

Copyright

by

James Joseph Ponce

2009

The Treatise Committee for James Joseph Ponce certifies that this is the approved version of the following treatise:

THE INITIAL AND SUSTAINING LEADERSHIP ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE  
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP GROUP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
*DALLAS ACHIEVES!* TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORY OF ACTION

FRAMEWORK

Committee:

---

Ruben Olivarez, Supervisor

---

Nolan Estes

---

Victor Saenz

---

Steve Flores

---

Jose Luis Torres

THE INITIAL AND SUSTAINING LEADERSHIP ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE  
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP GROUP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
*DALLAS ACHIEVES!* TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORY OF ACTION  
FRAMEWORK

By

James Joseph Ponce, B.B.A.; M.Ed.

Treatise

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2009

## Dedication

To God, who has given to me many talents and has blessed me beyond what I could have ever imagined.

To my gorgeous wife, Katherine, whose unwavering belief and support, has given to me the confidence to accomplish anything. To my beautiful boys—Julian, Mathew and Gabriel, my free range mustangs—that one day you too will have your children ask, “What are you doing, your homework?”

To my Mom, Socorro, my first teacher, whose life’s work has been to be there for me. To my Dad, Jimmy, the “educated Mexican,” who against the odds broke the cycle by attending and graduating college.

To my sisters Vanessa, Pat and Marla and my brother, Luis, thank you for supporting me each in your unique way.

Finally, to all of the individuals on whose shoulders I stand, I know that I share this accomplishment with you.

## Acknowledgements

The completion of this study was made possible by the support of many individuals. However, special recognition must be made to my committee chairman, Dr. Ruben Olivarez, whose guidance, counsel and wisdom went beyond the confines of my treatise.

Dr. Steve Flores' recommendation and constant encouragement not only brought me into the University of Texas Cooperative Superintendency Program, but also set me on a path traditionally reserved for others.

A special thanks to the rest of my committee members, Drs. Estes, Torres and Saenz: The time and effort you spent with me to ensure my success will not be forgotten.

This work would not have been possible without Dr. Michael Hinojosa, who lent support throughout the Program with time, encouragement, insight and practical advice, and Arnold Viramontes, who spent much of his time mentoring, challenging and teaching me beyond the scope of our work.

Monica Hinojo, Monica Flores, and Dora Renaud made it possible for me not to miss a beat.

My Area Superintendent colleagues Ivonne, Robin and Emilio always managed to find time for me.

Dr. Chris Allen's commitment, drive and desire to see me finish set the tone, and my CSP Cycle XVII colleagues each in their own way contributed to my successful completion of the program.

I am grateful to Guillermo, Sandra, Luis and Antonio for taking care of me with more than a place to stay.

Finally, thanks to The University, who accepted the skinny kid from Seagoville, Texas in the fall of 1985 and has since seen me through a Bachelor, a Master and a Doctorate degree.

THE INITIAL AND SUSTAINING LEADERSHIP ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE  
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP GROUP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
*DALLAS ACHIEVES!* TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORY OF ACTION  
FRAMEWORK

Publication No. \_\_\_\_\_

James Joseph Ponce, Ed.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2009

Supervisor: Ruben Olivarez

Given the prominence of the transformational theory of action in major urban educational reform efforts, this study intends to describe and analyze the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the superintendent and his leadership team, the board of trustees and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. Specifically, this study seeks to encourage the research community to discover, understand, and gain insight concerning the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action.

The study utilized the constructs of Bolman and Deal's (2003) *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership* four frames for "making sense" of organizations as the analytical tool for the description of initial and sustaining leadership

actions taken to develop the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. This analytical framework guided the data collection, categorization, and emergent themes. The answers to the research questions posed in this study emanated from the analysis of the data.

The findings indicate the superintendent and his leadership team, the board of trustees, and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission utilized specific leadership actions in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

Ultimately, the findings of this study provide information for researchers and those who design, enact and implement transformational theories of action.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures.....	xiii
CHAPTER 1: Introduction .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of Study.....	3
Research Question .....	4
Research Design .....	6
Definition of Terms .....	7
Significance .....	9
Limitations.....	9
Chapter Summary .....	10
CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature .....	11
Introduction.....	11
Organizational Transformation.....	11
Transformational Leadership.....	12
Bass and Avolio’s Transformational Leadership .....	15
Conger and Kanungo’s Behavioral Model .....	16
House and Shamir’s Charismatic Leadership.....	17
Theory of Action.....	17
Urban Education and Espoused Theories of Action.....	18
Accountability in Education .....	22
Public Education and Reform.....	25
Liberal Education Period to 1980 .....	26
Reform 1980 to Present .....	27
Summary.....	31
CHAPTER 3: Methodology.....	33
Introduction.....	33
Purpose .....	34
Research Questions.....	34
Research Design .....	35

Limitations of Case Study Research.....	36
Site Selection .....	37
Participant Selection .....	38
Data Collection .....	39
Interviews .....	39
Questions .....	41
Documents .....	42
Case Study Protocol.....	43
Data Analysis.....	44
Research Validity.....	45
Summary.....	46
CHAPTER 4: Findings .....	47
Introduction.....	47
Research Site .....	47
Local Community .....	47
District Demographics .....	48
District Performance .....	49
Research Sample.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Superintendent and his executive leadership team .....	49
Board of Education .....	50
Dallas Achieves! Commission.....	50
Data Analysis.....	51
Initial and sustaining leadership actions .....	51
Research Question 1: What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the Dallas Achieves! Transformational Leadership Group take to address the structural frame associated with the development of the Dallas Achieves! transformational theory of action framework? .....	53
Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework.....	54
Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team.....	58

Leadership Action 3:Crafting and Communicating a Vision .....	60
Leadership Action 4:Supporting the transformational framework .....	63
Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress .....	76
Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation.....	78
Research Question 2: What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the Dallas Achieves! Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the human resource frame associated with the development of the Dallas Achieves! transformational theory of action framework? .....	83
Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework.....	84
Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team.....	84
Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision .....	85
Leadership Action 4: Supporting the transformation .....	87
Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress .....	88
Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation.....	88
Research Question 3: What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the Dallas Achieves! Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the political frame associated with the development of the Dallas Achieves! transformational theory of action framework?.....	91
Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework.....	92
Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team.....	96
Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision .....	97
Leadership Action 4: Supporting the transformation .....	98
Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress .....	99
Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation.....	101
Research Question 4: What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the Dallas Achieves! Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the symbolic frame associated with the development of the Dallas Achieves! transformational theory of action framework?.....	106
Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework.....	107
Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team.....	109
Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision .....	113

Leadership Action 4: Supporting the transformation .....	115
Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress .....	117
Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation.....	118
CHAPTER 5: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations .....	122
Major Findings.....	124
Structural Frame .....	124
Human Resource Frame .....	126
Political Frame.....	127
Symbolic Frame.....	128
Major Conclusions.....	129
Structural Frame .....	130
Human Resource frame .....	132
Political frame.....	134
Symbolic frame.....	138
Major Implications.....	141
Theoretical Implications .....	141
Large-scale Organizational Change.....	141
Leadership and Transformational Organizational Change .....	143
Practical Implications .....	151
Recommendations for Future Study .....	153
Conclusion .....	154
Appendix A.....	157
Appendix B.....	158
Appendix C .....	160
Appendix D.....	162
Appendix E .....	163
References.....	166
Vita.....	180

## List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1 - 1 <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Transformational Theory of Action Framework 2006.....	4
Figure 1 - 2 <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Transformational Leadership Group.....	5
Figure 3 - 1 History of <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> and the Road to Broad .....	33
Table 4 - 1 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Overall Performance percent passing and number of exemplary and recognized schools 2005-2008.....	49
Table 4 - 2 Structural Frame Leadership Actions.....	53
Figure 4 - 1 Definition of Success Framework: Dallas Independent School District 2008 .....	67
Table 4 - 3 Human Resource frame Leadership Actions.....	83
Table 4 - 4 Political frame Leadership Actions .....	91
Table 4 -5 Symbolic frame Leadership Actions .....	106

## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

As public educators move to fulfill their mission, to educate all children to become responsible citizens that contribute positively to our national well being, they must be prepared for the politics, legislation and ideologies that may interfere with the execution of this mission. Given the complexities associated with the current enrollment patterns in our public schools and demographic research (Murdock, Hoque, Michael, White & Pecotte., 1995; Murdock, 2004) on the implications for human, socioeconomic and natural resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is clear why the urban centers are garnering attention from multiple stakeholders. Key philanthropic organizations have made it their mission to assist in the transformation of our urban school systems. For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2008) is committed to working with partners in communities throughout the country to transform our education system; the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (2008) has committed more than one half of their portfolio to achieving lasting change in large, urban school districts and the Broad Foundation (2008) honors urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between high- and low-income students.

Despite the attention and support for urban systemic transformation, the direct responsibility for and successful execution of urban educational reform are tightly coupled to the ability and capacity of the leaders and their leadership teams within the individual communities. Leadership teams are employing a transformational theory of action to articulate a district's goals, actions, resources and outcomes. While the

transformational theory of action holds many promising elements, there are many aspects of this concept that are not understood. Bolman and Deal (2003) present a four frame construct, rooted in managerial practice and social science research, for reframing and gaining clarity concerning complex organizations. As the authors (2003) illustrate, reframing requires an ability to understand and use multiple perspectives, to think about the same thing in more than one way. Given the complexity and dynamism of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational effort, Bolman and Deal's (2003) four frame construct for reframing organizations is a key analytical tool for evaluating the initial and sustaining actions associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The Education Commission of the States (2008) reports:

Today, the average Black or Hispanic high school student currently achieves at about the same level as the average white student in the lowest quartile of white achievement. Black and Hispanic children are much less likely to graduate from high school, acquire a college or advanced degree, or earn a middle-class living.

The situation, which is indicative of the urban educational settings, calls for large-scale organizational change (Ledford, Mohrman, Mohrman, & Lawler, 1989). The character of the urban educational system must be fundamentally changed so that performance throughout the entire organization is significantly altered (Dufour & Eaker,

1992; Fullan, 2000; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1988; Nutt & Backoff, 1996; Senge, 1990; Zmuda, Kuklis, & Kline, 2004). Contemporary research asserts that in order to significantly improve student achievement, districts must establish a systemic transformational change framework that addresses all aspects of the district's organization while placing engaged high performing students at the center of all actions (Childress, Elmore, & Grossman, 2006; Fullan, 1991; Fullan, Bertani, & Quinn, 2004; Waclawski, 2002).

Acknowledging this sense of urgency, major urban educational systems have expended significant resources in an effort to establish a systemic transformational change framework or theory of action, to guide the reform efforts necessary to close the achievement gap. The use of transformational theories of action in large urban school districts is a prevalent but understudied strategy; therefore, this body of work is intended to add to the body of knowledge concerning the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by leadership teams in the development of their transformational theory of action. Analysis of these leadership teams' initial and sustaining leadership actions is critical to understanding the development of the transformational theory of action.

### *Purpose of Study*

The purpose of this study is to describe the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the Dallas Independent School District's Superintendent, his executive leadership team, Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational

theory of action framework. Findings should provide information that assists researchers and practitioners to understand the initial and sustaining leadership actions that were taken in the development of a transformational theory of action as it pertains to a major urban systemic change effort.

### **Dallas Achieves! Dallas Independent School District's Transformational Theory of Action Framework**

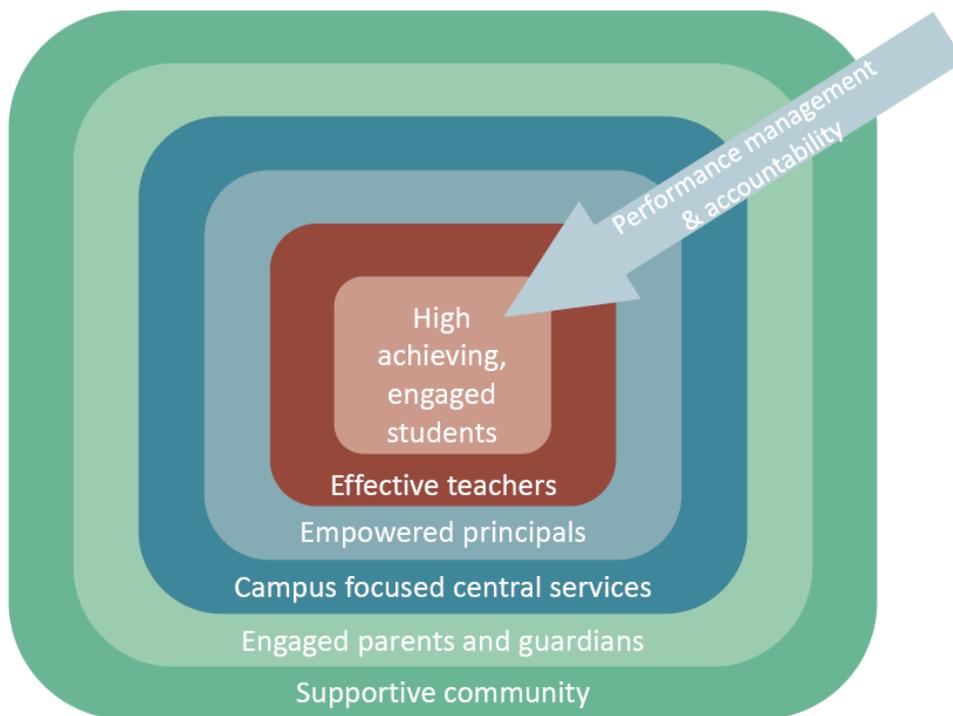


Figure 1 - 1 *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Theory of Action Framework 2006

#### *Research Question*

In order to describe the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the Dallas Independent School District's Superintendent and his executive leadership team,

Dallas Independent School District’s Board of Trustees and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission (henceforth named the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group) in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

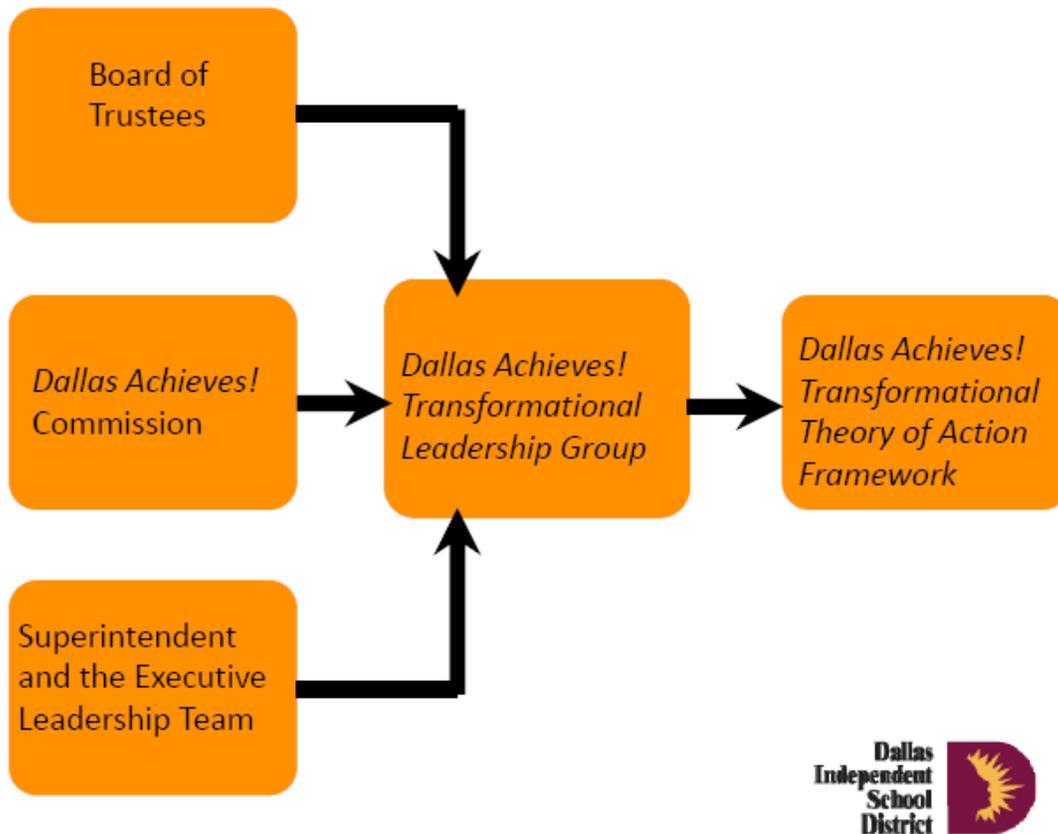


Figure 1 - 2 *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group

This study proposed the following questions:

1. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!*

Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the structural frame

associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework?

2. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the human resource frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework?
3. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the political frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework?
4. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the symbolic frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework?

### *Research Design*

The study utilizes a qualitative, intrinsic single case design. To gain a detailed account of the phenomenon under study, a descriptive case study will be “useful in presenting basic information about area of education where little research has been conducted” (Merriam, 1998, p. 38). The study will remain coherent to defining attributes of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994; Yin, 1994).

Ultimately the employment of a case study will lead to inquiry for the purpose of understanding and an opportunity for the construction of knowledge pertaining to the phenomenon of study (Stake, 1995).

### *Definition of Terms*

Educational Accountability: The guarantee that all students, without respect to race, income, or social class, will acquire the minimum school skills necessary to take full advantage of the choices that accrue upon successful completion of public schooling, or we in education will describe the reason why (Porter, 1971; Lessinger, 1971).

Educational Reform: Planned efforts to change schools in order to correct perceived social and educational problems (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Large Scale Organizational Change: Lasting change in the character of an organization that significantly alters its performance. The organization becomes different and remains different (Ledford *et al.*, 1989).

Large Scale Education Reform: Educational reform efforts that meet the following criteria: (1) the focus of reform is an entire system and/or (2) a minimum of 50 or so schools and some 20,000 or more students is involved (Fullan, 2000).

Transformational Change: The process of altering context (Laszlo & Laugel, 2000).

Theory of Action: A theory of deliberate human actions, which serves to explain or predict behavior (Argyris & Shon, 1974).

Theory-in-Use: The theory that actually governs the actions of an individual, which is constructed by observing actual behavior (Argyris & Shon, 1974).

Espoused Theory of Action: The theory which governs perceived actions of an individual (Argyris & Shon, 1974).

Structural Framework: An organizational framework that reflects current approaches to social architecture and organizational design. The framework reflects a belief in rationality and a faith that the right formal arrangements minimize problems and maximize performance. Properly designed, these formal arrangements can accommodate both collective goals and individual differences (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Symbolic Framework: An organizational framework that sees life as more serendipitous than linear. The framework reflects the belief that organizations function like complex, constantly changing, organic pinball machines. Symbols embody and express an organization's culture: the interwoven pattern of beliefs, values, practices and artifacts that define members who they are and how they are to do (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Human Resource Framework: An organizational framework proposing that organizations can be energizing, productive, and mutually rewarding. This framework reflects the belief that organizations require a sensitive understanding of people, their needs, and their symbiotic relationship with organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Political Framework: An organizational framework proposing that politics is simply the realistic process of making decisions and allocating resources in a context of scarcity and divergent interest. The framework reflects a belief that interdependence, divergent interests, scarcity, and power relations inevitably spawn political activity (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Transformational Leadership: The shaping, altering, and elevating of the motives, values and goals of followers through the vital role of leadership (Burns, 1978).

