

A Collaborative Approach for Small Districts to Use the Effective Schools Process for Comprehensive School Reform

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Abstract

This article describes the Ohio Demonstration Project, a three-year initiative, involving a collaborative of eight small districts (with 27 buildings) using the Effective Schools Process for comprehensive school reform in conjunction with the Ohio Center for Effective Schools. Having many of the same reform needs as larger and/or more affluent districts, but lacking the financial and human resources to mount their own full-scale effort, these eight districts have jointly accomplished far more than they could have working alone. A diagnostic Profile was completed for every building, and each Leadership Team received training in the Effective Schools Process, culminating in an Action Plan targeted to its unique needs identified from the Profile. The primary focus of each Plan was increased student achievement and the necessary reforms in curriculum and instruction. The Effective Schools correlates are incorporated into each Action Plan to provide a supportive context for the classroom reforms. Even though the Action Plans are unique to each building, their common focus on: 1) aligning the curriculum to state and national standards; 2) integrating the “best practices” research into their classroom instruction; and 3) equipping teacher-leaders to facilitate the implementation process, enabled the eight districts to collaborate on much of the work.

Small-District, Collaborative Reform Initiatives

Much of the attention paid to public school reform focuses on large urban districts who serve a majority of disadvantaged students with extremely low levels of achievement. If the reform occurs in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, or Cleveland, the efforts make national news, whether good or bad. On the other hand, initiatives in smaller schools often go unnoticed because the number of students impacted is not large enough to command the national spotlight. This, and other fine journals, have featured stories of promising and instructive Effective Schools programs in single buildings or a cluster of schools in larger districts. The Ohio Demonstration Project is a

collaborative of eight small districts that have joined forces to achieve comprehensive school reform. Their experience offers a gateway of opportunity through which the small district can access large-scale reforms once confined to their larger cousins.

It seems somewhat paradoxical that not much has been published about Effective Schools in smaller districts when these districts greatly outnumber the larger, urban districts. According to statistics for 2000-2001 (Hoffman, 2002), it is these small districts, with enrollments of fewer than 5,000 pupils, who serve 34% of the students in America. Even more alarming is the fact that 60% of the districts serve student enrollments of less than 1,500 (10% of the students in America). To further make the point, of the nearly 91,000 schools in America, 42% are schools that serve the smaller districts described in this project. At one time, these small districts were exclusively rural, but many have evolved into a combination of suburban and rural, or “subural.”

Because they do not have the traditional disadvantages of the urban districts and are not as ethnically diverse, there is often the mistaken assumption that rural and subural districts have no serious reform needs. And while they may never be featured on CNN or spotlighted in *Education Week*, these districts serve a substantial segment of America that does indeed struggle with the disadvantages of economic loss, dysfunctional families, high student mobility, apathy and disaffection, and cultural bias. Their small size often prohibits them from being able to offer advanced and diverse electives. It is often difficult for them to attract and keep talented staff, and the parent-community stakeholders do not always value excellence in education. Because their core populations are not ethnic minorities (albeit they may serve several religious and cultural minorities as well as extremely poor students), these districts do not qualify for the supplemental funding and the many generous subsidies available to their urban counterparts.

The staff in these districts are similarly excluded from the heavily subsidized professional development and advanced training opportunities so often accorded staff in urban and/or wealthy districts. Moreover, when entire departments consist of only one or two content specialists who teach several courses, the range of ideas and perspectives to which students are exposed is more limited and narrow than with larger, more diverse metropolitan departments.

Even though they have as much zeal and talent as larger systems, small districts typically lack the resources to *independently* initiate and sustain truly comprehensive reform programs. But working in collaboration with other districts of similar demographics within their geographic region enables them to stretch their resources by sharing the costs of training and technical assistance, producing materials, and maintaining a system to monitor student performance. This partnership can actually double or triple the number of small school staff who can be involved. It also liberates them from the twin demons of the small and/or rural district: *isolation* and *insulation*. Although their *isolation* is partly a function of geography, it also takes the form of local pride and a welcome exclusion from the problems they read about in more affluent and/or city districts. Their *insulation* is the tendency to limit their expectations for quality and effectiveness to their own highest achieving students and to those whom they perceive to be their *best* teachers. Many of the staff graduated from the district where they are now employed and actually *reflect* more than help to *shape* the community culture toward readiness for the 21st century.

