

Collective Teacher Efficacy and High School Reorganization
as Small Learning Communities:
An Action Research Project in Southwestern Colorado

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Abstract

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As a high school principal, I have been immersed in seeking effective ways to create school conditions in which teachers can perform their best instructional work with students. Small learning community (SLC) environments are a high school design model with which I have over ten years experience in both theory and practice. Of particular interest to me has been the role of teachers related to a successful school change process, more specifically during the reorganization of a comprehensive high school into SLCs. This capstone project began in Washington State in 2005, and then transitioned to a new school in a new state in 2007 when I moved to Colorado.

Through my study, I developed a conceptual framework that suggests a relationship between cognitive psychology and the experiences of teachers within changing school conditions. As a leader, I wanted to learn more about how to inspire teachers to work together and develop the highest level of collective efficacy that potentially would translate into deeper student learning and increased achievement.

In 2007, I accepted a new position as Principal at a Colorado high school that was beginning to explore SLCs as a school design. I asked the questions:

1. *In what ways, if any, does the collective efficacy of teachers change as my high school undergoes organizational change towards smaller learning communities and more personalized learning environments?*
2. *How might high school organizational factors, associated with the transition to small learning communities, associate with the perceived efficacy of teachers? These factors include, but are not limited to, shared school goals; school improvement priorities, teacher inclusion in decision-making and decision-making processes; and principal practices that build teacher leadership capacity.*

My capstone project evolved into a three-part inquiry process. First, was the measuring of collective teacher efficacy and documenting the changes that were happening in Alpine View High School (AVHS) as part of converting to small learning communities. In hindsight, this was the more rudimentary part of my work, yet provided important foundation for deeper and more complex learning. Next came deeper clarity and understanding as I worked with my findings, expanded on them, and made meaning of what the “data” suggested. This struggle proved to be the most important aspect of my capstone as a “leader for learning”. Lastly, has been the reflective process as I revised my understanding of school leadership, adult learning, and the complex conditions that need to be considered during a significant school change process. Through my capstone learning, I enlarged my conceptual framework to include the critical role of school leadership within the context of teacher efficacy and successful high school change.

Two important bodies of research guided my capstone inquiry. The first addresses high school reorganization to small learning communities as an effective mechanism to improve student achievement. In addition to using broader scholarship

studies, the specific planning and implementation of changes at AVHS were guided by recommendations found within two significant research meta-analyses (Cotton, 2001 and Oxley, 2008). The second body of research addresses teacher efficacy as an important factor in school effectiveness, with particular focus on collective group efficacy. A quantitative research instrument for measuring collective teacher efficacy (Goddard, 2002) was used to describe this important construct for my study. In addition, qualitative data from staff survey and teacher leader interviews was gathered. Themes were mined that further connected leadership behaviors and school conditions, as described in the literature, which associate with collective teacher efficacy.

Primary Findings of my capstone include:

- A) Collective efficacy did not seem to change over three years as my high school moved through the process of reorganization to small learning communities. If anything, it declined slightly.
- B) Quantitative measuring of a complex construct, such as collective teacher efficacy, may be too simplistic to understand high school reorganization as an authentic and real-time practice inquiry – especially if my goal is to learn as a leader. School change is affected by both internal and external factors, both of which must be considered as part of the strategic path. In short, complex measures are needed to understand complex issues.
- C) School leadership matters. My capstone inquiry, findings, and subsequent reflection underscore the importance of principal leadership in a high school. Of particular importance is my increased awareness and understanding regarding the human and symbolic frames of leadership in school change (Bolman and

Deal, 1998) and the specific needs of teachers during significant school change processes (Ross, 2004).

In addition, this capstone study and reflections on my work will influence my professional practice and future directions in school leadership. My learning includes but is not limited to the following:

- A) Leadership for school change benefits from using a specific conceptual framework, in which overlapping parts integrate together. My proposed conceptual framework is described in the final chapter of this capstone study.
- B) Collective teacher efficacy is a critical factor in predicting and planning for effective teacher collaboration, sustainable school improvement, and increased student achievement. Principal efficacy is also important and a topic for future further study.
- C) Transformational leadership behaviors are intricately tied to developing collective teacher efficacy. To foster collective teacher efficacy, principal leadership must include opportunities and strategic actions for 1) shared school goals; 2) shared decision-making; 3) improvement plans with goals that match teachers' perceptions of needs; and 4) empowering others as leaders. (Ross, 2006).
- D) The importance of gathering qualitative longitudinal data as part of a plan for continuous school improvement is forever etched in my leadership toolbox.

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Thank you to the teachers and students at Marble Top High School in Clarksville, Washington and Alpine View High School in Alpine, Colorado. Both experiences have taught me critical lessons about school leadership and provided first hand practice in the human and symbolic frames of school organization (Bolman and Deal, 1998). I also appreciate the warm support from the faculty at the University of Washington *Leadership for Learning* graduate program, and especially for the smooth transition among committee members as my life took twists and turns throughout this capstone journey. I am especially grateful to Kathy Kimball who modeled how to meet unexpected sadness with strength and grace, and to Margery Ginsberg who helped pick up the pieces of my work and supported me to see it through to the end. Lastly, thank you to my family who provided me with the freedom to follow my own path even though they may not have always understood why this is important to me. I am thrilled to have completed what I set out to accomplish.

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PREFACE

I set out on this journey initially motivated only to “stay sane” as I transitioned from a successful 18-year high school teaching career into school leadership. Realizing that the world of public school secondary administration would require me to become an Assistant Principal in order to become a Principal, I continued in graduate school to ensure that I would have a professional community to stay engaged in the important educational conversations that inspired me to leave the classroom and dare to attempt to change the status quo in high schools. That journey – now almost 10 years later – led me to learn things about myself both professionally and personally that I could not have predicted. Most importantly, I have been reminded to take heed of Parker Palmer’s words which I first pondered in 1999 and learned through many of his works, “Reconnect who *you are* with what *you do*”. (Palmer, 1998 and 2000)

Regardless whether my “classroom” is filled with thirty 16-year olds or one hundred adults, I now understand more clearly how the belief and cognitive system of the “teacher/leader” is critical to what happens among the “students”. Teachers influence the success of their students through their own their personal agency and by what they believe about their students. Likewise, and more personally, principals influence the success of their teachers in similar ways. Teacher efficacy – individual and collective – is important for school change to be effective and sustained. From my action research, my most significant learning may be that my role as a school leader is more important than I ever realized. Teachers need their Principal to act and believe similarly as compared to how teachers are hoped to act and believe about their students. This mutually beneficial, reciprocal relationship may ultimately be the key to

sustainable school change and for all students to be successfully prepared to participate fully in the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

As an educator with more than 25 years experience, I have been interested in the conditions necessary for high schools to restructure successfully to meet the needs of students in a 21st century learning environment. Eighteen years in the classroom led me to firmly believe that teachers are paramount to any sustainable change effort. My capstone project began as a search to identify important connections between the qualities of teachers who worked in a high school that was undergoing significant change, and the success of such change initiatives. At the beginning of this inquiry (2005), I was working in a Washington state high school that was being re-organized into small learning communities (SLCs) and I started paying attention to the shift in teacher culture and relationships as the school went through the change process. When I became a new principal in Colorado that was beginning a similar conversion to small learning communities, I began to ask about the relationship of teacher efficacy to the successful implementation of school reorganization. The concept of teacher self-efficacy expanded to collective teacher efficacy as I observed groups of high school teachers working together in novel ways and forming new professional roles and relationships. I wondered if/how the collective efficacy of the teaching staff associated with the changes that were happening in our school reorganization. This is not a simple relationship, as I have learned through my action research project. Additional variables, some predictable and most not, increased the complexity of the change process and may have impacted the cognitive processing of teachers. Perhaps, most importantly, careful listening sharpened my understanding about the critical role that the school

leader plays in the dynamic toward fostering positive teacher efficacy and collective teacher efficacy in a high school undergoing significant change.

CHAPTER 1

Educational Background and Context

Large comprehensive public high schools continue to dominate the landscape for delivering secondary education to students, yet many are not successful in accomplishing their mission to educate all students, especially students of color, minority ethnicities, and/or from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. The evidence is compelling – poor attendance, dropout rates, public dissatisfaction – students are graduating without skills necessary for college, for work, for life. (Shannon & Bylsma, 2003 & 2008; Colorado Department of Education, 2009; NASSP, 2004). Consequently, high school reform continues to be an urgent subject of attention in educational research. The message is clear – in a time when relationships and personalized learning are key to student achievement, most large schools fail to support the strong relationships and community for students and teachers that are associated with fostering success.

Some researchers have suggested that the most critical element in authentic high school change is school size (Wasley, et. Al., 2000; Meier, 1995;Sizer, 1984; others) “All else being equal, students in small high schools score higher on tests, pass more courses, and go on to college more frequently than those in large ones (Cotton, 2001). In response, many high schools have “broken down” – organizationally, structurally, instructionally, operationally, professionally, socially, symbolically. Over the past decade, large sums of grant money, from both government and private sponsors, have been invested in schools and school districts that have taken on the challenge of personalizing and improving high school.

“...American high schools operate in much the same way today as they did 50 years ago, leaving most of today's young people without the academic preparation they need to be successful in college, work, and life. ... [Our] goal is to improve high school graduation and college preparedness rates by fostering dynamic high schools that help all students prepare for college and work through a rigorous and challenging curriculum, stronger relationships between students and teachers, and more relevant coursework.” (Gates Foundation website, 2004)

High-performing high schools, regardless of demographics, geographical location or size, share several similar attributes: common focus on shared goals; high expectations for all students in a rigorous course of study; personalized learning environments and relationships among students and adults; respect and responsibility; time for staff to collaborate; performance-based learning and achievement; and technology as a tool for instruction and learning (Dickinson, 2002). Based on these recommendations, high schools must reinvent themselves to increase student learning, improve on-time graduation and reduce dropout rates, prepare students for college without remediation, and close the achievement gap.

Beyond structural reorganization

Small learning community advocates claim that high schools that personalize their school environments are more likely to be successful with all students, especially children of color and/or from low socioeconomic backgrounds. However, structural reorganization, by itself, may not result in anticipated gains in high student achievement. Noguera (2002) effectively argues that reducing the size of a school is a necessary, but insufficient, step toward improving school quality. Fine and Somerville (1998, p. 104) summarize, “Experience and research make very clear that school size does indeed matter—but they also make clear that ‘small’ is no silver bullet.” Successful schools need: 1) a clear mission; 2) shared common core

values; 3) a coherent and consistent curriculum; and 4) teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled to guide student learning. Tom Vander Ark, former Education Director for The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, effectively describes the obsolescence of today's high schools (2002, p 56): "Among other things, we must rethink our preconceptions about the 50-minute, discipline-based blocks of learning. High school must be a place where young people can grapple with such complex issues as globalization, environmental degradation, and terrorism, as well as the implications of new technologies and advances in science. Students need extended periods of time to study multidisciplinary topics, opportunities to work in teams on complex projects, and the expectation that they will communicate a reasoned perspective in a variety of ways."

Clearly, organizational change is only the beginning and must be followed by more important cultural and instructional changes. School reinvention is a process, not an event.

Teachers are key

The role of the adults in a school, especially the teacher, may be the most important and difficult shift to make in redesigning high schools. Teachers must be learners themselves, growing in response to the needs of their students as well as collaborating and learning with their colleagues. From the Wallach Report (2002, p.19), which cites still relevant research that is now more than fifteen years old:

High school reform is meaningless unless it changes daily teaching and learning in the classroom (Tewel, 1995). Highly effective school improvement programs focus on achieving specific student outcomes and recent research outlines that variables at the classroom level account for greater variation in student outcomes than do variables at the school level (Harris, 2000). Professional development should be ongoing, relevant and focused on

fostering student achievement. In addition to new teaching strategies, professional development can provide structures for intellectual inquiry and reflection about classroom practice, which eliminate teacher isolation and build a community of professionals engaged in learning (Tewel, 1995).

A substantial body of research suggests that one of the most important school determinants of student achievement is the quality of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2002). Teachers are key to the success of educational reform. “Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it’s as simple and as complex as that.” (Fullan, 1998, p.117). Teachers prepare lessons, deliver instruction, design learning experiences, assess student performance, communicate with parents, participate in professional development, collaborate with colleagues – all for the purpose of increased student learning. Teacher training programs and professional development programs prepare teachers to be culturally competent (Darling-Hammond, L., 2002); use instructional strategies that work (Marzano, R. 2001); differentiate their curriculum (Tomlinson C., 1999); use multiple intelligences (Gardiner, H., 1993); integrate curriculum (Fogerty, 1991) – in addition to mastering the content appropriate to the specific discipline and/or grade level they teach.

Teacher efficacy

In addition to employing specific teaching strategies, teachers bring their belief system about their students, about learning, and about themselves as practitioners into the classroom. The belief teachers have in their ability – individually and collectively – to affect the outcome of their work with students in schools defines their efficacy. Albert Bandura defines self-efficacy as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their

lives. “Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave.” (Bandura, 1997, p.19)

Efficacy, applied to teachers, has been the focus of a concentrated body of scholarship for nearly thirty years. Efficacy in education has been further investigated and developed as it applies to students, leadership, schools, and educational organizations. “Teachers’ beliefs in their efficacy affect their orientation toward educational processes as well as their specific instructional activities.” (Bandura, 1997, p. 245)

In addition to individual self-efficacy, collective teacher efficacy has been associated with student and school success. Perceived collective efficacy is defined as “a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments.” (Bandura, 1997, p 477)

There are compelling links between collective efficacy and group goal attainment. Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, leaders in the field of teacher and collective efficacy, have described the important linkage between collective efficacy, professional collaboration, and student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2004, p.8):

“The strong link between group performance and collective efficacy concerns the resiliency with which the efficacious pursue given goals. Analogous to self-efficacy, collective efficacy is associated with the tasks, level of effort, persistence, shared thoughts, stress levels, and achievement of groups. Furthermore, collective teacher efficacy, within a professional community of educators, has the potential to improve individual teacher efficacy and, more importantly, lead to higher levels of student engagement and achievement.”

Purpose of capstone inquiry

The purpose of this capstone project is to increase my leadership understanding about the role of collective teacher efficacy within a large

comprehensive high school in rural Colorado, which has been undergoing significant organizational change as small learning communities. In 2008, Alpine View High School divided its staff of approximately 90 teachers into small learning communities (SLCs), each of which was charged with accepting collective responsibility for approximately 200 9th and 10th grade students. At the time, the primary motivation to change was to improve relationships and personalize the teaching and learning environment. In 2010, the school took an additional step toward identifying specific instructional methodologies that would be associated with each learning community and adding a school choice opportunity for both students and teachers. Throughout each part of the change process, teachers were included in strategic planning and redesigning the overall big school structure as well as creating their own new small learning community (SLC). My interest as the school leader has been to study this change process to learn, understand, grow, and potentially inform future practice for other high school leaders immersed in improving high schools and, ultimately, to increase student achievement. My focus is on the following questions:

- 1. In what ways, if any, does the collective efficacy of teachers change as my high school undergoes organizational change towards smaller learning communities and more personalized learning environments?*
- 2. How might high school organizational factors, associated with the transition to small learning communities, associate with the perceived efficacy of teachers? These factors include, but are not limited to, shared school goals; school improvement priorities, teacher inclusion in decision-making and decision-making processes; and principal practices that build teacher leadership capacity.*

Framing the context for inquiry

Alpine View High School (AVHS) is a comprehensive high school, located in rural Colorado. For at least the past 5 years, AVHS has continuously directed its improvement efforts toward addressing three major challenges: underperformance of our minority and low socio-economic students, flat performance of “middle” students, and the social-emotional readiness of many students to fully participate in their high school education. (see annual Alpine View High School Accountability Reports, School Improvement Plans, and Unified Improvement Plans – available on Colorado Department of Education/CDE website). Our school renewal effort was built upon the belief that the most important attributes of a successful high school are: 1) a strong focus on teaching and learning; 2) professional community with high quality teachers who feel supported; 3) distributed leadership that contributes to both student and professional learning; and 4) coherence between student and professional learning. (Knapp et.al., 2003)

AVHS began discussions that included reorganizing into small learning communities, prior to hiring a new principal in 2007. Following a series of staff and stakeholder collaborative meetings, and visitations to schools throughout the country, AVHS declared they were ready for a significant change. The implementation of SLCs focused on ideas that had been learned through prior training with Richard and Rebecca DuFour (DuFour & Eaker, 1998), to create and strengthen conditions necessary for true professional teacher communities to develop. Teachers planned to improve their instructional expertise as they assumed collective responsibility for their students. Small learning communities were designed to increase the opportunity for

strong academic relationships with each and all students. The overarching goal has and continues to be focused on the creation of a school environment conducive to student success and meets the challenge of Alpine View High School's stated vision as "a thriving educational community".

A representative "Committee for Strategic Change" leadership team identified fourteen general criteria that they associated with improved academic achievement and positive student experiences in high school. Most importantly, in 2007, these criteria gave teachers and staff the confidence necessary to reach consensus to take the first step in first order school change:

- Teachers will work with assigned students over longer periods of time;
- Teachers and students will have strong and meaningful relationships;
- Teachers will have time to collaborate;
- Diversity in instruction will be offered;
- Post-high school and career connections will be supported;
- Students will be prepared for post-graduation pursuits;
- Flexibility will exist for earning credit;
- Advanced and accelerated learning options will be available;
- Students will feel safe and be safe at school;
- Remediation and credit-recovery will be built into the system;
- The best of AVHS will be maintained!
- Essential questions and skills will guide student learning at each grade level;
- All students will demonstrate their learning in authentic ways - assessments, presentations, projects, exhibitions, internships, etc.;
- All students will identify and explore areas of interest and potential for their future beyond high school.

In 2008-09, the reorganization into smaller learning communities began. During the second year of implementation, and following the hiring of a new district superintendent,

Alpine View High School was challenged to participate in a strategic site planning process to ensure that the goals and new improvement plan of the high school were aligned with the new strategic plan of the school district. In doing so, a newly formed Core Planning team proposed that the Small Learning Communities needed to be “refined” further, the most important part of which was to select a specific instructional methodology for each SLC, which would be practiced by all teachers within that community. In addition, each SLC would be open to student and teacher selection to facilitate a better match between teaching and learning preferences. The 2011-12 school year was designated as a planning year for implementation of the new SLCs to open in August of 2012.