Transactional Leadership: The exchanging of goods, services or other things in order to realize independent objectives (Burns, 1978).

### *Significance*

Information concerning the initial and sustaining leadership actions of transformational theory of action in large urban school districts is not prevalent; therefore, this study is intended to (a) contribute to the body of knowledge regarding urban educational transformational reform efforts and the use of a theory of action, (b) discover information on the initiating and sustaining actions pertaining to the development of such a theory of action, (c) inform those who design, enact and implement transformational educational reforms and (d) encourage those who wish to “test” the underlying theory of action in systemic transformational change as embodied in urban educational reform efforts (Council of the American Education Research Association, 2006; Malen, Croninger, Muncey & Redmond-Jones, 2002).

### *Limitations*

While the case study is vital to advancing the knowledge about innovative programs and practices, there are limitations to the design. According to (Merriam, 1998), case studies are limited by the: (a) ability of the researcher to devote the necessary resources to obtain a rich, thick description of the phenomena, (b) focus on a slice of the whole, (c) ability of the researcher to rely on his or her own instincts and abilities

throughout most of the research effort, (d) ability of the researcher to suspend personal bias, and (e) issues of reliability, validity and generalizability.

### *Chapter Summary*

This chapter established the context and research focus for the study of the initiating and sustaining actions taken by *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action. The chapter included an introduction to the study, a description of the study and the research questions to be explored. A review of the pertinent literature will follow.

## CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature

### *Introduction*

Given the number of educational reform efforts which incorporate a theory of action, there is a need to understand transformational frameworks as they pertain to major urban systemic change efforts. In order to provide background and information for the study, the following bodies of literature are reviewed: (a) organizational transformation, (b) transformational leadership, (c) theory of action and urban educational systems' theory of action (limited to New York City Department of Education, Boston Public Schools, and the Dallas Independent School District), (d) accountability in education and (e) reform in public education.

### *Organizational Transformation*

While the transformational leadership literature creates the context for and characteristics of the transformational leader, practical application of transformational leadership and the accompanying skill set necessary to transform an organization has met with mixed results (Kotter, 1998). Given the complex nature and the difficulty of executing the large-scale transformation of an organization, the literature describes models by which to guide successful transformational actions.

Bolman & Deal (2003) assert that the complicated, ambiguous and unpredictable nature of organizational life often leads to the misreading of situations by leadership. Overcoming the often myopic view of an organization calls for a reframing of the organization—one which requires an ability to understand and use multiple

perspectives, to think about the same thing in more than one way—through four frames: structural, human resource, political and symbolic. Reframing, they contend, offers a powerful tool for gaining clarity, generating new options and finding strategies that work.

Nutt & Backoff (1996) contend that, in order to realize transformational change, leaders must walk the vision—by walking the talk with key people inside and outside the organization—while simultaneously framing that vision for public consumption and pushing the action forward. The authors anchor their contention with fourteen propositions that have exhibited promise when practiced with proficiency.

Kotter (1998) suggests the following lessons from his observations of transformational change efforts: (1) the change process goes through a series of phases which usually requires a significant length of time, (2) skipping phases only creates the illusion of speed and never produces satisfactory results, (3) critical mistakes in any of the phases can have a devastating impact and (4) most have relatively little experience in renewing organizations; therefore, everyone is capable of making at least one big error. Kotter offers eight steps, grounded in a combination of transactional and transformational leadership skills, that when successfully applied add the possibility of success.

### *Transformational Leadership*

As shown by the review of literature concerning educational reform, the notion of districts establishing a systemic transformational change framework, that addresses all aspects of the district's organization while placing engaged high performing students at the center of all actions, is a complex task (Childress *et al.*, 2006; Fullan, 1991; Fullan *et*

*al.*, 2004; Leithwood, 1992). Additionally, political pressures (McDermott, 2000) and the human tendency to resist change (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1988) play a significant role in the success of systemic change efforts. Given the complexity of transformational change (Conger, 1999; Kotter, 1998; Nutt & Backoff, 1996), the transactional model (Burns, 1978) of manager-employee relations, based on promise and reward for good performance or threat and discipline for poor performance, will not suffice. The quantum change necessary to establish systemic transformational frameworks additionally requires transformational leadership (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson, 2003; Kotter, 1998; Nutt & Backoff, 1996; Pawar & Eastman, 1997).

The concept of transformational leadership has its roots in Burns' (1978) description of political leadership in which he developed the idea of transactional and transformational leadership. Within the notion of transformational leadership, Burns distinguishes the reform transformational leader, or one who gradually transforms the existing system, from the revolutionary transformational leader, or one who transforms by creating an entirely new system. Burns' transformational leadership concept of leaders and followers engaged in common enterprise, who are dependent on each other, whose fortunes are rising and falling together, and who are sharing results of planned change together, was adopted into the confines of organizational management by Bass (1985). He developed the view that transformational leadership was a way to augment transactional approaches to management. This new paradigm contrasted the democratic and autocratic approaches to leadership, suggesting that the lower order of change

improvement (contingent reward, management by exception, laissez-faire) was inherent in transactional leadership, while higher order change improvement (charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration) called for transformational leadership.

While Bass (1997) asserts the universality of the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm, where ideals and implicit theories of leadership tend to be transformational rather than transactional, transformational leadership in and of itself does not automatically spell success. There is evidence that suggests transformational leadership has contextual influences that mediate the effectiveness of a transformational leadership style (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Bass, 1985; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Pawar & Eastman, 1997). Most notably, Pawar & Eastman (1997) contend that an organization most receptive to transformational leadership is characterized by contextual features (adaptation orientation, dominant boundary-spanning units, adhocracy or simple structure and clan modes of governance) that can readily serve as vehicles for context-harnessing transformational leadership tasks. Beugre, Acar, & Braun (2006) and Pawar & Eastman (1997) extend Burns (1978) reformer and revolutionary types of transformational leadership with the notions of contextually influenced context-harnessing vs. context-confronting, revolutionary, evolutionary, and transgressor types of transformational leadership, respectively.

Akin to the idea of transformational leadership is the concept of charismatic leadership. While Kent, Crotts and Azziz (2001) conclude that there is no empirical basis “supporting the continued use of the concept of charisma in addition to, as part of, as a

synonym for, or as a replacement for transformational leadership” (p.223), meta-analysis studies (Conger, 1999; Pielstick, 1998; Stewart, 2006) indicate the evolution of the fields. Charismatic and transformational leadership in organizational settings share many similar constructs and are, in many ways, converging towards one another.

According to Conger (1999), within the discipline of charismatic and transformational leadership in organizations, three theories tend to dominate the basis for empirical investigation: (a) Bass and Avolio’s transformational leadership, (b) Conger and Kanungo’s behavioral model and (c) House and Shamir’s charismatic leadership.

#### *Bass and Avolio’s Transformational Leadership*

According to Bass (1985, 1990) the transformational leader motivates us to do more than we originally expected to do; subsequently, transformation can be accomplished by: (a) raising the level of consciousness about the importance and value of designating outcomes and reaching outcomes, (b) getting us to transcend our own self-interests for the sake of the team or organization, and (c) raising the need level on Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Based on surveys and case findings, Bass identifies transactional and transformational leadership factors: three which dealt with transactional leadership—(1) contingent reward, (2) management by exception active/passive, and (3) laissez-faire—and four which dealt with transformational leadership—(1) charismatic leadership, (2) inspiration, (3) intellectual stimulation and (4) individualized consideration. Subsequent restructuring combined charismatic leadership with inspiration, thereby establishing Bass’ original six multifactor of leadership.

Upon re-examination of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Avolio *et al.* (1999) conclude that the MLQ survey was best represented by six lower order factors (charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, active management by exception and passive-avoidant) and three correlated higher-order factors (transformational, development exchange and corrective avoidant). The results revealed that although the transformational leadership components were still positively intercorrelated, it is probably more useful for assessment, counseling and training purposes to assess the lower and higher-order constructs as separate factors.

In an attempt to theoretically explain empirical results linking contingent rewards to transformational leadership, Goodwin, Wofford, & Whittington (1993) also examined the MLQ. The authors found that transformational leaders provide credit, expressions of satisfaction and appropriate rewards when followers perform their jobs well, but—unlike transactional leaders—they do not use these items as a basis for the relation between leadership and followership.

#### *Conger and Kanungo's Behavioral Model*

The Conger/Kunungo behavioral model builds on the idea that charismatic leadership is an attribution based on followers' perceptions of their leader's behaviors (Conger, 1999). Conger and Kunungo (Conger, Kanungo, Menon, & Mathur, 1997) support a stage model of charismatic leadership which involves moving organizational members from an existing present state toward some future state. This stage model progresses from the initial state, where an ongoing assessment of opportunities and constraints in both the internal and external environments is used to determine the

organization's direction, through the second stage, the formulation of the direction into formal strategies and goals and their articulation for the organization's membership, to the final stage, gaining commitment and mobilizing the organization's membership both to implement the strategies and goals and to undertake the initiatives to achieve them.

### *House and Shamir's Charismatic Leadership*

House and Shamir propose a theory where charismatic leadership transforms follower self-concepts (Conger, 1999). According to Shamir, House & Arthur (1993) the following five processes are the heart of their theory, which revolves around the charismatic leader's ability to motivate followers through implicating their self image: (a) increasing the intrinsic valence of effort by strengthening followers' belief in the necessity and propriety of "standing up and being counted," (b) increasing effort accomplishment expectancies by enhancing the followers' self-esteem and self-worth, (c) increasing the intrinsic valence of goal accomplishment by articulating a vision and a mission where goals are presented in terms of the values they represent, (d) instilling faith in a better future by de-emphasizing extrinsic rewards in order to emphasize the intrinsic aspects of efforts, and (e) creating personal commitment by which efforts are invested regardless of the balance of external costs and benefits.

### *Theory of Action*

The idea of a "theory of action" is grounded in Argyris and Schon's (1974) notion that individuals adopt sets of principles and propositions to describe, assess and defend the effectiveness of their behavior. Argyris & Shon (1974) make a clear distinction

between the espoused theory of action, which states the theory by which they intend to act, versus the theories-in-use which reflect the behaviors actually exhibited or undertaken. An important point is the notion that “the theory-in use may or may not be compatible with the espoused theory; furthermore, the individual may or may not be aware of the incompatibility of the two theories” (p. 7). More recently, educational systems have embraced the concept and have nested their transformational reform movements in espoused theories of action.

### *Urban Education and Espoused Theories of Action*

Given the extensive analysis associated with awarding the Broad Prize, this body of work identifies the espoused theory of action for the two past Broad Prize winners—the New York City Department of Education in 2007 and the Boston Public Schools in 2006—as well as the Dallas Independent School District, which is seeking recognition by The Broad Foundation.

#### New York City Department of Education.

On January 1, 2006, Mayor Michael Bloomberg proclaimed:

Our mission over the next four years will be to create—from preschool through high school—a public education system second to none. We will strengthen the three pillars of our school reform: Leadership, Accountability, and Empowerment, putting resources and authority where they belong: in our city schools (New York Department of Education , 2007).

Despite the inroads made since the 2003 inception of Mayor Bloomberg's transformation of New York City's public schools, the New York Department of Education (2007) data reveal that four out of ten students still do not meet or exceed the standards in mathematics and English language arts, and that African-American, Latino, and low-income students, on average, score several grade levels below their peers.

In order to accelerate the bold changes necessary to hasten student achievement, the New York City Department of Education initiated the *ChildrenFirst* transformational effort. Three key components are involved: (1) immediate aim: accelerate the reduction of the central office bureaucracy, (2) intermediate aim: give educators greater capacity to prepare all children to thrive and (3) ultimate aim: accelerate student progress. This theory of action rests upon three big ideas: (1) those closest to the students should get to make the key decisions about what will best help their children succeed, (2) empowered schools must be accountable for results and (3) schools should be able to count on funding that is fair and transparent. The *ChildrenFirst* theory of action will play a critical role for the next wave of a reform strategy that moves toward a culture where: (a) principals are able to recruit and retain the best teachers, (b) principals have the flexibility to select the school support organization that is the best fit for their students, (c) principals have less red tape and more resources, (d) parents know how schools are performing and how they compare, (e) parents can count on fair and transparent funding, (f) a broader set of more powerful tools are utilized to accurately measure and analyze student achievement, and (g) strong performance is rewarded, while consequences are enforced for underperformance (New York Department of Education , 2007).

Boston Public Schools. Despite the Boston Public Schools' gains from a decade of continuous leadership coupled with the 1996 reform strategy *Focus on Children I*, many challenges remain. Boston Public Schools' examination (Boston Public Schools, 2005) of the cumulative efforts of their transformational framework, *Focus on Children I*, led to two strong conclusions: (1) Boston Public Schools was demonstrating steady improvement and (2) the rate of improvement had to accelerate. These conclusions were the basis for the *Focus on Children II* theory of action that shifts the focus from "Whole School Change" to "Whole School Improvement" (Boston Public Schools, 2001, p. 8). The new theory of action focuses on the following aims: (1) immediate aim: accelerate and align the continued improvement of teaching and learning to high standards, (2) intermediate aim: improve school leadership capacity to meet accountability measures and standards, and (3) ultimate aim: accelerate the improvement of student achievement. The theory rests upon seven essential ideas for Whole School Improvement: (a) use effective and culturally relevant instructional practices and recreate a collaborative school climate that improves student learning, promotes student engagement, and builds on prior knowledge and experiences, (b) examine student work and data to drive instruction and professional development, (c) invest in professional development to improve instruction, (d) share leadership to sustain instructional improvement, (e) focus resources to support instructional improvement and improved student learning, (f) partner with families and community to support student learning and (g) maintain high levels of effectiveness, efficiency and equity in all operations.

Dallas Independent School District. The Dallas Independent School District's vision is to become the best urban school district by 2010 at which time all children will have been prepared for college or the workforce. The Dallas ISD Urban Macro Goals 2007 Progress Report (Dougherty & Mellor, 2007) reveals that, despite the fact that approximately one-quarter of the elementary schools and one-fifth of the middle and high-schools have reached recognized or exemplary status, "Dallas ISD's improvement rate must accelerate in order for the district to be on track to exemplary status by 2010."

In order to become the best urban school by 2010, the Dallas Independent School District is embarking upon a major systemic transformational effort—*Dallas Achieves!* Three key alignment elements transcend the associated theory of action framework: (1) immediate aim: goal alignment, which establishes aggressive performance targets throughout the system, (2) intermediate aim: strategic alignment, which ensures the district's efforts and resources are allocated in direct support of progressing towards these performance targets, and (3) ultimate aim: achievement alignment, which ensures that performance targets lead to increasing percentages of college and career ready students across the entire district (Doc 39:2). The *Dallas Achieves!* theory of action will play a critical role as the basis for a reform strategy that moves the district towards: (a) a culture driven by transformational based performance metrics, (b) a focus on rigor and high expectations, (c) a shared definition of success based on college and career readiness, (d) a supportive intervention strategy based on need, (e) a balance between absolute and value added performance, (f) a culture of inquiry based on an increased sophistication in

data driven decision making tools, and (g) total integration of a performance management system (Dallas Independent School District, 2006).

### *Accountability in Education*

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) was enacted to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and to reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. President George W. Bush, during his first week in office in January of 2001, touted:

These reforms express my deep belief in our public schools and their mission to build the mind and character of every child, from every background, in every part of America (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Ravitch (2000) refers to Oscar D. Robinson's remarks on the famous simile of the educational ladder, with its foot in the gutter and its top at the university, to point out the similar belief from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that free public education could enable any youngster to rise above the most humble origins and make good on the nation's promise of equal opportunity for all.

The emphasis on the notion of accountability to ensure academic success for all children is the trademark of the twentieth century (Linn, Baker, & Betebenner, 2002) While many may mark The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as beginning the era of accountability, the foundation for accountability in education was laid much earlier.

The initial idea of accountability within the context of education is most associated with Lessinger's (1971) foray into merging the accountability tenets and models engrained in the business and industry environment with a contracting educational enterprise. Primarily, Lessinger promoted “A Plan for Educational Redevelopment,” which ultimately called for a district to plan and monitor student output against actual performance. Bunda (1979) and Ornstein (1988) indicate that opponents of the contracting definition of accountability voiced concerns with (a) the number of influences which can affect a student’s score on test, and (b) the use of behavioral or measurable objectives to define what a school is aiming for.

As the concept of accountability grew in stature, there was a concern that educators were failing to develop the concept in a manner congruent with the professional values. Levin (1974) notes the deficiencies of the contemporaneous conceptual approaches to accountability (performance reporting, technical process, political process and institutional process), calling them myopic and therefore preventing a more comprehensive view of systems of accountability; he proposes a closed loop feedback system which is continuous and dynamic, where linkages are tight and information is generated and transmitted freely. Despite his proposal for a system of accountability for education, Levin claims, “we are on shaky ground when we try to translate educational outcomes into societal outcomes since the latter are generally removed from time and space from the former, and a dynamic social, political, and economic structure is likely to alter these relationships over time” (Levin, 1974, p. 387).

The growth in use of accountability in the educational setting had led to disparate uses of educational accountability. However, despite differences in application, Bunda (1979) concludes the uses of educational accountability all require measurable goals, designate responsibility for achievement of the goals and foster a belief that there is an agent responsible for achievement of the goals.

Recognizing the tight coupling between the “agent responsible” and the notion of accountability, Fenstermacher (1979) suggests the accountability movement would lead to a denial and/or a weakening of the persons presumably being held accountable, unless the elements of a strong accountability relation—trust, responsibility and discretionary authority—are taken into account. This recognition cautions the education community to be cognizant of the incongruence between the business sense of accountability versus the educational sense of accountability, the latter of which has a varied complexity given the contextual factors as articulated by Levin (1974) and Bunda (1979).

As the notion of educational accountability became a part of the education culture, *The Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) pointed out to the American public that the educational foundations of society are being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity. During this time, the notion of mediocrity was closely aligned with the perception of low educational standards. This claim of mediocre performance in the public sector introduced the interdependency between accountability and standards.

Once researchers recognized the inter-reliance between accountability and standards, there was support for the idea of a consistent, system-wide school

improvement approach to standards-based reform and accountability (Blum, 2008; Cohen, 1996; Porter, 1971). Accordingly, this system-wide approach should take a combination of careful accountability, school based and professional standards and resources both to challenge students and teachers and to provide them with what they need to meet those challenges (Harris & Herrington, 2006; Herman, 2007; O'Day, 2002).

Despite the trend toward a systemic approach to accountability, standards and resources for support Leithwood & Earl (2000) contend that much of what passes for accountability-oriented school reform is driven more by ideology or philosophy than evidence. Additionally, Linn, Baker, & Betebenner (2002) argue that despite stringent national accountability standards for improving the progress of all subgroups of students, the diversity of state content standards, the rigor of state tests and the stringency of state cut scores place the starting point for various states in a quite different position due to the diversity.