But through collaboration with neighboring districts to address mutual concerns, even the smallest districts can broaden their understanding of what needs to be done, increase their expectations of what their staff and students can accomplish, and access a wealth of human and material resources to assist them. Their common challenges and similar interests enable them to identify with more honesty and precision areas of strength as well as need; and the knowledge that they have multiple, shared resources on which to draw has empowered them to devise viable plans of action for comprehensive reform. The Effective Schools Process is the ideal venue through which this collaborative reform effort can be accomplished and sustained. One important disadvantage of the small district that cannot be overlooked is manpower. In contrast to large districts who have entire departments devoted to staff development, curriculum and instruction, and data analysis, these small districts must rely on external consultants to work with their school teams. Although this represents an added expense, the costs can be shared among participating districts. But it also allows the small district to take advantage of ideas, strategies, and processes from other successful reform projects brought to the table by experienced consultants. The

following description of the Ohio Demonstration Project details the time devoted by external consultants to work with the curriculum directors, principals, and lead teachers to carry out the various aspects of the process.

The Ohio Demonstration Project

Eight small school districts in northwest Ohio are in the second year of a three-year project to implement the Effective Schools Process as a consortium. The project involves 27 buildings serving nearly 12,000 students in grades K-12, with over 800 staff members. Two-thirds of the project costs are funded by the Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Foundation, and the other third is provided by the eight districts. As a testament to the seriousness of the districts' commitment, each Board of Education passed a resolution adopting the Effective Schools Process to guide the district's comprehensive school reform. The impetus for involvement in the project included:

1. Declining student achievement in one or more of the four core content areas as measured by scores on the Ohio Proficiency Test, currently administered at grades 4, 6, and 9. (Several staff believed that not all students could master the adopted curriculum.)
2. A lack of congruence between the district curriculum in the four core areas and the national and newly-legislated state content standards. (Districts' academic expectations did not reflect levels of excellence.)
3. Inconsistency in the use of the "best practices" research to deliver and assess classroom instruction.
4. The lack of integration and common focus among various innovations and reform programs currently underway in individual buildings. (Not all students had the same opportunity to learn or time on task.)
5. A narrow conception of instructional leadership in each building and the resulting lack of ownership and accountability by teachers for the quality of classroom practice. (Instructional Leadership was not part of the deep-culture in most buildings.)
6. A lack of substantive parent involvement in their children's academic development. (Home-school relations were not as positive and productive as they could be.)

7. No system to continuously monitor student performance and to make the data readily available to teachers and parents for immediate and focused intervention. (Decisions about the curriculum and instruction were not based on data.)

The Ohio Demonstration Project began with the compilation of a comprehensive Profile of each of the 27 buildings in the eight districts. Compiled after a three-day, on-site visit by the consultants from the Ohio Center for Effective Schools, each Profile provided an entry-level “snapshot” of the building and reflected its current demographic information; levels of student achievement; and perceptions about various aspects of the school program from parents, community members, staff, and students in grades four through twelve. Consultants from the Ohio Center also used a Teaching-Learning Audit to gather perceptions from building staff about the curriculum practices in the district and the extent to which best practices are implemented in classrooms. This Audit, developed by the authors (March and Peters, 2000), is a structured interview conducted by external consultants with building representatives to provide baseline data. At the conclusion of the three project years, the entire Profile process will be repeated to determine the amount of growth that has occurred. Each district monitors its own interim growth and informs project staff of changes in student performance and school culture.

The second major activity was to train District Leadership Teams (typically consisting of the central office and building improvement teams) in the Effective Schools Process. This 30-hour training, led by consultants from the Ohio Center, focused on the history of Effective Schools as being one of the oldest and most respected school reform processes; a review of its research base in the seven Correlates that distinguish effective from ineffective schools; and the major tenets of the Effective Schools Process including:

1. The sincere belief and central mission that all children can learn the adopted curriculum.
2. That the adopted curriculum must be designed by classroom teachers to reflect state and national content standards and must also require students to demonstrate competence in higher-order thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and technology necessary to succeed as productive citizens of the 21st century.

3. That classroom instruction and assessment practices must be based on the best practices research, including constructivist and performance-based learning activities.
4. That both excellence *and* equity must characterize a school's success.
5. That decisions about the curriculum and instruction must be driven by data.
6. That the climate in each building must reflect safety, order, and a serious commitment to every student's success while inspiring the personal development, freedom of expression, and respect for diversity that are essential to a democratic society.
7. That the district and building infrastructure must be adjusted to support and sustain the specific reforms in classroom practice, instructional leadership, parent relations, and data-driven decision-making once they are in place but to accommodate annual adjustments to reflect changing conditions and emerging needs.

The Effective Schools training culminated in the Leadership Team's development of a multi-year Action Plan to guide the reform efforts in each school. These Action Plans were derived from the Team's analysis of the data reported in the comprehensive building Profile and the prioritization of their identified needs. Each Action Plan sets forth specific goals or targets; strategies and activities to achieve them; the logistics for accomplishing each activity (including roles and responsibilities for every staff member, timeframes, and financial support); the in-building leadership tasks needed to facilitate and encourage the reform efforts; and the criteria for success, or how to know whether and how well the goals or targets have been reached. The core of each Action Plan is the improvement of student achievement and the redesign of the curriculum and instructional program. Each Plan also includes the Effective Schools Correlates to support and sustain the reforms in teaching and learning. The draft of each Action Plan was presented by Team members to the respective building staff and adjusted in response to their suggestions and concerns. The focus of these building sessions was to involve every staff member in the process of authentic decision-making about how best to integrate the reform efforts into the deep-structure of the building culture. The

Action Plans are reviewed on a regular basis at the quarterly meetings to update progress and adjust as needed. Therefore, it truly reflects project direction and activity.

The analysis of the Profile and the development of the Action Plan took considerable time (an average of 15-20 clock hours for each Plan), but their importance cannot be overstated. Without careful and responsive reflection about what *is* currently working and should be continued, as well as what *is not* working and should be replaced, and unless the intended reforms result in increased student achievement and accommodate the personal and professional needs of staff members, the action planning process is merely an exercise in compliance with a state mandate or grant requirement and has no impact on what actually occurs in the daily operation of a building. The Effective Schools Action Plans set the direction for the core activities of the Demonstration Project and, collectively, guide the reform activities in each of the eight districts.

The third major project activity – much of which actually coincided with the Effective Schools Training since it involved many of the same staff – was Leadership Training of the building improvement teams. In deference to the sensitivity among many teachers that here was yet another administrative layer, they became known as In-Building Facilitation Teams, shortened to the moniker InBuFaTe. Although the principal is an official member of the InBuFaTe, his or her role is that of a co-facilitator and not the person in charge *per se*. This is an important point, because unless and until a staff member refuses to participate or attempts to interfere with the reform process, the principal as *authority* is unnecessary. Each teacher on the InBuFaTe works directly with a small cluster of staff members to implement the reform activities, resulting in the empowerment and accountability of every staff member to demonstrate instructional leadership. Working with external consultants, the InBuFaTes meet four times a year, and they participate in a three-day year-end retreat where members of their District Leadership Team join with the teams from other Effective Schools districts to celebrate their successes and to refresh themselves for the coming year. Participants also learn about group dynamics and hone their skills in working with peers. District Teams review their Action Plans as a district-wide progress check and make needed adjustments for the coming year.

The fourth project activity has been the work in Instructional Design. Although each Action Plan sets forth targets or goals that address parent involvement, in-building leadership, school climate, and various shifts in the infrastructure to accommodate and support reform, the *centerpiece* of each Plan is the reform of the curriculum and instructional delivery. With states promulgating academic standards for each content area, curriculum and the delivery of instruction have undergone a drastic metamorphosis. To address these new expectations, the Instructional Design process has involved the eight project districts in the following collaborative activities.

Academic Standards: the adopted curriculum that all children are expected to master. Teams of teachers from all eight districts (representing grades K-12) in each of the four core content areas met to translate state content standards into academic expectations. Working in grade-level clusters, each team spent four to five days developing the learning outcomes from the standards. As an indication of “buy-in,” each district funded slots in addition to those provided by the grant so they would have a broader base of support for implementing what was developed. These expectations – called Performance Indicators – are authentic, measurable learning behaviors through which all students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the content standards. And consistent with the best practices research, the Indicators require students to apply the various levels of thinking, creativity, decision-making, and problem-solving skills they will use in daily living. Although the Performance Indicators are developed by the collaborative teams, the drafts are circulated among the teachers in each of the eight districts to obtain feedback and to reach consensus. The Indicators are thus “tweaked” to fit the unique circumstances of each district. Once reviewed by district teachers, the Performance Indicators for each subject are adopted by the local Board of Education as the district’s official achievement targets. During year one, math and language arts were developed and are being piloted during year two. During year two, science and social studies Performance Indicators are being developed and will be piloted in year three. These Indicators drive the entire instructional program, serving as the basis for purchasing materials and equipment, developing course offerings and assigning students, reporting progress to parents, and providing professional development for staff.

Curriculum Mapping: to ensure opportunity to learn and time-on-task. These same teams of teachers (and, in some cases, joined by other teachers) learned to develop Curriculum Maps for each grade level or course within a subject. The grant paid teachers a small stipend to attend a four-day training program (provided by Ohio Center consultants) in the summer to develop the Curriculum Maps. Many of the Maps were developed to include more than one subject to expedite integration. Each Curriculum Map sets forth the Performance Indicators clustered into unit, thematic, or chapter “chunks” and placed into a year-long calendar or timeline. Also featured were: (a) the core content topics to be addressed in each chunk; (b) essential materials and resources to be used; (c) selected enabling skills and knowledge needed by students to master the Indicators; (d) thinking and reasoning processes students will use to master the Indicators; (e) technology to augment and expedite mastery; (f) cross-content integration to broaden the context or application of Indicators; and (g) products or assessments to document mastery. The initial version of the Curriculum Maps was developed by grade level and/or course teams, enriched by the collective ideas from the several districts. Thereafter, each district customized the Maps to suit the preferences and circumstances of the individual grade level and/or the teacher in a particular district/school. The Maps were word-processed by the project staff, not only as a convenience to the teachers but to expedite their annual revision in response to the changing needs of the curriculum and the instructional program. During year one, Maps were developed for K-12 math and reading/language arts and are being piloted this year. In June 2003, Maps will be developed for science and social studies to be piloted next year in year three.

Unit Planning: using the best practices research to provide opportunity to learn and time-on-task. Teams of teachers then translated the various chunks of the Curriculum Map into Unit Plans to guide the delivery and assessment of classroom instruction. Working in grade level groups, these writing teams met with external consultants for 10 days (with released time) across the school year from September through May. The Unit Plan format used by the Instructional Design process is one that helps teachers organize the teaching-learning process for their students. Each Unit Plan sets forth the following components, reflective of the best practices research: (a)

those Performance Indicators that cluster together to drive the Unit Plan (this clustering corresponds to the chunks into which the Curriculum Map was divided, e.g., by the month, the theme, the chapter, etc.); (b) activities that motivate students, drawing them into the unit by actively involving them in a concrete experience related to the Performance Indicators, determine what they already know and need to learn, and set forth the expectations for them by the end of the unit; (c) activities that provide students the information they need to master the Performance Indicators which include learning constructs (e.g., graphic organizers, critical attributes, varying levels of questions) and delivery strategies (e.g., lecture, inquiry, guided discussion, demonstration); (d) assessments that determine student mastery of the Performance Indicators using traditional but valid paper-pencil tests and quizzes; and (e) culminating activities or performance assessments that measure students' independent mastery of the Performance Indicators and are scored with a rubric whose criteria reflect the Indicators.

During year two, Unit Plans are being developed in mathematics and reading/language arts, parallel to the piloting of the Curriculum Maps and Performance Indicators in these subjects. Each Unit Plan is being developed by grade level and/or course teams, enriched by the collective ideas of the several districts. As with the Maps, each district will customize the Unit Plans as per the unique circumstances of the individual grade level team and/or the teacher in a particular school/district. The Unit Plans will also be word-processed as a convenience to the teachers and to expedite their annual revision. The math and reading/language arts Unit Plans will be piloted during year two of the project. In keeping with the cycle of development, piloting, and revision, science and social studies units will be developed in year three, parallel to the piloting of the Curriculum Maps and Performance Indicators in both areas.

Assessments. During year three, the eight Ohio Demonstration Project districts intend to devise benchmark assessments for determining student mastery of the Performance Indicators. Currently, the Leadership Teams are considering several questions, some of which include: where to purchase valid items and how to criterion-reference them to the Indicators; whether each teacher should administer them as students are ready or should give the tests on an organized district-wide schedule; and

whether parallel forms should be developed to avoid such testing errors as over-familiarity.

A fifth project activity – but one that has been underway since the Performance Indicators were developed – is the installation and pilot of a data management system ADAM. An acronym for Academic Data Analysis and Management, ADAM is a web-based system that merges district-level data on each student's academic progress (e.g., high-stakes test results, attendance) with his or her classroom achievement, or mastery of the Performance Indicators. For students who are struggling, teachers also record contributing factors that may have impacted each student's lack of mastery. This district-classroom interface enables ADAM to compile and maintain a comprehensive Individual Student Profile. Each Individual Student Profile is kept current and is immediately accessible to school staff and to parents to permit timely and targeted decisions about what a particular student needs to succeed academically. Because the Individual Student Profile includes a student's entire academic history (including academic interventions such as after-school tutoring, 1:1 assistance, Title I), teachers and parents can see what has and has not proven effective. Parents will also be able to access their students' Profiles from home in read-only files. In the aggregate, these data also provide district leaders with a definitive record of student performance each year and across time. After a four-hour training session by district staff members who serve as ADAM trainers, teachers input mastery data for each Performance Indicator as often as they like, or at the end of a grading period if they prefer. Because the Performance Indicators have been adopted by the Board of Education as the official achievement targets of the district, these mastery data are the basis for student letter grades. Accompanying each report card is a parent report that lists the Indicators mastered and not yet mastered and shows the contributing factors that may have contributed to the student's mastery level. As appropriate, a request for parent assistance is also included.

Collectively, each data set can be summarized into a variety of short-term and longitudinal reports; conversely, they can also be disaggregated by any variable in the system (e.g., by gender, by students who did or did not attend pre-school, by those absent fewer than 10 days, by those who were in balanced literacy reading versus

phonics-based reading). These summaries and disaggregations permit districts to make more timely and appropriate decisions about the academic needs of entire groups of students, while permitting classroom teachers to provide immediate interventions as needed to individuals or groups of students. The use of data to make decisions must become an integral part of the district's deep-culture.

One of the features that distinguishes ADAM from other management systems is the data analysis component. Using built-in statistical algorithms, ADAM allows school staff to run factor analyses and correlations on their data to identify patterns or trends at certain grade levels and/or in certain subjects overall (or in substrands) and to isolate variables that seem to have more or less impact on student success. For example, teachers can compare student performance with specific teaching and testing practices to determine which are more or less successful with particular students. School leaders can make these comparisons on a larger scale – controlling for specific variables – to better assign students and to select those methods and materials that are the most effective for certain students. ADAM is currently being modified to interface with a district's existing systems (e.g., *Progress Book* that performs a gradecard function) to make each district's data analysis process a seamless whole.

ADAM has been developed for use in districts who are using the Effective Schools Process to assist them with the Continuous Monitoring Correlate and to expedite their data-based decision-making. Its earlier version was called Management Information System for Effective Schools (MISES). Both MISES and its updated successor ADAM were developed with funding from the Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Foundation, and ADAM is the property of the National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development Foundation.

In larger districts with their own mainframes, networked file servers, and a large enough technology staff, ADAM can be managed by the district itself. This is the case in Oxnard, California, one of the "test-bed" districts currently assisting in the development of ADAM. In smaller districts, such as the eight rural and subural districts in the Ohio Demonstration Project, ADAM is being managed by the project staff of the Ohio Center for Effective Schools.

Early Results

Although most projects are funded for three years (including CSRD awards and most grants from private foundations), common sense and various research efforts (Chrispeels, 2002) have proven that it actually takes between three and five years before demonstrable gains in student performance appear in the test results. But there are other indicators of success that project staffs and participating districts can track to get a glimpse of whether the project is having a positive effect. These include the following.

Friendly pressure to follow through. All eight districts report relief at having the opportunity (and external assistance) to honestly review their current programs as well as their various initiatives and innovations in light of their Profile data; to discard what is not working; and to consolidate what is working into a common focus through the Effective Schools Action Plans. The fact that the Plans involve all staff in substantive roles, spell out specific tasks, and are reviewed quarterly to allow needed adjustments seems to have brought a level of comfortable commitment. Because the Plans have been adopted and publicly proclaim where their staff goes and what they are doing, each of the eight districts has subjected itself to a firm but friendly accountability to follow through. When questioned whether they could have indeed accomplished the same thing on their own, the responses have been that – like dieting – it is too tempting not to when on one's own. The collaboration has established a bond of positive interdependence that makes each district take seriously its obligation to the other seven.

Instructional leadership among teachers and administrators. With their districts' participation in the project, the various building improvement Leadership Teams that had been dormant – or whose efforts had been confined to social or political agendas – have been transformed into legitimate instructional leaders. Because most of the teachers in each district are on at least one of the many committees and teams, and every teacher is involved in the consensus-building and pilot of the Performance Indicators, Curriculum Maps, and Unit Plans, the project is indeed becoming part of the deep-culture of each building. This is not to claim total acceptance and 100% support; to be sure, there are significant pockets of resistance, and some of the staff remain uncomfortable with the reforms. They must be gradually brought along through the

patient assistance and encouragement of trusted peers. One distinct advantage of the InBuFaTe approach (the in-building model of coaching) is that the support is daily and continuous during the project and will continue after the project has been completed.

Excellence and equity in the academic standards. When state standards are simply adopted without translating them into Performance Indicators, teachers make their own interpretations of what the standards say, and classroom instruction remains basically the same as it was before the standards were adopted. Without focusing on best practices in the delivery and assessment of instruction, nothing really changes for students. All staff in the eight districts are taking seriously the adoption of the Indicators as the districts' official achievement targets, and the pilot efforts are anything but "business as usual." The realization that parents are expecting to be included and that all students are expected to be successful has redefined the attitudes and practices of many staff in the eight districts. Grade level team meetings, parent conferences, professional development sessions, faculty meetings, curriculum director meetings, monthly superintendent meetings, and virtually every other communication among staff and between staff and parents includes discussion about the Performance Indicators, the Curriculum Maps, ADAM, and other project-related activities. There are many questions and concerns, and these are addressed as often as possible. While the level of acceptance is not universal, the level of resistance is decreasing. Center staff work with district administrators and teams to make decisions that best fit each circumstance; the ultimate decision rests with the district on how best to implement the work.

The role of local support in implementing project goals and activities. As with many service centers, the Ohio Center for Effective Schools is *not* located in close proximity to the eight project districts. Therefore, it is imperative that persons at the district site assume responsibility for communication, implementation of the work, and the meeting of schedules and deadlines. The key contact people for this project have been the districts' curriculum directors who oversee the majority of the coordination at their district sites. Not only have they each assumed the responsibility for working with their local Board of Education and superintendent, but they have facilitated the process with the teachers by attending development meetings and addressing questions unique to a particular site. When teachers want to have more representation at the various

curriculum meetings, it is the curriculum directors who determine what is financially doable in each circumstance. All work developed by teachers is submitted to the Ohio Center through the district curriculum director who reviews it for quality before it is submitted. The Ohio Center consulting team works directly with the curriculum directors to design work sessions to address local needs. There is a master calendar of work sessions that is maintained at the Center; other districts can assimilate into a session if it meets a need for that site as well. This base of support will sustain the project beyond the outside services that have come as a result of the grant.

Although the work is tedious, the feedback from teachers relative to the Instructional Design Process indicates that the most positive benefits about the work are gaining a clear focus of what is to be expected from the various grade level teams and being able to share with teachers from other districts in the accomplishment of tasks. They feel isolated when working in their own districts and empowered when working as part of a cross-district grade-level team. The expertise that is exchanged, the emails that are sent, and the sharing of materials and ideas are intangibles that cannot be measured by any survey. Teachers actually schedule the work sessions they will attend on the basis of when their entire grade-level team can attend; they come early or stay afterward to share materials and unit ideas. They feel a shared responsibility to each other and for the quality of the products developed.

All eight districts have repeatedly reinforced the Ohio Center staff for scheduling time when the Leadership Teams can share with other districts for a portion of their work sessions. However, they also spend time discussing issues relative to their own sites. Even when the issues are common, the solutions tend to be unique to each district or building. Although the geographic area, the district size, and type of district are similar, the basic unit of change is still the individual school site. By collaborating when possible, but developing unique documents for each district, the Effective Schools Process enables reform to become a reality for these small districts. The strength of the process is best illustrated by the fact that the eight districts have been discussing how to extend the work begun into at least a fourth and fifth year. New standards for the state are being developed in the fine and performing arts, and they see this as the way to have total staff involvement through the curriculum

process. Once these reforms are implemented in all areas, the deep culture of the building will change and the Effective Schools Process becomes the way a school site does business.

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NOTES

1. Additional references that readers may wish to peruse are listed below:

March, J.K., & Peters, K.H. (2002). Curriculum development and instructional design in the Effective Schools Process. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(5), 379-381.

March, J.K., & Peters, K.H. (1999). *Developing high-performance schools: Instructional redesign for learner-centered classroom reform*. Phi Delta Kappa International for the National Center for Effective Schools: Bloomington, IN.

Taylor, B.O. (2002). The effective schools process: Alive and well. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(5), 375-378.
2. Examples of Performance Indicators, Curriculum Maps, and Unit Plans are available on the OCES Website or by contacting the authors. E-mail: jmarch@ohioeffectiveschools.org or kpeters@ohioeffectiveschools.org

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