I am the investigator for this capstone project in my current role as Principal of Alpine View High School, a position I have held for the past four years. I was hired, in part, due to my prior experience working in a high school that had undergone conversion to small learning communities. When I joined the AVHS staff in 2007, I found a group of teachers who were enthusiastic about taking on the new challenge yet unsure of what would come with the change. In the spring of 2008, we reached consensus to reorganize traditional departments into four interdisciplinary learning communities for 9th and 10th grade students. Our local School Board and parent community endorsed the high school’s plan for implementation beginning in 2008-09 school year. An initial evaluation process was proposed primarily to track student engagement, school attendance, and standardized test scores. The teachers wanted to be self-directed and grow their capacity for leadership. My role as Principal was to

create and sustain an environment that supports teachers, and to allocate resources relative to time, professional development, and enhancing student learning.

As leader of the school, I am accountable to district supervisors, the school board, and to our school parents and community to monitor and adjust the work at the high school in such a manner that is consistent with our district and school site strategic plans and maximizes opportunity for all students to be successful. I communicate regularly with the superintendent's district staff and report at least annually to the school board.

This capstone documents an authentic action research study, based on survey data, artifacts, and interviews with teachers and staff. My study is limited in scope to the experiences of teachers as they have worked within their small learning community and with their professional colleagues, over a period of four years. My study purposely did not address other variables that may influence or be related to my findings, some of which, in hindsight, may have been important to my deeper understanding of our school change process and needs. These will be discussed in the final chapter.

Collective efficacy of teachers was surveyed in spring of 2007-08 school year (baseline), in the spring of 2009, and then again in the spring of 2011. Other survey work associated with specific attributes of our school change process was collected in spring of 2011. Documentation of professional work associated with our multi-year (and on-going) change process will be described as it relates to teachers' experience and sense of efficacy. In addition, teachers who currently work or have worked in Teacher Leadership roles at AVHS were interviewed in a focus group to learn more about their

specific experiences and deepen my understanding of conditions and practices that potentially influence an efficacious staff and school environment.

Our school change process, and the corresponding data collection for my capstone, was developed with support of Alpine View School District officials, and surveys were approved for use with teachers. As both principal and researcher, my goal has been to collect sufficient information to inform the next logical steps for continuous improvement at Alpine View High School. I anticipate the acquisition of increased knowledge and understanding about the strengths and challenges of the adult professional communities within each small learning community will increase clarity about actions to engage and support teachers more effectively in their work. This capstone may also inform how to improve effective collaboration, support teacher and student relationships, and continue to increase our collective responsibility for student learning. Other anticipated accomplishments, outside the boundaries of this capstone, may contribute to our improved understanding of student engagement and academic success.

School population in context

Alpine School District consists of six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Over the past two decades, the Alpine community has seen a demographic shift with many new families moving to this desirable “destination” city. With the arrival of new students, came new expectations that AVHS would serve more affluent students and prepare students for entrance to tier 1 colleges. Today, we find ourselves with a much more diverse student population, mostly with respect to socio-economics and culture. Alpine View High School, as the only high school in our school

district, serves Native American and Hispanic students, as well as Caucasian students who span the economic continuum from homeless to independently wealthy. Despite the success of many students, too few make it to graduation in 4 years and our local GED program is thriving. (see Appendix A)

Historically, there has been and remains a group of underserved students within our building. Many of these students simply disappear between 9th and 12th grade. For example, the class of 2007 began with 384 9th graders in October 2003. By October of their junior year, 341 students remained and 319 seniors graduated in late May 2007. This is an attrition of 65 students, representing 16.9% of the original freshmen class. The net loss is balanced by the number of students who moved offset by the number of similar-age students who entered the district during the same time period. Our current graduation rate (defined as 4-year completers) is 69%, slightly below the Colorado state average.

AVHS student performance on standardized tests provides additional insight. In Colorado, the CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program) assesses every 9th and 10th grade student attending Alpine View High School in reading, writing and mathematics. Student performance on the CSAP indicates that, although some students do well, a sizable number of students performed below proficient in mathematics, reading, and writing during each of the last three years. Most disturbing is mathematics performance. When the class of 2007 was in the 10th grade, 62% scored *below proficient* in mathematics, equating to 216 individual students. The class of 2008 and 2009 10th grade students performed equally poorly in mathematics with 65% and 58%, respectively, scoring below proficient. Reading and writing CSAP results were not

as low, yet still 37 - 41% of 10th graders scored below proficient in writing and 17- 22% scored below proficient in reading.

In 2008, The Colorado Department of Education rated Alpine View High School as “high” in terms of academic performance on state assessments, but “low” in terms of academic growth of students. (see CDE website for more information on state calculation of performance data). This mixed rating represents an academic challenge for our school. Although many students perform well on standardized tests, most students do not demonstrate an increase in achievement from one year to the next. This is especially true for our students in special populations including Gifted and Talented, English Language Learners, and students who receive Special Education services. As of spring 2011, growth of disaggregated low performers is starting to show improvement and, for the first time, we have met state expectations for some of these critical populations.

Course failure rates illuminate the problem further. For example, during the first term of the 2007-08 school year, 17.1% of 9th graders and 15.6% of tenth grade students failed at least one class. During the 2006-07 school year, 33% of our 9th grade class earned at least one D or F. High failure rates lead to students being behind in credits needed to graduate. Internal data indicates that 16% of the Class of 2010 lags behind in credits earned by the end of the 10th grade. Disaggregated data finds that 28% of Native American students and 40% of Hispanic students are currently behind in credits needed to graduate on time.

Some students from AVHS’s two feeder middle schools enter 9th grade unprepared to participate in entry-level high school work. For example, at least 20% of

incoming 9th graders are enrolled in some kind of gap-closing or remediation math course due to not being ready for Algebra 1. Too few students have adequate parental support and positive educational values shared at home. AVHS provides services for students who require alcohol and/or drug counseling, are victims of domestic violence, and/or have concerns for their personal safety. These social problems are in addition to economic hardships – our reported free and reduced lunch rate averages 22%.

Colorado State surveys students every year in 8th and 10th grades in all public schools, using the state standardized *Healthy Kids Colorado* instrument. In 2006, 32% of students said that their parent was not interested in their schoolwork, and 34% said that no parent or other adult talked to them about their problems. 19% responded that finishing high school was not important. In addition, the survey asked students if they had missed school because of safety concerns in the past 30 days. 12% of them answered that they had stayed at home one or more times. 38% said they had been bullied or harassed and 28% said they had been hit, kicked or punched while on school property in the last 12 months. This data suggests that students are in need of positive adult relationships that nurture their growth, resiliency, and personal efficacy.

The new organizational changes at Alpine View High School are founded on the belief that smaller learning communities will provide more opportunities for teachers to know their students well, personalize and differentiate the teaching/learning cycle, and provide positive role models and support that may be lacking outside of school. As a result, the collective efficacy of the staff will continue to improve and/or be sustained. Teachers are viewed as the critical element to school success and positive student achievement.

CHAPTER 2

Research Foundations

Reinventing high schools as small learning communities

The body of significant evidence that supports reorganizing large comprehensive schools into small, personalized communities of learners is approximately twenty years old.

In 1996, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAASP) released, *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution*. In this significant and concise report, high school leaders from across the United States published their vision for high schools for the 21st century. “Six main themes thread their way through the pages of this report, emphasizing that better education depends on personalizing the high school experience for students, lending coherency to their education, organizing time differently, using technology at every opportune point, revitalizing the ongoing professional education of teachers and administrators, and enhancing leadership at every level at which it can affect teaching and learning.” (p 5). NAASP declared that it is the high school’s mission to “remind young people that life without the intellectual tools for participating fully in the marketplace constitutes a sentence to likely destitution.” (p 3); and “the American high school as an anvil upon which the nation forges its strength, must accept part of the blame for the troubles that surround it, having neglected to fulfill its duty to develop citizens who can assume their rightful place in a democracy with a free-market economy.” (p 4)

NAASP recognizes that breaking down high schools into more manageable and humane units, may provide the conditions for addressing their recommendations.

Described as “small schools”, this high school design serves students in groups no larger than 400, shared by a group of teachers numbering between 6 and 20 depending on the population of students. These schools are focused in their mission and explicitly declare that they are not comprehensive. Rather, they are personal educational communities that rely on relationships with students and among adults to engage students in active inquiry, in-depth learning, and assessment by performance. Parents are regarded as partners within their child’s education. Although some “small schools” run as independent schools, economy of scale supports continued efforts for large comprehensive high schools to break down into several small schools that operate side-by-side within the same building.

The primary emphasis for converting high schools into smaller learning environments is to “personalize” the learning environment. Personalization is regarded as key to improving academic achievement for all students and closing the achievement gap. “The impersonal nature of high school leaves too many youngsters alienated from the learning process.” (NASSP, p 4) Students and teachers are encouraged to work together in supportive learning communities, as a necessary condition to ensure that all students learn. Personalization also promotes student motivation, a critical factor for many high school students to attend school daily, stay in school, and participate in their education. “Supportive personal relationships, the authors wrote, “are critical in promoting and maintaining student engagement. Although learning involves cognitive processes that take place within each individual, motivation to learn also depends on the student’s involvement in a web of social relationships that support learning.” A key recommendation is to “restructure comprehensive [urban] high schools to create smaller

learning communities that foster personalized and continuous relationships between teachers and students.”

In 2004, *Breaking Ranks* was re-released as *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*. Although it held many of the same tenets as the first edition, it went further to address collaborative leadership and professional learning communities. In doing so, *Breaking Ranks II* provided the most mainstream argument and justification for reinventing large comprehensive high schools as small learning communities and began to provide a road map for doing so.

In 1998, Raywid published a “Synthesis of Research”, which highlighted the growing body of findings in support of small schools as a “reform that works”. Her findings included: 1) Students at all grade levels learn more in small schools than in large schools, although school size and organization tend to play a greater role as students get older (Howley 1989, Mosteller 1995, Lee et al. 1995); 2) At-risk students are much more likely to succeed in small schools than in large schools (Oxley and McCabe 1990, Wehlage et al. 1987); 3) Small schools are far more likely to be violence-free than large schools (Toby 1993/1994); 4) The bonds created in small schools enable such schools to influence students' post-high school behavior, including college attendance (Downey 1978; Walberg and Walberg 1994; Marian and McIntire 1992; Bensman 1994, 1995; *Seattle Weekly* 1997; Bush 1993); and 5) The success of small schools is attributable to various features, all of which seem to emerge from three key factors: (1) small size (Walberg and Walberg 1994, Lee and Smith 1994, Lee et al. 1995), (2) an unconventional organizational structure (Bryk and Thum 1989, Lee et al. 1995), and (3) a setting that operates more like a community than a bureaucracy (Bryk

and Driscoll 1988, Bryk et al. 1993, Bryk and Thum 1989, Lee and Smith 1994, Wehlage et al. 1987).

In 2000, a well-publicized initiative was launched by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to change the face of education, particularly high schools, in the United States. Based on the growing body of research, and in consult with many contemporary educational leaders, the Foundation agreed that “high schools are more likely to be successful when they are small and personalized... but also have a clear sense of what they hope to achieve with students, align their educational aims with school organization and structure, share a core set of beliefs that shape what its educators do, and hold high academic standards for students.” (Toch, 2003, p 12-13). Under the leadership of former school superintendent Tom Vander Ark, the Gates Foundation described “great” high schools as places that “expect every student to graduate ready for college or a family-wage job; engage all students in challenging course work that is relevant to their lives and their aspirations; and are small – most educating no more than 100 students per grade – so that students get personal attention in a safe, respectful environment. (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation website, 2004). Attributes of such high achieving schools include: common focus, high expectations, personalized, respect and responsibility; time to collaborate; performance based; technology as a tool. Teachers and students engage in powerful teaching and learning, active inquiry, in-depth learning, and performance assessment.

Concurrently, grant allocations from the U.S. Department of Education and money from other private foundations (Annenberg, Carnegie), provided additional economic and political recognition for the reorganization of large high schools into small

learning communities as an official national reform movement. As of 2008, despite budget cutbacks, federal programs awarded grants to nearly 1,350 high schools.

(Oaxley & Kassissieh, 2008)

More specifically, and as it applies directly to my capstone project, several studies provided insight from meta-analyses which associated specific attributes of small school environments with success in achieving goals addressing increased student achievement and graduation rates. In December 2001, Kathleen Cotton identified “the new small schools” as having higher levels of achievement, equity, affiliation/bonding, safety and order, and lower levels of truancy and dropouts. In addition, preparation for college is better, participation in extracurricular activities increases, and parent satisfaction is more positive.

Perhaps, most important to this study, is that teacher attitudes and satisfaction are improved. This is without loss of curriculum quality and, when calculated per graduate, at no additional cost. Cotton quotes Fine and Sommerville, (1998) in saying, “When done well...small schools can be remarkable for improving the intellectual and social life of children, youth, educators, and parents. Successful small schools provide an educational environment where all students can achieve at high levels and where staff have exciting opportunities to teach and learn—and small schools can be a systematic strategy for inciting momentum into urban school reform.

Cotton attributes successful small school high schools as those which possess:

- 1) Autonomy – Deemed essential, SLCs have autonomy in decision making, physical separateness, selection of teachers and students, and flexible scheduling.

- 2) Identity – SLCs develop a distinct program of study that originates from their unique vision, interests, and the characteristics of its members.
- 3) Personalization – This goes beyond SLC teachers and students simply knowing each other well. Teachers identify and respond to students’ strengths and needs over multiple years in de-tracked academic environments. Parents and community are an essential part of the learning experience.
- 4) Support for Teaching – SLC teachers assume authority and responsibility in educating their students. School leadership and decision-making is shared and reciprocated – teachers lead and administrators teach.
- 5) Functional Accountability – SLC teams use multiple forms of assessments that require students to demonstrate their learning – and for the SLC to demonstrate its success. Each SLC communicates with other small schools and has tangible support from building and district network partners.

In 2008, the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory published an important resource titled, *From High School to Learning Communities: Five Domains of Best Practice*. In the introduction, the report aims to “provide guidance to school staff and stakeholders in the demanding work of transforming 20th-century comprehensive high schools into 21st-century learning organizations.” NWREL’s study was used by Alpine View High School during its Strategic Site Plan work in 2010 (see Appendix F). Tactic 5 of AVHS’s Site Plan specifically says, “We will refine the Small Learning Community organization at [AVHS] in order to provide sufficient collaboration time, support student pursuit of standards of excellence, and assure shared responsibility for the success of

our students.” The Action Team for Tactic 5 grounded its recommendations in NWREL’s Five Domains.

Like Cotton’s work, NWREL’s 5 Domains grow out of a meta-analysis of research, each of which associates attributes of specific SLC studies with student achievement in at least two research studies (pg. 3) The 5 Domains are:

- 1.) Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Teams – As the center of teaching, learning and program improvement efforts, teacher teams organize themselves, around the students they share in common. Team members share time to collaborate on program design, lead learning activities, and troubleshoot students’ progress over multiple years of study.
- 2.) Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum and Instruction – Teacher teams form meaningful relationships with students and facilitate a more authentic, active form of student learning. Provided with autonomy, teams can integrate discipline-based content in learning activities to create program coherence, opportunities for learning content in different contexts, and connection to real-world issues.
- 3.) Inclusive Program and Practices - Students choose to enter a particular SLC on the basis of their curricular interests, without restriction based on perceived ability. Teaching teams include educational specialists, collaborate with students’ parents, use time and resources flexibly, and tailor instruction to meet all students’ needs for mastering challenging curricula.
- 4.) Continuous Program Improvement – An integral part of the work of teacher teams is disciplined reflection on their practice to ensure that all students are learning. SLC teams engage in a continuous cycle of program improvement efforts. Teams

assess their practice by analyzing student work and soliciting feedback from students, parents, and SLC partners.

- 5.) Building/District-Level Support for SLCs – For SLCs to flourish, the larger school and district must operate in a manner that supports them. A fundamental requirement for making the kind of adjustments necessary to support SLCs is to give teachers and their students a major role in decision making.

NWREL defines a Small Learning Community as: “An interdisciplinary team of teachers [which] shares a few hundred or fewer students in common for instruction, assumes responsibility for their educational progress across years of school, and exercises maximum flexibility to act on knowledge of students’ needs.” (Oaxley, p. 1) Using the metaphor of a tree, NWREL’s 5 Domains are said to be interdependent. No single domain is sufficient for a Small Learning Community to be successful and/or sustainable over time.

Teacher efficacy

Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2000) provide an historical overview of teacher efficacy theory, beginning with J.B. Rotter in 1966. Rotter, with researchers at Rand Corporation, “first conceived of teacher efficacy as the extent to which teachers believed that they could control the reinforcement of their actions. The critical question was whether control of reinforcement lay within the teachers themselves or in the environment.” (p. 481). Teacher efficacy is defined as “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” or as “teachers’ belief or conviction that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be difficult or unmotivated.” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p 202). “The construct

of teachers' sense of efficacy refers to teachers' situation specific expectation that they can help students learn. ... Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy believe that they are capable of having a positive effect on student performance. They choose challenging activities and are motivated to try harder when obstacles confront them. They become engrossed in the teaching situation itself, are not easily diverted, and experience pride in their accomplishments when the work is done." (Ashton & Webb, 1986, p 3)

Teacher efficacy has been linked to many outcomes and professional behaviors including persistence to work with difficult students, exhibiting higher levels of organization and classroom planning, being less critical of students, and demonstrating persistence and resilience when things do not go well (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Coladarchi (1992, p 334) reports findings that suggest, "personal and general efficacy were the two strongest predictors of commitment to teaching." Perhaps, most importantly, is the positive correlation found between teacher efficacy and student motivation and achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson and Dembo, 1984; Pajares, F., 1996, others).

Teacher efficacy is drawn from a more basic characteristic, personal self-efficacy. Bandura (1977, 1993, 1994, 1997) demonstrates that self-efficacy is a cognitive process, effectively developed through mastery experiences. In one documented study (1993, p 121), Bandura showed that when children were told prior to performing a particular task whether successful completion reflected an inherent capacity or acquired skill, the group whose "conception of ability as an acquirable skill fostered a highly resilient sense of personal efficacy. Under this belief system, the

individuals remained steadfast in their personal efficacy.” Comparatively, “those who viewed ability as reflecting an inherent intellectual aptitude, their perceived efficacy plummeted as they encountered problems.” As adults, similar behaviors are observed.

One’s perception of self-efficacy is also deepened through social modeling, i.e. seeing others, like oneself, successfully perform similar tasks. Similarly, positive appraisals, emotional state, and successful stress management correlate directly with perceived efficacy. With reference to teachers, Bandura points out that “teachers’ instructional efforts are governed more by what they believe they can accomplish than by their view of other teachers’ abilities to prevail over environmental obstacles by effective teaching.” (1997, p 243).

In a 2004 interview, (Shaughnessy, 2004), Anita Woolfolk-Hoy cautioned the use of the term “teachers’ sense of efficacy” rather than “teacher efficacy”, paying reference to Arthur Bandura for emphasizing the difference. “The term, ‘teacher efficacy’ is too often confused with teacher ‘effectiveness’.” Similarly, Bandura (1993, p 11) cautions not to confuse efficacy with esteem. “Efficacy is specifically concerned with judgments of personal capability whereas esteem takes into account judgments of self-worth. There is no fixed relationship about one’s capabilities and whether one likes or dislikes oneself.”

Four important sources shape efficacy (Bandura, 1997, others) – mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and affective state. Each applies to individual self-efficacy as well as group attainment of collective efficacy and each source is apparent within high school culture among teachers. Goddard (2004) demonstrated that mastery experience plays most heavily among schools, explaining

that the perception a performance has been successful tends to raise efficacy beliefs, contributing to the expectation that performance will be proficient in the future.

Vicarious experiences are modeled regularly in high schools, in which one teacher observes successful performance by another teacher, thereby enhancing one's own belief s/he can also be successful. Social persuasion and affective states – mentioned above – deepen the emotional experience of the teacher whether it be confidence, conviction, anxiety, or excitement. In turn, these factors increase or decrease efficacy and expectation of success.

Teacher's belief in their own capacity to affect the motivation and/or achievement of their students influences the instructional decisions they make and the way they interact with their colleagues. Comparing two ELL teachers who each begin a difficult teaching assignment with a group of new students – one teacher is successful based on her confidence, willingness to experiment with instructional approaches, persistence, collaboration, and communication; while the other has concerns about failing in her assignment that leads to frustration, lack of progress for her students and herself, and thoughts of changing her career. (Leithwood and Beatty, 2008) "Efficacy expectations are a major determinant of peoples' choice of activities, how much effort they will expend and how long they will sustain effort in dealing with stressful situations." (Bandura, 1997)

Teacher efficacy may also be context specific, in that it can change depending on the situation. For example, the same teacher may feel efficacious in one situation compared to another such as teaching different subjects or even among one group of students compared to another. In response, Tschannen-Moran, et. al (1998) created a

more integrated model for teacher efficacy that includes an individual's personal assessment and perception as well the resources and context associated with the situation. This more complex concept of efficacy has influenced educational researchers, and others, in studies related to organizational learning, team potency, and collective efficacy.

Collective teacher efficacy

Although cognition is essentially a neurophysiological process, social and environmental interactions and networks influence the many ways in which cognition manifests itself. Bandura reminds us "the human mind is generative, creative, and proactive, not just reactive. ... People bring cognitive productions into being by the intentional exercise of personal agency," yet, "personal agency operates within a broad network of sociostructural influences." Furthermore, "social cognitive theory extends the analysis of mechanisms of human agency to the exercise of collective agency. ... Collective efficacy is not simply the sum of efficacy beliefs of individuals. Rather, it is an emergent group-level attribute that is the product of coordinative and interactive dynamics" (Bandura, 1997, p 5-7)

Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2000) contend that collective efficacy emerges from the same underpinnings as individual or self-efficacy. Likewise, collective efficacy is influenced by the same factors - mastery, social, emotional, and vicarious experiences. For example, the creation of norms in groups, serve the function to control the actions of individuals when they fall outside the good of the group. Mastery experiences, also shape the group in similar powerful ways as they do an individual's perceived self-efficacy. Most recently, these same researchers reported, "For schools,

perceived collective efficacy refers to the judgment of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students.” (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2004, p 4).

Goddard has postulated that two key elements interplay in the development of collective teacher efficacy – analysis of the teaching task, including all that is required in any specific teaching activity; and assessment of teaching competence, including that of their colleagues, professional development, experience, and conditions. “Perceptions of group capability to successfully educate students result when teachers consider the level of difficulty of the teaching task (in relation) to their perceptions of group competence.” (Goddard et.al., 2000, p 485) Like Bandura, Goddard and his colleagues presume that collective efficacy is a measure of group capability, not that of the individuals who make up a school faculty. The difference is shown in the following example, and demonstrated in the collective efficacy instrument used in this capstone project:

Individual: “I am able to get through to the most difficult students.”

Collective: “Teachers in this school can get thru to the most difficult students.

In the context of external factors affecting efficacy - both individual and collective - teachers would do themselves well to seek a position that “protects and nurtures” their efficacy (Shaughnessy, 2004). Teachers should seek models and mentors, ask for what they need, and keep a reflective journal noting successes. Stemming from teacher efficacy research findings, and as related to my specific capstone inquiry, school principals might ask: 1) What opportunities exist for teachers to share their successes with other teachers, school and district staff, and parent/community

members? 2) How do we encourage and support our teachers to take instructional risks, based on past successes with novel experiences? 3) When we gather for meetings, are they opportunities to learn, reflect, and share - or are they sessions to sit and listen? 4) Does a teacher feel like s/he contributes to the adult learning in this school?

Bandura (1997, p 243), reminds us that “teachers operate collectively within an interactive social system rather than isolates.” Thus, collective efficacy of teachers is more than the additive sum of individual teacher efficacy. Collective efficacy is a complex attribute of teachers, in the context of their social and cultural environment. “The stronger the beliefs people hold about their collective capabilities, the more they achieve. This is true regardless of whether the group’s sense of efficacy develops naturally or is created experimentally.” (Bandura, 1997, p 480).

Efficacious teachers create efficacious schools. Bandura identifies the following attributes observed in efficacious schools: high expectations and standards for achievement; subgroup instruction designed to accelerate learning and make-up deficits; heavy involvement of parents as partners; regular communication within school and between school and parent community; learning activities structured in ways to promote a sense of personal capability and scholastic accomplishment in all students; and classroom behavior managed successfully.” (1997, pp 244-247). Furthermore, “schools in which staff members collectively judge themselves highly capable of promoting academic success are likely to imbue their schools with a positive atmosphere for sociocognitive development. ... The belief systems of the staff [create]

an organizational culture that can have vitalizing or demoralizing effects on the perceived efficacy of its members.” (1997, p 248).

School conditions and collective teacher efficacy

Several researchers have looked at the relationship between collective efficacy, school organization, and/or working conditions – both experimentally and conceptually. (Goddard, Logerfo, & Hoy, 2004; Goddard, Hoy, Woolfolk-Hoy, 2004; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Newman, Rutter & Smith, 1989; Tschannen-Moran et al, 2000). Although specific findings vary, they generally conclude, “The more teachers have the opportunity to influence instructionally relevant school decisions, the more likely a school is to be characterized by a robust sense of collective efficacy. ...From the perspective of social cognitive theory, the results highlight the important role of structures and actions that enable groups to exercise collective agency. ... Collective efficacy beliefs, in turn, foster commitment to school goals and gains in student achievement.” (Goddard, Hoy, Woolfolk-Hoy, 2004, p 10)

Bandura (1997) associates school conditions with influencing teachers’ mastery experiences as they apply to collective efficacy. These include: 1) participation in decision-making; 2) feedback on performance; 3) clarity of goals and expectations; and 4) strong leadership. In addition, the successful experiences of some teachers, such as teacher leaders, may vicariously contribute to and socially persuade the efficacy of the group overall in a positive direction. Conversely, high levels of stress of even just a few teachers may diminish the efficacy of the group overall.

In a very large study involving more than 2000 elementary school teachers in 141 schools, Canadian researchers investigated the “antecedents of collective teacher

efficacy” and “the school processes that promoted teacher ownership of school directions.” (Ross, et.al. 2004) Using a similar research base as that described in this capstone study, they found the following contribute positively to collective efficacy: 1) shared school goals, 2) shared decision-making, 3) match of school improvement goals with teacher perception of needs, and 4) school leadership that empowers staff and fosters collaboration.

Furthermore, Ross suggests that “collective efficacy could serve as a powerful mediating variable in school improvement research, providing an explanation of why some schools are ‘moving’ or ‘stuck’, why site-based decision-making has positive outcomes in some schools and not in others, and in identifying the conditions that lead to productive professional communities in schools.”

Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) further connected high collective teacher efficacy with increased student achievement in a study of 66 middle schools in Virginia. They found that, overall, high efficacy associates with teachers promoting a shared sense of responsibility, setting high expectations for students despite low SES condition, and displaying persistence and resiliency when working with students who struggle. Principals in such schools were viewed as instructional leaders who sought creative ways to improve instruction, listen to their teachers, promote innovation, and promote a positive school climate. School conditions, which correlate positively with student achievement, suggest that a principal can directly affect or contribute to their school’s collective teacher efficacy by engaging in specific leadership behaviors.

Today, schools and school districts are compelled to find effective ways to increase student achievement, especially for diverse students. Nowhere is the difficulty

of the task more apparent than in today's large public high schools. Despite tremendous efforts to improve curriculum and change school structures, the gap between accomplished and underachieving students remains. Teacher quality focuses primarily on skill and competencies and certifications. The body of research on self and collective efficacy suggests that the cognitive processing and belief system of teachers is paramount to the success of school improvement efforts. My capstone inquiry is grounded in the belief that the most significant role within the school system is that of the teacher. "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and as complex as that." (Fullan, 2001)

CHAPTER 3

Inquiry Design and Methodology

“Action research is a ‘wonderfully uncomfortable’ (Lytle, 1977) place to be – once we start our journey of investigation, there is no way of knowing in advance where we will end up.” – Mills, 2003, p. 2

Rationale for approach to study

As a High School Principal and the primary investigator in this capstone project, I utilized action research as my method of inquiry, for the primary purpose to inform and improve our school practices, my leadership practice, and ultimately, to enhance student learning. Although not an initial goal, I also sought to create a conceptual framework for school change leadership as the principal.

Action research has been described by many researchers including Lewin (1947), Corey (1953), Elliott (1991), Mills (2003) and Stringer (2008). One of my favorite definitions is the opening line Emily Calhoun’s work (1994), “Action research is a fancy way of saying let’s study what’s happening at our school and decide how to make it a better place.” For the purposes of my study, I refer to Mills and Stringer for both theoretical background and practical methods.

Geoffrey Mills (2003, p 5) defines Action Research as “any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers to gather information about the ways that their particular school operates, how they teach, and how well their students learn. The information is gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment and on educational practices in general, and improving student outcomes.” He argues that connections between traditional research and actual practice are problematic; therefore, a more pragmatic

methodology provides greater access to the teacher, principal, or school practitioner for collecting data and understanding findings.

Ernie Stringer (2008, p 4) describes action research as a “look-think-act” routine for implementing a more sophisticated model that includes: design the study; gather data; analyze the data; communicate; and use. Stringer’s framework compliments my inquiry approach in that my initial question was based on my curiosity and speculation about the relationship, if any, between teacher efficacy and school re-organization. I wanted to “look” to see what about teacher collective efficacy existed in our school that I could “think” about and understand better. Depending on what I learned, I could “act” to improve and influence the effectiveness of our school change work.

To review, my capstone project asks the questions:

- 1. In what ways, if any, does the collective efficacy of teachers change as my high school undergoes organizational change towards smaller learning communities and more personalized learning environments?*
- 2. How might high school organizational factors, associated with the transition to small learning communities, associate with the perceived efficacy of teachers? These factors include, but are not limited to, shared school goals; school improvement priorities, teacher inclusion in decision-making and decision-making processes; and principal practices that build teacher leadership capacity.*

My former training as a scientist and background as a science teacher sometimes haunted me to think that I must have quantitative data to support and validate any conclusion that I might draw from my findings. Ultimately, I used both quantitative and qualitative techniques, as the latter helped greatly in understanding my quantitative findings and making meaning of teachers’ experience throughout the school change process.

I utilized ideas from Ravitch and Riggan (2012) to begin developing a conceptual framework that will influence my future leadership work. Their definition incorporates three elements: personal interests, topical research, and theoretical frameworks. My study originated from my long-term interest in the role teachers play in school change and, more specifically, how teacher behavior may influence the success and/or sustainability of a school change initiative. This near bias I'm sure resonates from having spent 18 years as a classroom teacher and experiencing the frustration first hand when working with other teachers who seemed to give up or externalize why students did or did not learn. Learning more about cognitive psychology and the concept of efficacy drove me into the literature to understand what had been studied and/or observed about teacher behaviors and student achievement, teacher retention, and school success. These theoretical frameworks, at times, became paralyzing in that the literature was vast and so interesting that it was easy to move from one related aspect to another. I focused on the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and school organizational change. The specific topical research at my school provided the relevant context and application for framing my understanding. In doing so, I was able to fill in the "intellectual bins" in my study but also created a few new bins. (Ravitch and Riggins, 2012, p 12). Combining quantitative and qualitative data helped me to conceptualize an understanding of teacher efficacy that is relevant and makes sense to me as a school principal, and has the potential to influence my leadership actions and behaviors in a way that no single finding from the literature was able to do.

Capstone inquiry plan: tasks and timelines

The overall time frame for conducting my capstone surveys, and collecting data, observations, and artifacts is shown in Figures 1 and 2:

Figure 1

Date	Method	Activity	Who?
April, 2008	Quantitative	Survey staff on “collective efficacy”	Certificated staff
May 2009	Quantitative	Survey staff on “collective efficacy”	Certificated staff
May 2011	Quantitative	Survey staff on “collective efficacy”	Certificated staff
May 2011	Quantitative	Survey staff on factors associated with School Change to SLCs	Certificated staff
October 2010 thru December 2011	Qualitative	Artifact collection related to school change	All staff
September 2011	Qualitative	Teacher Leader Focus Group interview on school experiences and leadership actions.	8 Teacher Leaders

Figure 2

CE measures	Year	Fall	Winter	Spring
Collective Efficacy measured spring	2007-08			Staff decision to change to SLCs
Collective Efficacy measured spring	2008-09	1 st generation SLCs Year 1 ----->		
	2009-10	1 st generation SLCs Year 2 ----->		Strategic Site Plan work begins
Collective Efficacy measured spring	2010-11	October, Strategic Site Plan adopted	Site Plan Tactic 5 Action Planning	
	2011-12	Planning year for 2 nd generation SLCs		
	2012-13	New SLCs scheduled to open, August 2012		

Measuring collective teacher efficacy

In 2000, Roger Goddard, with Wayne Hoy and Anita Woolfolk-Hoy, developed a quantitative instrument to measure the collective efficacy of teachers. The initial instrument was tested in elementary schools in a large urban Midwestern school district

and found to have strong reliability and validity in its use. Compared to other efficacy tools at the time, Goddard et.al. chose group orientation for the items in their efficacy scale so that actions and behaviors were being operationalized at each item level and reflected the group-level construct being measured rather than individual reference. In doing so, answers within the collective efficacy survey instrument require a judgment about the whole faculty, rather than as an individual. “Simply put, if a group attribute is what a researcher seeks to measure, then such a measure should be analyzed at the group level” (Goddard, 2002, p. 99). The instrument was originally designed with 30 items, which were later reduced to 21, in what is known as the CE - long form. In 2002, Goddard created a 12-item CE - short form and demonstrated that it correlated highly ($r = .983$) to the long form, and thus valid for use. The CE - short form has been used numerous times in the literature in a variety of studies which include collective efficacy as a variable.

Regardless of number of question items, the collective efficacy instrument is designed so that some items are worded positively (+) and others negatively (-) so as not to influence respondents. Items asked participants to respond to both group competence and task analysis so as to reflect the more integrated concept of teacher efficacy described by Tschannen-Moran, et.al (1998) and discussed earlier.

Participants were asked to respond using a Likert scale that spanned 6 points from strongly disagree to strongly agree. (See Appendix B for CE – short form instrument.)

In my capstone study, I used the 12-item CE - short form consistently, with data collection beginning in April of 2008, shortly after the Alpine View High School staff reached consensus to move to small learning communities. In May of 2009, one year

after our initial implementation of small learning communities, AVHS collective teacher efficacy was measured again. In May of 2011, the twelve questions from the CE – short form were incorporated into an internal self-evaluation survey administered to all certificated staff. All three times, the CE survey was conducted during an announced staff meeting. Paper responses were transcribed electronically by a school office assistant and then analyzed by me.

Focus group with teacher leaders

As the change process unfolded at Alpine View High School, it became apparent that a more robust concept of collective teacher efficacy would be needed to fully understand what, if anything, was happening among teachers as we proceeded through our reorganization to small learning communities. Although Goddard's Collective Efficacy instrument provided good insight, other factors that had not been planned or predicted also played a role in teachers' overall experience and participation. For example, beginning in 2008-09 school year, significant budget changes happened in Colorado state as well as in our school district, which led to loss of staff at the high school. Within the three years of this study, AVHS lost nearly 20 staff members who were not replaced. Conditions related to teacher work conditions, including class size and number of class preps, changed dramatically. Questions addressing funding and sustainable district support swelled and, despite promises by district administrators, doubt seeped into our school environment. As a result, I looked deeper into understanding school conditions that might associate with collective teacher efficacy, and found two important studies that were published in 2004.

Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, and Gray (2004) worked with 2170 teachers in 141 elementary schools, and found that certain school conditions predicted positive collective teacher efficacy even more than prior student achievement. These conditions were identified as: shared school goals, school-wide decision making, fit of plans with school needs, and empowering principal leadership. Ross's study claimed that "these school processes contributed teacher efficacy information by influencing teacher cognitions about mastery experiences, by providing opportunities for vicarious experience, through persuasion, and by protecting teachers from the dysfunctional effects of negative emotional states." (p 178).

Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) compiled a summary of evidence that links collective teacher efficacy to teacher collaboration opportunities and to specific principal actions. Specific leadership behaviors include listening to teachers, promoting innovative teaching, including teachers in decision-making, and fostering positive school climate (p. 195). Furthermore, teachers in such schools are more likely to implement proven instructional strategies and share methods, activities, and samples of student work – all which associate positively to increased student achievement.

A focus group of AVHS Teacher Leaders was formed to provide deeper insight into the school conditions and leadership actions that are associated with promoting collective efficacy among teachers as described above. Stringer's model of action research (2008) recommends that focus groups engage participants in an investigation but to do so interactively and, potentially, trigger new ideas and insights. Past and present Teacher Leaders were selected to participate first individually, and then as a group, to explore school conditions that the literature associates positively with

collective teacher efficacy. I defined a Teacher Leader as one who, in addition to teaching classes, has served in one or more of the following roles: an instructional leader for first generation or current SLCs, teachers as participants and decision-makers within AVHS's Strategic Site Planning process, teachers as participants in the state-mandated Unified Improvement Planning process, and/or teachers who lead curriculum and/or technology. To protect teacher privacy, pseudonyms were used in this capstone project. Eight representative teachers who have had a past or present role as a Teacher Leader, regardless of success in their role, were selected to participate.