### *Public Education and Reform*

Despite these highest of expectations for our public schools, the ability to realize large-scale change throughout the public education system remains elusive (Childress *et al.*, 2006; Clark & Astuto, 1994; Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 2000; Fullan *et al.*, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Educational reform over the twentieth century can be characterized by two periods: The 1890s ideal of a liberal education, and the most recent “waves” of reform commencing in the 1980s.

### *Liberal Education Period to 1980*

Charles W. Elliot, president of Harvard University, and William Torrey Harris, U.S. commissioner of education, championed the original liberal education period in the 1890s. These influential individuals insisted that schools in a democratic society should aim to fully develop the intelligence of all children, regardless of their parents' social status or their probable education (Ravitch, 2000). The progressive era of the 1920s, most notably associated with John Dewey, intended to make schools an instrument of social reform. The progressive period explicitly attempted to change the core of schooling from a teacher-centered pedagogy to one based on an understanding of children's needs (Dewey, 1938; Elmore, 1996; Ravitch, 2000). This philosophy concurrently contrasted with the ideas of Franklin Bobbitt, Edward Thorndike and Stanly Hall, who incorporated the industrial age school restructuring movement notions of an education based on efficiency and utility (Goodman, 1995; Ravitch, 2000). These dueling philosophies continued to influence the educational landscape until the demise of the progressive education movement in the 1950s. Subsequently there were three major catalysts affecting educational reform efforts: the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown V. Board of Education*, the Soviet Union's 1957 launching of Sputnik, which spurred the 1958 National Defense Education Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. These monumental events, each carrying a blueprint for social salvation, were all complicated by what Tyack & Cuban (1995) describe as the time lag between advocacy and implementation, i.e. the uneven penetration of reforms in the different sectors of public education and the different impact of reforms on various social groups.

### *Reform 1980 to Present*

Elmore (2004) and Resnick & Hall (1998) point out that the great political and social struggles of the twentieth century were less about teachers and students, more about expansion, structures and inequities. When pondering the implementation and persistence of reforms, Tyack & Cuban (1995) allude to the notion that structural additions, i.e. reforms that were non-controversial, produced by influential constituencies, or required by law and easily monitored, had better chances of permanence. Given the perceived disconnect between educational reform and the current reality, education became a “hot button” for public attention; it was still considered to be at least part of the solution to many of the social and economic issues characterized during the 1980s (Leithwood, Janzti & Mascall, 2002; Ravitch, 2000). Something had to be done to improve educational standards. In 1983, *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) focused the public’s attention on a “crisis” in education. This was the beginning of a series of “waves” of education reform.

The first wave: excellence and standards movement. The publication of *A Nation At Risk* identified a “crisis” of low expectations, mediocre instructional practices and menacing foreign competition, thereby legitimizing an education reform movement that had already begun in a handful of states (Alexander, 1992; Elmore, 1997; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Ravitch, 2000). The first wave proposed response strategies to bolster the traditional education system by changing the “inputs” as a way of improving student achievement through mandated top-down initiatives. The use of the bureaucratic model to institute improvement proposals led to policy mechanisms

such as more academically demanding high school graduation requirements, longer school days, new teacher preparation programs, performance based pay, increased student attendance and testing as well as increasing standards; regulations were the order of the day (Murphy, 1992; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

One of the most prominent features of the first wave was the convergence of federal and state governments on broad educational goals (Vinovskis, 1996). Elmore (1997) refers to the 1989 Education Summit that included President George Bush and all 50 governors as an extraordinary event. The bipartisan support for explicit state and local standards enabled the inception of the standards movement.

While the first wave criticized the reform efforts for bypassing teachers and failing to connect policy to practice (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) or for failing to bring higher quality products or services to scale (Elmore, 1996; Stringfield, 2002), Murphy (1989) suggests that evidence supporting first wave successes was largely ignored by the academic community.

The second wave: restructuring. First wave critics eschewed the use of top-down policy mechanisms to improve schooling without focusing on individual schools. This criticism sparked a philosophical shift to educational improvements that relied upon empowering teachers to work more effectively with students, school based management, parental voice and choice, and teaching for understanding (Cooper & Sherk, 1989; Murphy, 1992). Collectively, the tenets of this philosophical shift are often referred to as the second wave. School reformers, practitioners and policymakers recognized that the notion of reform was increasingly a “local” event (Office of Educational Research and

Improvement, 1998). Coupled with this notion of educational reform as a “local” event was the idea that the state role should be one of direction, support, and resources for movements arising from localities (Kirst, 1992). Furthermore, the reformers, practitioners and policymakers fully realized that “local” reform was highly dependent on the federal, state and local ability to create a collaborative, cohesive and comprehensive effort.

Collectively, these efforts manifested into the notion of systemic reform.

While elements of the idea of systemic reform had been present in various forms, Jennifer O’Day and Marshal Smith authored the term to describe what they felt was the key to change. They defined systemic reform as the combination of state curricular frameworks and assessments with site-based school reforms. While other researchers have made adjustments to the idea of systemic reform, conceptually it is O’Day and Smith’s notion—that systemic reform attempts to align curriculum, student assessment and teacher preparation into a coherent and comprehensive effort to help all students achieve high standards of excellence—that remains prominent (Vinovskis, 1996).

The third wave: comprehensive school reform. Following a call to action with the excellence and standards movement, and the subsequent focus on local control and the notion of systemic reform that embodied the restructuring movement, a third wave of reform emerged. Comprehensive school-wide reform provided external designs for improvement of entire schools rather than focusing on particular populations of students within schools; changes were not limited to particular subjects, programs, or instructional methods (Datnow, 2000; Desimore, 2002; (Rowen, Barnes, & Cambum, 2004). This switch to external reform organizations marked a shift away from the belief that the best

way to reform schools is through grassroots or local school efforts (Datnow, 2000). Comprehensive school-wide reform was bolstered by the changes in 1994 Title I legislation that allowed for school-wide projects, the 1997 passage of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Act, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003; Desimore, 2002; Rowen *et al.*, 2004). The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Act's foundational underpinnings meld the ideas of research-based practices with an integrated systemwide process of change (Rowen *et al.*, 2004). Borman *et al.* (2003) contend that externally developed reform models offer top-down direction; however, the direction is not in the form of legislative mandates, rather in tangible and accessible support for school change rooted in research.

According to Kliebard (1988) reform over the last century has historically fallen into (a) grand reforms that attempt to change a whole national system of education; (b) reform movements that attempt to restructure patterns of teaching and learning, or (c) specific changes based on real or alleged research findings. Tyack & Cuban (1995) contend that most reforms, regardless of stature, were adopted and tended to last due to their "structural add-on" nature which did not disturb the standard operating procedures of schools. Overall, attempts to systemically interfere with the standard operating procedures have been hampered by issues of scale and sustainability.

While there is evidence of "pockets of excellence" within districts, broad scale effective change that transforms the engagement between student and teacher has proven to be most elusive (Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2000; Hargreaves, 2002; Resnick & Hall, 1998; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Resolutions to the problems of scale and sustainability

(Stringfield, 2002) are reflected in Coburn's (2003) depth, sustainability, spread and shift, Hargreaves' (2002) social geographies of educational change, McLaughlin & Mirta's (2001) five essential factors affecting sustainability, Resnick & Hall's (1998) building learning organizations around effort based systems, and Elmore's (1996) idea of changing incentive structures.

### *Summary*

History has shown that reform minded individuals have existed since the inception of public schooling. As Ravitch (2000) points out, as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Oscar D. Robinson produced the famous simile of the educational ladder, with its foot in the gutter and its top at the university, the belief that free public education could enable any youngster to rise above the most humble origins and make good on the nation's promise of equal opportunity for all was alive and well. Subsequently, wave after wave of reform movements defined the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In spite of these efforts, Elmore (2004) and Resnick & Hall (1998) point out that the great political and social struggles of the twentieth century were less about teachers and students, more about expansion, structures and inequities. Despite the attention and support reform, the literature reveals that direct responsibility and successful execution of educational reform are tightly coupled to the ability and capacity of the leaders and their leadership teams within individual communities. Systemic fundamental change requires transformational leadership, but the grammar of schooling, as noted by Tyack and Tobin (1995), is remarkably resistant to change. Increasingly, leadership teams are employing a

transformational theory of action framework to overcome the grammar of schooling and to articulate a district's goals, actions, resources and outcomes.

While the transformational theory of action framework holds many promising elements, the literature review revealed a lack of research regarding the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken to develop the transformational frameworks. This research helps to fill the void in the literature. This chapter reviewed literature associated with the notions organizational transformation, transformational leadership, theory of action and urban educational systems' theory of action (limited to New York City Department of Education, Boston Public Schools, and the Dallas Independent School District), accountability in education and reform in public education.

## CHAPTER 3: Methodology

### *Introduction*

This chapter describes the methodology and study design that were used to collect, analyze and interpret data to answer the research questions. The chapter details the: (a) purpose of the study, (b) research questions, (c) site and participant selection, (d) study design, (e) limitations of case study research and (f) data collection.

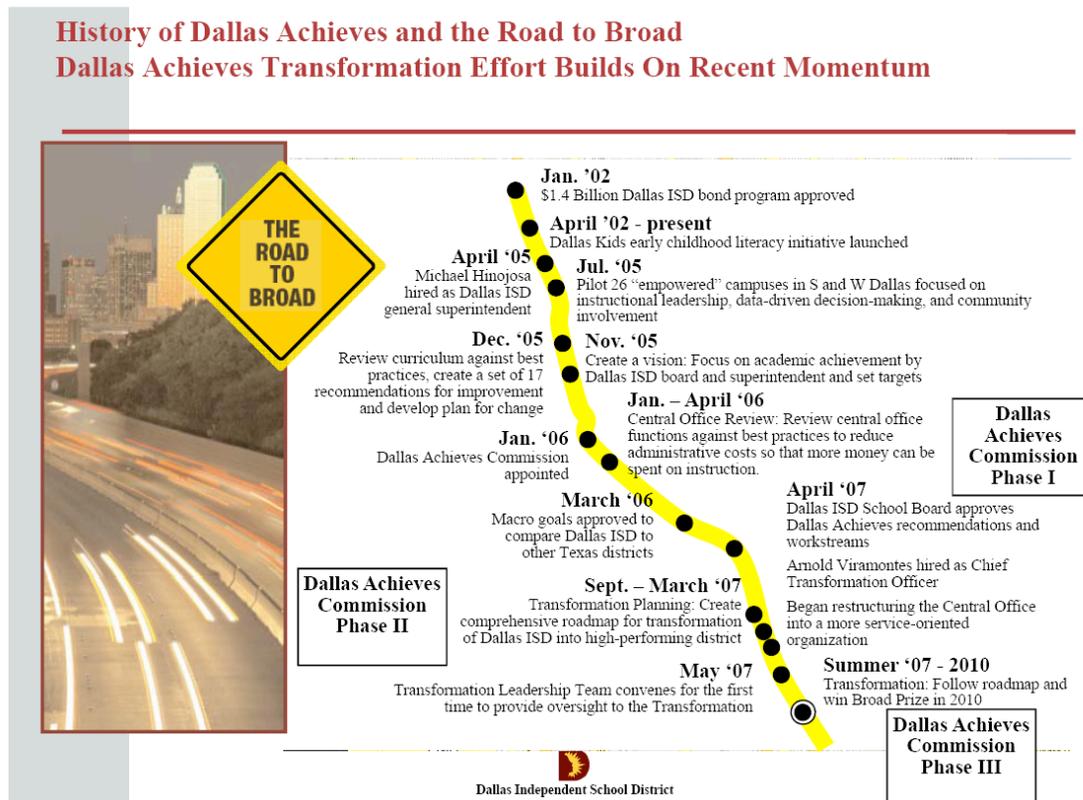


Figure 3 - 1 History of *Dallas Achieves!* and the Road to Broad

### *Purpose*

The purpose of the study was to describe the initiating and sustaining actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group. The group's initiating and sustaining actions were critical to the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework. The study was bound by the time period from the superintendent's arrival in April of 2005 to the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

### *Research Questions*

In order to describe the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework, this study will propose the following questions:

1. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the structural frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
2. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the human resource frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
3. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the political frame

associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?

4. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the symbolic frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?

### *Research Design*

The research utilized a qualitative case study research design to answer the research questions. Qualitative approaches have several commonalities: they focus on the phenomena that occur in the natural settings, they involve studying those phenomena in all their complexity and they are useful for understanding the meanings that individuals have constructed about the phenomena (Leedy & Olmrod, 2001; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). In order to support the appropriate level of flexibility and response necessary for the emergent changing nature of qualitative research, Merriam (1998) identifies the following essential constructs as its distinguishing characteristics: (a) the phenomena of interest are understood from the participants' perspective, (b) the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, (c) the research involves fieldwork, (d) an inductive research strategy is used and (e) the study is richly descriptive.

The case study is especially suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood phenomenon, by the employment of as many variables as possible and the triangulation of multiple sources of evidence (Leedy & Olmrod, 2001; Merriam,

1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). As Merriam (1998) suggested, the current study employed a descriptive case study to develop a rich, “thick” description of the actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group that were perceived as critical to the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

#### *Limitations of Case Study Research*

While the case study is vital to advancing knowledge about innovative programs and practices, there are limitations to the design. According to Merriam (1998), case studies are limited by the ability of the researcher to: (a) devote the necessary resources to obtain a rich, thick description of the phenomena, (b) rely on his or her own instincts and abilities throughout most of the research effort, and (c) suspend personal bias. The focus is limited to a slice of the whole, and there are issues of reliability, validity and generalizability.

The limitations associated with this study included the following:

(a) The breadth and depth of the initial and sustaining actions in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework included many variables beyond the resources of this researcher.

(b) The *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework involved many individuals; however, this study focused on the initial and sustaining actions of three of the major leadership groups involved in the development. Their recollection and perception may or may not have been accurate.

(c) Although this researcher made every attempt to suspend personal biases, his close proximity, direct involvement and stature within the *Dallas Achieves!*

transformational framework may have precluded objectivity on his own account as well as with the participants of the study.

(d) The literature reviewed was a fraction of the countless number of documents (e.g., *Dallas Achieves!* Commission notes, Notes from the Boston Consulting Group about transformation, Foundation for Community Empowerment Archives, personal notes, NCEA reports, news alerts, communication about IFL institutes, etc.) concerning the subject.

### *Site Selection*

In order to become the best urban school district by 2010, the Dallas Independent School District embarked upon a major systemic transformational effort—*Dallas Achieves!* Three key alignment elements transcend the entire transformational *Dallas Achieves!* theory of action framework (Dallas Independent School District, 2006): (1) immediate aim: goal alignment, which establishes aggressive performance targets throughout the system, (2) intermediate aim: strategic alignment, which ensures the district's efforts and resources are allocated in direct support of progressing towards these performance targets, and (3) ultimate aim: achievement alignment, which ensures that performance targets lead to increasing percentages of college and workforce ready students across the entire district. The *Dallas Achieves!* theory of action (Dallas Independent School District, 2006) played a critical role as the basis for a reform strategy that moved the district towards: (a) a culture driven by transformational based performance metrics, (b) a focus on rigor and high expectations, (c) a shared definition of success based on college and workforce readiness, (d) a supportive intervention strategy

based on need, (e) a balance between absolute and value added performance, (f) a culture of inquiry based on an increased sophistication in data driven decision making tools, (g) a performance management system integrated throughout the system and (h) an alignment of the organizational structure to support teaching and learning.

While information concerning school reform, such as the studies from the University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research, Traver's (2006) study on New York City's public school system and Stein, Lea and Mehan's (2004) study of New York City's District #2 and San Diego, speaks to reform frameworks from the summative assessment perspective, research concerning the initiating and sustaining actions in the development of transformational frameworks in large urban school districts is not as prevalent. Therefore, the Dallas Independent School District was selected for this study in order to increase understanding of the initiating and sustaining actions taken in the development of a transformational theory of action as it pertains to major urban systemic change efforts.

### *Participant Selection*

The study was designed to describe the initiating and sustaining actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group that were perceived as critical to the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. This researcher sought to discover, understand, and gain insight concerning the phenomena; therefore, the sample selection utilized the purposeful sampling strategy as described by Merriam, 1998). The sample included individuals bound by the following:

1. Direct involvement in the initial and sustaining leadership actions of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.
2. In-depth knowledge about those actions.
3. Association with the superintendent and his executive leadership team, Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees or the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.

In addition, the study employed chain sampling to assist the researcher in finding out who had information pertinent to the study. The researcher started with “key informants who are viewed as knowledgeable” (Mertens, 2005) about *Dallas Achieves!*. According to Yin (1994, p.84), “key informants are often critical to the success of a case study. Such persons not only provide the case study investigator with insights into the matter but also can suggest sources of corroboratory evidence– and initiate access to such sources.”

### *Data Collection*

The case study “focus[ed] on data in the form of word—that is, language in the form of extended text” (Miles & Haberman, 1994, p. 9). Therefore, the study employed two of the major sources of evidence outlined by Yin (1994): interviews and documents.

### *Interviews*

According to Stake (1995), two principal uses of case study are to obtain the description and interpretation of others; therefore, the interview is the main road to discovering and portraying the multiple views of the case. This study employed a semi-structured interview technique with a flexibly worded mix of more and less structured

questions. The format allowed this researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam, 1998).

The interviews were person-to-person encounters guided by the Miles & Haberman (1994, p. 48) framework for agreement with study participants. First, the researcher revealed that the interview would be conducted to discover, understand, and gain insight concerning issues perceived as critical to the initial and sustaining leadership actions of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. Second, the participants were informed that their identity would be protected by the use of pseudonyms and that all materials would be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Third, the participants were informed that they might be called upon to review and critique the interim and final products; however, the researcher maintained final say over the study's content. Fourth, the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that there would not be compensation for their time and information. Finally, the participants were informed that there would be at least two semi-structured interviews at a date, time and location convenient to them.

The primary interviews lasted one to two hours and were focused on the research questions specific to the study. The second interviews, when necessary, served to clarify concepts and to address concerns revealed through the data analysis from the first interview and review of documents.

Following each interview the participants were provided with the transcribed interview document. The participants were asked to read and provide feedback and/or corrections to the transcripts before they were used for analysis and interpretation.

### *Questions*

The semi-structured interview process allowed for “a mix of more or less structured questions” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). The following questions were used to initiate the interview process; however, the semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to respond to situations, allowing for emerging and new ideas on the subject.

1. What did the superintendent and his executive leadership team do to initiate and sustain the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
2. What did the Dallas Independent School District’s Board of Trustees do to initiate and sustain the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
3. What did the *Dallas Achieves! Commission* do to initiate and sustain the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
4. What was your role in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
5. What did you perceive as the major structural frame in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
6. What did you perceive as the major political frame in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
7. What did you perceive as the major human resource frame in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?

8. What did you perceive as the major symbolic frame in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?

### *Documents*

According to Yin (1994), the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources; therefore, this study utilized documents to discover, understand, and gain insight concerning issues perceived as critical to the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. Once the documents had been located, their authenticity and accuracy was verified to ensure that information relevant to the study may be cataloged and analyzed.

To maximize the benefits of the interview and documents as sources of evidence, this researcher employed Yin's (1994) *Three Principles of Data Collection*:

(a) The use of multiple sources of data, which leads to the development of converging lines of inquiry by providing multiple measures of the same phenomenon. In order to enhance the converging lines of inquiry, this researcher created a four by three data collection matrix by interviewing participants from each of the three leadership groups instrumental in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. The data collected in the interview process was corroborated with documents from the Transformation Management Office Archives, the Dallas ISD press releases, the Dallas ISD website, other internet sites and the state of Texas' Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) database.

- (b) The creation of a case study database, which leads to an increase of reliability by organizing and documenting the data collected for the case study. This researcher cataloged and maintained the interview data as well as the document data. The data base served as the primary vetting source.
- (c) The maintenance of a chain of evidence, which increases *reliability by* allowing the reader to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions. This researcher carefully maintained a thread of evidence that emanated:
  - (a) from development of the initial line of research questions
  - (b) through the data gathered *from each interview*
  - (c) as coded and categorized utilizing Bolman and Deal's (2003) four frame framework
  - (d) through the findings that emerged
  - (e) as corroborated with the various document sources
  - (f) as concluded based on the convergence of the multiple sources of evidence.

#### *Case Study Protocol*

Given that a case study protocol plays a major role in increasing the reliability of case study research, this researcher employed Yin's (1994) case study protocol outline. The elements included were: (a) an overview of the case study project incorporating all pertinent background information, the purpose of the study and the IRB letter approving the study, (b) the signed agreement with study participants as guided by Miles & Haberman (1994), and an e-mail or phone call transcript confirming the time and place of

the interviews, and (c) the case study questions which reflected the questions as presented above with the knowledge that case study's naturalistic inquiry design required this researcher to adapt the interviews to the emerging themes.

### *Data Analysis*

The analysis of the data used the techniques offered by Miles & Haberman (1994). This case study utilized the well-delineated Bolman & Deal (2003) constructs of four frames: 1) structural, 2) human resource, 3) political and 4) symbolic. These analytical tools enabled the description of the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken to develop the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. The analysis took place on three levels: (a) Level 1: the initial coding into the four frames, (b) Level 2: the categorization within each of the four frames and (c) Level 3: the leadership actions associated with each of the four frames.

In order to facilitate the retrieval and organization of the initial and emergent themes, the data was delineated via codes (Miles & Haberman, 1994, p. 56). The coding "by hand" took into account the three sources of categorization as noted by Merriam (1998): the researcher, the participants and sources outside the study. For the level one initial and emerging themes and the level two categorization, this study relied on the Bolman & Deal reframing of Kotter's Change Stages (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 386-387 Table 18.2) and organizational change (p. 372 Table 18.1) which address barriers to change. For the level three distinction of leadership actions, this study relied on the researcher's analysis and the conclusions of the Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees.

Ultimately, the analysis of the data led to an increased understanding and insight concerning the initial and sustaining leadership actions critical to the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

### *Research Validity*

This researcher utilized most of Merriam's (1994), basic strategies to enhance internal validity in the following manner:

(a) triangulation was accomplished by employing a data collection and analysis strategy which included interviews of three distinct groups, the review of pertinent documents and field notes. The interviews took place as prescribed. On two occasions, a second interview was merited. The pertinent documents that were examined included items from the Transformation Management Office Archives, Dallas ISD press releases, Dallas ISD website and other Internet sites as well as the state of Texas' Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) database. The field notes were used to clarify, as points of reference, or as markers for further inquiry.

(b) member checks were accomplished by taking transcribed interviews back to the people from whom they were derived, to make sure this researcher was representing them and their ideas accurately. Each participant was given a copy of an unedited transcribed interview and instructed to review it to ensure accurate representation and to correct inaccuracies or mistakes in the transcription.

(c) peer examination was accomplished by asking colleagues to comment on the interview and document findings as they emerged. The interview and document findings were disseminated to practitioners and researchers for review and comment.

(d) this researcher's bias was addressed by clarifying his assumptions, worldview and theoretical orientations at the outset of this study. This researcher's bias was noted in the limitations section of this study.

### *Summary*

The study described the initiating and sustaining actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group that were critical to the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. This researcher discovered, understood, and gained insight concerning the *Dallas Achieves!* phenomena through the use of by utilizing interviews and document review. Since the nature of a descriptive case study lends itself to “presenting information about areas of education where little research has been conducted” (Merriam, 1998, p. 38), the study was motivated by the lack of information concerning the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. The findings provided information that will help researchers and practitioners consider the merits of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework as it pertains to a major urban systemic change effort.

## CHAPTER 4: Findings

### *Introduction*

This chapter will describe the research purpose, research site and research sample, and will present the results of the data analysis with respect to the research questions. The results are presented in terms of the well-delineated constructs of Bolman and Deal's (2003) *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership* four frames: 1) structural, 2) human resource, 3) political and 4) symbolic. The data, common and emergent themes were evaluated to identify the differences among the perceived initial and sustaining leadership actions of the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group.

By describing the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group, this study provides findings that will assist researchers interested in large scale organizational change or public education systemic change, as well as school districts considering or in the midst of a transformational reform effort.

### *Research Site*

#### *Local Community*

According to the Dallas ISD *2008-2009 Facts* (2009), the Dallas ISD encompasses an area of 384 square mile in the eastern portion of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Besides the city of Dallas, Dallas ISD includes all or portions of the municipalities of Addison, Balch Springs, Carrollton, Cockrell Hill, Farmers Branch,

Garland, Highland Park, Hutchins, Mesquite, Seagoville, University Park and Wilmer (Dallas ISD Facts, 2009). Dallas is home to over 1.3 million inhabitants, which makes it the third largest city in Texas. The city of Dallas, whose economy is primarily based on banking, commerce, telecommunications, computer technology, energy and transportation, is the main economic hub of the Dallas-Ft. Worth metroplex and the city of origin for the majority of the district's children.

### *District Demographics*

Dallas Independent School District's enrollment of approximately 158,000 students makes it the second largest school district in the state. According to Academic Excellence Indicator System data, the student demographics reflect a Hispanic population which grew from 47. % (97-98) to 65.3% (07-08), an African-American population that decreased from 40.7% (97-98) to 28.7% (07-08), a White population that decreased from 10.2 % (97-98) to 4.8% (07-08), a Native American population that decreased from 0.4 % (97-98) to 0.2 % (07-08) and an Asian/Pacific Islander population that decreased from 1.6 % (97-98) to 1.0 % (07-08). In the 1997-1998 school year, 72.5 % of the student population was categorized as economically disadvantaged, as contrasted to 84.7% in the 2007-2008 school year. The student population with limited English Language skills grew by 2.2% over the ten year time span to 32.5 %.

### *District Performance*

Table 4 - 1 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Overall Performance percent passing and number of exemplary and recognized schools 2005-2008

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Reading	72	78	80	83
Math	60	65	66	71
Science	53	58	58	63
Social Studies	82	81	84	89
Exemplary and Recognized schools	32	80	51	103

During the 2005 to 2008 school years, Dallas Independent School District has experienced steady growth in all major categories as assessed by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (Dallas Independent School District, 2006).

In conjunction with this steady growth, the district was experiencing significant challenges pertaining to adequate yearly progress (AYP) at the comprehensive high schools, and academically unacceptable status at eight percent of the schools (Doc 14).

### *Research Sample*

#### *Introduction*

While *Dallas Achieves!* involved many facets of the district and the city, this study's primary focus was the initial and sustaining leadership actions by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

#### *Superintendent and his executive leadership team*

The superintendent and his executive leadership team were a mixture of career

educators and non-traditional education executives. The superintendent was embarking upon his fourth superintendency. The balance of the team included a curriculum and instruction veteran with thirty years of educational experience, a former acting superintendent, the former Executive Director of the Texas Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund, two Broad Academy graduates, a former principal, and a former CEO.

### *Board of Education*

In addition to adopting of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and transformational policies, the reform-minded Board of Trustees participated in intensive training known as Reform Governance in Action (RGA). Reform Governance in Action is a two-year reform-oriented education-training program for teams of educational leaders. The RGA program was developed by the Center for Reform of School Systems to train and support the nation's most promising reform-minded school boards and superintendents (Center for Reform of School Systems, 2009).

### *Dallas Achieves! Commission*

The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission was formed to assist the school district's efforts to become the best urban district in the country. Utilizing information from his entry plan, which identified individuals most critical to the success of the district, the superintendent convened a 60-plus-member group of stakeholders to assist in the development of a transformational framework. The group evolved into the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. The Commission included a broad-based multifaceted group of leaders from the business, higher education, civic, and faith-based communities as well as

city and state officials, philanthropists, and grass roots leaders. The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission was ultimately responsible for a body of work that included more than 100 recommendations and the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework.

### *Data Analysis*

This data analysis utilizes the well-delineated constructs of Bolman & Deal's (2003) *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership* four frames for “making sense” of organizations as the analytical tool for the description of the initial and sustaining leadership actions. Categories by which to organize the initial data collection and create the context by which to identify the common and emergent themes were based on the frames (p. 372 Table 18.1), which address barriers to change, in conjunction with Kotter’s Change Stages (p. 386-387 Table 18.2). The analysis of the data takes place on three levels: (a) Level 1-the initial coding into the four frames, (b) Level 2-the categorization within each of the four frames, and (c) Level 3- the leadership actions associated with each of the four frames

#### *Initial and sustaining leadership actions*

The data collected in the study reflects the emergence of the following six initial and sustaining leadership actions undertaken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework:

Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework.

Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team.

Leadership Action 3: Crafting and communicating the transformational vision.

Leadership Action 4: Supporting the transformation.

Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress.

Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation.

The following analysis addresses the respective research question with regard to each of the leadership actions.

*Research Question 1: What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the Dallas Achieves! Transformational Leadership Group take to address the structural frame associated with the development of the Dallas Achieves! transformational theory of action framework?*

Table 4 - 2 Structural Frame Leadership Actions

Leadership Action 1: Setting the Stage for a Transformational Theory of Action Framework	<u>The Development of a Coordination Strategy</u>
	Superintendent's execution of an entry plan
	The curriculum audit
	The involvement of consultants with <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission's development of a transformational strategy
Leadership Action 2: Building a Transformational Team	<u>The Development of a Coordination Strategy</u>
	Establishing the <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission
Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision	<u>The Implementation Plan</u>
	The role of the superintendent's leadership team
	The formulation of <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission recommendations
	The board's critical votes
Leadership Action 4: Supporting the Transformational Framework	<u>The Creation of Structures to Support the Change Process</u>
	The superintendents hiring authority
	Converting the areas to learning communities
	Redesign of teaching and learning division
	Collaborative planning time and reduction of class size at the secondary level
	The Transformation Management Office and the introduction of performance management and the definition of success
	Fundraising
	<u>The Removal or Altering of Structures or Procedures that Support the Old Ways</u>
	The redesign of the central staff
	The reorganization of areas into learning communities
	The request for principal process
	<u>The Alignment of the Structure to Support the New Culture</u>
	Managed instruction with earned empowerment
	The alignment of the <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> recommendations
	The alignment of the superintendent's evaluation and incentive pay
Leadership Action 5: Communicating Initial Transformational Progress	<u>Keeping People on the Plan</u>
	Transformation Management Office's role in the creation of work-teams
	The mapping of interdependencies
	The notion of student achievement
Leadership Action 6: Recognizing Barriers to the Transformation	<u>The Structural Barriers to Success</u>
	Concern for structural capacity
	Data
	Stability and sustainability in leadership
	Communication
	The lack of an education foundation

According to Bolman & Deal (2003), the structural frame focuses on the architecture of the organization—the design of the units, subunits, rules, roles, goals and policies—that shape and channel decisions and activities. Therefore, the following analysis utilized the categories associated with their reframing of Kotter’s Change Stages (p. 386-387 Table 18.2) as they pertain to the initial and sustaining leadership actions. Table 4.2 summarizes the Structural frame leadership action findings.

*Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework*

In setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework, the analysis reveals a multifaceted coordination strategy. The primary elements of the coordination strategy included the superintendent’s execution of an entry plan and a curriculum audit (Appendix C) and the involvement of consultants with *Dallas Achieves!* Commission’s development of a transformational strategy and the establishment of an education foundation. As noted by one of the participants, the coordination strategy solidified the timing and execution of the transformational elements:

The board had met and set a vision and direction, the NCEA had come in and done a curriculum audit against best practices that gave us the beginnings of a road map for an education plan and rework of our curriculum and instruction, and shortly thereafter the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission gave a best practices set of recommendations about

transformation about all the systems in the district. Those things then became the basis for the *Dallas Achieves!* transformation plan (INT 25:2).

Superintendent's execution of an entry plan. Upon entering the district, the superintendent employed his entry plan strategy to assess the state of the district and to establish an agenda for change. The entry plan took into account stakeholders from within as well as outside the organization:

When I did my entry plan I came in and I asked a lot of open ended questions, and some of the questions that I asked were power questions, such as "If you were in my shoes what would you focus on first? What are the two things you need to do to make Dallas the best urban district in the country? What expectations do you have of the superintendent?" I asked those questions to 25 principals, to everybody at the cabinet level of the superintendent, the previous superintendent, to all 9 trustees, and to community members.(INT A9:1-2).

The superintendent approached, he conducted a series of interviews when he first became the superintendent with business leaders in the community and conducting those interviews he identified a group of key stakeholders and influencers in the community who would be important people for making a contribution to the sustained difference. And really in any community sector, but specifically as he was interested in the education (INT A27:1-2).

The results of the entry plan contained powerful information that, once shared with the board, proved to be the catalyst for the transformational theory of action framework.

Then I gave the results of that information to the board. I was hired in, I started in May 2005, I completed that study in July 2005, I reported to the board in August 2005, and by November the board helped me at that point then to launch the transformation plan (INT A9:1-2).

The curriculum audit. The analysis revealed that the decision to utilize the National Center for Education Accountability to conduct a curriculum audit was a secondary but equally important element to setting the stage for transformation. The education plan, coupled with the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations, was considered a corner stone of the entire transformational framework.

The curriculum audit helped us put together the things that we needed to make sure the education plan was robust (INT A9:3; DOC 29).

Additionally, one participant noted, one of the major benefits was the consistency brought about by the curriculum audit:

You know, singing from the same hymnal, we need to be teaching from the same book. We all need to understand what the curriculum is and what the curriculum is not (INT A14:10).

The involvement of consultants with the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission's development of a transformational strategy. The superintendent realized rather quickly that the scope of the coordination strategy was going to require resources beyond the

purview of the district (INT A19:12). Therefore, he initially tasked the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission to look at the cost savings opportunities in central staff (INT A27:2; DOC 7). Given the extent of the task and based upon its work in school reform in New Orleans, Delaware and Chicago (DOC A21:4, DOC A27: 1), the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission solicited the involvement of the Boston Consulting Group. The Boston Consulting group contributed three important functions to the development of the coordination strategy—best practice research, small and whole group facilitation and data driven focus and decision making (INT A19:5;INT A9:13-14; DOC 1).

After the successful identification of central staff cost savings opportunities utilizing a model that included best practice research, small and whole group facilitation and data driven focus and decision making, the superintendent asked this commission to take a broader charter by developing a transformation strategy that was fact based and comprehensive that would go through the same basic process (INT A27:2).

We then said, “Okay.” To everybody at the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, “Do y’all now have the ambition, let’s go on ahead and do a comprehensive transformation plan?” People said, “Yes, okay, we would like to do that” (INT A21:5).

It became immediately evident that the coordination strategy would require a detailed cost estimate for the entire project, an agreement on the time frame for operating the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and a migration strategy for transferring the roles and responsibilities of the Commission:

So we started to price out BCG, not going to do anymore pro bono work, you know now we're going to have to start paying people to do this so we estimated our budget to be 10 Million bucks, we'd thought raise 10 Million locally, and then 20 Million may be nationally from you know Gates, Dell, the usual suspects. And we would not only come up with a plan but would stay intact for three years to help implement the plan because frankly, most of us don't know what we don't know which is how to implement. And then at the end of the three years, the responsibility for public accountability for the results and the continued implementation of the plan would be transferred to the Dallas Education Foundation (INT A21:5).

While the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission had many opinions about the education plan it was decided that they would focus on all facets of transformation, sans the education plan (INT A19:6).

*Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team*

In order to leverage the community resources necessary to tackle the enormity of a far-reaching transformation, the superintendent keenly made use of the data he had collected in his entry plan as the source for assembling the external component of the transformation team. While the entry plan was lauded for its thorough and comprehensive nature and recognized as the linchpin for the transformational framework, it also became the screening mechanism for establishing the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.

Establishing the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.

The brilliance of the superintendent was to sit down with every trustee and try to figure out how to communicate with us, as part of his entry plan, and ask us who in our district, our opinion leaders, the people that yank our chain, push our buttons, help guide the political pressure placed on the trustees and give me nine or ten people. He contacted all of them and sat down with as many as would sit down with him and convinced them to become part of the commission. So in that way the same people that have a lot of influence on the trustees, themselves are also the people on the commission (INT A14:3).

The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission was comprised of about 60 community leaders who would take as their charge to develop, initially, cost savings opportunities, and then, ultimately, a set of transformational recommendations (INT A27:2). The power of the Commission as a transformational team is best described as follows:

Mainly what the commission did was they served as an interested community of advisors. They're a group of business and civic leaders that came together with regularity, probably came to thirty meetings and listened to a report on the fact base and help draw logical conclusions from that fact base about what would be relevant for Dallas. They helped in the development of the frameworks and the recommendations and they were basically a large steering committee for this effort. And then once they had reached agreement on what the recommendations should be they

then served as advocates for those recommendations and also a subgroup of them developed funding, went out and raised funding with foundations and other interested parties to find project support for the district with outside service providers in making some of the change happen (INT A27:4).

So it's basically identifying and getting the superintendent and the leadership team on board, identifying the commissioners and get the board on board with helping that identification, getting them together, getting the outside consultant, handing them the document of the work product of the recommendations, and tell them to go for it. Put money behind, we know about how much it will cost, we know about how long it will take and these are the things you should do. I think while it looks complicated, it's really very simple, but that now requires a lot of communication (INT A19:15).

### *Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision*

The analysis of the structural frame reveals three key elements: the role of the superintendent's executive leadership team (ELT), the formulation of *Dallas Achieves!* Commission recommendations and *the board's critical votes* as pivotal to the crafting and communicating of the vision.

The role of the superintendent's executive leadership team (ELT). It is acknowledged that once the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations were vetted through the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the superintendent and his executive leadership team

played a pivotal role in crafting the final vision (INT A19:6). More importantly, the crafting and communicating was a joint effort, but the implementation fell to the respective chiefs.

Now the implementation and the sustaining has been obviously working through the staff. So the sustainability there, the implementation, the expansion had a lot of different people involved in refining the plan, getting down to the specifics, getting it together, finding out what was actionable, putting it in the play, and then implementing the plan (INT A9:2).

So that's kind of the role of the ELT [executive leadership team], to support the external review, support translation of those recommendations and the plan, align to the board's vision, and now we're deep into implementation and review of the work (INT A25:2).

Accordingly, the Executive Leadership Team played a fundamental role in supporting the transformation across divisions and departments. Their constant facilitation and leadership of the transformation plan, process and philosophy was critical to supporting the work of the superintendent and the board in the entire transformational effort (INT A25:4). The facilitation and leadership was not overlooked and was recognized as a key factor in crafting and communicating the vision as exhibited with the following comment:

I think that was one of the most brilliant things that him [superintendent] and his administration [ELT] worked on was to formulate a plan to keep

coming back to the board with that was crafted and designed for the student body that we have. (INT A23:7).

The formulation of *Dallas Achieves!* Commission recommendations. The analysis reveals that the crafting and communicating of the vision benefited from the process by which the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations were formulated. For example, there was extensive communication and collaboration—about 51 meetings over the time span of six months; ultimately, based upon research indicating that certain transformations failed because of line item vetoes or tweaking, the 100-plus recommendations had to be voted up or down in their entirety (INT A19:5). The recommendations were voted up by a supermajority of the Commissioners, lending instant credibility to the process by which the vision was crafted and communicated.

The board's critical votes. The board's critical votes were an essential component to crafting and communicating the transformational vision. It was very clear the transformational framework would have ended if it were not for the board's solid backing of the superintendent's and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission's recommendations (INT A21:9). In addition to supporting the recommendations critical to crafting the transformational vision, the board voted to define their goal—to graduate all children college and workforce ready—as the number one core belief:

They approved the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission recommendations, and obviously they approved all the strategic plans. But quite simply they gave us the end, and what we found out is that the difference between college and workforce ready is minimal in today's global environment so they

initiated that and hold us accountable from the stand point that we report to them where we stand on all of those particular issues as they pertain to performance targets, what the delta is, how we improve the achievement of the kids (INT A17:3-4).

*Leadership Action 4: Supporting the transformational framework*

In supporting the transformational framework, the structural frame reveals the creation of structures to support change, the removal or alteration of structures and the alignment of structures as dominant themes.

*The Creation of Structures to Support Change.* Creating structures to support the transformational framework was an essential part of the initial and sustaining leadership action, as noted by the following:

You know to me there are multiple pieces. You know that you can talk about [Dallas] Achieves! Commission, but you can talk about the *Dallas Achieves!*, when I talk about the *Dallas Achieves!*, it certainly includes the Commission but it's not just the Commission (INT A12:1-2).

Analysis of the structural frame reveals several notable strategies including: the superintendent's hiring authority, converting the areas to learning communities, redesign of teaching and learning divisions, collaborative planning time and reduction of class size at the secondary level, principles of learning, tiered professional development, the introduction of the Transformation Management Office, performance management and the definition of success, and fundraising.

The superintendent's hiring authority. There was a general feeling that the superintendent did not have the right people to execute the transformation. Therefore, the board amended in a critical deferred to the superintendent the authority to hire the people he thought necessary to execute the transformation.

So the board, that was a critical vote, a critical amendment to board policy, when the board delegating authority to the superintendent, giving him the power to hire whoever he wants. But we delegated that power to the superintendent as part of this transformation so we wouldn't get in the way (INT A23:16).

Converting the areas into learning communities. One of the most recognizable support structures was the creation of the learning communities.

Historically, as a means of managing the schools, the district's high school feeder patterns had been divided into areas delineated by East, West, North and South quadrants. These divisions had become the pillars of stability and instructional leadership within their geographical areas due to the instability of leadership at the superintendent level; prior to the arrival of the current superintendent in April of 2005, the district had experienced seven superintendents in the previous ten year period. The lack of coherence and leadership at the central staff level led to varied innovation, focus and resource allocation across the areas.

However, in an effort to standardize the instructional focus and resource allocation in the schools, the district was reorganized into four geographically different elementary learning communities and three geographically different secondary learning

communities. Of significance was the emergence of the superintendent's learning community, one that was need based and resource intensive (INT A9:5; DOC 4). The creation of the learning communities sent the message that:

We meant business about the work and that we really supported the role of the principal and the executive director and the teachers as instructional leaders (INT A25:9).

Redesign of teaching and learning division. In order to support the learning community concept several undertakings ensued. Perhaps the most significant was the redesign of the teaching and learning division.

Also we redesigned every department in the teaching and learning division to align to those learning communities so that every communities so that every learning community executive director has one direct supervisor for reading language arts, and one for math, and one for science, and one for social studies, and one for special ed, and one for bi-lingual, one for guidance and counseling. To build a system of support to support schools in that structure, that was one I think big thing (INT A25:9-10).

Collaborative planning time and reduction of class size at the secondary level. In addition to the redesign of teaching and learning several big ticket items transpired. Most notably were the items from the 2005 curriculum audit: collaborative planning time and reduction of the class size at the secondary level and tiered professional development (INT A9:6; INT A14:6; INT A25:3; INT A27:8).

So our board took that leap of faith with us and the reports given by the auditors last week were overwhelmingly supportive of that quality use of and the impact of that collaborate planning time on improved student achievement (INT A25:10).

The Transformation Management Office and the introduction of performance management and the definition of success. Following the reorganization of teaching and learning, and vital to the structures of support, was the creation of the Transformation Management Office, the introduction of the performance management and accountability arrow and the definition of success.

Given the scope, breadth and current capacity of the district to address the recommendations within the transformational framework, the Boston Consulting Group recommended creating the Transformation Management Office (INT A21:7; INT A21:8).

There has been a lot of skepticism in the district, there have been a lot of plans come and go, but how many have been implemented? The symbolic part of it was, we had to have a crew of people that were going to be responsible, to make sure that we implemented the plan, and that's where TMO, the transformation management office, came in. So it was somewhat symbolic, but it was very tactical, because we were able to put all the recommendations out there, sequence and organize them, make sure that they're getting done, having reporting systems to get them done, having work teams to develop some of the specific plans of the transformation initiative (INT A9:16).

The performance management and accountability work-team or the “arrow” of performance management and accountability symbolically and literally influences all of the vision rings.

Then we have the arrow of performance management that ties it all together to make sure that we have performance management and accountability throughout the system (INT A9:11).

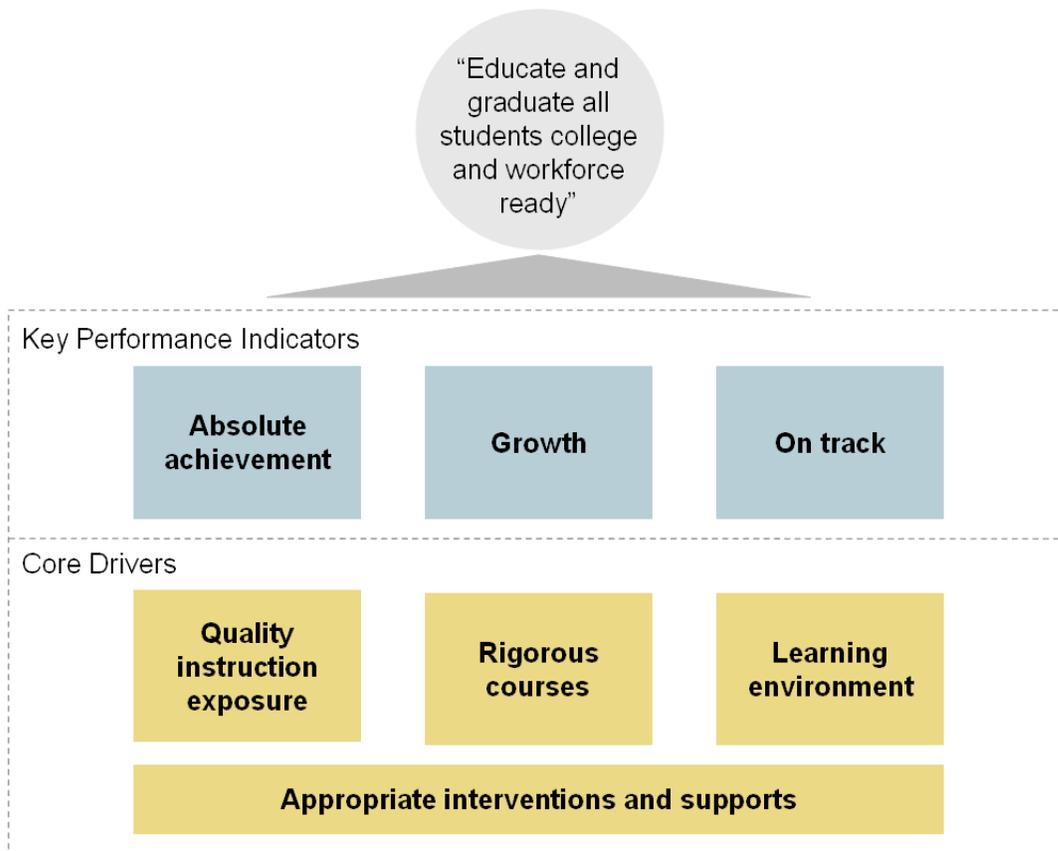


Figure 4 - 1 Definition of Success Framework: Dallas Independent School District 2008

An immediate and key performance management and accountability contribution was the development of the definition of success into a framework. Immediately evident was the lack of clarity about what constituted success or what aspects of the work made them successful. Therefore, the transformational framework “helped in tying up some of those loose ends by putting some metrics to what is success” (INT A17:7).

How do we know that we have actually succeeded? What is that? That is starting with the end in mind and that is our kids being college and workforce ready (INT A17:6).

Fundraising. The *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group came to the immediate conclusion that the development of the transformational framework was (1) going to necessitate the employment of consultants, (2) going to involve a significant investment of money and (3) going to have to be accomplished without the use of public funds (INT A9:4; INT A14:2; INT A17:6; INT A19:4).

Therefore, under the leadership of Don Williams, a trusted individual throughout the city, and in order not to involve the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the Foundation for Community Empowerment became the fiscal agent (INT A19:4)

So I went out and began raising the 10 million bucks and the superintendent would come to some of the little lunches and you know, cocktail parties, and the president of the Foundation for Community Empowerment and I. And usually a BCG person or somebody, you know we would invite the rich folk of Dallas and the heads of foundations and so on and we would throw the pitch and so we raised over 10 million

bucks for the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. All private money and all to be separate from the district. At the same time we're all making calls on Gates, on Dell, on Annenberg, on others (INT A21:6).

*The Removal or Alteration of Structures*. It is generally acknowledged that during any transformation effort it is important to create structures that will support the new structures. Equally important is the removal or alteration of existing structures that support the old ways. The analysis suggested the redesign of the central staff, the reorganization of areas into learning communities and the request-for-principal as chief structures that were altered or removed.

Redesign of the central staff. In their structural analysis the Boston Consulting Group discovered narrow spans of control and deep layers of management within the district's central staff (DOC 3). Typically this situation leads to large ranks of middle-management and over-management; the organization itself hinders the ability to get things accomplished, there is difficulty in cascading cultural change and values down through the organization, and net people costs are disproportionate to other cost drivers (DOC 2: 3). Given this information, the district embarked on a redesign of the central staff. While the output was a leaner central staff (with the elimination of 150 central staff positions) and an \$8 million saving to the campuses, the outcome was more complex.

What we were really doing was aligning the information flow, not just the functional flow. So when you flatten the organization hierarchy you also maintain the context and integrity of the message (A17:8-9).

Redesign has been recognized as “the line in the sand.” It was reported as the one item that simultaneously denoted the seriousness of the change and the scale of the transformation (INT A17:14; DOC 5; DOC 6). Over time, the organization had become middle-management heavy; therefore, in order to minimize redundancy, it was recommended that the central office be pared down from eleven to seven layers, and that the span of control for each manager be maintained within the range of six to ten direct reports (INT A14:10; INT A17:9; INT A21:11; INT A23:4; DOC 2; DOC 3).

The reorganization of the areas into learning communities. As it pertained to the reorganization of the areas into learning communities, one school of thought, as previously illustrated, maintained that this was a new support structure. However, the data implies that the reorganization of the areas into learning communities was a structure that needed to be removed (INT A12:6; DOC 12). This notion is exemplified in the following:

It’s shifting the focuses back to the campuses back to the campus level.

One, breaking down the silos among superintendencies mini, baby superintendencies, we had a structure where we had nine area superintendents and they created their little silos with their feeder patterns and nobody could come in or out without their permission and how one feeder pattern trained and worked together and did things was different from the other one. What some of them thought was curriculum and what wasn’t the curriculum, I mean they were all different; they were all over the place. (INT A14: 10).

The request-for-principal process. The request-for-principal process proved to alter the principal selection process throughout the district. The request-for-principal process was lauded for its philosophy of including representatives from all stakeholder groups in the school's community, and for the level of transparency in making the selection a more public process (INT A9:7-8; INT A14:17-18).

Now you have a process that came out of this process that allowed the community to be involved. Historically, it was just that every superintendent made a recommendation to the superintendent, the superintendent met with the board, and the board grilled over the recommendation and put that person in. And at some cases the individual was a terrible match for the community and we learned a valuable lesson that if the community is not behind the school, the school will not be successful (INT A23:9).

The Alignment of Structures. The analysis revealed the Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment initiative, the alignment of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission recommendations, and the alignment of the superintendent's evaluation and incentive pay, as the primary structural realignment elements that supported the transformational effort. However, as stated in the following, it was clear that all resources and structures were being aligned to support student achievement:

So he's [superintendent], we're [the board] trying to get to a point in this transformation that a total focus will be on academic achievement of the kids. And I can quite honestly tell you that since I've been on the board

since 1997, this is the first time in a long time that the total academics of the school district are first and foremost on everybody's mind (INT A23:4).

Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment. The key component for aligning the structures to the new culture was the adoption of the board policy that stated the district was going to operate on the premise of Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment (INT A9:13; INT A14:6; Dallas Independent School District, 2006).

Our theory of action is one of *Managed Instruction with Performance Empowerment*, which means that the central office accepts responsibility for directly managing the district's core business, teaching and learning within flexible parameters that balance accountability with empowerment according to the needs and performance of individual schools (DOC 40:1; DOC 45;1-3).

The policy clarified the direction of the day-to-day instructional as well as operational focus throughout the district.

We need to understand that we need to do it at about the same time in everywhere in the school district. Those are structural changes. Going from kind of a laissez faire, every teacher is going to close their door and teacher whatever the heck they want whenever they want to having what we call managed instruction which is pretty much everybody's gonna be at the same place time every single week because kids move schools. (INT A14:10).

More importantly, everyone had to understand that managed instruction was non-negotiable; therefore, the challenge was to transfer the theory into practice.

I was told by some external philanthropists, teachers don't like managed instruction, but it's working here in this district and it's working now because people didn't force it, because now people were successful and had tools to be successful with it and instead of saying, "Why'd I have to do this," they're saying, "hey, this is not bad. My job is different, my job may be easier". Then when they got the results they said, "It's worth changing what I was doing" (INT A9:15).

The alignment of *Dallas Achieves!* Recommendations. One of the bigger tasks that emerged as the district took on the alignment of structures to support the transformational effort was the alignment of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations with the district initiatives (DOC 13):

After that what we had to do is we had to take all of those initiatives and see what the alignment was to the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission recommendations, how it related to the NCEA audits, how it related to the education plan, how it related to the campus improvement plan, how it related to the district improvement plans, and the district strategy. In essence where was the synergy or the alignment from what we were doing to what we were recommended to do or what we said we were going to do depending on whether it was campus or district, or what we strategically

felt we should do and in that what we found was that there were that were actionable or not actionable (INT A17:2).

The effort to align the structures throughout the district and within the parameters of the entire transformational framework was an attempt to circumvent what is known about transformational failures.

We've seen a lot of case studies of school districts around the country and seen what works and what doesn't work. Mostly what doesn't work and it just seems that nobody had ever laid it all out as a whole. Looked through the entire system and said, "Hey, what do we need to do to change this?" And so we had to align everything (INT A14:4).

In order to "align everything," the district had to improve upon the allocation, alignment and focus of resources to support the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action. Prior to the transformational effort, resource alignment was devoid of any coherent strategy; therefore, there was a concerted effort to begin the alignment process.

Prior to really looking at that plan as our single united vision resources were allocated to the schools or areas and with best of intentions again, campuses would buy the materials they thought they needed for their schools, which might or might not align to the campuses next door, which might or might not be coherent with the campuses both of those schools were feeding their children to when they graduated to the next campus level. So we made some improvements in focusing our resources towards the transformation and towards the theory of action. (INT A25:8-9).

The alignment of the superintendent's evaluation and incentive pay. One important element to aligning the structures to support the transformational effort was the board's alignment of the superintendent's evaluation to his incentive pay. By doing this, the superintendent's evaluation became a driver in the transformational culture. The board, in this way, set a clear expectation—transformation starts at the top and it begins with student achievement.

We then, the board, another step the board took was that we aligned the superintendent's evaluation of academics with those same results and we said we're going to have the results in a public meeting every year. So they come in and look at our data from October, put together their report and report to us in November, in our November board meeting cycle, those results and those align to the incentive pay we have to the superintendent and to his evaluation. So it's all aligned, all the different pieces we have to amend his contract and the evaluation tool under his contract which we have to do a year before, doing so, with that and those NCEA recommendations on the academic part of his evaluation (INT A14: 2-3).

While the analysis illustrates the importance of Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment, alignment of *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations, and alignment of the superintendent's evaluation and incentive pay, there were elements across every division that played a significant role in the initial transformational effort:

And the reality of it is what it teaching and learning that moved the grade, was it human resources, was it schools, was it transformation office, was it chief of staff division, what was it? The answer: it was everything, the alignment of everything and that's what moved the grades (INT A17:14).

*Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress*

One of the primary challenges to any transformational effort is communicating the initial transformational progress. The data indicated that the Transformation Management Office's role in the creation of work teams, the mapping of interdependencies and the notion of student achievement were important elements in the communication of the initial transformational progress.

Transformation Management Office's role in the creation of workteams. The Transformation Management Office's creation of work teams, the mapping of interdependencies and the establishment of metrics for success was a direct outcome of the analysis of the 100-plus *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations. It became evident that in order to keep people on the plan, the ensuing work would have to be functionally aligned to the education plan as well as to all district initiatives supporting the education plan. In the final analysis, 11 work teams were created to execute the transformational work that evolved from the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations (INT A17:1; DOC 11).

The mapping of interdependencies. Of primary significance was the mapping of the interdependent cross functional work and resource utilization that was going to have to take place in order to accomplish the successful execution of the recommendations (DOC 8).

We [the District] had a lot of people telling us what to do and how to do it but there were more asking what we weren't doing. Very few people could tell us how to take that magnum leap and to be quite honest with you, we tried several things and the key to it, in my opinion was the interdependencies. Once we put the big chart up with all the interdependencies and everybody saw that they couldn't do it without the other person, I think that was the key (INT A17:7).

The notion of student achievement. The notion of student achievement was an integral part of keeping people on the plan. It was noted that, at some point during the process, a critical shift occurred. The shift, which allowed forward momentum, was anchored in an increased focus on student achievement and a decreased focus on adults and adult issues (INT A12:9).

You know, continuing the focus on student achievement. Every single meeting focusing on it, talking about it every time, refocusing some of my fellow trustees to what matters... But it's about focusing on the results and the accountability for teaching those kids like they do in school districts that are successful that we're going to be able to transform our school system and break out of the status quo (INT A14:9).

The other piece that was the biggest key to transcending was that we said it was all about the kids. So when the goal that said to educate every child to be college and workforce ready, in all of our conversations we kept talking about just the kids, when you keep focusing on the kids all that

other stuff, people it sounds petty when they're talking about all that other stuff. (INT A19:13).

A contributing factor to the shift in focus to student achievement was the participation of the superintendent, his executive leadership team and the board of Reform Governance in Action. In this case, under the guidance of the Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS), the superintendent, his executive leadership team and the board embarked upon a study of theories of action for change. Confronted with the conditions of the district, the superintendent, his executive leadership team and the board realized that incremental change would not suffice (INT A21:7, INT A23:20). Therefore, they opted to pursue a fundamental change theory of action. Realizing the power of policy to create the conditions that allow for transformational change, the board adopted into policy the managed instruction with earned empowerment theory of action (DOC 45;1-3).

I think again that just going through the reformed governance in action it sort of kept us, helped keep us focused and at the right altitude more times than not (INT A12:2).

*Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation*

The analysis brought to light barriers to the transformation which permeated the structural frame. While there was positive momentum there was also evidence to suggest a loss of clarity and elements of confusion. The analysis reveals concerns about structural capacity, lack of data, stability and sustainability in leadership, communication and the lack of an Education Foundation as some of the barriers to the transformation.

Concern for structural capacity. The structural capacity issues can be linked to the historically rigid structure of the organization. The organization, which was more inclined to experience incremental change, did not necessarily have the structural capacity required to implement the plan (INT A17:6). Therefore, throughout the system:

People were working in silos isolated doing the best job that they knew how to do with the directives or mission they thought that they had been given, but not a lot of human capital and human systems being redesigned to support everyone pointed in the same direction, towards the same vision, with the same plan (INT A25:6-7).

As a consequence, the speed, breadth and intensity of the transformation exposed the weaknesses in the system. Despite the improvements, there continue to be opportunities for improving the systems and structures that support the transformation (INT A25:10).

Insufficient Data. The lack of information used for decision making surfaced as a barrier. Given the number of decisions necessary in a transformation the ability to have timely accurate data is essential. In conjunction, the level of expertise and the capacity of the decision maker to act on the data may lead to failure (INT A17:12). Collectively, these items remained a concern as expressed in the following statements:

The data systems that we had were a challenge so having the accurate information all the time was difficult to put it all together (INT A9:5).

The one thing I guess surprises me, if I had to put my finger on is the lack of information that is used for decision making, that was the biggest

impediment, it still is the biggest impediment, is the quality of the data (INT A17:8).

So in the technical systems we had and still do have a lot of work to do in improving our system's capability to be accessed by all stakeholders and to provide the information in the way it's most accessible by stakeholders. (INT A25:8).

Stability and sustainability in leadership. Prior to the current superintendent's tenure, there were seven superintendents in a ten year period. The constant churn of superintendents, coupled with the shifts in programs and instructional focus, contributed to the formulation of barriers. The analysis suggests that the lack of stability and sustainability of leadership manifested itself into a barrier. This suggestion stems from the notion that transformation requires consistent transformation oriented leadership at the board and superintendent level for an extended period of time (INT A12:3; INT A14:17; INT A23:18; INT A25:13; INT A27:8,10).

It's certainly difficult to transform an organization of our size and complexity, even more difficult to transform an organization of our size and complexity that has not had a lot of sustained reform in the past. That has had a lot of people in leadership and not a lot of focus on coherence and sustained reform (INT A25:5).

So that's probably the biggest problem in education is the sustainability of success (INT A17:15).

One other prominent factor that emerged from the sustainability perspective was the amount of time coaching individuals through the transformation process. As noted, transformation requires certain capabilities and many times there are individuals who do not possess the necessary requisites:

I don't think that we did a good job at all, so sustaining is still a question.

And don't get me wrong, it's not to say that anybody is not capable in the district but you have to be trained in certain things to be capable and you have to look at capacity and you have to look at inner connections and you have to look at all that stuff, and that is not something that everybody is used to doing (INT A19:18).

Communication. The entire arena of communication surfaced as a structural barrier. The proverbial thinking was that communication needed to be clearly defined, multimedia, aggressive and proactive; however, this was viewed as a major deficiency (INT A19:15-16).

I think the only thing that I would say is this and I think this is probably what hasn't been done well enough in the *Dallas Achieves!* and with the superintendent and that is a good communications plan. I think you've really got to brand and communicate, communicate, communicate. (INT A21:16).

The lack of an Education Foundation. Once the initiative to fundraise became a reality, the lack of an Education Foundation became a point of confusion which added another barrier to success. Most individual funders were unwilling to donate directly to

the district; therefore, the Foundation for Community Empowerment became the fiscal agent (A19:4). However, this point was not necessarily clear or easily explained.

It's been somewhat of a challenge because when you're going up and you keep kind of getting mixed messages by, okay there's *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and there's the [education] foundation and so you go out there when you do the fundraising and kind of do fundraising for two separate things people kind of merge together or separate them, they don't understand (INT A14:2).

*Research Question 2: What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the Dallas Achieves! Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the human resource frame associated with the development of the Dallas Achieves! transformational theory of action framework?*

Table 4 - 3 Human Resource frame Leadership Actions

Leadership Action 1: Setting the Stage for a Transformational Theory of Action Framework	<u>The Involvement of People Throughout the Organization to Solicit Input</u>
	Comprehensive involvement of multiple stakeholders
Leadership Action 2: Building a Transformational Team	<u>The Building of a Guiding Team</u>
	The formation of the <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission
Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision	<u>The Meetings to communicate direction and get feedback</u>
	The formal and informal meetings between all major stakeholders
Leadership Action 4: Supporting the Transformational Framework	<u>The Provision for Training, Resources and Support</u>
	Reformed Governance in Action, CRSS and the Texas Institute
	The <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Institutes
Leadership Action 5: Communicating Initial Transformational Progress	The analysis does not reflect significant data to connect the human resource frame and the communication of the initial transformational progress
Leadership Action 6: Recognizing Barriers to the Transformation	<u>The Human Resource Barriers to Success</u>
	The human capacity to execute change
	Effective staffing
	Buy-in

According to Bolman & Deal (2003), the human resource frame focuses on an understanding of people, with their strengths and foibles, reason and emotion, desires and fears. Therefore, the following analysis utilized the following categories associated with the human resource framework and Bolman and Deal’s reframing of Kotter’s Change Stages (p. 386-387 Table 18.2) as they pertain to the initial and sustaining leadership actions. Table 4.3 summarizes the Human Resource frame leadership action findings.

*Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework*

Comprehensive involvement of multiple stakeholders. In an effort to set the stage for the transformation theory of action framework, it was essential to involve people throughout the organization and to solicit input concerning the present and future state of the district. The analysis reveals a comprehensive, far reaching endeavor that extended across all sections of the city of Dallas. A direct byproduct of these actions was the formation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. With an eye on sustainability, the superintendent deliberately set out to build a team, inclusive of the board, staff and community, which would collaboratively develop a plan.

None of it [previous plans] was as comprehensive as what this plan was put together by so many different people that have their fingerprints on this plan, and the fact that it is working hopefully it will sustain for a long period of time (INT A9:12).

*Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team*

The Formation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. The formation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission was a direct response to the community's complete lack of confidence in the school district's ability to educate the children and the need to build a team of individuals willing and able to tackle the notion of transformation (INT A23:5; DOC 31)

So our take was that if you can get the key members of the community to come together and help put together a plan that would be implemented

then they would feel like they had a place in the school transformation and they would feel like they had ownership if that transformation took place (INT A19:3).

On the surface the formation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission may seem benign; however, it was very unique from the perspective that the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission was composed of such a broad based constituency (INT A12:7; INT A14:3; INT A19:3).

I think what was unique about it is that they were from all walks of life. We had parents, we had the teachers union, we had legislators, and I mean there was just every facet of the Dallas community was involved. That's unique in that they had an open forum on what their perspective was of what Dallas ISD needed to do be the premier urban school district in the nation. I think it's unique that the superintendent would take the initiative to open it up to that kind of scrutiny. I mean that kind of transparency is relatively unknown in the public sector (INT A17:5).

### *Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision*

Formal and informal meetings between all major stakeholders. As the superintendent and his executive leadership team, the board and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission were crafting and communicating the transformational vision, a major element was the series of revolving meetings to communicate direction and get feedback. The meetings involved the superintendent and the board, the superintendent, his

executive leadership team and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the board, the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the Boston Consulting Group.

From the initial interaction, concerning the initial cost reduction recommendations, to the review session of the transformational framework and the fact base that underpinned the recommendations, all communications between the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the board were focused on information and dialogue. The meetings between these two parties did not require any formal approval action (INT A27:2-3).

Initially, in order not to interfere with the external input process, the superintendent, his leadership team, and the board were not interacting with the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. However, throughout the process, the superintendent was briefed about the plan that was formulated by the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.

So he [superintendent] then at every step of the way you know, we [*Dallas Achieves!* Commission] would visit with him [superintendent], is this, you know if you got any big issues let us know now because you know we understand and in the end this has got to be implemented by the school district, not folks like us. And so he was supportive and gave feedback all the way through (INT A21:8).

In order to keep the development process moving forward and lines of communication open, the superintendent and his leadership team conducted monthly meetings with the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and quarterly meetings with the Boston Consulting Group (INT A17:5).

Leadership Action 4: Supporting the transformation

Training became an integral part of supporting the transformation. Specifically, the analysis reveals the board, the superintendent and his executive leadership team received extensive training from Reform Governance in Action, CRSS and the Texas Institute and the *Dallas Achieves!* Institutes.

Reform Governance in Action, CRSS and the Texas Institute. Fundamental to the development of the transformational framework was the extensive training with Reform Governance in Action, CRSS and the Texas Institute (INT A9:3; INT A12:2,3; INT A17:4; INT A27:3). The data indicates the three-tiered training began with the Texas Institute which conducts the Center for Reformed School Systems. The Center for Reformed School Systems espouses the reformed governance framework and is focused on the decisions the school board needs to make for a reformed urban school district. Then, along with other big urban districts, the board participated in training supported by the Broad Foundation which delved deeper into the reformed governance model. Finally, the school board was selected to participate in a two-year training whose main focus is the sustainability of the reform governance framework.

We've got to do our work and that includes drafting policies for change, passing policies for change and kind of going to the next level so there are a whole bunch of policies that we have to pass. Certain reform policies. We have to look at our meetings and our agendas of our meetings. Are we focusing on student achievement? (INT A14:7).

The *Dallas Achieves!* Institutes. In addition to extensive training on reform governance, the data shows principal focused training on instructional habits.

We've had, now, 13 *Dallas Achieves!* institutes where every summer we brought the principals together and we taught them on how to work with their teachers. Building to that capacity, building the instructional capacity of the principals mostly through the chief academic officer, but also through chief administrative officer, and chief of staff. Those things really helped changed the conversation, and the fact that they happened simultaneously (INT T9: 14).

*Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress*

The analysis did not reflect any significant data to connect the human resource frame and the communication of the initial transformational progress.

*Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation*

The analysis brought to light several barriers to the transformation which encompass the human resource frame. While there were positive elements associated with the human resource frame, there was also evidence to suggest a level of anxiety, uncertainty and incompetence. The analysis reveals a concern about the human capacity to execute change, effective staffing and buy-in as contributing to the barriers to the transformation.

The human capacity to execute change. From both the internal and the external perspective, there was trepidation about the district's human capacity to execute the quantum change. Therefore, the strategic plan utilized the external consultants as side-by-

side coaches in an attempt to transfer necessary skills with the necessary speed to execute and manage the elements of a transformational framework (INT A19:13-14; INT A23:16). Given the extent of the transformation, a broad set of skill sets had to be injected into the organization.

Well, one was the organizational development skills to change, understanding how to get people to go along with the major change process that was going to happen. Second, was project management, how do you really go about visioning and completing projects from beginning to end, understanding your resources, developing work plans and executing, building the teams to really execute (INT A19:14).

On the instructional side of the organization it was noted that the system was not in every instance designed to support transformation (INT A25:6). Therefore, when addressing the human systems, the district had a lot of capacity building to engage in. The ability to quickly build capacity, amongst principals and teachers, so that they believed in it, supported it, implemented it became a barrier to advancing the transformation (INT A9:7; INT A14:15; INT A23:13).

Effective staffing. In addition to building capacity, it was noted that teacher quality and the principal's evaluation of teaching was not congruent with the expectations necessary to fulfill the transformation.

There is not a good system in place today for evaluating the performance of teachers in a way that makes good sense. 95% of Dallas ISD's teachers are rating proficient above and the graduation rates don't reflect that level

of proficiency in the teaching staff so there's something broken there

(A27:7)

The data suggests that ineffective staffing throughout the organization, especially at the teacher and principal level, would inhibit the district's ability to transform (INT A14:13; INT A21:14; INT A23:21).

That's staffing in everything, that's maintenance workers that's cafeteria workers, that's coaches, teachers, of course, and several administration and you need to get in good people. And you need to train them and you need to support them (INT A14:13).

Buy-in. As in any changing environment, buy-in becomes an issue. The data implies that there were internal as well as external buy-in issues.

Number one was that a lot of people in Dallas don't think transformation or systemic change is possible for the school district. In some of these meetings that we went to you know, people's eyes would roll back and they'd say well, Oh wait, we've heard all this before. "It's not going to happen or no way," so you had some real doubters outside the system, I'm sure inside too, you'd know better than I (INT A21:9-10).

We didn't have buy-in [about the strategy to accomplish the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations] in the ELT [Executive Leadership Team] to begin with but when we started showing interdependencies and that we really couldn't do this in silos is when we started getting more buy-in (INT A17:3).

*Research Question 3: What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the Dallas Achieves! Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the political frame associated with the development of the Dallas Achieves! transformational theory of action framework?*

Table 4 - 4 Political frame Leadership Actions

Leadership Action 1: Setting the Stage for a Transformational Theory of Action Framework	<u>The Networking with Key Players and the Use of the Power Base</u>
	The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and the Foundation for Community Empowerment (FCE)
	The National Council for Educational Accountability (NCEA) and Institute for Learning (IFL)
	The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the Meadows Foundation and the Broad Foundation
	The Dallas Morning News' editorial board
	Various key players outside of the <i>Dallas Achieves!</i>
Leadership Action 2: Building a Transformational Team	<u>The Stacking of the Team with Credible, Influential Members</u>
	The <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission
	Transformation Management Office
Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision	<u>The Mapping of the Political Terrain and the Development of an Agenda</u>
	The unanimous vote of the first <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> recommendations and the supermajority vote on the final <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> recommendation
Leadership Action 4: Supporting the Transformational Framework	<u>The Creation of Arenas, the Building of Alliances and Defusing of the Opposition</u>
	The adoption of the <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> recommendations in their entirety by the Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees
Leadership Action 5: Communicating Initial Transformational Progress	<u>The Investment of Resources and Power to Ensure Early Wins</u>
	Initial <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> recommendations and evaluation concerning central administration cost
	Immediate actions following the central cost reduction recommendations
	The early childhood collaborations
Leadership Action 6: Recognizing Barriers to the Transformation	<u>Political Barriers to Success</u>
	Race
	District/ <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission conflict
	The Dallas Morning News
	Resource Allocation
	Personal accountability

According to Bolman & Deal (2003), the political frame focuses on the organization as a competitive arena characterized by scarce resources, competing interests and struggles for power and advantage. Therefore, the following analysis utilized the following categories associated with the political frame as identified in their reframing of Kotter's Change Stages (p. 386-387 Table 18.2) as they pertain to the initial and sustaining leadership actions. Table 4-4 summarizes the Political frame leadership action findings.

*Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework*

An important component of setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework is the utilization of the power base to network with key players. The analysis reveals the involvement of several key players within as well as outside the community. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and the Foundation for Community Empowerment (FCE) were instrumental in research, evaluation, facilitation and third party accountability; the National Council for Educational Accountability (NCEA) and Institute for Learning (IFL) were influential pieces of the education plan; the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and the Broad Foundation were initial critical funding partners, and the editorial board [Dallas Morning News] and various key players outside of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission provided internal credibility.

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and the Foundation for Community Empowerment (FCE). Given the constraints of executing a transformation, the data suggests there is an important and necessary role for external partners. In this case, the

Boston Consulting Group and the Foundation for Community Empowerment joined forces to facilitate the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission's analysis of the Dallas ISD systems (INT A19:2). The Boston Consulting Group, researching best practices from around the world, was instrumental in building the fact base and in aligning the research to support the transformational effort (INT A14:2;INT A17:15-16; INT A21:4; INT A23:6). The fact base became an integral part of the process for assembling the commission and getting their input. The analysis did involve the educational systems; however, unlike past efforts for reform, the focus included the entire operational systems.

So if in fact you have a commission and these consultants that are non-educators that are looking at the generic way of running and operation and you're using the superintendent leadership team to determine to balance that against to say and educational perspective, we thought that was the best of both worlds (INT A19:2- 3).

The National Council for Educational Accountability (NCEA) and Institute for Learning (IFL). Two key external partners essential to the analysis of the educational systems were the National Center for Educational Accountability and the Institute for Learning (INT A23:6). The National Center for Educational Accountability's curriculum audit, set the stage for much of the transformational work that revolved around the education plan. The Institute for Learning provided the theoretical framework by which to anchor the district's teaching and learning philosophy. The National Center for Educational Accountability continues to play a vital role in sustaining the transformation.

The NCEA [National Center for Educational Accountability] helps us with that review of the work by coming back to the district annually every November or December to give us an annual report card. They present a report card to the board and give us a grade on every one of the recommendations, they cite commendations, findings, and challenges, and then that becomes our retooling of our road map, if you will (INT A25:2-3).

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the Meadows Foundation and the Broad Foundation. At first, three of the most critical key players were the initial funding partners, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the Meadows Foundation and the Broad Foundation. The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation grant was touted as one that probably was going to change the face of Dallas ISD (INT A17:16). The five million dollar investment to support the district's performance management initiative provided resources, but more importantly, legitimized the district's performance management framework.

The Broad Foundation and the Meadows Foundation were key supporters in recognizing the importance of the reformed governance model:

We have been fortunate that the Meadows Foundation has been generous enough to pay for our part I don't know if Broad would have picked us up otherwise, we're lucky there is a local foundation to help support this effort and it's for all the trustees to go to the training and it is two years long (INT A14:5).

The Dallas Morning News' editorial board. Given the influence of the local newspaper, the endorsement of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations by the Dallas Morning News editorial board was a critical point in the initial stages of the transformation (Appendix D).

There was a meeting held with the commission held with the editorial board of the newspaper to preview some of the findings so they can make a judgment about whether they were good and applicable for Dallas schools and they made a judgment to recommend to the board that they approve it. And they wrote about trustees that were in favor of, or perceived to not be in favor of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations at that time. To a degree, I think that was a good and positive force on one level (INT A27:10-11).

Various key players outside of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. In conjunction with the editorial board endorsement, it was noted that beyond the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, there was many supporters throughout the community.

Politically, we had a tremendous amount of support from all of our elected officials, we've had a tremendous amount of support from our community organizations, many of the members of the commission are members of community organizations, which is fantastic. We've had a tremendous amount of support from members of the business community (INT A23:11).

*Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team*

The analysis reveals an external team of credible and influential members—the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission—and an internal team of credible and influential members—the Transformation Management Office. This combination of external and internal members was essential in building a transformational team.

The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission emerges as the primary external team (INT A12:3-4; INT A14:1; INT A17:1; INT A19:6; INT A21:4; INT A23:2). According to the superintendent (INT A9:13), the team that comprises the sixty plus member *Dallas Achieves!* Commission are the chief stakeholders that were critical to the future success of the Dallas ISD. This diverse coalition of people from all facets of the Dallas community spent a year or more developing a framework for the transformational plan.

I would say the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the formation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission is a very big symbolic issue because it represents a group of very diverse, a very diverse group of interested community leaders coming together to try to develop a common perspective on a plan for schools. (INT A27:9).

Transformation Management Office (Appendix A). The primary internal influential team was the Transformation Management Office. During the reorganization and redesign, it was important to establish immediate credibility with the troops; therefore, the Transformation Management Office was able to choose from amongst some of the best people in the district (INT A9:16; DOC 28).

The people that I picked, I was blessed and still am with the best organization because of the unselfish nature of the people that were picked to fill those positions. The deputy, was very unselfish, the principal that we brought in, the HD person we brought in, most everybody in the group is very unselfish in how they went out and carry forth how to bring all this stuff together. So critical to any organization this goes to the sustainability thing is that you build it around people that understand the message and understand what you're trying to do (A17:16).

*Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision*

The unanimous vote of the first *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and the supermajority vote on the final *Dallas Achieves!* recommendation. The data indicates the development and subsequent approval of the agenda for change was crucial to crafting and communicating the transformational vision. The effort to craft and communicate a transformational vision is greatly enhanced when the primary items include, the unanimous vote of the first *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and the supermajority vote on the final *Dallas Achieves!* recommendation.

At least the first round was a unanimous recommendation and the second round was unanimous but for two people so about 16 in favor and two against. I mean that does drive some of our agenda, you know our agenda for change and for reforming the school district. (INT A14:4).

And so after all the discussion and the final play in and a couple of I think small amendments, RK made the motion to approve, AC who seconded it,

and it carried unanimously. I mean I was literally stunned. When does anything in Dallas ever get done unanimously? So that gave us the notion and I think Dr. Hinojosa the notion that this actually could proceed (INT A21:5).

Then as you know we finally came to vote about February or March of '07, the commission and it carried something like 44 to 4, we had four no votes on the commission (INT 21:6).

*Leadership Action 4: Supporting the transformation*

In order to support the transformational effort, it is important to create arenas, build alliances and defuse the opposition. The analysis reveals the adoption of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations in their entirety as a major factor supporting the transformation .

Adoption of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations in their entirety. A major political element to defusing opposition to the transformational effort was the adoption by Dallas Independent School District's Board of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations in their entirety. The all or nothing proposition provided the necessary mandate for change (DOC 36).

The deal that we made with him was like base closing stuff, it was all up or down. You can't cherry pick that was the deal that we made with him ahead of time, we're not going to spend all this work, and go raise all this money and everything and then you can cherry pick this thing you know, it's all or nothing and he agreed to that and so he approved it, that was in

March of '07 or something like that. Then it went to the school board, same deal, no cherry picking to the school board, thumbs up or thumbs down. I was at the meeting where it was presented. It was April of '07 when the school board approved it (INT A21:6-7).

*Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress*

In communicating the initial transformational progress, this study reveals the initial *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and evaluation concerning central administration costs, immediate actions following the central cost reduction recommendations and the early childhood work as critical to the investment of resources and power to ensure early wins.

Initial *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and evaluation concerning central administration costs. The initial phase of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations focused on an evaluation concerning central administration costs. The evaluation concentrated on all non-classroom labor and other non-labor expenses. The cost savings projections from the initial phase promoted the notion of central cost savings and were the catalyst for further action.

I think there were 13 recommended actions, 13 recommended actions that amounted to; there was a range of savings potential, I think it was around, I can't remember the exact dollar amount but it was millions of dollars a year, millions of dollars a year worth of savings from 13 recommendations all on a cost take out. So that was one of the earliest things that were looked at (INT A27:11).

Immediate actions following the central cost reduction recommendations. The immediate actions following the central cost reduction recommendations solidified the idea that in order to ensure the early wins, the district would need to actualize the recommendations. Among the most visible recommendations were preventive maintenance programs, elimination of hall monitors, creation of common planning time, implementation of smaller class sizes at the secondary level, creation of academic coaches and the redesign of central staff (INT A27:12; DOC 24).

The early childhood collaborations. One of the early wins that emerged was the early childhood collaborations. The *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations required a significant amount of work around the birth to four-year-old age group; therefore, a significant collaboration with early childhood providers—public, private, and parochial—throughout the city has occurred, to the extent those collaborations were cited as a “best practice.”

So one example, one small example of that collaboration is that early childhood childcare providers in our city have access to a professional development with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers and experts in our district at very little or low cost to them depending on whether they’re for profit or not for profit. Another example of that collaboration that is a direct result of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission is that we are now, if you will in quote, certifying early childhood providers or daycares in our city as Dallas ISD partners when they complete a course of training

at and use the standard curriculum recommended by our early childhood program (INT A25:6-7).

*Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation*

Within the political framework, barriers revealed by the analysis included the recognition of disempowerment and the perception of conflict between winners and losers. Specific barriers include race relations, the board and the perception of its power, conflict between the District and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the *Dallas Morning News*, resource allocation and personal accountability.

Race. Historical as well as current race issues automatically lend themselves to opposition. The vestiges of segregation and the Dallas' contentious journey with desegregation continue to permeate the city as well as the district. The rapid changes in the city's demographics have led to further mistrust, negative race relations and the notion that certain races of children and adults are favored at the expense of other races. The situation especially pertains to Hispanics and African-Americans (INT A14:11-12; INT A17:10-11; INT A21:11-12; INT A23:12).

One of the interesting things coming into Dallas is that I didn't know that Dallas had a history of being a zero sum game. And I don't want to sound judgmental and I could be way off base, but it feels as if given some of the political climate conversations and occurrences of the past is that part of our political battle has been to grow the belief that everybody can win. That somebody doesn't have to lose points for somebody to gain them, or somebody doesn't have to lose resources for somebody else to gain them,

or one community doesn't have to give up something for another community to gain something (INT A25:12).

The board and the perception of its power. The board by definition is afforded certain powers; however, in reality, the power flows along a continuum, much of which has its base in the informal channels. Politically, individuals are invested in the current structure, especially those who have been successful. Therefore, there was a delicate balance in dealing with changing something in which an individual may have been very successful. The idea that a board member might have to give up individual power and resources within his circle of influence, for the good of the greater district, continues to be difficult (INT A9:6; INT A14:12; INT A21:11).

In addition to losses of power and resources within an individual's circle of influence, evidence also suggests confusion, a perceived conflict of interest, and usurpation of authority on the part of the commission over the board (INT A9:6; INT A25:5; INT A27:5).

That the outside enemy was helping the inside enemy, that the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission was driving the car, that the board took offense to the fact that the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission were making recommendations. It's that whole ego thing, the whole deal about you can't tell me how to run my business, and it's the commission going I can't believe you guys are so stupid you're not doing this, so it's that whole external/internal, it's not about collaboration, it's the entity. That's the biggest thing (INT A17:13).

District/ *Dallas Achieves!* Commission conflict. Despite the agreement to leave the education plan off the table, the analysis suggests a contentious relationship between the district and the commission regarding the district's education plan and the notion of managed instruction with earned empowerment (INT A21:14; INT A25:6).

There was some friction a few times that I am aware of. Our education division wanted to go this direction, *Dallas Achieve!* Commission wanted to go that direction so there had to be some massaging of egos and feelings to get us to where we are today. It wasn't a smooth transition because we had some highly qualified paid professional who worked for the system and you had a whole bunch of local volunteers on the commission. (INT A23:7).

The Dallas Morning News. One of the most recognizable barriers to transformation was *The Dallas Morning News'* unbalanced journalistic stance towards the district.

You know, having a newspaper that five full time reporters just on our school district and yet has one reporter for all of Higher Education in Texas, all of the UT system, all of the A&M systems, all the Texas Tech system, all the UNT system, the community college system, SMU, one reporter. Dallas ISD, five reporters. (INT A14:16-17).

As noted there were areas of the district experiencing real success; however, due to the imbalance in reporting, many of the positive aspects of the transformation failed to

gain prominence. This imbalance created complexities for the superintendent and the board while simultaneously undermining the community's confidence (INT A17:11).

Another political obstacle is that the district is in a fish bowl and that every action that is taken, a particularly the ones that have a negative spin to them, you know, we end up on the front page of the newspaper. And that creates a stir in the community and a scarring of the district and the community. Where one of the political issues is that I don't think that there has been balanced journalism (INT A27:8-9).

Resource allocation. The attempt to equitably allocate resources has led to a significant debate over the fairness with which the resources were being distributed and the extent to which the resource availability was reflecting coherence across the district (INT A25:8; INT A27:6). Additionally, the disparities made it difficult to ascertain the rationale behind the amount of funding per child.

One thing we haven't done is student weighted funding, where the money follows the kids as we receive it from the state. And that is another major structural change that is yet to come. Because right now even within our school system we're too uneven. You know money is not following the needs of the kids (INT A14:14).

Personal accountability. The notion of personal accountability surfaced as a barrier to transformation. The reality of change led to resistance within the organization and highlighted an aversion to personal accountability (INT A21:10).

The biggest hurdle I guess, is the performance management and accountability, nobody wants to be held accountable, so putting that arrow through there was probably the most significant part, now that was strategic, of any of the rings that was the most strategic part, to show that it went through everything (INT A17:13).

*Research Question 4: What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the Dallas Achieves! Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the symbolic frame associated with the development of the Dallas Achieves! transformational theory of action framework?*

Table 4 -5 Symbolic frame Leadership Actions

Leadership Action 1: Setting the Stage for a Transformational Theory of Action Framework	<u>The Telling of a Compelling Story</u>
	The need for systemic change
	The use of best practices
	Belief that effort creates ability
Leadership Action 2: Building a Transformational Team	<u>The Placement of a Commanding Officer on the Team</u>
	The Superintendent
	Chairman of a foundation and tri-ethnic chair of the <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission
	The Chief Transformation Officer <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> project manager
Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision	<u>The Crafting of a Hopeful Vision of the Future Rooted in Organizational History</u>
	The notion of transforming into the best urban school district in the country
	The <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> framework
Leadership Action 4: Supporting the Transformational Framework	<u>The Visible Leadership Involvement</u>
	The superintendent
	The school board
	The <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission
Leadership Action 5: Communicating Initial Transformational Progress	<u>The Celebration and Communication of Early Signs of Progress</u>
	The curriculum audit review
	The academic progress reports
	The <i>Dallas Achieves!</i> Commission updates
Leadership Action 6: Recognizing Barriers to the Transformation	<u>The Symbolic Barriers to Success</u>
	Legacy issues
	The status quo Perseverance

According to Bolman & Deal (2003), the symbolic frame focuses on the issues of meaning and faith. It puts ritual, ceremony, story, play and culture at the heart of the organization. Therefore, the following analysis utilized the categories associated with the symbolic framework in Bolman and Deal's reframing of Kotter's Change Stages (p. 386-

387 Table 18.2) as they pertain to the initial and sustaining leadership actions. Table 4-5 summarizes the Symbolic frame leadership action findings.

*Leadership Action 1: Setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework*

In setting the stage for a transformational theory of action framework, the ability to tell a compelling story is vital to the initial and sustaining leadership actions. The analysis reveals that the compelling story in this case included the need for systemic change, use of best practices, and the belief that effort creates ability.

You know one of the things that I hope that we can do is demonstrate that an elective board in an urban community can in fact be part of creating a great school system (INT A12:11).

The need for systemic change. The pervasive notion throughout the city and the district was that, in order to overcome the constant churn of superintendents (seven in ten years) and to become the best urban district in the nation, the Dallas Independent School District was going to have to seriously entertain the idea of systemic change and transformation (INT A21:3; INT A23: 1-2, 4-5; DOC 10; DOC 16). It became clear the unit for change was no longer program or classroom based, but district wide (INT A19:8; INT A21:2-3; INT A25:2).

If we are serious about educating kids, we got to do something different.

We can't keep having these pockets of success. In order for the entire school district to be successful and be one of the top urban districts in the

nation we're going to have to change our formula, change our direction, change our mind set, and change the way we're doing things (INT A23:2).

The use of best practices. A focal point of the compelling story was the use of best practices as the anchor for becoming the best urban district in the country. Prior to the use of best practices, the driving force behind most conversations or debates was anecdote or individual experience. Therefore, in order to gain validity, the development of a fact base of best practices became vital to the story (INT A14:1-2; INT A23:2; DOC 22).

In terms of the fact base that was underneath that there was quite a body of work, several hundred pages of work that was assembled and we shared with the board. But it was informed by benchmark visits to high performing school districts and an analysis of the current state of Dallas ISD in terms of student achievement and all of the rings that were in that I just described in the framework. It was informed by best practices and that was not just from the U.S., it was a global scan (INT A27:3-4).

Belief that effort creates ability. A core belief essential to the story was the notion that effort creates ability. The publicly stated beliefs, that all children can get smarter through hard work and that all children deserve access to an academically rigorous learning environment that prepares them for a post-secondary education, forces the system to act accordingly (INT A25:11). It holds the system as well as individuals to the notion that all children can learn.

In my view it's the art of the possible. People think that poor kids can't learn, you know what I mean, and you don't have to be a "Charles Murray reader." Research and data shows that demographics are not destiny. For every demographic whether it is ethnicity, poverty, parent, no parent, guardian, no guardian in the home, mobility, that there are high performing school systems so the possibility, the hope of success is real (INT A21:14-15).

*Leadership Action 2: Building a transformational team*

In most transformational efforts, there is a clear commanding officer. In the case of *Dallas Achieves!* it is very clear that the superintendent was indeed the commander in chief. However, the breadth of the transformational effort required commanding officers on many fronts. Besides the commander in chief, the analysis reveals multiple commanding officers, including the chairman of a local foundation and member of the tri-ethnic chair of *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the Chief Transformation Officer and the *Dallas Achieves!* project manager.

The Superintendent. The superintendent was the architect in the design of the model that we used, that we call the *Dallas Achieves!* which makes sense for Dallas (INT A14:2).

The crux of the entire transformation was the superintendent's unwavering commitment to aligning the entire system to support engaged, high achieving children.

Then Dr. Hinojosa came in to concentrate on the academic achievement of our kids. So when I say this is the first time, I mean about my experience

[of my twelve years serving on the board], this is the first time I have had a general superintendent or superintendent of the school rather, who is directly concentrating on *Dallas Achieves!* meaning the achievement of our kids academically and if our kids achieve academically then the whole city of Dallas will achieve (INT A23:5).

The evidence suggests that there were a number of reform efforts and initiatives taking place to accomplish this goal; however, in order to bring clarity and coherence, the superintendent called the entire reform minded set of initiatives *Dallas Achieves!* (INT A21:7-8).

Included in the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework was the identification and formulation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the Reform Governance in Action training, his executive team, the Institute for Learning, and the idea that the district was the systemic unit of change (INT A12:1; INT A27:7).

Chairman of a foundation and tri-ethnic chair of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission,

You can't underestimate the importance of what Don Williams contributed to it. Don has really done it though. A lot of us, I don't mean diminish all the other help and the partners in progress and whatever it is but Don has put a lot of his money and certainly a lot of his energy and a lot of his leadership into the thing (INT A12:4).

While the data suggests the superintendent was clearly the commander in chief, most of what was accomplished would not have been possible without the leadership of Don Williams, chairman emeritus of Trammell Crow Company, chairman of the

Foundation for Community Empowerment and a member of the tri-ethnic chair for the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission (INT A21:9; INT A27:2; DOC 17).

The other one was the selection of Don Williams. When I said there are a few men that are acknowledged as being key city leaders and have deep pockets and are willing to put things on the line and have demonstrated that they are out to help the people in poverty to raise themselves up, it was Don. He was one of the few city leaders that could have pulled off the fund raising and could have pulled off, made the call to the commissioners (INT A19:12).

The Chief Transformation Officer. The superintendent's appointment of a Chief Transformation Officer signaled a commitment to turning the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory into action. Historically when dealing with transformational change, especially of the magnitude of the *Dallas Achieves!*, best practice requires an executive level officer to lead the effort. The superintendent, in devising the Chief Transformation Officer position, knew the individual should possess a skill set which encompassed strong performance, respect amongst the executive leadership team (ELT), experience managing operations and projects, good business judgment to help with prioritization and problem solving and political savvy to understand and deal with the internal/external challenges associated with change management (INT 27(2):2). The superintendent was able to turn to his chief of technology to fulfill the new role (DOC 37). In order to lead the transformational effort, the Chief Transformation Officer placed the establishment of the transformation team as priority number one.

So the roadmap for putting all of that together was a part of our team, you know the transformation team, building that group and I labored over who to put into that group. I picked the transformation office from areas that I knew that I needed the expertise in and they were built around these rings. I guess my role was to help build that framework and have the patience to find different ways to show the leadership team the path and why transformational change was more important than incremental change (INT A17:6-7).

*Dallas Achieves!* project manager. Given the scope of the transformational effort and the significant number of entities involved, the *Dallas Achieves!* project manager emerged as a key individual in the command structure. The speed with which the development of the transformational framework was taking place required a respected individual, facilitator and executive to manage the day to day operations (INT 17(2):3-4; INT 27(2):3)

I was intimately involved in all the conversations and all the strategy discussions and was really looking at an external party person with expertise in business process, business and leadership. Then I became the liaison between the consultants and the coaches of the commission and the school district so I became the person that did all the coordination and listened to everybody and was able to capitalize all the conversations I was hearing so that we could move forward. At that time I became president of the organization and the chief liaison between the district and the

commission so I basically was the liaison between the transformation office that was started and the commission and would at the same time would have one on one conversations with the superintendent so that he would know what the community, even the broader community was saying about what was going on inside the school district (INT A19:8-9).

### *Leadership Action 3: Crafting and Communicating a Vision*

In crafting and communicating the transformational vision, the analysis reveals the notion of transforming into the best urban school district in the country and the *Dallas Achieves!* framework as two significant vehicles.

The notion of transforming into the best urban school district in the country. The notion of transforming into the “best urban school district in the country” became the rallying point for crafting the transformational vision (INT A9:2-3; INT A12:9; INT A14:1, 5; INT A19:16; INT A23:3; INT A25:11; INT A27:9). The idea of transforming the Dallas Independent School District directly challenged all stakeholders to suspend their respective biases and to buy in to a process that revolved around the greater good and academic success for children (INT A19:14-15).

What it really means is the business community and the political community at the city level, at the state level, at the district level, the board politics, the leaders in the African American community, the Hispanic community, the business community just all those larger institutions and groups have to be willing to bring not only their agenda to

the table but their willingness to think beyond their agendas to the table to really build a system of excellence. (INT A25:13).

The *Dallas Achieves!* Framework. While the notion of transforming into the “best urban school district in the country” became the rallying point for crafting the transformational vision, the *Dallas Achieves!* framework was anchored by an earlier effort whose focus was on the Lincoln and Madison feeder pattern (former Area 2) and the Pinkston feeder pattern (former Area 6).

In 2005 The Foundation for Community Empowerment launched *Dallas Achieves!*, a partnership designed to transform first South Dallas schools and then the entire district by adopting the best practices that distinguish the nation’s most successful urban districts. Other partners are Dallas ISD, the National Center for Educational Accountability and Texas Instruments. Dallas ISD’s new superintendent, Dr. Michael Hinojosa, has embraced the effort and melded it with his own ambitious strategy for winning the Broad Prize for Urban Education, awarded each year to the nation’s most improved district, by 2010 (DOC 46).

Once the superintendent championed the effort, *Dallas Achieves!* became the mechanism for communicating the vision.

The vision rings [concept] is the basis for everything, it is something that everybody can settle on, everybody can digest, and it is palatable to people (INT A17:6).

The name and the framework became powerful symbols for communicating the vision. Essentially the name and the framework nested the entire transformation within

the context high achieving students and the symbiotic relationship between the city, the district and all the support mechanisms (INT A14:14; INT A17:2; INT A19:16; INT A21:7-8; INT A27:3).

The name was very symbolic because it was about Dallas, it's about all of Dallas and it's about achievement, achievement of students. When you have a transformation plan called *Dallas Achieves!*, it sends a signal that it's about teaching and learning and that it's about the whole city, it's not Dallas ISD Achieves, it's *Dallas Achieves!*. When we're successful, it will have a huge impact and ripple effect on the entire city and economic development and quality of life and those kinds of things (INT A9:9- 10).

*Leadership Action 4: Supporting the transformation*

Visible leadership is a key component to supporting the transformation. In support of the transformation, the analysis points to the superintendent, the board and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission as the most visible leaders.

The Superintendent. As commander in chief, the most visible leader was the superintendent. Beginning with the entry plan, his singular purpose was to build a framework to support a transformational effort. His unquestionable commitment to transforming the district into the best urban district in the country was a recognized force.

First of all the superintendent was committed to change, I mean without the commitment from the top, these things don't go anywhere because he's the one, you know his team, and the whole the teachers and

everybody else are who have to implement this, not the community members (INT A21:7).

The school board. Equally important was the visible leadership displayed by Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees. Throughout the process the board consistently voted in favor of all the transformational recommendations put forth by the administration and has fully (all but one member) participated in the Reform Governance for Action (INT A27:3). By all accounts the board did not vote against a single item that had a direct connection to the transformation or student achievement (INT A14:6; INT A21:8; INT A23:20; INT A25:5).

But this board as a corporate body has been unfailingly committed to the transformation. All of the votes that I believe that has been critical to the transformation, all the policy redesigns that I believe has been critical to the transformation have passed, not always unanimously but as a body I believe the board has always supported the moves and the resources they needed to make the transformation (INT A25:5).

The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission posed the most unique visibility in support of the transformation. The 60-plus member commission served as steering committee of interested community advisors. Their direct involvement in regularly held meetings helped in the development of the transformational framework and recommendations (INT A27:4-5).

The commission brought two things to bear I think that were critical. One, community visibility and they brought community support. In a city like

Dallas and district like Dallas, there hasn't always been an easy relationship between the larger community and the power brokers in the community and the school district so I think the first thing that the commission did was brought that support to bear. The second thing I think the commission did was they brought a light to the systems of operation in the district that needed improving for the transformation to be sustained (INT A25:6).

*Leadership Action 5: Communicating initial transformational progress*

Celebrate and Communicate Early Signs of Progress. The analysis reveals the primary venues. The curriculum audit review, *Dallas Achieves!* Commission updates and academic progress reports.

The curriculum audit review. The curriculum audit review was a medium to communicate the districts progress against the baseline set by the National Center for Education Accountability (NCEA) [now known as the National Center for Educational Achievement] initial curriculum audit. The initial NCEA audit recommended seventeen areas of focus based on five research based themes:

1. Curriculum and academic goals
2. Staff selection, leadership and capacity building
3. Instructional programs, practices and arrangements
4. Monitoring, compilation, analysis and use of data
5. Recognition, intervention and adjustment

The seventeen recommendations were an attempt to increase academic rigor and address the district's systemic issues related to student performance, college readiness and graduation rate (DOC 30, 34, 35).

Academic progress reports. The fact that it is working hopefully it will sustain for a long period of time and the dramatic improvements in the last year, when you double the percent of recognized and exemplary schools, which are our highest two ratings in our state accountability system, show that implementing the plan, with discipline, could have a payoff (INT A9:12).

Dallas Achieves! Commission updates. The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission updates were an integral part of communicating and moving the work forward. The *Dallas Achieves!* transformational effort was parceled into three phases—Phase 1: Diagnostic, Phase 2: Follow-up and Phase 3: Transformation. Each phase contained many dynamic elements and interdependencies within and across stakeholder groups. Therefore, the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission updates served as the vehicle by which to engage, communicate and project manage (DOC 24) .

*Leadership Action 6: Recognizing barriers to the transformation*

The analysis brought to light barriers to the transformation which encompass the symbolic frame. While there were positive elements associated with the symbolic frame, there was also evidence to suggest a loss of meaning and purpose, as well as clinging to the past. The analysis revealed legacy issues, the status quo and perseverance as the themes: contributing barriers to the transformation.

Legacy issues. The data suggests that a significant barrier to the transformation is the legacy issues that continue to interfere with forward momentum. Transformation requires challenging every core belief and every core system and process. The longer the district sustains the transformation, the more it exposes elements and practices that do not directly support a transformational effort or that work contrary to focusing on high achieving engaged students (INT A17:11; INT A27:6-8).

Oh absolutely, well one, is that you have to crack open the ghosts of the past, know you have to crack open those skeletons and find all those skeletons and you know any kind of major transformation that's going to occur in an urban school district is going to be associated with a lot of bad stuff. You know we didn't get this way overnight and we're not going to dig our way out overnight, you know 35 years of legacy of people not doing the right thing takes a long time to change. Getting enough people convinced that the status quo is unacceptable and you need to do something about it. Sometimes it takes major surgery to do something about it (INT A14:16).

The status quo. While individual mindsets and the culture have changed to a degree, the reality of the situation lends itself to the belief that all would go back to the way it was if the superintendent were to leave (INT A17:14).

That's another thing, when you embark on one these transformations, there are people who are going to be resistant to change and we have people who are going to be resistant to change and want to defend the

status quo or don't want the status quo to change they're gonna do bad things including lie to the superintendent, lie to the board of trustees, give us bad data, etc, etc, etc, all the other things, run to the morning news [Dallas Morning News] and the media before trying to handle it internally. Because we are gonna change things and people are going to resist us. So that's another thing that these people need to take into account (INT A14:17).

Perseverance. The ability to persevere was recognized as a barrier the transformational effort. Given the difficulties encountered when embarking on change, there were questions regarding the capacity to maintain focus and persevere.

It appears as if there comes a time in every urban district's transformation where something really tough happens and for some reason whatever that reason is they get off course. Whatever the guise that is where the transformation tends to break down and district leadership, political leadership, administrative leadership, the board leadership, the superintendent, they all have got to be able to recognize those events when they happen and to work through them and thrive through them without giving up the larger goals and the larger initiatives for the students (INT A25:14).

There was also evidence to suggest that the margin for error concerning student achievement was very slim.

I think the business community believes, they believe so strongly in the *Dallas Achieves!* the cause and the gains on the academic side and therefore they are willing help out and work to fix the back of the house stuff. And if you guys give up on the gains on the academic achievement side and the *Dallas Achieves!* you can forget them, they're not going to, and they'll dust their hands of DISD. Sorry (INT A21:18).

## CHAPTER 5: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations

Despite the overwhelming attention and support for urban educational systemic transformation, the direct responsibility and the successful execution of educational reform are highly associated to the capacity of the leader and leadership teams within the school community. Increasingly, these leadership teams are employing a systemic transformational change framework or theory of action to articulate a district's goals, actions, resources and outcomes (Argyris & Shon, 1974). This study describes the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

Given the current reality of education in our urban centers, it is clear that incremental change will not suffice. The situation calls for large-scale organizational change. Large-scale organizational change must alter the character of the urban educational system so that performance throughout the entire organization is significantly improved (Dufour & Eaker, 1992; Fullan, 2000; Senge, 1990; Zmuda *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, contemporary research asserts that in order to significantly improve student achievement, districts must establish a systemic transformational change framework that addresses all aspects of the district's organization while placing engaged high performing students at the center of all actions (Childress *et al.*, 2006; Fullan, 1991; Fullan *et al.*, 2004; Waclawski, 2002).

Acknowledging a sense of urgency, major urban educational systems have expended significant resources in an effort to establish a systemic transformational

change framework or theory of action to guide the reform efforts necessary to close the achievement gap. The use of transformational theories of action in large urban school districts is a prevalent but understudied strategy. This study examines and describes the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group used in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. The exploration of the following issues guided the study: (a) structural frame, (b) human resource frame, (c) political frame and (4) symbolic frame.

The four research questions for each issue are:

1. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the structural frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
2. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the human resource frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
3. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the political frame associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?
4. What initial and sustaining leadership actions did the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group undertake to address the symbolic frame

associated with the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework?

This case study utilized the articulated constructs of Bolman and Deal's *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership* (2003). More specifically, the four frames for "making sense" of organizations were used as the theoretical framework by which the data were categorized and analyzed.

### *Major Findings*

A summary of the findings is reported in alignment with the classification categories as delineated in Bolman and Deal's (2003) reframing of Kotter's Change Stages (p. 386-387 Table 18.2) and reframing organizational change (p. 372 Table 18.1) which addresses barriers to change.

#### *Structural Frame*

1. Leadership Action 1. The development of the coordination strategy was framed with the elements of the: superintendent's comprehensive entry plan; thorough the curriculum audit conducted by an external consultant and the transformational strategy as developed by the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission with guidance from external consultants.
2. Leadership Action 2. The development of the coordination strategy was framed with the elements of the establishment of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.
3. Leadership Action 3. The implementation plan was guided by the: *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group recommendations.

4. Leadership Action 4. The structures created to support change included the superintendent's hiring authority; the conversion of the supervision of the geographical areas to horizontal learning communities; redesign of the teaching and learning division to support the newly created learning communities; introduction of collaborative planning time and the reduction of class size at the secondary level; establishment of the Transformation Management Office; performance management and the definition of success and extensive fundraising.

The alignment of the district's structures to the new culture consisted of adopting a managed instruction with earned empowerment theory of action policy (Appendix E); aligning the superintendent's evaluation and incentive pay to student outcomes and aligning the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations.

5. Leadership Action 5. The removal or alteration of structures that supported the old ways were reflected in the redesign of the central staff; the conversion of the supervision of the geographical areas to horizontal learning communities and the newly initiated request for principal process.

The actions for keeping people on the plan were comprised of the Transformation Management Office's role in the creation of work teams, mapping of interdependencies, and the establishment of metrics for success to address the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and the notion of student achievement.

6. Leadership Action 6. The structural barriers to success were manifested in the concern for structural capacity to absorb change with the speed and depth necessary; the lack of capacity with the data integrity, infrastructure and personnel to analyze

and act appropriately; the lack of a comprehensive intense communication plan; the stability and sustainability of leadership and the lack of an education foundation.

### *Human Resource Frame*

1. Leadership Action 1. In an effort to involve people throughout the organization and solicit input on the notion of transforming the district, the superintendent interviewed over fifty people from within the district and throughout the city of Dallas and he established a multifaceted *Dallas Achieves!* Commission of over sixty community members.
2. Leadership Action 2. The formation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission played a key role in establishing a guiding team.
3. Leadership Action 3. The meetings to communicate direction and get feedback included meetings between the superintendent and the board; the superintendent, his executive leadership team and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission; and the Boston Consulting Group and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.
4. Leadership Action 4. The training and resources provided to support the transformational effort comprised extensive board/superintendent-executive leadership team involvement with Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS) and the Texas Institute and intensive principal involvement with the *Dallas Achieves!* Institutes.
5. Leadership Action 5. The analysis did not reflect significant data to connect the Human Resource Frame to the communication of the initial transformational progress.

6. Leadership Action 6. The human resource barriers to success were evident in the concerns about the human capacity to execute change, buy-in from internal as well as external stakeholders and effectively staffing for the new culture.

### *Political Frame*

1. Leadership Action 1. The networking with key players and the use of a power base required direct involvement of the Boston Consulting Group (BCG); the Foundation for Community Empowerment (FCE) as a third party accountability system; the National Center for Education Accountability (NCEA); the Institute for Learning (IFL); the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation; the Meadows Foundation; the Broad Foundation; the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission; various influential political, community, and business organizations and the *Dallas Morning News* editorial board.
2. Leadership Action 2. The credibility of the transformation team and the inclusion of influential members were reflected in the multifaceted sixty plus community members that made up the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the newly formed Transformation Management Office.
3. Leadership Action 3. The mapping of the political terrain and the developing of the transformation agenda were aided by a unanimous vote of the initial set of eleven central administrative oriented *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and a supermajority of votes to accept the one hundred plus transformational *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations.
4. Leadership Action 4. The creation of arenas, building of alliances and diffusion of the opposition was facilitated by the supermajority adoption of the entire *Dallas*

*Achieves!* recommendations by both the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees.

5. Leadership Action 5. The investment in resources and power to ensure early wins includes the very public evaluation and immediate execution of remedies to address the initial *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations concerning central administrative costs; and the work with the early childhood collaborations.
6. Leadership Action 6. The political frame barriers to success were evident in race and its relation to the historical context of Dallas, the conflict between members of the superintendent's executive leadership team and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the conflict between the board and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, problems with resource allocation, issues of personal accountability and the *Dallas Morning News*.

#### *Symbolic Frame*

1. Leadership Action 1. The compelling story for transforming the district was nested in the need for systemic change to overcome the pockets of excellence that dotted the district, the incongruence with district practices and industry best practices as exhibited by the National Center for Educational Achievement December 2005 curriculum audit findings and the notions that children can get smarter and effort creates ability.
2. Leadership Action 2. The commander-in-chief of the entire transformational effort was the superintendent; however, the scope and breadth of the transformation required several commanding officers—the chairman of a local foundation, the tri-

ethnic chair of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the chief transformation officer and the *Dallas Achieves!* project manager.

3. Leadership Action 3. The crafting of a hopeful vision of the future was rooted in the idea of transforming the Dallas Independent School District into the best urban school district in the country and the vision rings, which illustrated the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.
4. Leadership Action 4. The consistent visible leadership of the Transformational Leadership Group personified the initial and sustaining leadership actions.
5. Leadership Action 5. The early signs of progress were primarily communicated and celebrated in three venues: the annual curriculum audit review, the quarterly *Dallas Achieves!* Commission updates, and the annual academic progress reports.
6. Leadership Action 6. The symbolic frame barriers to success include the prominent legacy issues, the status quo and perseverance.

### *Major Conclusions*

The emergent theoretical constructs related to the structural, human resource, political and symbolic frames and the associated barriers to success served as the basis from which to draw the conclusions.

Bolman and Deal's (2003) proposed skills, processes and rules of thumb for successful leadership practice within each of the frames and their accompanying notion that change undermines existing arrangements, creating ambiguity, confusion and distrust serve as the lens by which to frame the conclusions.

### *Structural Frame*

Effective structural leadership is characterized as social architecture whose focus is on designing and building. Accordingly, effective structural leadership has the right design for the times and is able to get structural changes implemented (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p.352). In this case study, the effective structural leadership characteristics of (a) doing their homework, (b) rethinking the relationship of structure, strategy and environment and (c) focusing on implementation are exhibited in the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the Transformational Leadership Group in the following manner:

Doing their homework. The execution of the Superintendent's entry plan served as the basis by which to launch the transformation effort. By engaging principals, cabinet level administrators, the previous superintendent, all nine school board trustees, and to community members in a focused, deliberate series of questions, the superintendent was able to identify, key stakeholders, leverage points and barriers to a framework for transformation. The best practices curriculum audit conducted by the National Center for Accountability (NCEA) set the stage for initial road map of the education plan and the rework of the district's curriculum and instruction practices. The education plan's best practices audit became the vision for the change. The education plan served as an integral pillar to the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. The fact base researched by the Boston Consulting Group was an extensive body of work that was informed by visits to high performing school districts, an analysis of the current state of Dallas ISD in terms of student achievement and all of the components that make up the

*Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. The fact base included the United States as well as other entities throughout the world. The Boston Consulting Group benchmarks included Dallas ISD's performance and trend line graduation grade, college readiness statistics over time, on-track-for-college readiness throughout students' school careers, and the impact of quality teaching on student gains.

Rethinking the relationship of structure, strategy and environment. With an emphasis on Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment and a focus on instructional leadership, the structure of campus support was reorganized into learning communities. The area superintendent structure gave way to four geographical elementary learning communities and three secondary learning communities. Two of which were geographical in nature, and the third; the superintendents' learning community, was geared towards supporting the schools in most need. The redesign of the central staff reduced the number of layers between the central services and the campuses. Every department in the teaching and learning division was aligned to support schools within the learning communities. Every learning community executive director now has one direct supervisor for reading language arts, math, science, social studies, special ed., bilingual ed., and guidance and counseling.

Focusing on implementation. The majority of the implementation fell directly to the executive leadership team and the associated staffs. Various components of the theory of action for change were nested in the areas where the expertise resided. For example, the education plan was the domain of the chief academic officer; implementation was the domain of the chief administrative officer while the development of the performance

management and accountability, data warehouse, mapping, work teams and work team charters, *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and systems all became the domain of the newly created transformation management office. The Chief of Staff, financial, central and human development offices were designed to provide direct support and intervention. The central staff redesign was the impetus for building an organization that would implement and sustain the transformational actions necessary to execute the plan.

### *Human Resource frame*

Effective human resource leadership is characterized as catalyst in nature. Accordingly, effective human resource leadership facilitates the motivation and empowerment of subordinates (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p.354). In this case study, the effective human resource leadership characteristics of (a) believing in people and communicating beliefs, (b) visibility and accessibility and (c) empowering others are exhibited in the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework in the following manner.

### Believing in people and communicating beliefs. *Dallas Achieves!*

Transformational Leadership Group all coalesced around the belief that the Dallas Independent School District was going to become the best urban district in the country. Immediately after reporting of the results of the superintendent's entry plan in November of 2005, the board along with the superintendent concluded they would embark on a transformational effort that would transform the system into a great urban district. