ons to their instruction. Students may be helped by such Read Alouds, but such use does not fulfill the real potential of the approach.

In addition, principals, teachers and ILs note that, while teachers are trying the approaches in good faith, many do not know how to choose Read Aloud material and how to connect it to ongoing classroom instruction. Such teachers, across the content areas, will need additional help to learn to incorporate the Read Aloud instructional technique into their curriculum. We think this realization and situation are a natural outgrowth of a) working with a new approach across curriculum areas and levels of schooling, and b) too little initial professional development and almost no on-site support. We know that the situation will change in the coming year due to the presence of the school-based Resource Teachers. And, we know that the ILs and others are discussing how and to what extent specific content area teachers should include Read Alouds in their repertoire of teaching practices.

Teachers face some of the same issues with respect to implementing the Independent Reading Component of the Literacy Framework.

Independent Reading.

Teachers remain committed to Independent Reading and report seeing a positive impact on their students. In this, our findings confirm what we learned in the fall. However, as with Read Alouds, teachers are more aware of the challenges they face in trying to fully implement this component of the Literacy Framework.

Middle school teachers report that the most challenging aspect of Independent Reading is classroom management. They struggle with how to use one-on-one conferencing while the rest of the class reads independently.[5]

> [We were told] we need to learn to read quietly, like get the whole classroom quiet and read. That's good. And then, gradually, the teacher can talk to individual students. But what happens in our type of school is when you go talk to one kid, you lose a whole bunch of kids. They start talking on the other side of the room. Is that really what you want to happen? [Teacher C]

> I found it valuable but, I still find it very difficult to do in this setting. For the whole class, the way I used to do it is better. I think more quality reading took place with just me staying up here reading, and kind of glancing up every once in a while. It's quiet. I think, whenever I do start conferencing with a student, this little core of kids, across the room, thinks it's chat time. So, those who may be into their books are disturbed by them, and it's kind of a ripple effect. [Teacher D]

These teachers' comments reveal genuine problems which they will need to learn to manage if they are to implement the Independent Reading component of the Literacy Framework. Their comments also suggest that helping teachers learn to manage the less teacher-directed strategies, more generally, might enable students to take a more active role in their own learning.

Two teachers, who initially struggled with behavior problems, reported that they gradually found ways to socialize the students so that individual conferences became possible. This first teacher describes helping the children first to understand what silent reading means and how to do it. Then, as a second step, she began to conference with individuals.

> A lot of teachers are saying, "I can't do this" and I had said the same thing six months before. So it is possible [to learn to do it.]. It's also important to tell teachers, "It doesn't happen overnight. You don't just get there. You have to train the kids. You have you start with, you've got a book and they've got a book and

[5]At Pacific Beach, teachers use the STAR testing system to monitor students' reading levels, rather than hold individual diagnostic conferences. They do not report the same management concerns.

> you're going to model reading and they're going to read." I start the first day without a book in my hands, and I just stare at them, make eye contact with any kid who isn't reading, and smile at them, and they go back to reading. And the book that I'm holding in my hand is just decorative. Then I will read while they read, and then I will finish reading and say, "Hey, I read this cool part in my book, do you guys want to hear about it?" and I'll read them a cool part of my book that I thought they'd like. So it definitely began with a lot of modeling and a lot of scaffolding of: this is what silent reading is. And then I moved from reading in the front of the room to reading at my desk, which is where I wanted to conference with kids, because it's kind of private over in that corner. I wanted to make sure that from that vantage point that I could see the children in the classroom. I set up a situation in which the child who was conferencing with me was facing me, with her back to the classroom, and I could see the rest of the kids. (Teacher E)

Another teacher has taken to conferencing in the room's doorway in a position that enables her to see what the students are doing inside the room. By using this approach, she finds that the readers are not distracted by the conference and she has a private space in which to conduct it.

> I'm going slowly, obviously, but we're plugging along, and everybody comes out and reads to me. And what I've done is even when it's really cold, unless we're just freezing, I go outside, and I let their chair be right around the outside, there. And I sit right there. That's what I'm doing. So, a) I can glare in, you know, that evil teacher look. And, b) the [conferencing] student has a little privacy. And they do, they read to me, and they don't feel real intimidated, because they're hiding around the corner from the class. [Teacher F]

Schools varied in the extent to which Science and Math teachers were asked to do Independent Reading. At PB, all teachers were involved because of the organization of the Accelerated Reader program into the seventh period advisory. This arrangement, however, did not require math and science teachers to take regular class time for Independent Reading. Most other schools were not asking math and science teachers to build Independent Reading into their curriculum. Teachers were still concerned that they would be told to add this to their curriculum and wondered how they would do it. Our understanding is that they are unnecessarily worried.

Overall, the teachers we interviewed were extremely pleased with the results they were seeing from the focus on reading.

> Students are reading a lot more, and they're quiet. I mean the bell rings, they come in, the book comes out, and they're reading. And even at lunchtime, you'll see kids reading. So it's pretty exciting. And I think one of our goals for literacy was we just want kids to read at grade level. If we could just get everybody at grade level, it would be such an achievement for our school. So that's been our task this year. We're not there yet, but we've made a lot of strides. I feel really good about that. [Teacher G]

The growth among English language learners was particularly rewarding to their teachers.

> I think it's working really, really well. I've seen a lot of growth with my English learners, more so than in past years. I think Independent Reading is really important. The more the kids read, the better they are going to read. And since they're reading so much, I've seen a lot of growth. I think it's really successful. [Teacher H]

> I see that they are really improving, too, in terms of their ability to read. If you can compare this year, to the year before, to the year before, ...I see that they really are taking on the challenge. They really are involved in it. When I hear the kids read in class, they do much better. The VEEP population is much better than the VEEP population used to be, in terms of their reading levels, and also their willingness to read. [Teacher I]

At the end of the first year of implementation of Independent Reading, no one with whom we spoke thought that the approach ought to be eliminated. Language Arts, Humanities and ELL teachers were, not surprisingly, most pleased with the initiative. Math and Science teachers remained concerned about what it would mean for their content. However, ILs suggest that they will not be required to implement this component of the Literacy Framework with any regularity. When it makes sense in light of the curriculum, however, these teachers should be familiar with the approach and able to implement it.

Accountable Talk[6]

One important goal of standards-based reform is to engage students actively as learners. The reform's approach to teaching and learning rests on the assumption that, without such active engagement, students will not fully comprehend what they are to learn. Rather, they will be left with surface knowledge that they will be unable to put to good use. The Accountable Talk approach that should accompany Read Alouds, Independent Reading conferences and most other aspects of classroom interactions, is a key element of the Literacy Framework in San Diego and of standards-based reform more generally.

ILs and principals recognize that this component of the Literacy Framework will be very difficult to implement because it runs counter to the ways in which most teachers organize their classrooms, present content and lead discussions. Most teaching is still whole-group oriented and teacher directed. Furthermore, when they learn about Accountable Talk, not all teachers understand what it means in practice or how they would use it. As one Instructional Leader explained:

> The big push for middle and high school, especially -- and the principals have

[6]See page 2 for a definition of Accountable Talk.

> really come to [this conclusion] themselves -- is that the Accountable Talk piece is really critical, especially when it comes to literacy. Children have really got to be trained by the teachers, and the teachers have got to know how to ask the right questions that pose the right circumstances for children to talk to each other, to question, to challenge, and to bump up their thinking in ways besides simple recall, which is where most of the kids are right now at middle school and high school. Kids are still doing the fact recall, raising their hand and answering the question, one-on-one with the teacher. [IL-E]

At the end of the schoolyear, teachers' understanding of the concept varied considerably. Many teachers at one school believed Accountable Talk to mean simply being on task:

> The kids shouldn't just all be talking about what they did last night. If they're going to be talking, it should be a discussion type of thing about whatever the subject matter or the content that you're studying is. That's Accountable Talk. [Teacher J]

> This is something I'm sure I've been dinged on, because I get off-topic with my students all the time. I think it just ties with the academic rigor, that you're always having Accountable Talk. You're always -- what you're talking about in the classroom is always focused on your objective, on your standards, on the purpose for the day. [Teacher D]

> Well, I think that if you are teaching in the class, and you are teaching to the kids and the kids are doing questions, I mean, that's Accountable Talk. And of course, if I read aloud to them and they are answering questions about the Read Aloud, that's Accountable Talk. [Teacher K]

Some teachers, whether or not they understand the concept, think Accountable Talk is a strategy to be used only with reference to reading. They do not understand it to be a more general approach to engaging students in the substance of their learning across the curriculum. This is likely a function of the context within which Accountable Talk was introduced.

> I understand [Accountable Talk] to be something that goes on before you read something aloud, and something after you read something aloud, and then connecting what you have read with other material. So it's a layering sort of thing. Before reading something, a teacher would want to probably connect personal experiences and have some sort of a relationship with the book before, and maybe use a predicting sort of thing, before actually reading. And then, afterwards, as you read, break it down, make sure the students are grasping what you're reading as you go, go slowly, and have some sort of assessment or a criteria to see that they're taking notes, or writing, or doing reflections. And then there should be a time for reflecting, after reading. And then a time for discussing. And either asking questions in writing, and responding to those questions. Then using the

> information you've gotten from this book to bring into the next book. [Teacher J]

Accountable Talk is not just about focusing on appropriate content, framing a reading lesson or answering questions. It is about a kind and level of content, conversation and questioning. As such, it is something entirely new and quite counter-intuitive for many teachers in our sample.

We did speak with some teachers who understood the idea and were able to infuse Accountable Talk into their curriculum. They were in the minority, but one such language arts teacher was very excited about discovering that Literature Circles were a great vehicle for raising the level of Accountable Talk among students.

> We had [someone do a workshop on literature circles], and she just did--it was perfect step-by-step-by-step. Great handouts. It is an awesome program. I started it about six weeks ago. The kids--trying to get them to have the Accountable Talk was very challenging. This program gets them having the Accountable Talk without you having to give it to them. It's these questions. Well it's giving the kids roles. They're in groups by their reading levels, and then they choose their book. So that's what they're reading now. They decide how many pages they can get through in a certain amount of time, as a group. They all have to get through that many pages. Then they're all given a role, a director or vocabulary, and then the role is really well designed. It gives them examples of higher level thinking questions. We call them the difference between thin and fat questions. A thin question being what color were her eyes? "They were blue." A fat question being, "If she could change the color of her eyes, what would she change them to, and why?" The kids have really grabbed onto this big time. And I sit and watch the kids in these discussion groups. You can't participate if you did not finish your form, and the discussion is always the following day. And these kids are really talking about literature, and they are bringing in things that we've learned about the authors craft from the beginning of the year. They're making comparisons. They're arguing with one another about their interpretations. "How did you pick up on that? You've got to prove that. You have to show me." So it's really incredible, and it's very powerful. [Teacher M]

A Science teacher described how she works on developing comprehension strategies and promotes Accountable Talk in the process:

> We do Read, Stop and Ask the Teacher. We all read. And then they stop and ask me any question they want to ask me. If I can answer that question, I ask the next question. This helps them with their questions and strategies. We use [Bloom's Taxonomy] so they can know what level questions they're asking, that kind of thing. Then we verify [the answer] in the text. They read it, they give me information, and then they go back to the text and verify what they said. This helps them to be able to pull out main ideas when they read. [Teacher N]

Some teachers recognize that the depth and complexity that are the goal of Accountable Talk will require as much training and practice for teachers to do well as it will for students to acquire the desired level of discourse. At first, students may be surprised and confused by the kinds of questions teachers ask. They will need to be taught how to answer such questions and engage in new kinds of conversations. One teacher suggested that Socratic Seminars exemplify the qualities of Accountable Talk:

> I think probably the way that I have the students engage in Accountable Talk is with group work and specifically through Socratic seminars. When they question each other, they ask "Why is this the case?" For instance, when they worked a few weeks ago on John Brown's last speech, they were asked: What is the real purpose of the speech? What's the surface level, the ostensible reason for his speech? What did he really try to accomplish with it? And then the kids' questioned each other as to why they thought his real purpose was this. Does he actually say that this is his purpose? That he's dying for a just cause? Or, on the surface is he saying that he's innocent? And what's your evidence of this? That to me is Accountable Talk, when the kids are questioning each other and asking why they're making the statements they're making. And then putting that in writing, I think is the proof of the pudding. If I can get their thoughts in writing, after having talked with each other in groups. [Teacher O]

During the 1998-1999 schoolyear, teachers and principals learned **about** Accountable Talk but did not have any significant professional development specifically targeted to this component of the Literacy Framework. Next year, under the tutelage of the school-based resource teachers, it should be possible for teachers and principals to become more knowledgeable about this strategy and receive direct coaching on how to effectively implement it.