The specific teachers for the focus group were identified through conversation with Dr. Richard Fulton, a collaborative school partner from Fort Lewis College. According to Dr. Fulton, these teachers know the pulse of Alpine View High School and share sufficient trust with school administration to be open and candid with their responses. The sample of eight represents a group of approximately 20 different teachers in our school who have held a compensated teacher leadership position between 2008-11, including department chairs, SLC leaders, program coaches, and school goal leadership. Further inclusion of all teachers who participated on the AVHS Strategic Site Plan, the number increases to approximately 40. Therefore the sample of eight within the focus group represents at least 20% of the teacher leaders at AVHS.

Stringer (2004, p. 91) recommends identifying key people in a focus group who, together, provide the following roles:

- Represent diverse perspectives from within the group
- Are likely to have a significant impact on the group
- Have seemingly typical experiences and perspectives
- Have particularly unusual or significant experiences or perspectives.

Each Teacher Leader was provided a written request to participate in the focus group. The questions that would frame our discussion were also provided prior to our meeting. The specific questions were developed from my literature review as indicators associated with school redesign parameters, collective efficacy, and leadership actions. (See Appendix H) Question topics included teacher experiences related to school goal setting and planning, participation in decision-making, and support for teachers relative to developing leadership capacity. Questions were also asked about specific Principal leadership behaviors experienced by teachers. Open-ended questions related to teachers' perception of school success, performance feedback, collaboration, and opportunities for leadership at school.

My purpose was for information from the Teacher Leader focus group to guide next action steps toward improving the success and sustainability of our school improvement process. Dr. Richard Fulton co-facilitated the focus group. Figure 3 outlines the make-up of the focus group team.

Figure 3: Teacher Leader Focus Group Team Attributes

Teacher Participant	Current role 2011-12 school year	Other or Former roles between 2008-2011	Years at AVHS
TL 1	Teacher Leader SLC X Social Studies teacher	Former Teacher Leader SLC 1 Student Leadership Advisor	16
TL 2	Teacher Leader SLC Y Social Studies teacher	Former Teacher Leader SLC 4 Varsity Athletic Coach – multiple sports	16
TL 3	Teacher Leader SLC Z Fine Arts teacher	NA	9
TL 4	Department Chair Special Education teacher	Strategic Site Plan Core Team	6
TL 5	Teacher Leader – planning Gifted & Talented program leader	Worked at other schools in district	4
TL 6	Instructional Technology Coach Math teacher	District technology team member	4
TL 7	Science teacher	Former SLC Teacher Leader	7
TL 8	Language Arts Teacher	Former SLC Teacher Leader Social-emotional Learning Leadership Strategic Site Plan Core Team	10

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Outcomes

Alpine View High School collective teacher efficacy

In December of 2007, right before Alpine View High School dismissed for the winter holiday break, I led a staff meeting in which our entire staff was asked to “vote on their feet” about making the change to small learning communities. I asked the question, “Are you ready to commit to assuming collective responsibility for the education of all of our students?” We drew a “metaphorical line” down the long side of the cafeteria, with one end labeled as “Yes, let’s start immediately,” and the other end labeled as “I can live with the decision but I have a million questions before I’m ready.” Staff who chose not to stand on the line, were asked to stand adjacent to the group. Over 100 staff members participated, including approximately 85 teachers. All but 11 found a place to stand on the central line, with most bunched toward the middle. At first, we listened to comments from individuals who stood on the line and why they positioned themselves where they did. Then we heard from those who chose not to stand on the line, and staff members talked among themselves to listen, answer each others’ questions, and address concerns. By the end of the 2 hour meeting, all but 2 staff members moved to the main line. We left the meeting in agreement to return to school in January and begin making the shift toward reorganization to small learning communities.

By April of the 2007-08 school year, our staff and stakeholders had decided on a specific model that divided the school into 4 small learning communities for grades 9 and 10. Core teachers prepared to move their classrooms during the summer to be

near each other in interdisciplinary teams. I measured the Collective Teacher Efficacy of the staff in May. Our Average Collective Efficacy measured 4.39 on a scale of 1 to 6 with 1 low and 6 high. Our standardized CE scored, compared against Goddard's 2002 sample of schools in Ohio, was 543.11, higher than the average of 500 but less than 1 standard deviation above all schools in the study. (See Appendix C)

The Alpine View High School staff worked in their Small Learning Community teams for two years, learning together and struggling together, as they moved closer toward a student-centered school environment compared to the content-driven department environment of their past. Teachers became more knowledgeable about their students and used data more closely than ever before. They also became acutely aware that they were not prepared to address some of the needs that were exposed through the improved relationships and time they spent with their students. Some became frustrated; others became motivated to learn more.

In May of 2009, I measured the Collective Teacher Efficacy of the staff again. Our Average Collective Efficacy measured 4.03 on a scale of 1 to 6 with 1 low and 6 high. Our standardized CE scored, compared against Goddard's 2002 sample of schools in Ohio, was 486.24, lower than the average of 500 but not a full standard deviation below all schools in the study. This was a decline since spring of 2008. (See Appendix D)

By winter of the 2009-10 school year, teachers were eager to go back to the planning table and revise our school plan based on what we had learned and what we still needed to learn and do. The superintendent offered to provide professional facilitation to ensure a good site planning process that would focus our school mission

and support staff cohesion. In March, we began work on our Strategic Site Plan, which provided the opportunity to close the small learning communities and “go back” to our departmental comprehensive high school. Instead, the core planning team chose to refine the small learning communities and outlined very specific ways to do so. (See Appendix F for Alpine View High School’s 2010 Strategic Site Plan.)

The 2010-11 school year was very busy with five Action Teams developing specific plans for each of the “tactics” put forward in the new Strategic Site Plan. Tactic 5 specifically addresses our small learning communities:

We will refine the Small Learning Community organization at [AVHS] in order to provide sufficient collaboration time, support student pursuit of standards of excellence, and assure shared responsibility for the success of our students.

In January of 2011, AVHS began an intensive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, inviting teachers to propose ideas for new small learning community design models (see Appendix K for RFP). By March, five proposals were submitted; each went through a critical review process by a 12-member all-stakeholder Review Team. In April, three new small learning communities were decided for our students, with the 2011-12 year scheduled as a planning year and opening scheduled for August of 2012. To demonstrate support for implementation, our superintendent and school district allocated \$200,000 toward our work, including \$50,000 to support Teacher Leadership for each of the new SLCs and a \$50,000 professional development budget for the planning year. The staff left for summer break ready to come back with plans to return in August ready to create their new SLC.

Before leaving for summer break, I measured the Collective Teacher Efficacy of the staff again. Our Average Collective Efficacy measured 4.02 on a scale of 1 to 6 with

1 low and 6 high. Our standardized CE scored, compared against Goddard's 2002 sample of schools in Ohio, was 484.82, still lower than the average of 500 but not a full standard deviation below all schools in the study. This was slightly lower than the previous measurement and still lower since our work began in 2008. (See Appendix E)

Figure 4 provides a summary of Collective Teacher Efficacy data collected over the three years during this capstone study. See Appendices C, D, and E for specific data collected each year by question.

Figure 4: Collective Teacher Efficacy Data Summary

		2008	2009	2011	Variance
1	Teachers in this school are able to get through to the most difficult students.	3.78	3.68	3.26	- .52
2	Teachers here are confident that they will be able to motivate their students.	4.64	4.18	4.04	- .60
3	If a child doesn't want to learn, teachers here give up.	4.91	4.91	4.47	- .24
4	Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful learning.	5.24	5.11	4.78	- .66
5	Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn.	4.91	4.78	4.62	- .29
6	These students come to school ready to learn.	3.96	3.12	3.38	- .58
7	Home life provides so many advantages that students here are bound to learn.	3.46	2.64	3.01	- .45
8	Students here just aren't motivated to learn.	4.35	3.62	4.50	+ .15
9	Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with the student disciplinary problems.	4.86	4.58	4.38	- .48
10	The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.	3.72	3.44	3.68	- .04
11	Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.	5.48	5.04	5.01	- .47
12	Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.	3.40	3.29	3.16	- .24
Average Collective Efficacy		4.39	4.03	4.02	
Standardized CE Score (500 = average)		543.11	486.24	484.82	

Based on my findings, I can now answer the first question of my capstone inquiry study:

In what ways, if any, does the collective efficacy of teachers change as my high school undergoes organizational change towards smaller learning communities and more personalized learning environments?

My findings suggest that collective efficacy decreases as my high school undergoes organizational change towards small learning communities and more personalized learning environments.

Observations associated with school reorganization to SLCs

Throughout Alpine View High School's change process, qualitative data and artifacts were collected as part of our normal work processes, many of which were collected beginning in the spring of 2009-10 school year. This coincides with the work and adoption of AVHS's Strategic Site Plan, which outlines all significant changes in our current and proposed future school change process.

In spring of 2011, additional baseline data corresponding to our new Site Plan goals and objectives was collected. (Appendix G). These questions were part of the spring staff survey that also included the CE – short form questions. This additional information contributes to deeper understanding of teacher perceptions and conditions affecting behavior, performance, and potentially, efficacy. Of particular interest related to my capstone study are questions 1-3 and number 8.

Questions include:

1. Teachers have sufficient collaboration time
2. Teachers support students to pursue standards of excellence academically.
3. Teachers assume shared responsibility for the success of our students.
4. Our SLCs are built upon interdisciplinary teaching and learning teams.
5. Our SLCs provide rigorous, relevant curriculum and instruction.

6. Our SLCs provide an inclusive program and practices for all students.
7. Our SLCs are supported by a continuous improvement process.
8. Our SLCs have building and district support.
9. Our school design provides flexible pathways to graduation.

Question 1: Teachers have sufficient collaboration time

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6
17	30	21	11	5	1
20%	35%	25%	13%	6%	1%

Question 2: Teachers support students to pursue standards of excellence academically.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6
0	1	6	22	40	17
0%	1%	7%	26%	47%	20%

Question 3: Teachers assume shared responsibility for the success of our students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	3	11	25	39	6
1%	4%	13%	29%	46%	7%

Question 8: Our SLCs have building and district support.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6
4	10	20	31	17	4
5%	12%	23%	36%	20%	5%

The information provided from these questions provide insight into the experiences of teachers and the conditions which may influence their thinking and behaviors. For

example, although the construct of collective efficacy is much more complex than simply “supporting” students, this data suggests that more than 90% of our staff believe that teachers provide support for students to reach high academic standards, yet questions on the very same survey indicate the lowest level of collective teacher efficacy measured in three years at AVHS. More than 80% of our teachers agree that they assume shared responsibility for our students. Conversely, only a few weeks after the Alpine School District pledged \$200,000 in additional monetary support for Teacher Leadership and professional development targeted at implementing the new SLCs, 40% of the staff indicated that the SLCs do not have building and district support. Nearly 80% disagree that they have sufficient collaboration time.

Such conflicting data suggests that other factors may be at play in the experiences of teachers, which are perhaps equally as important as the construct of collective teacher efficacy as it relates to successful school reorganization and the increased success of students.

Focus group with teacher leaders

As described earlier, a focus group was held to probe more deeply into the experiences of teachers who held one or more leadership positions within our school during our school reorganization process. For the purpose of understanding their responses, each participant has been identified by a number as follows:

- TL 1 – SLC X Teacher Leader
- TL 2 – SLC Y Teacher Leader
- TL 3 – SLC Z Teacher Leader
- TL 4 – Special Education Teacher Leader
- TL 5 – Gifted and Talented Teacher Leader
- TL 6 – Instructional Technology Teacher Leader
- TL 7 – Former SLC Teacher Leader
- TL 8 – Former SLC and SEL Teacher Leader

Teacher's individual responses on Parts 1 and 2 were tallied and averaged, as shown in Figure 5. Similar to the Collective Efficacy scale and other survey instruments, a liekert scale of 1-6, with 1 being low and 6 high, was used. (See Appendix H)

Figure 5: Teacher Leader Survey Questions – Responses and Summary

Teacher Experience at AVHS	TL1	TL2	TL3	TL4	TL5	TL6	TL7	TL8	Average
1. Teachers are involved in developing shared school goals.	5	5	5	3	4	5	4	4	4.375
2. The AVHS school improvement plan (UIP) goals match teachers' perception of our actual school needs.	4	3	5	2	3	4	2	2	3.125
3. Teachers influence decisions at AVHS, especially those that are instructionally relevant.	5	5	5	3	3	4	5	5	4.375
4. Teachers are supported to develop their leadership capacity and are provided opportunities to be leaders in school.	5	6	5	4	5	3	2	2	4.00
Principal Leadership at AVHS									
5. Empowers others to feel ownership of our school and our school's direction.	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4.25
6. Acts as an instructional leader	4	4	4	4	4	3	6	6	4.375
7. Listens to teachers	4	5	4	3	4	4	1	1	3.25
8. Promotes innovative teaching	5	6	5	5	5	4	6	6	5.25
9. Engages teachers in school improvement goals and decisions	5	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	4.25
10. Creates a positive and supportive school climate.	4	4	4	4	2	4	1	1	3.00
11. Is perceived to be influential with her supervisors.	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	3	4.375

Teacher's experience as revealed through these questions suggest that they value clarity and purpose among overall school goals and the specific professional work they are expected to perform. In addition, teacher leaders may connect differently with school goals

compared to teachers who have a full assignment of classes each day. To some extent, and not surprising, former teacher leaders feel less positive about available support for building leadership capacity among teachers as compared to current teacher leaders.

As the Principal of the school, information from the Teacher Leaders provided critical and important feedback on the importance of creating and maintaining a positive school climate especially in time of significant school change. Teachers need to feel listened to, an important aspect of maintaining professional community among the staff and between administration and teachers. Further probing within the Focus Group discussion provided more clarity and understanding.

Focus group analysis and themes

Teacher Leaders brought their survey responses to our scheduled Focus Group meeting. Our conversation, lasting nearly 4 hours, focused mostly on the open ended questions below:

Part 3: Questions for open discussion:

12. Describe one or more school successes of which you've been a part since you started working at AVHS. Would you describe AVHS as a successful school?
13. How often do you receive effective feedback related to your performance as a teacher? Whose feedback do you value? What is the best kind of feedback to receive?
14. Describe how you work with your teacher colleagues in community. Provide examples of the one or more ways in which you collaborate effectively. In what ways does your professional collaboration affect student achievement?
15. Describe the different kinds of leadership at AVHS – how effective and/or ineffective is AVHS leadership?

Teacher Leaders provided information that helped me understand their experiences at school and related conditions that supported or countered their sense of efficacy, performance, and overall success. Notes were taken by myself and Dr. Fulton,

which we shared afterwards. The focus group discussion was also recorded. Using Stringer's methodology for categorizing and coding, the following themes were distilled from their responses. In addition, interesting and unique insights were provided. The numbers refer to Teacher Leader participant as identified earlier.

1. Teachers are positive in response to having the opportunity for teacher-directed change rather than external or administrative-directed change:

- A. There was a striking contrast in the discussion between the AVHS's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP - state mandated) versus the Strategic Site Plan (building generated - optional), in terms of teacher input and connection to teacher effectiveness.
- B. The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) is seen as an administrative, top down-directed model. It used only "this" data as identified externally, not other meaningful data (7); there is a "severe disconnect between UIP and myself as an art teacher" (3); and the "average teacher does not know what UIP is" (1);
- C. The Strategic Site Plan was seen as a teacher-directed model. "Allows everyone to have their fingerprints" on the school change (1). "Allowed wider view of student success than just test scores" (4). "Freed up teacher passion to develop initiatives" (2). Allowed us to work on issues under our control" (7).

2. Teachers are positive in having a "critical path" and protocols to follow. Teachers want structure and articulation of priorities.

- A. Teachers referred to the importance of having a "critical path", referring to focusing on "teacher-directed" initiatives and the development of the AVHS Site Plan objectives.
- B. "Over-structure" of Site Plan was seen favorably in that it provided clear timelines and protocols that helped all teachers stay focused on implementing reform - in ways that involved many, if not all, teachers.
- C. Critical Friends are a great idea; however, they lacked the clarity and focus of the Site Plan and eventually were not used sufficiently to become part of school norm (8). Teacher Leaders enjoyed the formal ability to get critical feedback and use protocols, but teachers commented that the lack of time and, without formal protocols and leadership, the initiative fell off the radar.