Word Study

The newest component of the Literacy Framework introduced to the schools this year was Word Study through CORE training. Once again using a trainer of trainers model, principals and one lead teacher attended three days of training, one on phonemic awareness, one on spelling, and one on vocabulary building. The information presented was quite theoretical, although the spelling and vocabulary sessions included some practical strategies. Everyone in the district received extensive resource materials which provide excellent references. As this training took place quite late in the year (late March, April, and early May), and the original presentation was not in a "teacher friendly," useable format, little follow-up training had yet been done at individual school sites when we visited in May. The delay was in part because the teachers responsible for doing the in-service had to do a substantial amount of work to sort through the materials to figure out a way to present it to their staff. They also had to decide exactly what was most important for teachers to get out of all the information since time was limited. Two principals explained the challenge handed to their teachers. The first described the challenge for teachers of putting together school-based professional development from the CORE training. The second questions the wisdom of having people who were just trained in something turn around and train others.

> [CORE training] was like a bad class. [People attending] were talking so loudly, had we wanted to pay attention we couldn't have. [The presenter] had all the information, and he was rich in all his history and resources, but [he had] no delivery and we were dying. And I felt sorry for my peers who didn't have [reading specialists] to present [this material to their teachers]. After that [training], how could they decide what to present and how to present it? But [my reading specialists] went through the training, and they put together a wonderful staff development -- three hours with all best practices, hands-on, peer talk, table talk, discussion, presentation, overhead, Power Point. I mean, it was all in there. [Principal A]

> The reform in this school is systemic because we have taken our time in building a knowledge base. The way that the district is doing it now is like X number of hours, and you're trained to do this [new CORE professional development]. We were trained maybe 15 hours, and then we have to teach this curriculum? The principal and the resource teacher [should do it] and we were just taught that curriculum?! I mean surely they could have presented this [to teachers] in a different way. It's just a lot of stuff. [Principal B]

From the perspective of teachers who participated in CORE training, the approach was faulted on two accounts. First, as the principals noted, the training itself was poorly designed to enable participants to learn. Second, the top-down mandate alienated some participants even though they agreed with the content and goals of the program.

> I think a lot of us are going to have difficulty in figuring how to teach [CORE]. I'm still not really sure what it is we're supposed to be doing. That's really hard. It's like that's the worst possible teaching. They do not set very good examples for effective classroom teaching, if this is the way they teach us and expect us to learn. "By the end of the week, we want you doing da, da, da, but I'm not going to tell you what it is or how to do it." I think from the teachers' point of view, there's a lot of resentment, and we're confusing the message with the messenger. A lot of what they're asking us to do, we can't say no to, because it is good teaching practice. And there are a lot of us who are [glad] we're finally teaching vocabulary, because we know it's been missing for a long time. But the way they're doing it is very authoritarian and very confrontational. It's so weird to be told, "You're going to do this and this and this." I mean it really is with a gun to your head. That's not a comfortable learning experience. That's when kids shut down. That's when teachers shut down. [Teacher Q]

Given how late in the year this training occurred, and given the difficulty of turning it into school-based professional development, we were not surprised to find uneven implementation of these strategies when we visited the schools in May and June. The content of CORE is important, however, and it is likely that this is another area in which teachers and principals would benefit from additional and well-designed professional development.

Summary: Professional Development for Literacy Training

Throughout this report, we have observed how important high quality professional development is to teachers' and principals' ability to implement elements of the Literacy Framework. And, we have noted that the district had to move forward with the reform agenda without using the school-based staff developer model due to the SDTA's opposition to the district's approach to recruiting for the position. As a result, even though teachers are pleased, overall, with the thrust of the reform, professional development for it has a somewhat troubled history. From the perspective of the Institute for Learning Staff, everything happened extremely fast. They were still learning at the same time they were responsible for teaching others. From the perspective of teachers and principals, everything also happened extremely fast and the professional development provided was inadequate. Quite disturbing to the school sites was the way in which new initiatives were introduced – mandates were issued and compliance monitoring was often in place before any training was offered, making new requirements feel like threats. Principals received memos with information about how to proceed with teachers. Given the speed with which they felt they needed to implement the reforms and, in some cases, given their lack of sophistication about how to provide professional development to their teachers, some principals reported that they passed on to teachers the memos they had received from the ILs. Needless to say, teachers did not find this approach to professional development very helpful. They reported that the memos covered too much information at once, and/or were explained by people who lacked experience and expertise with the ideas they were advocating. As the year progressed, the district considered the limitations of its early approaches and improved both the process and content of professional development focused on the literacy strategies. Teachers appreciated the changes.

In this section of the report, we want to review general concerns with professional development that we have raised throughout, highlight areas in which the district has made distinct improvements, and suggest issues that will need attention in the coming schoolyear.

Early in the schoolyear, when everything was new and uncertain, principals were trained to help their teachers learn to use Read-Alouds. This approach left principals with a task for which most felt ill-prepared. One principal expressed her frustration with both the process and the content of the early phase of literacy professional development.

> At first, I resented it and I felt that I was being told what to do but not how, and that's frustrating: You're accountable; do this. But not all the pieces of the "how" were there. And there was some kind of secrecy, like, "We'll tell you a little bit and then we'll tell you a little bit more," rather than [telling us] the big picture. But I didn't understand why we were getting it piecemeal, what was the mystery? The ILs didn't give the impression that they knew much more than we did, either. So, where am I [supposed to be] getting my guidance? And I couldn't answer the teachers' questions. Were they supposed to do Read Alouds all the time in science and math and physical education? And how were they supposed to do them in P.E. and were they going to be marked down if they didn't? [Principal A]

Teachers had similar reactions to the early training.

> We had training a whole bunch of times, but it was never very clear because the people who trained us didn't really know, and not because they were not smart people, they were, but I think they gave us the impression that they weren't being trained very well in what it was. [Teacher C]

> We had a staff meeting where they explained what Independent Reading is, what Read Aloud is, and kind of -- If I didn't have any background, I would feel inadequate. I've had some training, and I know what Read Aloud is, and I know what -- to an extent. The terms were unfamiliar to some teachers, so just the fact that it was introduced, at the same time, this is what you do, this is what it is, and all that was probably overwhelming. So if I hadn't had any training, I would be like some people that I know. I mean, I would feel the same way. I mean, if you said, "Do we have training?" I could say yes. "Do we have adequate training?" I can say, "I don't know." [Teacher N]

Throughout the district, the number one complaint and the number one difficulty was that, as a result of state policy, there were no staff development days this year. The schools that have a modified schedule with either early release days or late starts, were able to use that time to work together as a staff. Year round schools were able to use some intersession days. But all schools felt strapped for time to meet, to discuss strategies with colleagues, or to attend additional training.

We consistently heard teachers report that they had not received any training in Read Alouds or Independent Reading. "Training" was often in the form of handouts or lectures. Sometimes videos were shown to give teachers more concrete examples, although the videos were always at the elementary level. Many language arts teachers, especially those with an elementary background found these ideas easy to understand as they were already using many of these strategies or had used them in the past. For those teachers without this background it was a different story.