- D. Teacher Leaders prefer the focus on “how” to teach/implement reform - Teacher Leaders consistently used the terminology of “how-focus” (2), which referred to time and direction dedicated to the actual implementation of learning communities and specific research based instructional methodology. Teacher leaders contrasted the “how focus” with the “what focused”, which referred to administrative decisions, Unified Improvement Plan, NWEA test results, and other forms of student achievement data (4).
- E. The Strategic Site Plan allowed teachers to “see concrete results” such as the new AVHS Welcome Center and SLC technology improvements related to the Site Plan, where teachers “got something very visual and physical.” (7) The improvements in community service are a very measureable aspect of student achievement, as one teacher said, “what better measure (of student achievement) than to lead?” (5)
3. *Teachers are positive about perceived “levels of participation” within their roles.*
- A. Teacher Leaders responded favorable to allowing teachers to “step up” and spoke about certain staff who will naturally “step up” into teacher leadership positions. However, when “structures” or “administrative support” are strongly in place, more people step up. (4) Especially good example include the Strategic Site Plan and associated Action Teams. In addition, when the vision of SLCs and “the job of teacher leadership is more clear”, teachers know what is expected of them. The SLCs have allowed teachers to “bring out their passion” and “develop skills not previously seen” and “opened slots for just the right person.” (2,3)
- B. Teacher Leaders indicated that teachers’ level of participation would vary based on their “emotional” connection to the school’s leader/principal. (4) Several provided feedback suggesting that it was important to “see the emotions and level of caring about the school” from administration. (4,8,5) Teacher Leaders stated that the “rest of the staff needs to see your [principal] passion for the school.” (6) As teachers saw the “more personal side of the Principal, more buy-in occurred”, but “not all the staff see that personal side.” (5) To create the best efficacy, one teacher mentioned the SLCs have created an environment where “hearts have been directed in the right way.” (4)
- C. Teacher participation and involvement relates to professional feedback and evaluation. Many levels of feedback were important to teachers’ sense of professional development and efficacy. Several teachers indicated that feedback fell into 4 categories:

- a) Student & Parent Feedback: “Student feedback was extremely valuable” and “parent feedback was helpful but limited.” (1) In the case of student and parent feedback there were no apparent areas of structure or support; therefore, like the critical friends, the use of the feedback varied tremendously.
- b) Peer feedback was “valued and related to trust.” Peer feedback was considered “informal” and had a basis in trust. However, like parent and student feedback, it had no internal structure so the results were “time-limited.” (5)
- c) Administrative Feedback: Administrative feedback was seen as “procedural” and “not respected without a continuous presence and trust” from the assistant principals or principal. One teacher put it this way - “If you don’t have a presence then you don’t get to give “informal” feedback.” (8) Administrative feedback was more helpful when “you [principal] took off your administrative hat and put on your teacher hat.” (7)
- d) Self Reflection: Self reflection was highly valued, however, Teacher Leaders desire more “professional development in Teacher Leadership.” (1,3,4) Teachers mentioned the trust that was evolving with the Small Learning Communities because “formal structures give teachers the trust to jump in (to leadership and efficacy situations).” (5) Yet, they added, “We have the time, now we need the guidance.” (4,7)

4. *Teachers’ experience in influencing decisions that matter varies at AVHS.*

- A. Being involved takes teacher’s time – the time that matters is what reflects back to the classroom. Don’t ask me to be involved in busy work. (8)

5. *Leadership [principal] needs to be both professional and personal to be effective.*

- A. “If I know you, I trust you, and if I trust you, I’ll work with you.” (5)
- B. Being direct can have a counter-effect. “I want to know but I need understanding and kindness” (3, 7)
- C. Being visible is so important. Teachers understand that the principal also needs to work at the district office but teachers want their principal more

visible in our building. “20 minutes a day – even a week – I need to see you.”
(1)

6. *Teachers want to be challenged but also supported in case they fail. Many teachers are afraid to take a risk, especially related to the evaluation process.*

A. Teacher Leaders talked about being pushed in areas of growth and introduced to new ideas favorably. “I like the expression, ‘permission to fail’ but I don’t believe it.” (7)

Based on my findings, I can now answer the second question of my capstone inquiry study:

How might high school organizational factors, associated with the transition to small learning communities, associate with the perceived efficacy of teachers? These factors include, but are not limited to, shared school goals; school improvement priorities, teacher inclusion in decision-making and decision-making processes; and principal practices that build teacher leadership capacity.

These findings suggest that school organizational factors associate positively with the perceived efficacy of teachers. Throughout my study, indicators of increased complexity became apparent and several should be investigated in more depth to increase my understanding as they relate to developing collective teacher efficacy among my school staff. Such influences are important to my leadership as a school principal as well as for deepening my understanding within this action research study. These, and other learnings, will be discussed in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 5

Reflections and Wonder

Human issues, not technical knowledge, are the most significant barriers to successful conversions of comprehensive high schools into small autonomous schools... it is the personal, human question, "what does this mean for me?" that is at the heart of the resistance to change.

–Rick Lear, 2001b, p 1

Proposing a conceptual framework

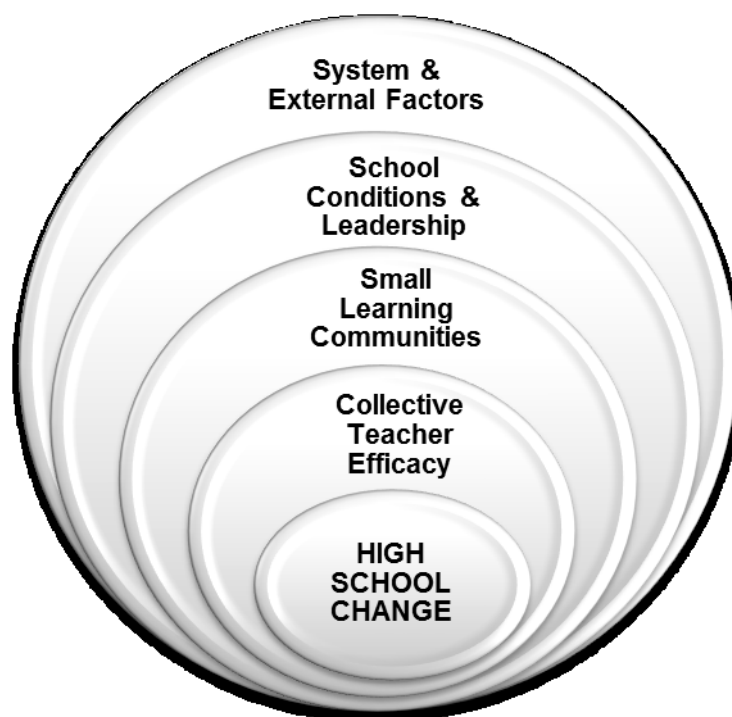
School-based action research studies typically, by definition and design, include the researcher in the work. My role as Principal at Alpine View High School cannot be overlooked as influential to my findings, including our success in reorganizing into small learning communities and the effect of my presence on potential changes in the collective efficacy of teachers. As this project is a dynamic work in progress, my observations and learning continue, even as I culminate my study and the findings I'm reporting in this capstone report. It's been more difficult than I imagined to encapsulate my learning and to reflect for the future. My AVHS colleagues and this capstone have become my teachers, and I'm an eager learner.

Ravitch and Riggins (2012) argue strongly for the importance and value of developing a conceptual framework as a mechanism for bringing coherence to empirical research that is aligned with the literature and, most importantly, for why the proposed study matters. A strong conceptual framework provides clarity in understanding the relationship between my questions, methods, my findings, and the associated literature that supports my learning and guides its evolution. In hindsight, I now understand that my initial framework was weak in that it provided only a singular connection between the concepts of collective teacher efficacy and high school reorganization. It lacked sufficient recognition of the "me" factor in my study as the principal and leader of the

high school. It also was limited in that I seemed to be looking at my school in a vacuum and not as part of a complex system that is continually influenced by external factors such as school district decisions, staffing and budget changes, and state regulations. Consequently, although I have learned from my findings, I may have learned even more from what I apparently did not set out to study.

Figure 6 illustrates how different variables may relate to one another, resulting in successful school change. The order of the concentric circles are representative of my learning during this capstone project, however other studies may suggest a different pattern of relationship and influence.

Figure 6: Conceptual Framework for Supporting School Change



The boundaries between the circles are porous and the influence of each surrounding factor on the school change process is dynamic, meaning any one factor may exert a

different influence at different times. Overall, the importance of the diagram is to illustrate that school change is affected by an interconnected and dynamic system of influences. Recognizing and attending to these influences, and understanding how these variables interact, may improve my future school leadership, as well as the leadership of others.

Influences and broader contexts

As discussed earlier, the collective efficacy measure of Alpine View High School teachers decreased or remained relatively flat over the course of 3 years during this study. This quantitative measure provided a baseline for my study, and launched deeper thinking about what was happening at the school, district, and community level that influenced what is apparently not a simple quantitative measure. It compelled me to seek meaning for the concept of “external factors” mentioned in earlier parts of this narrative. I now realize the importance of considering the complex educational context in which my school operated during the time of my capstone inquiry project.

In 2007, AVHS began our major reorganization process, which led to the first generation of small learning communities, implemented in August of 2008. Within less than one year, two significant external factors occurred that impacted AVHS in ways that I did not anticipate. First, a new superintendent was hired by the school district. This change alone created a significant impact on the confidence level that teachers held for the future potential of their ideas and work. For example, the autonomy of the high school was shaken by the superintendent’s immediate development of a district strategic plan and his well-publicized announcement to align K-12 and implement a systems approach to teaching and learning. Overall, the results of this leadership

change proved to be more positive than not to the long term development of our small learning community work, however, this was unforeseen during the first year of the new superintendent's tenure. Teachers responded with fear rather than with the hope and anticipation that is necessary for a new idea to get traction during the initial stages of implementation.

The second factor was a major reduction in school funding at both the state and local level, in turn, leading to a reduction in staffing at the high school of approximately 16 teachers over the course of two years. This change affected both probationary and tenured teachers through two different reduction-in-force processes, applied differently each year. Many teachers – cut or retained – expressed serious concern about the future of their own career in such uncertain times. For example, two very gifted young teachers turned in their resignation, stating they couldn't take the pressure to work under such conditions. Several other teachers resigned because their spouse was cut from the teaching staff at another school in the district. In our small isolated town, there are very few options open to teachers or other professionals. Therefore losing a job is often associated with moving. Several veteran teachers, one a teacher leader, took advantage of an early retirement incentive and left the profession. The overall result was a staff that was shaken by the external pressures and uncertain about future stability.

A third contributing factor was the opening of a new local charter high school. This local competition, exacerbated by district administration pressure, continues to be a source of concern due to the continued threat of declining enrollment and even more loss of staff.

Figure 7 provides a timeline of events that occurred simultaneously, over the duration of my capstone project. These relate events at AVHS to what was happening simultaneously at the district level.

Figure 7: Timeline for Capstone Project

	School “internal” Factors	External Factors	Capstone Work	
August 2007	I was hired as AVHS Principal SLC change process begins		Capstone transferred from WA to CO	Artifacts and practices collected as part of ongoing change process
Dec 2007	Staff consensus to implement 4 SLCs			
April 2008			1 st Collective Efficacy measure	
July 2008		New superintendent hired		
August 2008	1 st Generation SLCs open at AVHS; teachers reorganized into interdisciplinary teams	New School District Strategic Plan initiated		
April - May 2009		Economic decline – AVHS staff reduced by 16 FTE (4 hired back)	2 nd Collective Efficacy measure	
August 2009		New local charter high school opens		
March 2010	AVHS begins Strategic Site Plan			
April 2010		AVHS staff reduced by 6 teachers. 2 programs closed		
Oct - Nov 2010	New AVHS Strategic Site Plan adopted by staff and community	3A School District Levy passed by Alpine community		
April 2011		AVHS staff reduced by 3 teachers.		
May 2011	3 new SLC designs accepted by AVHS and community for reopening in Aug of 2012.	District commits \$200K to implementation planning year for 2011-12, including funding Teacher Leaders	3 rd Collective Efficacy measure	
Summer 2011		Superintendent resigns. Interim named for 2011-12		
August 2011	3 New SLCs begin planning year; new staff assignments into each new SLC			
Sept 2011			Teacher Leader Focus Group	
March 2012		AVHS Staff reduced by 6 teachers. Teacher Leader funding cut		
April 2012		New superintendent hired		
July 2012		New superintendent begins		
Aug 2012	2 nd Generation SLCs open			

Despite the uncertain economic climate, Alpine View High School continued its school reorganization work. The new superintendent, although skeptical at first, turned out to be a supporter of AVHS's small learning communities and was generally enthusiastic about the choices and possibilities that were being offered to students in our community. He encouraged us to evaluate the alignment between the district and AVHS goals and objectives through the development of a new high school strategic site plan. This process ultimately strengthened district commitment to our high school reorganization.

With Alpine View High School's new Strategic Site Plan, more clarity and focus was cast upon the refined small learning communities. Teacher participation increased in the creation, development, and implementation of our site plan, compared to the first generation SLCs, which were shaped by committee. Seemingly, a new wave of energy flowed through the school as teachers became involved in the new SLC proposal developments and pending creation of something new. Our local community passed a \$3 million dollar levy dedicated to technology and innovative programs, of which the school district committed two hundred thousand dollars to the high school in "one time" implementation planning money for the 2011-12 school year.

In late spring 2011, a new round of funding cuts and additional reduction in staffing was announced. And more unexpectedly, in early summer, the superintendent announced his resignation and acceptance of a new position as an Associate Commissioner for the Colorado Department of Education. This sea-saw of cuts and support unnerved the staff. Everything seemed open for question again.

The 2011-12 school year opened positively yet tentatively around teachers' affiliations with their new small learning community. Each team had a specific professional development plan in place that was fully funded from the district office. Teacher Leaders were also supported by the district with classroom release time and were recognized as leaders. With such resources in place, the information provided by the Teacher Leader focus group in October provided some surprises about school conditions, including feedback on school leadership that teachers felt enhanced or detracted from their experiences related to the school changes. This caused me to reflect deeply into what was missing and what was needed, and provided me with keen insight into how hard change, even positive change, can be.

Looking back to see forward

I wonder, if I had to do it all over again, what would I do differently? As it applies to my capstone, what could I have done – or should I have done – to increase the collective teacher efficacy of my staff so as to influence the successful and sustainable reorganization of Alpine View High School into small learning communities? I have identified three important variables that I now believe would have improved my study and which I will consider in my future leadership practices in a much more intentional way. These are 1) the important role of district support and external influences on the school change process; 2) the influence of principal leadership on the professional lives of teachers and how the decisions and behaviors of the principal contribute to school conditions; and 3) the necessity to have clear focus and purpose in the action inquiry process and, specifically, in conducting action research in the school setting.

School district support and external influences

Serious budget constraints have been plaguing public education for the past five years, in some states more than others. Coupled with increased accountability and achievement expectations, the pressure for teachers, principals, and schools to do more with less is greater than it's ever been. The staffing and budget cuts at Alpine View High School are not unique, however the relative changes between 2007 and 2009 were of major significance. In two short years, AVHS teachers went from having average class sizes of 20-22 to average class sizes of 27. In addition, for the first time that anyone could remember, a buried school board policy that does not allow any class without a minimum of 15 students enrolled was implemented. The actual changes were not as great as was the shock of the changes and the way in which they were communicated. The new superintendent used a sharp knife in declaring that teachers needed to learn that their days of excess were over.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratories (NWREL) Domain 5 specifically speaks to important district practices that need to be emerging or in place to communicate and provide support for successful small learning communities. (NWREL, 2008, p 46) Among these, district staffing and budgeting practices ought to give schools flexibility in allocating resources to meet SLC needs. Although implementation money was provided to AVHS, it was allocated according to traditional methods, and without two-way communication between district and school leadership and staff. Steeped in assumptions and uncertainty, the lack of clarity in funding purpose and direction contributed to staff doubting long term district support.

Cotton (2001, p 39) points out that “no school reform can succeed without the support of the school district administration and other key entities beyond the school.” Strengthening her argument with research from successful small schools, she warns that these entities are crucial to the survival of small school plans because they control information and access to resources. Ancess (1997, p 15) says:

“Public education institutions in our nation exist within the context of large and small, state and local bureaucracies which, although often perceived as obstacles instead of the supports they were intended to be, cannot be escaped. They are crucial to the survival of new schools because they control information and access to resources. Since access to information and the acquisition of resources are critical to new school development, new school founders who develop a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of their bureaucracy and learn how business gets done, who is who, and how to network and negotiate put their school at a clear advantage. The knowledge and skill of working the bureaucracy is especially important for dealing with the regulations that bureaucracies are charged with enforcing. Although the common wisdom that it is better to apologize than to ask for permission holds, it is even better to learn how to interpret regulations to the advantage of the school and make them work for you.”

Although I thought I understood the delicate relationship between school and district roles and practices, it seems that I did not sufficiently. Nor did my school staff. Two related flaws in my leadership practice and capstone inquiry were inadequate communication with my staff and over-estimating teacher awareness and capacity to understand these important dynamics. This may have contributed to what I now perceive to be weakened trust within my staff to be able to weather their doubts and hold confidence in me to sustain the resources we needed. In hindsight, I have opened several important and very personal leadership insights for myself as an educational leader.

CHAPTER 6

Leadership Learning

Principals are key

The influence of the principal is the most important – and relevant – learning I’ve acquired through this capstone project. Although the literature clearly supports a relationship between collective teacher efficacy and successful school change, such as reorganization to small learning communities, I acted as if this important connection would happen naturally and ignored the influence my leadership could have had on fostering it in a positive – or negative – direction.

The information provided by the Teacher Leaders provided clear evidence that the teachers needed me. The simple yet important behaviors and conditions they discussed correlate positively with the literature in support of fostering teacher and collective teacher efficacy. While working with Dr. Fulton to decode and make meaning of the Teacher Leader focus group responses, he concluded, “Teacher leadership and efficacy needs structure and guidance!” (R. Fulton, personal communication, October 8, 2011). Goddard predicted this finding much earlier, “A faculty with new opportunities to influence school decisions must have carefully structured experiences. The task of the school leader is not to solve all school problems alone but to help a faculty develop its capacity to make effective changes.” (2002, p. 181) My lesson learned – albeit obvious – leadership matters. To be more specific, the principal’s actions must be tailored to meet the specific needs of the situation and teachers – especially in time of intense school change. Active, focused, and structured leadership is required to guide teachers and schools successfully toward their impending goals.

Ancess (1997, p 16) provides a daunting character list for school leaders in schools that are successfully changing to small learning communities. Her list includes “accessibility, communication, trust, perseverance, tenacity, fortitude, stamina, confidence, a sense of humor, an unyielding optimism, generosity, entrepreneurialism, decisiveness, good judgment, political savvy, boldness, inter-personal skills, a relentlessly passionate and brutal commitment to the vision and task of mounting the school, and the willingness and know-how necessary to make the school happen and keep it happening until members of the community find their place and until the school finds itself and takes on a life of its own.”

Although I dare say that I think I possess most of these, I wonder how well I display and communicate these to my staff regularly? I also find it interesting that one trait that is not on Ancess’s list may be my biggest leadership flaw – patience. I suffer from becoming impatient with teachers who do not share my passion around the urgency to change and improve our schools. Daily, we are faced with students who cannot wait for the perfect conditions to be in place for us to do what’s necessary. In hindsight, skills often associated with transformational leadership could have assisted me in guiding my staff – and myself - to recognize short term gains inside of long term goals.

Hoy, et. al. (2002, p 90) suggests school leaders be cognizant of Bandura’s four sources of self-efficacy and collective efficacy – “and nurture them”. This includes promoting mastery experiences by creating conditions in which teachers can be successful with their students. Principals should also provide vicarious experiences

through modeling and making the successes and accomplishments of colleagues apparent to all – this helps to develop beliefs in one’s own capability to succeed.

In addition, Hoy discusses the importance of calm leadership in the face of conflict to build and sustain “organizational efficacy”, such that can tolerate pressures and conflicts. I am reminded again of patience as a necessary leadership quality, especially as teachers are learning new skills and changing roles. Schools and school staffs can function more effectively because they learn to adapt and cope with unanticipated difficulties, celebrate incremental successes, and take risks without fear of failure or poor evaluation. “The consequences of high collective efficacy will be the acceptance of challenging goals, strong effort by teachers, and persistence in effort to overcome difficulties and succeed.” (p 91).

Finally, I return to Goddard, who has guided my work throughout this capstone project. Goddard (2004, p 26) says,

“School principals are likely pivotal actors in developing a culture of strong collective efficacy. What kind of principals and what kind of role enactments enhance the collective efficacy of schools? Little has been done to study the self-efficacy of principals. Is strong principal efficacy in changing behavior a necessary condition for the program to improve collective efficacy?”

Suddenly, I feel like I’m back where I started, but this time the focus is on me. For all the attention I’ve focused on the efficacy of teachers during our school change process, I failed to apply the same measure to me. What is my leadership efficacy in that I can instill the change necessary in my teachers to be successful in our school reorganization process? During times of potentially turbulent circumstances, what resources might I access to gain support for my own professional learning and effective leadership? These important questions will guide my future as a principal and

educational leader. “The principal of the school has the responsibility to enhance the collective efficacy of the school to facilitate higher individual teacher efficacy beliefs and, thus, student achievement.” (Tschannen-Moran and Barr, 2004, p. 195).

Transformational leadership

Attributes of transformational leadership have been apparent throughout my capstone study but, only towards the end, did these qualities begin to resonate with me personally and professionally.

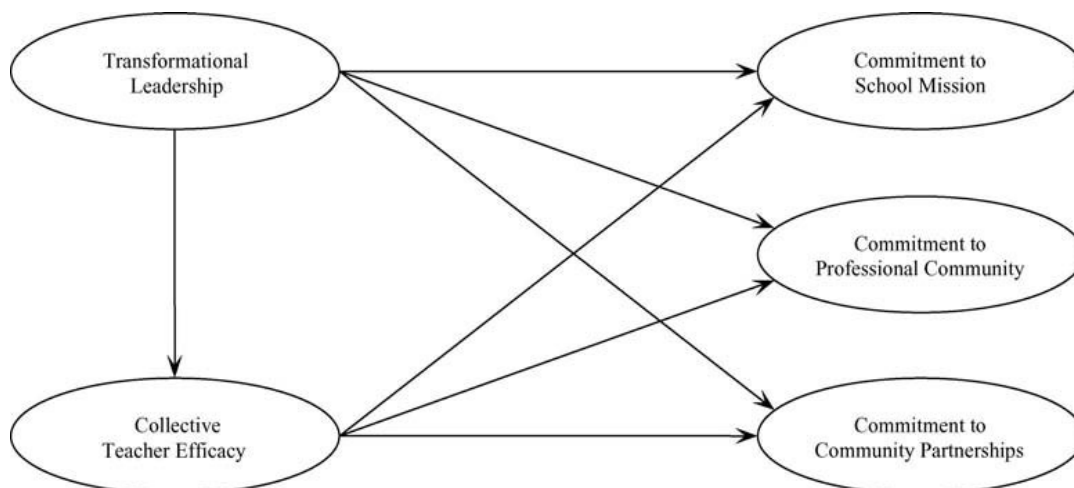
Transformational leadership has been studied and described in the literature since 1978, when Burns described transformational leadership as occurring “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (p. 20). In 2006, Ross and Gray noted “the essence of transformational leadership as dedication to fostering growth of organizational members and enhancing their commitment by elevating their goals (p. 180). Other researchers have studied and compared transformational leadership to other approaches of leadership both in and outside the field of education. Specific transformational leadership behaviors and [school] workplace conditions associate with positively with identified outcomes and achieving goals.

In 1999 and 2005, Leithwood and his colleagues conducted two different meta-analyses to further explore the concept of transformational leadership through their own research and that of others. After analyzing more than 50 studies overall, they could not conclude a concise definition of transformational leadership nor confirm a direct or indirect relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and positive outcomes. However, they did develop a useful model for transformational leadership

that includes 3 sets of behaviors: 1) setting directions – vision, goals, expectations; 2) helping people – support, stimulation, modeling; and 3) redesigning the organization – collaborative cultures, relationships with parents and community (Leithwood et. al., 1999, 2005). The second factor seems to be the weak link in my leadership actions. Despite Alpine View High School having a new strategic site plan to redesign our high school, which was created with the active participation of teachers and parents, it was insufficient to engage our teachers to “raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Providing vicarious experiences and modeling the behaviors I wish to develop in others must become part of my professional action plan.

More relevant to my study, is the attention to transformational leadership by Ross and Gray in 2004 and 2006. Of specific interest is their investigation of “collective teacher efficacy as a potential mediator of the leadership-teacher outcome relationship” (2006, p 180). In search of a mechanism between teacher outcomes and principal behaviors, their studies examined direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership practices on teachers’ commitment to the organization, commitment to professional community, and commitment to community partnerships (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Leadership, collective teacher efficacy, and school process variables
(Ross and Gray, 2006, p. 186)



Overall, Ross and Gray found collective teacher efficacy is a “partial rather than a complete mediator of the effects of transformational leadership on teacher commitment to organizational values (2006, p. 191). They also concluded three specific findings: 1) transformational leadership had an impact on the collective teacher efficacy of the school; 2) collective teacher efficacy strongly predicted commitment to community partnerships; and 3) transformational leadership had direct effects on teacher commitment, independent of agency beliefs. These findings are especially interesting because they dovetail with my capstone interest in teachers’ commitment to high school organizational change.

Demir (2008) also sought to find evidence relating transformational leadership practices with collective teacher efficacy, via support of teacher self-efficacy and collaborative school culture. Studying 66 elementary schools in Turkey, she concluded several specific leadership recommendations. Principals should provide opportunities for teachers to interact and share knowledge, and model a collaborative style of working

with teachers, similar to what is expected when teachers work with each other. “The principal, as a transformational leader, should influence teachers by role modeling the appropriate behaviors (p. 105). This finding is in support of Bandura’s development of efficacy through vicarious experiences (modeling) and mastery experiences (positive examples) when principals serve as the role models they seek in collaborative cultures. Demir also recommends empowering teachers in shared decision-making, however the opportunity must be accompanied by skill development (Hoy et. al., 2002) that goes beyond verbal persuasion.

Demir’s study also recommends that principals pay close attention to positive emotions to provide reinforcement of teachers’ agency and beliefs about their capabilities. Cycling back to the feedback that I collected from Alpine View High School’s Teacher Leaders, teachers’ emotional state of mind – especially related to stress – was communicated to me both directly and indirectly by several teacher leaders. Principal leadership practices that are purposeful to develop and nurture teacher individual and collective teacher efficacy are necessary to provide the optimal school conditions for teachers to engage in important change initiatives that will lead to increased student achievement.

Future leadership practice

To best facilitate teacher efficacy and the collective teacher efficacy in my school, my principal leadership actions should include purposeful and focused attention to the following:

- “Help teachers set feasible, proximal goals to increase likelihood of mastery experiences.” (Ross and Gray, 2006, p. 194);

- “Provide high quality professional development and feedback on skill acquisition.” (Ross and Gray, 2006, p. 194);
- Include teachers in school decisions that are instructionally relevant (Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy, 2004);
- Create opportunities for teachers to collaboratively share skills and experience. (Ross and Gray, 2003);
- Influence teacher interpretations of school and classroom achievement data. “Help teachers identify cause-effect relationships that link their actions to desired outcomes.” (Ross and Gray, 2006, p. 193);
- Model behaviors such as risk-taking and cooperation; foster norms of experimentation and continual growth. (Hipp, 1996);
- Promote mastery experiences for teachers, through thoughtfully designed staff development activities and action research projects (Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith, 2002), (Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy, 2000)
- Inspire group purpose by creating a shared vision which is centered on creating a student centered atmosphere (Hipp, 1996);
- Listen to teachers and promote innovative teaching (Newman, Rutter, and Smith, 1989), (Hipp, 1996).
- Offer teachers help, support, and recognition (Newman, Rutter, and Smith, 1989).
- Support teachers to create a positive school climate (Tschannen-Moran and Barr, 2003)

I should also remain acutely aware of context and organizational conditions which may thwart the promotion of teacher and collective teacher efficacy relative to principal leadership behaviors. In a paper presented in 1996, Kristine Hipp shared findings from a study that looked at 10 middle schools in Wisconsin that were involved in building-level change efforts. She points out two interesting and relevant findings that address constraints that limited the influence of leadership behaviors in support of teacher efficacy. The first addresses “negative environmental factors” including “ongoing budget cuts”. (p. 25) “Educational leaders need to be sensitive to the human-side of education. They must be aware of non-school constraints which cause frustration and send a powerful message that can be perceived as devaluing the importance of teachers and education in general. In response, principals who set the tone for teaching and learning are more apt to gain the trust of staff.” (p. 31). Hipp’s second finding related to schools that were newly engaged in change initiatives. Teachers were more likely to express feelings of uncertainty where they were “first learning to work collaboratively in teams, striving to reach consensus, learning to resolve conflict, and experiencing freedom to make decisions.” (p. 22).

Learning from the findings of others, and paying close attention to action research observations in my own school, can and will result in successful school change that ultimately leads to higher student achievement. Transformational leadership behaviors are powerful conduits to influencing collective teacher efficacy.

In summary, my principal leadership must include opportunities and strategic actions for 1) shared school goals; 2) shared decision-making; 3) improvement plans with goals that match teachers’ perceptions of needs; and 4) empowering others as

leaders. (Ross, 2006). Although specific pragmatic considerations for implementing such guidelines exceed the scope of this capstone, I intend to reconsider my planning of staff meetings, professional learning communities, and other strategic work groups and distributed leadership with regard to fostering collective learning, shared decision-making, and mutual staff support. Tschannen-Moran and Barr's words (2004, p. 195) will hang on my leadership wall, "The principal of the school has the responsibility to enhance the collective efficacy of the school to facilitate higher individual teacher efficacy beliefs and, thus, student achievement."

Approaches to inquiry in practice

For this capstone study, my action research methodology was more about "telling a story" rather than "creating a story" to tell. I set out to observe and report what was happening to collective teacher efficacy in my high school during a significant change process, rather than targeting principal leadership actions for the purpose of influencing the collective teacher efficacy of my staff.

Reflective practice, as influenced by Stringer's action research model and my capstone findings, has advanced my learning to improve future inquiry and action research studies. My initial premise that teachers are the unit of change would have been more powerful within a well articulated and expanded continuum of leadership that embraces a broader set of interactions and responsibilities. School leadership radiates from the Principal's office and extends in multiple directions to foster a change-focused leadership team within an aligned system. The relationship between principal and teachers, as partners in the change process, is critical to success and sustainability of

school improvement goals. Such a complex leadership construct, carefully designed, can result in a powerful platform for change.

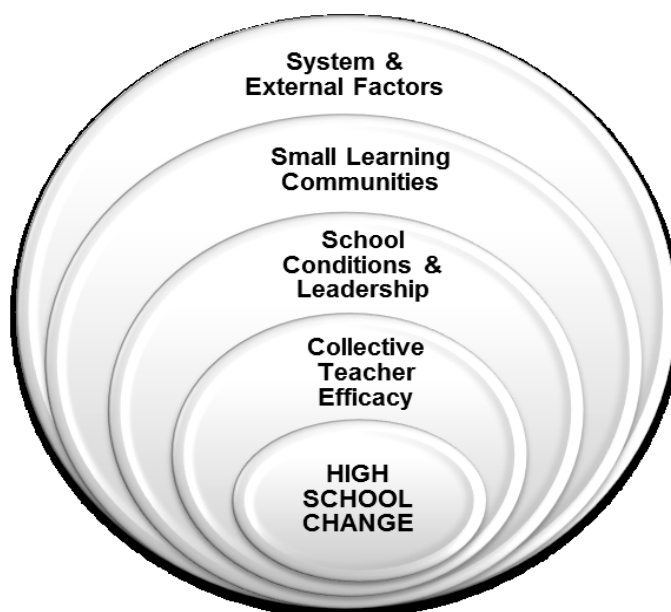
One primary role of the principal is to facilitate positive relationships and understanding within the school system and to build bridges between the school and outside influences. Externally, the principal must collaborate with and be supported by district and system leaders. Internally, effective principals distribute and support leadership among their administrative team and with teachers through focused development of teacher leadership capacity. My capstone findings suggest that the principal is key to leveraging the potential within the system – sometimes in subtle ways such as continuous two-way communication and sometimes through more strategically-planned actions. Working within a focused coherent system, the principal leads the promotion of collective teacher efficacy as everyone in the system contributes toward assuming collective responsibility for student achievement.

Through this capstone process, the opportunity to step back and “watch” my school, as well as my own leadership behaviors, has been very powerful. My original hunch was that efficacy would relate positively to the successful implementation of our school reorganization to small learning communities. Had I dug a little deeper, I may have found a stronger and more meaningful approach, not only to my capstone study, but also to the successful outcome of Alpine View High School’s reorganization work. I now wonder if my primary capstone question should have been more like:

In what ways, if any, does the collective efficacy of teachers change as a result of targeted leadership actions, such as those associated with transformational leadership, as a high school undergoes organizational change to smaller learning communities?

I also now understand more fully the importance of creating a conceptual framework early in the inquiry process to identify all assumptions and theories that might have been influential within my action research study. Figure 9 suggests the variables that became apparent as I collected data and analyzed my findings.

Figure 9: *Revised Conceptual Framework for Supporting School Change*



I have revised my conceptual framework, albeit slightly, to better clarify what I now understand to be the more influential relationships among the variables found in my study as they pertain to high school change. In reversing the position of “small learning communities” and “school conditions and leadership”, I am suggesting that the latter has more bearing on collective teacher efficacy than does the school organization factor of small learning communities. I also considered separating school conditions and leadership into two separate spheres but do not feel that I have sufficient support from my capstone or from my current literature review to know which is the more influential of

the two. My professional instinct says this is leadership however, without the associated body of evidence, I cannot say with confidence. In addition, the concept of school organization is found within the literature as a broad concept within which small learning communities would be but one example. Additional research would be necessary to determine if a high school small learning community design does indeed provide the school organization influences that positively associate with collective teacher efficacy.

This capstone study was always intended to be an action research project within my high school to understand how redesigning a large comprehensive high school into small learning communities would relate to the collective teacher efficacy of my staff. Immersing me in the change process as both a researcher and a participant, at times, was mind opening in understanding the complexity and fragility of the professional lives of teachers. At other times, it was mind boggling in trying to understand what was still needed when all the necessary resources seemed to be in place. I found myself traversing the entire leadership terrain from success to frustration, from feeling confident to being inept. My capstone study has helped me to understand the why of my findings and has provided a new map for next leadership steps at both Alpine View High School and/or for the next chapter in my leadership career.

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APPENDIX A

Alpine View High School Data, December 2007
presented to staff, School Board and community as compelling reasons
to reorganize school as small learning communities

Number of Individual Students who scored Unsatisfactory or Partially Proficient on CSAP*

		<u>Reading</u>	<u>Writing</u>	<u>Math</u>
2007	9 th	59	129	183
	10 th	80	147	211
2006	9 th	71	131	181
	10 th	76	145	230
2005	9 th	72	126	196
	10 th	63	130	216

Percentage of Class that Scored U or PP on CSAP*

		<u>Reading %</u>	<u>Writing%</u>	<u>Math%</u>
2007	9 th	17	36	51
	10 th	22	40	58
2006	9 th	18	34	48
	10 th	21	41	65
2005	9 th	19	34	54
	10 th	17	37	62

Higher Education Remediation Information

In 2004 (the most recent data available), of 128 DHS "recent graduates" that attended a Colorado Public college or university, 37.5% (48 students) were assigned to one (or more) remediation level courses in math, reading and/or writing. (2011 data updated to 31%).

2007-08 Grades: % students who earned at least 1 D or F

	<u>1st trimester</u>	
9 th	30.4% of the class	(119 students of 392)
10 th	33.3% of the class	(122 students of 366)
11 th	38.1% of the class	(139 students of 365)
12 th	33.2% of the class	(111 students of 334)

	<u>1st trimester</u>	<u>2nd trimester</u>	<u>3rd trimester</u>
2006-07* 9 th	33%	34%	32%
10 th	35%	36%	33%
11 th	42%	38%	37%
12 th	29%	25%	18%

*data presumes the class size did not change throughout the year.

Percentage of Class of 2007 who graduated with a 2.0 or below GPA: 9.7% (31 students)

DHS students who are behind on credits toward graduation

Class of 2009: **16%** (30% of our Hispanic and 31% of our Native American populations)

Class of 2010: **16%** (40% of our Hispanic and 28% of our Native American populations)

Average Daily Attendance at DHS

2006-07	91.7 %
2005-06	94.5 %
2004-05	92.5 %

* CSAP is acronym for Colorado Student Assessment of Performance, taken by all students in grades 9 and 10 in reading, writing, math, and science (10th grade only)

APPENDIX B

Collective Teacher Efficacy Instrument CE-Scale Short Form

Directions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about our school from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Your answers are confidential.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Teachers in this school are able to get through to the most difficult students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	If a child doesn't want to learn, teachers here give up.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4	Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5	Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6	These students come to school ready to learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7	Home life provides so many advantages that students here are bound to learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8	Students here just aren't motivated to learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9	Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with the student disciplinary problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10	The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11	Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12	Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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APPENDIX C

Collective Teacher Efficacy data – Alpine View High School – April 2008

		<i>Top number = count of respondents selecting the option.</i>						n	Average Score
		<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>		
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>		
1	Teachers in this school are able to get through to the most difficult students.	4	10	12	18	17	6	67	3.78
		4	20	36	72	85	36	253	
2	Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students	0	2	6	16	33	10	67	4.64
		0	4	18	64	165	60	311	
3	If a child doesn't want to learn, teachers here give up.	21	28	12	3	3	0	67	4.91
		0	3	3	12	28	21	R	
		0	6	9	48	140	126	329	
4	Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful learning.	33	24	6	2	1	1	67	5.24
		1	1	2	6	24	33	R	
		1	2	6	24	120	198	351	
5	Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn.	2	1	3	10	30	21	67	4.91
		2	2	9	40	150	126	329	
6	These students come to school ready to learn.	0	4	15	31	11	2	63	3.96
		0	8	45	124	55	18	250	
7	Home life provides so many advantages that students here are bound to learn.	1	14	22	21	7	2	67	3.46
		1	28	66	84	35	18	232	
8	Students here just aren't motivated to learn.	6	27	20	13	1	0	67	4.35
		0	1	13	20	27	6	R	
		0	2	39	80	135	36	292	
9	Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with the student disciplinary problems.	13	39	11	2	1	1	67	4.86
		1	1	2	11	39	13	R	
		1	2	6	44	195	78	326	
10	The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.	2	9	11	27	13	2	64	3.72
		2	18	33	108	65	12	238	
11	Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.	41	21	2	2	1	0	67	5.48
		0	1	2	2	21	41	R	
		0	2	6	8	105	246	367	
12	Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.	4	20	10	21	9	3	67	3.4
		3	9	21	10	20	4	R	
		3	18	63	40	80	24	228	
SdS for CE=100(CE-4.1201)/.6392+500						Average Collective Efficacy		4.3925	
SdS for CE = 100(4.393-4.1201)/.6392+500 100 (.2729) = 27.27/.6329 = 43.119 +500 = 543.119 500 = average 600 > 84% schools						Standardized CE Score		543.11	

APPENDIX D

Collective Teacher Efficacy data – Alpine View High School – May 2009

		Top number = count of respondents selecting the option. Mid Number = reversed order of respondents if applicable Bottom number = multiple of total respondents' score.						n	Average Score
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	Teachers in this school are able to get through to the most difficult students.	6	8	17	20	23	2	76	3.68
		6	16	51	80	115	12	280	
2	Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students	3	7	8	16	39	3	76	4.18
		3	14	24	64	195	18	318	
3	If a child doesn't want to learn, teachers here give up.	18	35	13	5	5	0	76	4.91
		0	5	5	13	35	18	R	
		0	10	15	65	175	108	373	
4	Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful learning.	37	23	8	4	3	1	76	5.11
		1	3	4	8	23	37	R	
		1	6	12	32	115	222	388	
5	Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn.	1	4	6	8	38	19	76	4.78
		1	8	18	32	190	114	363	
6	These students come to school ready to learn.	4	27	15	16	14	0	76	3.12
		4	54	45	64	70	0	237	
7	Home life provides so many advantages that students here are bound to learn.	11	27	20	15	2	1	76	2.64
		11	54	60	60	10	6	201	
8	Students here just aren't motivated to learn.	3	20	21	10	21	1	76	3.62
		1	21	10	21	20	3	R	
		1	42	30	84	100	18	275	
9	Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with the student disciplinary problems.	15	35	12	8	5	1	76	4.58
		1	5	8	12	35	15	R	
		1	10	24	48	175	90	348	
10	The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.	3	15	21	19	16	1	75	3.44
		3	30	63	76	80	6	258	
11	Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.	37	22	8	6	0	3	76	5.04
		3	0	6	8	22	37	R	
		1	0	18	32	110	222	383	
12	Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.	3	12	20	16	19	6	76	3.29
		6	19	16	20	12	3	R	
		6	38	48	80	60	18	250	
SdS for CE=100(CE-4.1201)/.6392+500							Average Collective Efficacy	4.0325	
SdS for CE = 100(4.033-4.1201)/.6392+500 100 (0.0871) = -8.71/.6329 = -13.762 +500 = 486.24 500 = average 600 > 84% schools							Standardized CE Score	486.24	

APPENDIX E
Collective Teacher Efficacy data – Alpine View High School – May 2011

Top number = count of respondents selecting the option. Mid Number = reversed order of respondents if applicable Bottom number = multiple of total respondents' score.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	n	Average Score
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	Teachers in this school are able to get through to the most difficult students.	4	12	28	27	5	1	77	3.26
		4	24	84	108	25	6	251	
2	Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students	0	3	20	29	21	4	77	4.04
		0	6	60	116	105	24	311	
3	If a child doesn't want to learn, teachers here give up.	15	31	13	12	5	1	77	4.47
		1	5	12	13	31	15	R	
		1	10	36	52	155	90	344	
4	Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful learning.	21	35	12	5	2	0	75	4.78
		0	2	5	12	35	21	R	
		0	4	15	48	175	126	368	
5	Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn.	0	1	13	18	27	18	77	4.62
		0	2	39	72	135	108	356	
6	These students come to school ready to learn.	0	14	27	29	7	0	77	3.38
		0	28	81	116	35	0	260	
7	Home life provides so many advantages that students here are bound to learn.	5	20	29	17	4	2	77	3.01
		5	40	87	68	20	12	232	
8	Students here just aren't motivated to learn.	4	31	31	9	1	0	76	4.5
		0	1	9	31	31	4	R	
		0	2	37	124	155	24	342	
9	Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with the student disciplinary problems.	13	30	18	8	5	3	77	4.38
		3	5	8	18	30	13	R	
		3	10	24	72	150	78	337	
10	The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.	1	2	30	34	8	2	77	3.68
		1	4	90	136	40	12	283	
11	Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.	23	42	6	2	0	3	76	5.01
		3	0	2	6	42	23	R	
		3	0	6	24	210	138	381	
12	Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.	3	6	18	28	17	5	77	3.16
		5	17	28	18	6	3	R	
		5	34	84	72	30	18	243	
SdS for CE=100(CE-4.1201)/.6392+500							Average Collective Efficacy	4.024	
SdS for CE = 100(4.024-4.1201)/.6392+500 100 (-0.0961) = -9.61/.6329 = -15.18 +500 = 484.82 500 = average 600 > 84% schools							Standardized CE Score	484.82	

APPENDIX F

Alpine View High School Strategic Site Plan

**Approved
October 2010**

*Address
Phone number
Website*

Alpine View High School

wishes to thank the following individuals for their assistance with this project:

Core Planning Team:

XXX, Community Member
 XXX, Community Member
 Richard Fulton, Parent/Community Member
 XXX Assistant Principal, Middle School
 XXX District Central Office
 XXX, Parent/Community Member
 XXX, AVHS Student, Senior
 XXX, AVHS Student, Junior
 XXX, AVHS Student, Sophomore
 XXX, AVHS Student, Sophomore
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Asst. Principal, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Asst. Principal, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Classified Staff, AVHS
 Diane Lashinsky, Principal, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Classified Staff, AVHS
 XXX, Teacher, AVHS
 XXX, Counselor, AVHS

Special thanks to XXX, School District representative,
for helping to coordinate this project.

Action Team Members

Tactic 1

Facilitators: XXX and ZZZ

Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Classified Staff
Student
Parent

Tactic 2

Facilitator: XXX

Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
AVHS Athletic Director
Parent
Student
Student

Tactic 4

Facilitator: XXX

Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Student
Parent

Tactic 3

Facilitator: XXX

Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Student
Student
Parent

Tactic 5

Facilitator: Richard Fulton

Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Teacher
Classified Staff
Student

School District Mission Statement

The mission of XXX School District, an innovative educational system committed to excellence, is to ensure each student develops the skills and attributes for lifelong learning and has the ability to compete and contribute in the global community, by guaranteeing equitable educational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment.

School District Beliefs Statement

We believe that:

Every individual is unique and has talents to contribute to society.
Equity is necessary for a just society.
Diversity enriches our community.
Individuals have a responsibility to the global community.
A safe and healthy environment is essential for people to thrive.
The pursuit of excellence is worth the investment.

Honesty and integrity build trusting relationships.
 Hard work, determination, and commitment are necessary for achievement.
 Everyone can learn beyond his or her own expectations.
 Each individual is responsible for his or her choices and actions.
 Achievement builds self-esteem and self confidence.
 Curiosity and creativity inspire learning and innovation.
 Healthy relationships are necessary for individuals, families, and communities to thrive.
 Quality education expands opportunities throughout life.
 Education is a shared responsibility of students, families, educators, and community.

School District Parameters

We will not tolerate behaviors that are disrespectful or demeaning to any individual or group.

No new program or service will be accepted unless it is consistent with the strategic plan, benefits justify the cost, and provisions are made for professional development and program evaluation.

No program or service will be retained unless it makes an optimal contribution to the mission and benefits continue to justify costs.

School improvement plans must always be consistent with the strategic plan of the district.

We will practice fiscal responsibility by balancing the educational needs of our students with the community's ability and willingness to pay.

We will embrace and integrate the positive legacies, traditions, and bounties of the Four Corners region throughout our programs.

Alpine View High School Mission Statement

The mission of Alpine View High School, a community-based partnership, is to ensure each student develops the positive character attributes and academic excellence necessary to compete and contribute in the global community, by providing tailored, engaging, and relevant educational opportunities within a safe and healthy environment.

Alpine View High School Objectives

All students will consistently demonstrate the District's identified character attributes within the school and community.

Each student will create and successfully complete a challenging, individualized academic and career plan.

All students will meet or exceed the District standards of excellence as measured by assessments that integrate content knowledge and 21st century skills.

Alpine View High School Tactics

1. We will develop and implement plans to address communication issues and implement clearly defined decision-making processes to build and strengthen relationships among students, staff, and the community.
2. We will expect all members of our school community to model, reinforce and integrate the identified character attributes throughout the school.
3. We will design and implement flexible pathways to graduation that ensure each student creates and successfully completes his or her challenging academic and career plan.
4. We will create a community-wide partnership in order to promote student accountability and success.
5. We will refine the Small Learning Community organization at AVHS in order to provide sufficient collaboration time, support student pursuit of standards of excellence, and assure shared responsibility for the success of our students.

Tactic 1

We will develop and implement plans to address communication issues and implement clearly defined decision-making processes to build and strengthen relationships among students, staff, and the community.

Tactic 1: Specific Result 1

Create communication protocols that promote consistent, transparent, and trustworthy behavior.

Action Plans:

1. Establish a committee comprised of a variety of stakeholders including students, parents, and staff to establish and assess communication protocols that promote consistent, transparent and trustworthy behavior and that model the district character attributes.
2. Review existing district communication protocols.
3. Review issues and history of communication at AVHS.
4. Locate incongruities between district communication protocols and current building communication practices.
5. Publish draft protocols for stakeholder review.
6. Refine protocols with respect to stakeholder feedback if necessary.
7. Publish refined protocols.
8. Review issues and history of communication at AVHS.

Tactic 1: Specific Result 2**Create consistent and transparent decision-making protocols.****Action Plans:**

1. Establish a committee comprised of a variety of stakeholders including students, parents, and staff to engage in the development of decision-making protocols consistent with the character attributes.
2. Review decision-making issues and history at AVHS.
3. Identify decision categories with regards to whom is making the decision: For example state, district, building administration, staff, etc.
4. Review attached decision-making protocols. [http://www.leadershipasheville.org/private/Methods for Team Decision Making.pdf](http://www.leadershipasheville.org/private/Methods%20for%20Team%20Decision%20Making.pdf)
5. Publish draft decision-making protocols for Stakeholder review.
6. Refine protocols with respect to stakeholder feedback if necessary.
7. Publish decision-making protocols.
8. Review and refine protocols periodically and as necessary.

Tactic 1: Specific Result 3**Provide regular, ongoing, professional development for administrators and staff for the purpose of effective implementation of communication and decision-making protocols.****Action Plans:**

1. Create a professional development module based on our specific building communication protocols and building decision-making protocols.
2. Review of the professional development module by the communication and decision-making protocol committees.
3. Utilize professional development time to train staff on protocols interspersed throughout the year.
4. Administrators and all staff (certified and classified) will participate in training for effective communication and decision-making protocols.
5. Collect ongoing feedback from staff, parents, and students.
6. Review feedback and use to influence the evolution of the communication and collaboration protocols.

Tactic 1: Specific Result 4**Refine existing communication and decision-making structures, eliminate ineffective models and establish new opportunities to provide consistent, open, transparent dialogue between all stakeholders.****Action Plans:**

1. Establish a committee comprised of students, parents, and staff to engage in the development of consistent opportunities for dialogue and to assess the effectiveness of those opportunities as they pertain to increased open, transparent dialogue.
2. Review district and building communication protocols.
3. Define the phrase "consistent opportunities."
4. Analyze, evaluate and refine existing structures that support teacher, student, administration, and parent voice (stakeholders), including but not limited to advisory, student class meetings, parent/teacher conference procedures, and eliminate ineffective models.
5. Create informal/formal student evaluations of teachers.
6. Establish new opportunities for communication between all stakeholders (e.g. parent-admin, parent-teacher, teacher-admin, teacher-student, student-admin).
7. Establish inclusive meetings in which teacher-leaders, department chairs, and administration would all attend together.
8. Collect ongoing feedback from student, staff, parents, and administration regarding structures, models and opportunities.
9. Review feedback and use to influence the evolution of consistent communication opportunities.

Tactic 1: Specific Result 5

Utilize technology to refine and enhance 1-way and 2-way communication in order to promote transparency and increase accountability among all stakeholders.

Action Plans:

1. Identify a technology team comprised of students and staff to improve usability and increase use of existing building communication technology by all stakeholders, including but not limited to: Moodle, student email, AVHS website, ParentConnect, marquee, El Diablo.
2. Deploy the same team comprised of students and staff to explore and implement new building communication technology such as but not limited to student created Facebook pages, Administration tweets, text information to parents, Google, mobile calendars.
3. Continuously evaluate technology use and usability.

Tactic 1: Specific Result 6

Promote a welcoming environment by establishing an AVHS Information Center to enhance both internal and external communication.

Action Plans:

1. Recruit a committee comprised of a variety of stakeholders including students, parents, and staff to establish the Center.
2. Identify clientele who will use Center and define "welcoming environment."
3. Identify supervisor role.
4. Identify necessary information available in the Center including but not limited to teacher availability, building access, activity schedules and sponsors, daily schedules, who to see about what, tutoring etc.
5. Find location and obtain necessary resources in order to establish Information Center.
6. Identify student job parameters.
7. Create application and evaluation process as well as credit for student staff.
8. Create a training program for communication concierge.
9. Advertise with /for all stakeholders.
10. Continuous evaluation of Information Center efficacy.

Tactic 2

We will expect all members of our school community to model, reinforce and integrate the identified character attributes throughout the school.

Tactic 2: Specific Result 1

The AVHS staff will review and understand the relationship of the ten district Character Attributes and the work being done with such things as the Discovery Model, Social Emotional Learning, and the AVHS Athletic/Activity Code of Conduct.

Action Plans:

1. Form a representative team of teachers and administrators.
2. Review approved district character attributes (including terms and definitions).
3. Identify and review elements of *Discovery* that have been implemented at AVHS (e.g., 6 P's, 3 Redirect Model, etc.).
4. Read AVHS Code of Conduct.
5. Identify other inclusive programs, policies and/or academic standards at AVHS that may support character attributes (e.g., PEAT).
6. Identify specific ways that each of the character attributes is modeled, reinforced, and/or integrated through *Discovery* elements, AVHS Code of Conduct, academic standards, programs, etc.
7. Present findings to the entire AVHS staff.

Tactic 2: Specific Result 2

Select a character education program that addresses the district identified Character Attributes. *District work being done now will be used to inform the selection of the AVHS program.

Action Plans:

1. Form a representative team that is led by students, teachers, administration, staff, and parents.
2. Review the approved district character attributes.
3. Identify the character education programs that are currently in use at AVHS and in other schools within the district.
4. Identify other character education programs that should be considered by the district and/or high school.
5. Determine the top one to three character education programs that incorporate district character attributes.
6. Conduct in-depth research on the top programs identified (possibly including site visits to the other districts currently using the programs).
7. Determine the best program to be implemented at AVHS while considering the potential alignment of character education programs in the district.
8. Align AVHS character education program with the district character education program.

Tactic 2: Specific Result 3

AVHS teachers, administrators, and staff will participate in professional development and collaboration opportunities in character education and character development skill building.

Action Plans:

1. Determine how all AVHS teachers, administrators, and staff will complete initial training in the chosen character education program, including training for new staff.
2. Train all AVHS teachers, administrators, and staff in character education program.
3. Commit professional development time during the school year to ongoing character education training.
4. Commit Professional Learning Community time for collaboration on character development skill building.

Tactic 2: Specific Result 4

Create authentic, relevant, differentiated, and engaging learning opportunities that develop character attributes.

Action Plans:

1. Form a representative team that is led by students, teachers, administration, staff, and parents.
2. Identify character education essential learnings for each specific grade level (9-12).
3. Design curriculum map within each grade level.
4. Determine venue(s) to deliver character education program in grades 9-12.
5. Design freshman orientation activities including experiential learning (i.e. ropes courses).

Tactic 2: Specific Result 5

AVHS will publish and communicate information on the chosen character education program and the list of character attribute definitions.

Action Plans:

1. Publish AVHS and district character attributes, definitions, and information on programs into a variety of venues: student planner, school website, Student and Family Success Guide, press releases, etc.
2. Identify forums for spotlighting exemplars of positive character in the school community.
3. Publish updates for AVHS community on progress in the character education program.
4. Create and post authentic, visual reminders of character education goals throughout the school (i.e. open ended scenarios, key words, what would you do etc.).

Tactic 2: Specific Result 6

Design and implement a comprehensive evaluation tool to gather qualitative and quantitative data to assess the effectiveness of character education implementation.

Action Plans:

1. Form a representative team that is led by students, teachers, administration, staff, and parents.
2. Inventory existing assessment tools and data management systems utilized by AVHS that are/may be indicators of character attributes development (discipline referrals, attendance records, behavior contracts, etc.)
3. Document all methods and sources of data that will be used to assess performance in meeting the strategy objectives.
4. Define a schedule for information and data collections, and ongoing progress reporting.
5. Analyze and interpret the data.
6. Determine the strengths and limitations of the assessment tool(s).
7. Establish a routine (ongoing) and comprehensive plan of distributing results and increasing accessibility of information on the program's performance.
8. Use professional learning time to collaborate with staff to identify appropriate program adjustments based on evaluation results.
9. Provide opportunity for staff reflection and discussion on modeling, reinforcing, and integration of the character traits.

Tactic 3

We will design and implement flexible pathways to graduation that ensure each student creates and successfully completes his or her challenging academic and career plan.

Tactic 3: Specific Result 1

We will ensure the development of every student's Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) using the "Career Cluster and Pathways Model" as designated by the Colorado Community College System.

Action Plans:

1. Orient all stakeholders as to why every student has an ICAP.
2. Restructure Demon Time to support development of each student's ICAP.
3. Create a system of communication and professional development so that every student, parent and staff member understands how to navigate the ICAP/Pathway system at AVHS.
4. Determine and communicate the current (e.g. independent study) and future (e.g. online learning, ICP) opportunities that will allow a student to complete his/her chosen pathway.
5. Evaluate progress and make appropriate changes.

Tactic 3: Specific Result 2

Identify, create, and publish a list of available Concurrent Enrollment (CE) options that meet graduation requirements, maintaining said list and relationships, and disseminating this information to admin, counselors, parents and SLC teacher leaders for use in creating and enriching students' ICAP.

Action Plans:

1. Identify current partnerships and vet other CE options with administration and specific department persons affected.

2. Review current criteria for allowing CE courses that provide graduation requirements and modify if necessary and articulate protocol for validating or prohibiting institutional partnerships according to how much they cost, accreditation, etc.
3. Update list annually, and share with counselors, administration, department chairs, and SLC teacher leaders for dissemination to parents and advisors during ICAP and registration time.

Tactic 3: Specific Result 3

Improve the internship program at AVHS that utilizes community partnerships to provide rigorous, outcome based real-world work experiences that awards credit in line with students' chosen pathway.

Action Plans:

1. Review and refine current internship program.
2. Create a director of internships for AVHS whose responsibility it is to utilize community partnerships and students ICAP information to provide a rigorous, outcome based real-world work experience that awards credit to students that are prepared to participate.
3. Determine community businesses and other organizations willing to work towards meaningful and productive internships for both the student and the business.
4. Develop a rubric which identifies how to grant credit for the internships and how students will be evaluated.
5. Identify appropriate modes of transportation.
6. Re-evaluate partnerships and consider new businesses for internship opportunities.

Tactic 3: Specific Result 4

Identify embedded standards across disciplines in order to provide flexible graduation credit (crosswalk).

Action Plans:

1. Create an articulation committee of core, elective, CTE teachers, post-secondary partners, and district level personnel.
2. Articulation committee will produce a system to identify and validate standards across curricula.
3. Actively encourage teachers to use the system to create flexible opportunities.
4. Create and communicate a list of courses that fulfill alternative graduation credit.

Tactic 4

We will create a community-wide partnership in order to promote student accountability and success.

Tactic 4: Specific Result 1

In collaboration with the district efforts, develop and implement a consistent and proactive system to maintain/enhance the community partnership pool.

Action Plans:

1. Centralize procedures for volunteering, internships, speakers, partnerships, mentorships, committees, etc.
2. Provide staff development regarding partnerships/procedures.
3. Enhance relationships with agencies/groups, such as Child Youth and Family Master Plan, to improve internal & external partnerships.
4. Expand on existing database (District and AVHS website). Include existing AVHS partners in district database.

Tactic 4: Specific Result 2**Provide pathways to involve students in a variety of community service opportunities.****Action Plans:**

1. Administration will reorganize the community service requirement to include completion of some community service each year.
2. Administration/counseling staff will clarify to staff and students the importance, requirements, and process for tracking completion of community service.
3. Expand opportunities for community service requirements to be met before and after school, at lunch, and during free hours.
4. Update existing AVHS website community service link to be more student friendly, current and relevant (ongoing).
5. Increase education of students by non-profits and advisors regarding community service opportunities such as a community service fair during school hours, guest speakers, announcements, field trips, virtual training, etc. (ongoing).

Tactic 4: Specific Result 3**Implement a community and school generated positive reinforcement system to reward students who achieve predetermined standards of attendance, behavior, improvement, and/or grade point average.****Action Plans:**

1. Establish individualized predetermined standards of attendance, behavior, improvement, grade point average.
2. Student leadership will solicit community and school or district funds & involvement for rewards for students (ongoing).
3. SLCs will create functions that regularly reward students for attendance, GPA, behavior, etc.
4. Teachers will be issued x amount of "Demon Dollars" to give out to students achieving predetermined standards of behavior for a weekly drawing (ongoing).

Tactic 4: Specific Result 4**A clear and consistent tardy policy will be determined and implemented.****Action Plans:**

1. Form a committee that will evaluate and make recommendations about whether the use of sound (bells, music, etc.) during passing periods assists in reducing tardies.
2. Determine what the definition of "tardy" is and establish a policy that will be consistently implemented throughout the school.
3. Administration and staff will establish a consistent school-wide consequences.
4. Communicate tardy policy to students, staff, and parents.

Tactic 4: Specific Result 5**Develop partnerships with community members/organizations in order to develop a community-wide truancy policy with clear, consistent, and enforceable procedures and consequences.****Action Plans**

1. Develop a community-wide truancy policy with a representative task force of district and community members.
2. Determine partnerships most impacted by and relevant to AVHS truancy.
3. Enforce the community-wide truancy policy.
4. Maintain, evaluate, and make adjustments as necessary to ensure a clear, consistent, and enforceable truancy policy.

Tactic 4: Specific Result 6

In order to promote student success and recognition, develop and implement an ongoing system to coordinate with community media & civic partnerships.

Action Plans:

1. Work with district PR person and administration to inform and encourage teachers and staff on how to promote student success and recognition at AVHS.
2. Request that the district PR person provide a list of civic partnership contacts that recognize student achievement in the media.

Tactic 4: Specific Result 7

Students will participate annually in a promotion during the school day about AVHS clubs, activities, and community service/service learning opportunities.

Action Plans:

1. Have a mandatory education fair during school hours that includes AVHS clubs, activities and local non-profits in order to expose students to as many co-curricular experiences as possible at the beginning of each school year.

Tactic 5

We will refine the Small Learning Community organization at AVHS in order to provide sufficient collaboration time, support student pursuit of standards of excellence, and assure shared responsibility for the success of our students.

Tactic 5: Specific Result 1

Develop a common vision that clarifies the purpose and goals of SLC concepts and communicate it to all stakeholders.

Action Plans:

1. Provide AVHS staff with time to examine the recommended SLC Best Practices (NWREL source 5 Domains) and identify important components of AVHS and SLC structure that are essential for the success of our students.
2. Communicate SLC Best Practices (NWREL source 5 Domains) to AVHS stakeholders.
3. Evaluate progress towards SLC Best Practices using NWREL criteria.
4. Create a process that will allow all AVHS stakeholders to provide feedback on SLC development in terms of improving student achievement, engagement and promoting diversity.

Tactic 5: Specific Result 2

Select proven, research-based educational methodologies that each SLC will implement in order to successfully provide coherent instructional programs with a shared vision and identity that engage every student in challenging, meaningful, relevant, authentic learning experiences.

Action Plans:

1. Develop guidelines for proposals and a process for reviewing the proposals for SLC methodologies to best fit the goals of the AVHS Site Plan and district's Strategic Plan.
2. Each SLC will develop a proposal. Other groups of two or more teachers may also submit proposals.
3. Identify available resources for "AVHS compatible" SLC methodologies, number of SLCs, organization of the SLCs based on staff and student interest, projected enrollment, and school-wide impact.

4. Identify and publicize the commitment of the necessary resources required for the success of each SLC proposal (financial, facilities, staffing, and time).
5. Clarify the level of autonomy for each SLC and define roles, responsibilities and decision-making of SLC leaders.
6. Communicate SLC methodologies to prospective students and families, incoming freshman, transfer students, and new students to facilitate awareness and choice. This effort should be performed in coordination with middle school registration process.
7. Implement a fair and transparent process for students and teachers to choose a SLC that connects content and essential skills with interests and passions.
8. Incorporate professional development opportunities focused on SLC methodologies that integrate Colorado State standards.
9. Develop an annual data-driven evaluation process to measure each SLC's effectiveness in improving student achievement, engagement, promoting diversity, and other relevant aspects.
10. Provide teachers release time to plan and implement team teaching units and projects as budget allows.
11. Pursue grant opportunities to support the implementation of SLC methodologies.

Tactic 5: Specific Result 3

Create a master schedule that prioritizes the methodology of each SLC.

Action Plans:

1. Schedule all SLC students and teachers together with common time to support the SLC's methodology and foster instructional coherence.
2. Incorporate planning time for teachers (i.e., common and individual planning time).
3. Identify key staff for the success of the SLC and schedule common collaboration time.
4. Schedule a balance of shared teaching responsibilities and expertise to cover expected courses in the SLC.
5. Identify roles and responsibilities of the counseling department and administration as integral members of each SLC.

Site Plan Implementation Plan for 2010-2011

TACTIC 1

We will develop and implement plans to address communication issues and implement clearly defined decision-making processes to build and strengthen relationships among students, staff, and the community.

Specific Result 1: *Create communication protocols that promote consistent, transparent and trustworthy behavior.*

Specific Result 2: *Create consistent and transparent decision-making protocols.*

TACTIC 2

We will expect all members of our school community to model, reinforce and integrate the identified character attributes throughout the school.

Specific Result 1: *The AVHS staff will review and understand the relationship of the ten district Character Attributes and the work being done with such things as the Discovery Model, Social Emotional Learning, and the AVHS Athletic/Activity Code of Conduct.*

District work being done now will be used to inform the selection of the AVHS program.

TACTIC 3

We will design and implement flexible pathways to graduation that ensure each student creates and successfully completes his or her challenging academic and career plan.

Specific Result 1: *Ensure the development of every student's Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) using the 'Career Cluster and Pathways Model' as designated by the Colorado Community College System.*

Specific Result 4: *Identify embedded standards across disciplines in order to provide flexible graduation credit (crosswalk).*

TACTIC 4

We will create a community-wide partnership to promote student accountability and success.

Specific Result 4: *Determine and implement a clear and consistent tardy policy.*

Specific Result 5: *Develop partnerships with community members/organizations in order to develop a community-wide truancy policy with clear, consistent, and enforceable procedures and consequences.*

TACTIC 5

We will refine the Small Learning Community organization at AVHS in order to provide sufficient collaboration time, support student pursuit of standards of excellence, and assure shared responsibility for the success of our students.

Specific Result 1: *Develop a common vision that clarifies the purpose and goals of SLC concepts and communicate it to all stakeholders.*

Specific Result 2: *Select proven, research-based educational methodologies that each SLC will implement in order to successfully provide coherent instructional programs with a shared vision and identity that engage every student in challenging, meaningful, relevant, authentic learning experience*

APPENDIX G

Teacher General Survey

Given to all Alpine View High School teachers in May 2011,
combined with the Collective Teacher Efficacy Instrument

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option.</i>		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>		1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Teachers have sufficient collaboration time.	17	30	21	11	5	1
		20%	35%	25%	13%	6%	1%
2.	Teachers support students to pursue standards of excellence academically.	0	1	6	22	40	17
		0%	1%	7%	26%	47%	20%
3.	Teachers assume shared responsibility for the success of our students.	1	3	11	25	39	6
		1%	4%	13%	29%	46%	7%
4.	Our SLCs are built upon interdisciplinary teaching and learning teams.	16	25	23	15	6	2
		18%	29%	26%	17%	7%	2%
5.	Our SLCs provide rigorous, relevant curriculum and instruction.	3	4	28	28	20	3
		3%	5%	33%	33%	23%	3%
6.	Our SLCs provide an inclusive program and practices for all students.	5	14	33	20	12	2
		6%	16%	38%	23%	14%	2%
7.	Our SLCs are supported by a continuous improvement process.	7	14	28	22	13	2
		8%	16%	33%	26%	15%	2%
8.	Our SLCs have building and district support	4	10	20	31	17	4
		5%	12%	23%	36%	20%	5%
9.	Our school design provides flexible pathways to graduation.	11	18	21	22	9	4
		13%	21%	25%	26%	11%	5%

APPENDIX H

September 5, 2011

Dear Teachers:

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey and questionnaire. I'm looking to understand the "teacher experience and perspective" more deeply as it applies to progressive and successful transformation of high schools. Although I will use this information as part of my capstone dissertation at the University of Washington, my primary motivation is to strengthen our work at [AHS] in a well-informed manner.

Given our school's commitment to research-based action and decision, these survey questions are grounded in two in-depth studies. One focuses on school-conditions related to successful change and increased student achievement. The other focuses on teacher efficacy and leadership action. Generally, the research suggests that specific school conditions and principal/leadership actions associate positively with teachers' collective efficacy. If you are interested in learning more about the specific research background, please let me know.

As you answer these questions, please provide as much detail in the examples/stories you tell about your school experience. Feel free to use a pseudonym or XXX instead of actual names if that is more comfortable. No real names will be used in my final written report or dissertation.

Some of these questions are specifically about school leadership, and specifically my leadership as principal. I trust in our relationship and mutual care for our school that you will provide honest, critical feedback. I hope you know that your candid responses are held in confidence and, in no way, will your name be associated with specific information you provide.

I will provide you with an electronic copy of this survey as well as this paper copy. I would appreciate you typing your responses and you can take as much or little room as needed for each question.

Please bring 3 copies of your completed survey when we meet on Monday, September 26. We will meet in room W1221 from 2:30 – 5:00 PM. If you do not have 5th period planning period, a sub will be provided for you. If you cannot meet in person or prefer not to, I would still appreciate your written responses.

Thank you for your participation!

Diane

Part 1: Please answer each of the following questions as it relates to your understanding of teachers' experience at [AHS]. In the narrative, please be as detailed as possible.

	Strongly disagree -----> Strongly agree					
1. Teachers are involved in developing shared school goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The [AHS] school improvement plan (UIP) goals match teachers' perception of our actual school needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Teachers influence decisions at [AHS], especially those that are instructionally relevant.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Teachers are supported to develop their leadership capacity and are provided opportunities to be leaders in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Part 2: Please answer the following regarding Principal leadership at [AHS]:

	Strongly disagree -----> Strongly agree					
5. Empowers others to feel ownership of our school and our school's direction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Acts as an instructional leader	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Listens to teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Promotes innovative teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Engages teachers in school improvement goals and decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Creates a positive and supportive school climate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Is perceived to be influential with her supervisors.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Part 3: General questions. Please be as specific as possible.

12. Describe one or more school successes of which you've been a part since you started working at [AHS]. Would you describe [AHS] as a successful school?

13. How often do you receive effective feedback related to your performance as a teacher? Whose feedback do you value? What is the best kind of feedback to receive?

14. Describe how you work with your teacher colleagues in community. Provide examples of the one or more ways in which you collaborate effectively. In what ways does your professional collaboration affect student achievement?

15. Describe the different kinds of leadership at [AHS] – how effective and/or ineffective is [AHS] leadership?

APPENDIX J

SLC Proposal Application

SLC Refinement – Tactic 5 January 5, 2011

TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

January 10 – March 14	SLC Teams work on Phase 2 Proposal Development – Form B
February 14	Opportunity for staff participation and influence in Phase 2 Proposal Development
March 14	Proposals Due
April 8	Review Panel Presentations
April 15	Review Panel Recommendation/Decision shared with staff

SMALL LEARNING COMMUNITY (SLC) PROPOSAL – FORM B

Please submit electronically to Diane Lashinsky no later than 12:00 PM Monday, March 14, 2011.

- Refer to [AHS] Strategic Site Plan, Tactic 5: Specific Results 1, 2, and 3 and associated Action Plans.
- Refer to *From High School to Learning Communities: Five Domains of Best Practice* - NWREL http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/665
- Refer to “Purple Sheets” feedback from [AHS] staff, collected on December 17, 2010
- Each proposal will be scored out of 100 points, with specific points allocated for each section.
- Each proposal will also receive a holistic score, on a scale from 1 – 4 (1 low, 4 high).
- Written feedback from the review team will be provided to SLC teams.

In addition to all that was included in Phase 1 “Idea Proposal” development, each team will use the following instructions and template to complete a more fully researched and developed “Phase 2” SLC Proposal.

TEMPLATE FOR PROPOSAL COMPLETION: (there may be overlap among sections)

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| Part I – Introduction and Basics | 5 points |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name of Small Learning Community 2. Names of Teachers submitting Proposal. 3. Abstract (~ 500 words) of your SLC Proposal | |
| Part II – Enduring Understandings/Essential Questions | 5 points |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List the important “Big Ideas” that capture your SLC’s philosophy and values for student learning and achievement. Can be done in terms of enduring understandings (statements) or essential questions (questions.) | |
| Part III – Demonstrate your understanding of <i>NWREL’s 5 Domains of Best Practice</i> and successful implementation of each domain within your SLC. | 25 points |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will your school maximize interdisciplinary teams’ time, support, and flexibility to work together and with your students? 2. How will your school make curriculum and instruction authentic, coherent, and challenging to all students? 3. How will your school create inclusive instructional groups based on student interest and provide adequate support for all students to meet high standards for learning? 4. What procedures, tools, and partners will be included and implemented to pursue continuous improvement of your SLC? 5. What building practices are required (aligned and/or reformulated) to maximize support for the operation of you SLC? | |

- Part IV – Demonstrate your SLCs ability to meet Tactic 5 expectations: 25 points
1. How will your SLC promote and respond to feedback regarding student achievement, engagement, and diversity? (SR 1, AP 4)
 2. Identify and explain the specific proven, research-based educational methodologies that your SLC will implement. (SR 2, AP 3)
 3. What is your projected student enrollment, grades served, specific courses, and graduation requirements that will be met within your SLC? Include new courses if that is part of your design. (SR 2, AP 3)
 4. Identify and justify all resources necessary to be committed to your SLC for successful implementation, including financial, facilities, staffing, and time. (SR 2, AP 4)
 5. Address level of autonomy optimal for your SLC. Define roles, responsibilities, and decision-making of SLC leaders. (SR 2, AP 5)

Part V – Demonstrate how your SLC will address Tactics 1, 2, 3, and 4 20 points as described within [AHS's] Strategic Site Plan:

1. How will your SLC ensure good communication and decision-making processes to build and strengthen relationships among students, staff, and the community? (Tactic 1)
2. How will your SLC model, reinforce, and integrate the identified character attributes throughout the school? (Tactic 2)
3. How will your SLC implement flexible pathways to graduation that ensure each student creates and successfully completes his or her challenging ICAP? Specifically address what College in Colorado Career Cluster pathways will be available for students to explore within your SLC? (Tactic 3)
4. How will your SLC create and participate within a community-wide partnership to promote student accountability and success? (Tactic 4)

Part VI – Create and explain an ideal semester “bell schedule” that prioritizes the teaching and learning methodology of your SLC. 10 points

1. How does your ideal schedule meet the challenges outlined within the Action Plans of Tactic 5, Specific Result 3?

Part VII – Inside your SLC... 10 points

1. Describe a day in the life of a student in your SLC (*provide a thorough description that captures the student's educational, social, and emotional experience*)
2. Describe a day in the life of a teacher in your SLC (*provide a thorough description that captures the teacher's professional, social, and emotional experience*)

Part VIII –

1. Is there anything else you want the Review Team to know as they determine the role/value your SLC will provide to enhance the teaching and learning experience for teachers and students at [AHS]?

Part IX – Answer the following specific questions as they apply to your SLC:

TBD...

REVIEW TEAM - goal 8-12 people

Richard Fulton, FLC, facilitator

- Teacher/s
 Counselor/s
 Administrator/s
 Parent/s (with middle school and high school children)
 Student/s
 District Cabinet member/s
 School Board member
 Community member

VITA

Diane Lashinsky is originally from Pennsylvania where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She later earned her Bachelor of Education from West Chester University and began an 18-year career teaching Biology and Chemistry. She has taught in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Washington, and the Navajo Indian Nation. After earning her Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and her Principal certification at the University of Washington, Diane assumed roles in school leadership as a Teacher Leader and Principal. She has more than ten-years experience leading high schools in Washington and Colorado that have undergone significant organizational and instructional change. In 2012, Diane earned a Doctor of Education degree at the University of Washington in Educational Leadership. She continues to work in public education as an educational leader.