> Now the truth is that most of the training has been oriented through memos. And what I mean by that is here's two-pages on it, now you're an expert. Or at least competent enough to do it. With regards to training, most members of this staff do not feel that they have received adequate training for the new techniques and methods that the district has put in place, which is bad for morale. Because what you have is administrators coming by to check on teachers, and these teachers are either not prepared to do what the administrator is looking for, or they just don't feel comfortable doing it, because they haven't had the practice. And this all came like overnight. This is not something we would ever do to our students. You don't want an administrator/ supervisor coming in to evaluate you on something that you've never been trained [to do]. [Teacher S]

> Our district superintendent is really pushing this. And, unfortunately, it came forward before the training could take place. At the middle school level, I think those of us that are single-subject teachers like me were feeling a little left in the lurch, like "Oh, my goodness. This is something that I was never trained for, now we're being asked to do it." But I am pleased to say that they are finally now realizing that maybe they put a lot on the plate, and didn't provide enough background for the teachers who actually have to implement it. So on May the 21st, which is coming up next week, we have a minimum day, and so they have actually organized for us a speaker to come in on word study, vocabulary, word attack skills, decoding, all those kinds of things, that I think many of our multiple-subject colleagues have been trained in.[Teacher A]
>
> Well, and that's the thing; we just don't have the opportunity. I mean, they're giving us sort of the foundation and the basis, but a lot of us don't have that prior knowledge to stick it to. It's like a review, but we never had the theory in the first place. And so it's all very, very new. Just to throw that on us, it goes over our head. [Teacher T]
>
> It's like three pages: individualized reading conference. And see, what was hard about this is it said you're supposed to give direct instruction on the skills and strategies, but no one told us what those skills and strategies are. You're just supposed to know that. And I'm an English teacher, and I've been trained like that, but I still don't know what they are, what I'm supposed to be looking for. [Teacher C]

Too often, we heard teachers express their frustration with superficial training that didn't get them to the level of expertise they needed to implement new practices.

> It was designed to be the Accountable Talk that's not teacher-student but that's students talking to each other. It was okay. Do I feel, based on that, that I would be able to go and implement it in my classroom? Yes, because I've done reading outside of it. If that was the only thing I had gotten, no. I think that's the piece that's missing, I think that's where the frustration comes. It's not just in this but in several different things. You're telling me that I have to do all these things, and I see that these things are good for kids, but how do I get there? [Teacher P]
>
> The Read Aloud was a little rocky. I don't think that our in-services were the greatest. There was a lot of information, and I think it's just because it was new and the district was changing and they were trying to teach people to teach people to teach people, and as things filtered down they got diluted. I think that was the problem with Read Aloud: it was just handed to[us] all at once, with, "Now do this." I was very hostile towards it, because it was very threatening, the way it was presented: "You will do this. We will be in to see you. We will be in to evaluate." It was like, Whoa, Whoa, Whoa! [Teacher R]

By mid-year, the district realized that it had to re-design its professional development for teachers. As a result, the district provided training for teachers running the after school reading programs.[7] We heard extremely positive feedback from teachers who participated in the monthly training sessions for the after school reading program.

> I'm being given the professional books, I'm being give the binder, I'm being given the articles to read, so in a way I have a big advantage over everybody else, because now I see where this fits in the big picture. So, I love it, it's been great. I feel like I've received more good training, this year, than I ever have. And we're getting paid for it, which is kind of wild. [Teacher C]

In addition, the district provided two Saturday sessions on Read Alouds and two Saturday sessions focused on Independent Reading beginning in January 1999. The response to those sessions was extremely positive. Teachers were hungry for quality training and many more would have attended had their been room for them.

> At first, we received no training. [Then] they had four Saturdays, but they were in January, February and March. So, you understand, we had been doing this since September. I went to those four Saturdays; two of them were Read-Alouds and two of them were Independent Reading. They were excellent. We got good handouts. I had marvelous teachers. I came back with great stuff. I have since presented to half of the faculty. I still have my stuff to give the other half, and the administration hasn't had time to schedule it in. [Teacher U]

> It was the first professional development I ever attended, in three years of the great deal of professional development I've had, where books were brought to the professional development that weren't professional books, they were actual pieces of literature in the staff development, which was actually very revolutionary to see. The focus of Independent Reading was really on picking books and conferencing. They told us, "You need to have children reading, independently, books that are leveled appropriately. You need to be conferencing with students." They did give us some good information about conferencing.[Teacher V]

We have heard that this improvement in the quality of staff development has continued. The district sponsored massive training this summer, bringing in outside experts, and the feedback we have heard thus far has been excellent. The obvious lesson here is that staff development can have powerful results when its done well. When it's not, it alienates teachers and makes them more resistant to change, as we found in one of our sample schools. One teacher's description offers both reason for hope, and cause for concern.

---

[7]This training began well after teachers had begun working in these programs. The situation was another instance of training lagging behind a mandate to implement specific, new practices.

> If you can get the staff to talk about it as a school -- let's improve the students' writing, let's improve their reading, let's change, improve our teaching -- it's really positive. If you can keep the district name out of it, it's very positive. If you mention it's from the district, it gets a little tense. But, as long as we keep it focused on, "Let's improve [the school], let's improve their portfolio," it's positive. I think everyone's seeing the kids learning to write and doing better, and they see themselves changing, doing more writing, doing more thinking with the kids. That kind of stuff. But you've got to keep that word, mandate, out of the conversation, and when you do, it's positive. When that word comes in -- Eeee! [Teacher W]

In the coming schoolyear, the district will face the task of helping teachers to get better at what they already learned and it will probably add new components of the Literacy Framework to the reform agenda. Most particularly, the district will focus professional development on Accountable Talk and how to integrate reading and vocabulary building strategies into ongoing curriculum and instruction. Data from teachers who experienced this first year of enormous change suggests that, if such professional development is done well, if it addresses what they need to know and know how to do, they will appreciate it and try to use it with their students. Such an outcome would benefit the district, the teachers, and, most importantly, the students of SDCS.

IV. LITERACY ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIO

San Diego's Literacy Assessment Portfolio has evolved considerably from the small pilot effort that began in the early 1990's with the PACE program (Performance Assessment Collaboratives for Education) through the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Through this project, two middle schools, Mann and Muirlands, worked to develop schoolwide portfolio systems. The PACE portfolio was designed to be a reflective tool to help students assess their own growth on a number of different dimensions of academic development. By the time the district began exploring the use of portfolios for assessment purposes by participating in the pilot testing of the New Standards Portfolio during the 1995-1996 school year, a number of schools had developed their own schoolwide portfolios. The district's portfolio assessment system was modeled after the New Standards project, and produced the pilot version of the Literacy Assessment Portfolio during the 1996-1997 school year. That first year, the goal was to have four eighth grade teachers at each middle school send 30 portfolios to a central district scoring session in the summer. Each portfolio was to include evidence of students' reading ability in four domains (based on the reading standards, which were created by district teachers): literature, informational materials, public documents, and functional documents. In addition, students had to demonstrate that they had read at least 25 books or book equivalents.

Like the Literacy Framework, the Literacy Portfolio focuses attention on instruction to improve student outcomes. While the two initiatives have yet to be formally integrated at the district level, some teachers have made the obvious connection: the Literacy Portfolio requires students to put Accountable Talk in writing.

> Accountable Talk to me means you can make assumptions or assertions about the text, and you can point to something in the text that backs you up, that makes your statement more than just guessing. And so I've revised all my--oh, it's been a busy year. All of my packets to do that kind of thing. They're very used to it now. And there's a wonderful transferral to the writing when you say cite from the text when you're writing. They know what you're talking about, and they know the point of it. [Teacher X]

Teachers who participated in the original scoring sessions that first summer indicated that they gained new insight into fundamental assumptions of standards reform. However, at this early stage, many teachers did not understand the connection between the use of portfolios for assessment and accountability and the on-going instructional program in their classrooms.

In our August, 1997 report, Neufeld wrote:

> Our understanding is that if there is genuine standards-based reform at the classroom and school level, then teachers will be able to use students' on-going school work to fulfill the district's accountability requirements. Accountability will not be an "add-on" in the way that teachers suggest it will be.... We think that their concerns about accountability for themselves and their students reveal the current lack of connections between teaching and assessment, and assessment and accountability....We think that teachers' responses to this component of reform can guide the district toward professional development that helps teachers forge tighter links between content and performance standards and the use of a number of alternative and on-going assessments of students' learning. Without such professional development, the requirement for assessment portfolios will not necessarily forward standards-base reform. With it, the district's assessment decision could be an impetus for further progress. (Pp. 22 & 24)

Each year the district's experimentation with, and refinement of the Literacy Portfolio has helped teachers develop a better understanding of the connections between curriculum, instruction, and assessment. After the initial scoring experience in the summer of 1997, the Office of Standards and Assessment compiled a Teacher Handbook for the Literacy Assessment Portfolio. In response to feedback received from teachers who scored the portfolio, the handbook included revised Entry Slips, Scoring Guides, and Samples of Student Work as exemplars of standard-setting work. After the pilot scoring, functional documents were dropped from the reading exhibit because the district found that they could not be reliably scored.

The 1997 handbook was distributed to teachers at the Mid-level Conference in October of that year. During the conference, Karen Bachofer and her staff offered multiple sessions on the Literacy Assessment Portfolio to explain how to use the handbook as a resource. It was an opportunity for teachers to ask questions and to look at samples of student work to help them understand what was expected to meet standards, and to alert teachers to common problems encountered during the pilot scoring. We noted that the range of teachers' questions at the time

suggested that their understanding of the literacy standards and the portfolio process varied greatly, as one would expect in the early stages of implementation.

1997-1998 was the first official year of implementation where all eighth grade students were required to submit Literacy Portfolios. It served as a baseline measure for the district's accountability system. Even though there were now high stakes attached, the portfolio continued to be viewed as a "work in progress," -- one that would be revised and fine tuned as the district gained experience in the use of large-scale performance assessments.

Additional revisions were made for the 1998-1999 school year, again incorporating feedback from teachers who participated in the second year of scoring. These revisions reflected the language in the district's Language Arts Standards, which were adopted by the Board in 1998. New cover sheets were developed and distributed to schools in October to clarify the criteria that would be used to evaluate entries for the coming year. Three common criteria provided the guidelines for each of the categories. In each case, students had to demonstrate: 1) that they understood what they read; 2) their ability to analyze what they read; and 3) their ability to use what they learned in someway – to critique the argument, relate the information to personal experience, or substantiate one's interpretation of the text.

An important change in the 1998-99 version of the cover sheet was that the bullets (performance descriptors) which had appeared beneath the criteria on each entry slip the previous year were removed. The Assessment Office found that teachers confused the performance descriptors with the criteria, assuming that each bullet had to be addressed to score well.

A new handbook was completed in March 1999 (but not delivered to the schools until April) to further explain changes that were made in this year's portfolio. The new Handbook cleared up ambiguities that existed in the first edition. For example, the name of the Public Document entry was changed to "Persuasive Writing," which was a more accurate label for the criteria to be addressed. The actual criteria for the entry did not change from those distributed in October, although there is still considerable confusion over this issue. One teacher explained some of the misunderstanding:

> They fine-tuned it, they didn't make drastic changes. In fact, they made it more clear. Still, teachers don't understand that these portfolios -- it's basic teaching strategies, it's good teaching skills, and what goes in there is what you're doing in your classrooms. And people are rushing at the last minute to do stuff, and it's like, "Wait a minute, you should have been doing this all year, regardless if you were required by the district to have a portfolio." [Teacher R]

As in earlier versions, the Handbook included answers to commonly asked questions to clarify many of the misunderstandings and confusion that teachers' voiced about the reading entries and the assessment process. For example, The Handbook explained that:

> Performance descriptors provide information about <u>how</u> the student can show

> evidence of the criteria for a particular entry type, but they do not constitute criteria.

And yet, the change in wording to clarify the possible ways in which a student could demonstrate the he or she met the criteria was read as a change in the requirement. Representatives from the Standards and Assessment Office were available, upon request, to meet with schools' to answer questions and assist with strategies for developing assignments that could produce standard setting work. The consistent message the Assessment Office tried to convey was:

> Portfolios are not something separate from what you do on a daily basis. Yes, there are times throughout the year when the collected work needs to be examined, reviewed, discussed, and eventually chosen for placement in the Literacy Assessment Portfolio, but your on-going standards-based instruction should provide many opportunities for the students to demonstrate necessary criteria in their work. Setting aside specific days to complete a portfolio assignment is in complete contrast to the intent of the portfolio and can present a sense of "more to do." (Literacy Assessment Portfolio Teacher Handbook, March, 1999)

Across the district, teachers reacting to the disappointingly low scores from the first year were diligent about working with colleagues and students to improve the quality of student work. However, without staff development days, there were few vehicles for disseminating information, other than through written documents, which in many cases were not read, or were interpreted differently by different people. We encountered a marked discrepancy among the teachers in our sample in all four schools as to their understanding and comfort with the portfolio. There were a handful of teachers at each school who were "in the know," and felt confident about what the portfolio required of them and their students. There were also a significant number of teachers who were unsure about the expectations, while still others resented what they considered to be a lot of extra work beyond their teaching responsibilities.

The teachers who were most knowledgeable tended to be those who were either involved in last summer's (1998) scoring, or teachers who had sought out assistance from and/or worked directly with personnel from the office of Standards and Assessments. Although those experiences contributed greatly to teachers' understanding, it was not always sufficient to enable them to go back and "train" the rest of their staff. As a result, teacher reaction to the portfolio process varied considerably, depending on the depth of their understanding of what would constitute the quality of student work necessary to meet the standard. In general, those most informed were also the teachers who were most positive about the portfolio. One teacher described an "aha" experience, after working with an Assessment Office staff member:

> The more I look at it, the more I really think the district literacy portfolio is absolutely brilliant, in terms of its emphasis and its drive to get teachers to be good teachers and do all the things they're supposed to. And I didn't understand that, when I thought it was just, "Have the child read a piece of informational reading and then tell me about it." Now that I understand it, I think it's brilliant. [Teacher

P]

A teacher from another school had come to a similar conclusion:

> It's the reading. It's the thinking. It's all the skills that they need that they hadn't learned up until this point. That's not to say they didn't have other good teachers. It's just that we haven't been concentrating on those skills, because for some reason or another, we thought the kids could not exhibit that kind of thinking, and they can. And so those essays, the five essays that my kids have done this year for their portfolio have been a fantastic tool for teaching, for learning, for assessing, for evaluating my lesson and how I taught it. I'm blown away by what I have learned by teaching them to write. [Teacher Y]

Teachers who had been developing and scoring portfolios noted the impact of the portfolio work on student's writing. One teacher who had scored all three years noted:

> I've seen tremendous progress. The quality of student work we're seeing is really improving. I think this is the most significant thing we've done in twenty years in the district in terms of raising student achievement. [Teacher Z]

Similarly, another teacher confessed:

> I can look back on four years ago, and I can't believe that I said that was good enough. It certainly has made me think about how I teach.... And so now we've got this districtwide, schoolwide portfolio, same standard, everyone is working with the same rubric, and all the kids are speaking the same language. They're all out in the hall bemoaning the fact that their response to literature isn't good enough. And, although, they are upset about it, it is wonderful that they have a common language. [Teacher A]

Both our observations of classrooms and our conversations with teachers reveal that even when teachers understood the connection between the portfolio requirements and their teaching, some still find it extremely challenging to construct the kind of in-depth lessons that would culminate in a product that could meet the standards. Although the following teachers understood the expectations, they were not confident in their ability to create appropriate assignments.

> I listened to her [the consultant from Assessment Office] and was very inspired by what she had to say, and kind of thought I understood it but wasn't quite sure what to do next with it, because I was a little intimidated. I understood what she was saying but I had no idea how to get there myself. I still felt like I was not capable of creating that broad an assignment that would come together in one thing, that would still meet our literacy standards and our social studies standards and our performance standards, and all the other standards we have to meet -- and still be what I wanted it to be in my classroom. [Teacher V]

> In order to get the type of portfolio that the district is looking for, for a good score, this is not just something, "Oh, today we're going to spend the next hour and we're going to do a portfolio entry," so then it takes a week, and all this scaffolding, and all this stuff. Which is good, to some extent, but trying to come up with the assignments to meet all the district criteria is difficult. And they are giving us more samples now. We're all getting a little bit more of a clue,.... There's really no way we could have started very much sooner anyway, because you had to teach these things prior to even trying to start to get them composing what would be portfolio quality. I'm still not sure I've done it correctly. [Teacher F]

One teacher who has demonstrated her ability to design and teach in-depth lessons that meet the portfolio criteria felt that the Assessment Office had underestimated how radical a change this orientation is from most teachers' practice. She points to the need for carefully designed, in-depth staff development to teach teachers to construct standards-based units.

> In order to do these portfolios well, you do need to do a lot of work, and it's true that a lot of good teachers are doing a lot of these steps, but there's a lot of teachers who aren't doing it, or aren't doing it all together, every time. And so I think that it really does need to be presented as, "This is a lot of work. We are asking you to fundamentally change the structure of what you're doing. If what you're already doing does fit, great; if it doesn't, then you need to change." After we came back , there was not a whole lot of discussion of how to disseminate [portfolio information] into departments. It was just said, "You need to discuss this in departments."....My sense is they weren't really well discussed, in large part because a lot of people were still processing what it was that [the consultant] had told us. It goes back to the trainer of trainers issue and that most people weren't ready to then turn around and judge other people, because they were still figuring out what it was they were supposed to do. [Teacher P]

We also found that staff development is needed to help shift some teacher's mindsets to recognize that students can do high level work, if teachers provide the structure to get them there.

> They kind of upped the standards after we had turned them in last year. And so this year I think we've all felt a really big push that all of the kids have to have a 4, and truthfully all the kids can't. And it's been very frustrating for us to try and get these fabulous papers, these four papers out of these children. [Teacher AA]

To compensate for the lack of district-level staff development on the portfolio, the most obvious resource teachers had available was each other. We learned about a few schools that organized their own in-school training to help teachers understand the criteria to be addressed.

> First of all during the summer we had six of our teachers involved in the scoring all from different areas and grade levels. I, myself, was a room leader. So I was aboard when we in essence established what the standard was going to be for each

> of the types. The standard was really kind of loose after the pilot year. And I think they really raised the bar a lot when they had a chance to look at everything that was coming in during the summer. [Teacher BB]

At the beginning of the year, this core group of teachers organized inservice training for the rest of the staff, and then the resource teacher continued to work one on one with humanities/language arts teachers. So when the new Handbook arrived in April, the experienced group took it in stride:

> I think it was three or four weeks ago that the books finally came in. And, of course, we were way ahead by then, because we knew thanks to the people who were there, what the standards really were. [Teacher BB]

However, this sense of assuredness did not extend to everyone in the school. Even in this site where there were several teachers who had scored, and where they attempted to organize their own staff development, there were still many teachers who ended up with different interpretations.

> I know after the fact, I think it was in December or January, [our resource teacher] pulled a couple of anchor papers, that came out from the district, it wasn't our school. And so we had an opportunity to see what the district last year considered a 4. But this year it's changed all over again, and so I don't think last year's 4 would meet standard this year. So I think they're still in the process of fine tuning it. I know it's been--what was it three weeks ago? I got a new packet from the ed center, and I thought, "Oh, I don't want to read this big packet. I'm just going to throw it on my desk." And along about the fourth day, it was still sitting on my desk, and I thought, "You know, I just want to look through here one more time." And I'm so glad I did, because they changed one of the categories. So it's not public document anymore, it's persuasive writing, and that's totally different. [Teacher G]

Even in some schools where teachers made the effort to investigate the new requirements, many remained frustrated with the lack of resource support to help them figure it out.

> We were trained on staff development days before school started on what the literacy expectations were for the portfolio, and mainly we're just a good strong group of teachers I think that care enough that we ask questions, and we won't stop asking until we get an answer. We got our principal to get a speaker from the district so that we could ask questions. We didn't get answers to our questions. We got answers like "It's a work in progress." We don't know if we're doing the right thing. We just know we're working awfully hard to meet the criteria that they set, and then three weeks ago they changed it. So we're not too thrilled. [Teacher U]

Year round schools were at a particular disadvantage as their schedules conflicted with the district scoring, and they had no experienced teachers to turn to for direction.[8]

> [Another teacher] gave us some graphic organizers that we could use. But that's really the first thing that we've had to work with, other than last year's. And then, it seemed to me that it was very inconclusive as to whether they were going to use the same criteria from last year or they were going to change it, until just recently. And it seems like just only recently that they've solidified what they're looking for. [Teacher J]

> So, it's been difficult. Part of that is the district, because the district just introduced it, and they're fine-tuning it. And it's going to happen. They're going to go, "Oh, well, we didn't see that." So that's part of it. And the district really hasn't done a large part of in-servicing the staff. We had [a consultant] come out to our instructional council, to in-service us, but the district said they couldn't send someone out to in-service the whole staff -- that that was our job -- which I kind of find is inadequate; they should be able to do that. [Teacher R]

Some schools got together to look at anchor papers in an effort to understand what was expected to meet standards, and to determine what teachers would need to do to help students get there. However, few felt expert enough to take responsibility for training others. Moreover, the range of understanding varied wildly from school to school, from department to department, and from teacher to teacher within a given school. A teacher at one school shared with us:

> I learned that everybody has a different idea as to what a 3, 4 or 5 is. Even though we trained everybody, I still think there's a discrepancy. Especially for the teachers that haven't done the scoring. And I have encouraged almost everyone to do it, because it really helps.[Teacher AA]

A teacher at another school described where the humanities department was:

> Actually, we're still discussing what makes a 4 and what makes a 3, which was very helpful. And there was still a lot of discussion: Well, there's enough analysis or interpretation to make it a 4, or there's not enough. And it was interesting that there's a discussion of what can the kids possibly analyze and interpret? Things like that.... I think we're at the place where we have to start developing the assignments, or the curriculum that revolves around it. So, I'm ready to move on, but we all have to bring everyone along together. And I think we did spend at least two days looking at student work, getting an idea of what's in [the portfolios] and discussing it. And we sat around and said, boy, isn't that bad. I guess that was step one, and we haven't gotten to that place where, well, what are we going to do?

---

[8]The timing of the district scoring was altered this summer (1999) to allow year round schools to participate for the first time.

[Teacher T]

Teachers from a third school explained how they learned what to do:

> We learned it from each other. People that graded last year said "You better not let your kids do this," or "You know what happened. That was great assignment, but it got them a zero, because it wasn't the right piece." So now we've tightened up. [Teacher U]

> [We learned from] people who took part in the scoring, and from the scores themselves. I had a lot of different impressions; overwhelmingly that there were persnickety standards that were ridiculous like if they forgot to mention the name of the book they read or the author, they got either zeros or did very badly. Book lists, for example, the quantity, range in-depth piece, if they weren't right up there at grade level, and the one that was particularly identified was R. L. Stein, then they were dinged for that. I think that is very unfair for students who aren't reading at grade level. [Teacher X]

Even without in-depth training and the aid of a knowledgeable coach, many teachers have progressed in their understanding of expectations for student work to meet the standards, which we believe is a significant development.

> So, some of the entries, or the type of homework we asked for the kids to do were missing the opportunity for the kid to present or to show that he could synthesize, that he could relate it to many points that they have to do for the papers. So, half of the time it was that the homework, the assignment was not the right assignment. And it was good to notice that. [Teacher K]

Thus, the "work in progress" nature of reform, and of the Literacy Assessment Portfolio in particular, is very frustrating for conscientious teachers who were diligent in their efforts to follow the guidelines. The developmental nature of the work requires experimentation, adjustment, and rethinking at each stage. But for teachers who are trying to implement each new version of the experiment as it evolves, it can be especially challenging when the expectations are not clearly communicated.

> This year I have been forced to create assignments which fit, and I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing. But I have created assignments, which fit each requirement of the portfolio entry, and in history it was public documents. We took that on as our portfolio entry, and I have created several assignments, which are geared specifically to meet those requirements. I have gone through on several occasions the various components of what makes a public document entry. And then when it changed a couple of weeks ago. It's now persuasive text, not public documents. So they must be persuasive. And there were a couple of components which have changed specifically. All right. Now this says, "To what extent does

> the work show evidence that the student has read and understood the specified text?" That's similar to the public document. Okay. This has not been a requirement in the previous public documents, "How effectively is the information used to clarify -- prove or disprove the central idea?" That was not a requirement. Previously it said, "What is the central idea? What is the message?" And then, "How successful is it?" [Teacher O]

This teacher explained that the language was different, depending on where you read it, making it unclear what was required. In this instance, the teacher was once again confusing the performance descriptors with the criteria. The part of the Handbook that he read was from a list of "guiding Questions," which states,

> The following set of guiding questions **may** be used to determine the extent to which criteria are present in student work... (Literacy Assessment Portfolio Teacher Handbook, 3/99).

We heard numerous examples like this one where teachers interpreted changes in wording to be changes in requirements. Teachers often misconstrued the performance descriptors, which were intended to provide "possible examples," reading them instead as though they were all the elements required to meet the standards. The considerable confusion that still exists about the portfolio requirements points to the need for extensive professional development and increased clarity in the language used to explain the requirements to ensure that all teachers not only understand what they are being asked to do, but that they also have the opportunity to develop the skills to do it. One of the major tenets of standards reform and an essential feature of the principles of learning is that there are clear expectations that are understood by everyone.

Perhaps, more than any other group, mathematics teachers were perplexed as to what their role was in the Literacy Portfolio.

Where Does Math Fit? Frustration was particularly acute among math teachers who agreed that reading is important in all content areas, but felt that it was not their responsibility to ensure that students were meeting the language arts standards. As more and more people recognized the kind of assignment that was required to meet the standard, for example, of a public document entry, it felt too contrived and unconnected to their curriculum. Consequently, the Literacy Portfolio was often perceived as an 'add-on' to math teachers.

> The department's got to get beyond the personal feelings of, why am I doing this? I'm being dumped on -- before they can get there. I think. And we're not doing it. I think if it was a math portfolio they would be, because there's more buy-in, there's more reason; it's math.[Teacher W]

> A lot of people are at the last minute saying, "What do I do? What do I have to do?" And a large part of that is because literacy has really overshadowed math, in the entire district this year. Which I think is part of why I'm somewhat adamant

> about doing something with math, because I really feel, I think it's important for kids. [Teacher P]

> I was frustrated and I also felt like I didn't want to take any more time away from teaching math. Because what we're really assessed on is not the portfolio but this SAT test. And I felt like, If I don't cover stuff that's going to be on that test, they're going to do bad. I mean, our school's goal is to do well in the portfolio and the SATs. [Teacher C]

Even teachers in language arts recognized that it was not necessarily appropriate for all content areas:

> I think, for math, it's the most difficult. I mean, they do writing, they write, but you're being asked to do a lot here, with the portfolio. For science and for social studies, it fits in, it makes sense to do it. PE really struggles with it, they just don't have the facilities for it. I think people are very accepting of it, I mean, they want to do it. I think there's still a lot of training and questions to be answered, and math did it. But, it takes a lot of time for math to do this. [Teacher T]

Moreover, when math or science teachers did work on an entry, it often fell to the language arts teachers to take the work through the writing process to get an acceptable finished product.

> Because writing takes a lot of time, and I'll get maybe an informational document from the math teacher, but she or he will give me the folder, and say, "We didn't have time to revise these. It interfered with my teaching of the curriculum." And so I'm left using my class time to revise what they did in another class. And so it's impacted my class greatly this year. So there are lots of things I would have loved to have done, but this has been the primary focus this year. It's very, very time consuming. But I think there too, if we want the standard to go up, then those are things we need to do. [Teacher G]

Similarly, another language arts teacher explained the issue as one of ownership and accountability:

> Our eighth grade teachers who have the pressure, they would feel like, "No. My name is going on this folder, and I'm going to make sure that they've got it." [Teacher M]

The parallels between the two literacy initiatives – the literacy framework and the literacy portfolio – are striking. Overall, everyone is pleased with the literacy focus. Teachers are committed to the reform because they believe it is good for kids. Both efforts have struggled with providing timely staff development to support teachers in their desires to improve instruction. Both initiatives need to pay greater attention to literacy strategies that are aligned with the curriculum and performance standards in math and science. And most importantly, teachers,

principals, and Instructional Leaders all agree, that this intense year with all its inherent challenges, is indeed getting positive results.

> What has made the dramatic change for my staff is the fact that they can now see that the instruction that they're providing in their classroom is providing greater student achievement. [Teacher CC]

> What do I see? I see kids who weren't reading at all reading. I see kids who were reading somewhat reading much, much more. This year when it came to the reading logs, they had more books than they knew what to--they needed more spaces on their--I guess we have to make the goals higher. Because they're reaching the goals we're giving them now. [Teacher DD]

V. CONCLUSION

San Diego City Schools has launched an all-out effort with two major thrusts to improve literacy. One, the Literacy Assessment Portfolio, in its third year of development is coordinated by the Office of Standards and Assessment. The other, the Literacy Framework, just introduced this year, is coordinated by the Institute for Learning. The two initiatives have identical goals – to improve K-12 literacy skills – but they operate independently. The Literacy Framework directs teachers' attention to classroom strategies designed to improve student performance. Through significant staff development, teachers will learn to strengthen and enlarge their repertoire of teaching strategies. The Literacy Assessment Portfolio aims for the same goal through a focus on assessment driven instruction which will enable students to meet targeted performance goals. Both approaches are based on sound principles and are already starting to yield some promising results. However, both efforts have shared common problems with implementation as a result of either insufficient or ineffective staff development. We believe that if the staff development issues are addressed and the two efforts aligned to support one another, the outcome could be quite powerful.

San Diego has accomplished a great deal in its first year of establishing the Literacy Framework and the role of the Instructional Leader. Its accomplishments have not come cheaply; they have exacted a lot of hard work and emotional stress from everyone involved. Feelings have been hurt, relationships frayed and, at times, frustration seemed to be the heart of the enterprise. But, despite all of this, teachers and principals agree that they are learning to use literacy approaches and strategies that should have a positive impact on student achievement and they are extremely pleased about this. The district has learned more about the professional development needs of teachers and principals and re-grouped during the year to offer more appropriate training in Independent Reading and Read-Alouds. Problems still persist with professional development – with the form and content of training and with the weak train the trainer model – but the district seems to understand what it needs to do to improve the work it does with teachers and principals. The advent of the school-based staff developers should further strengthen teachers' opportunities to learn. ILs continuing work with principals should, likewise, strengthen school-based attention

to instruction

We know that it will be tempting to move ahead with implementing new components of the Literacy Framework or to move on to mathematics in the next year. In light of this temptation, we raise a caution. Teachers and principals became familiar with the strategies they learned in the 1998-1999 schoolyear; they did not become proficient or distinguished in them, for the most part. It will be important to deepen what teachers know and can do with what they learned last year before requiring them to add further to their repertoire of knowledge and skill. It will be important to avoid overwhelming them with too much too soon. We know that the children they teach should not have to wait while their teachers learn. But we also know that, unless teachers have the capacity to do well what they have learned, they will be unable to use effectively the new, potentially powerful strategies with their children. The district will have a hard time figuring out how to balance the demands for depth and speed. We think it will be worthwhile to engage teachers and principals in conversations about what will enable them to move forward thoughtfully and at a sane pace.

Next Steps in the Evaluation. In order to further understand the implementation of the literacy framework and the supports in place to help teachers learn to use the associated literacy approaches, in consultation with the Clark Foundation and the district, we plan to modify our data collection strategies for the fall of 1999. First, given the importance of the school-based staff developers, we hope to interview teachers in this role at most of the district's middle schools. Our goal will be to learn a) how they have been prepared for their work and the strengths and limitations of that preparation, b) how they work with teachers and principals to forward the literacy agenda, and c) how they interact with the ILs and others involved in forwarding the literacy agenda. Second, to add balance to what we know about the ILs view of their work with principals, we want to learn more about principals' a) views of their interactions with the ILs, b) involvement with the literacy support teachers, and c) implementation of their roles as instructional leaders. To this end, we hope to interview most of the district's middle school principals. Third, we plan to interview, once again, most ILs and others in central office who are involved with the work of implementing the literacy framework. This focus and enlarged sample of principals will enable us to provide feedback to the Foundation and the district on the early phase of implementation of the essential support roles for principals and teachers.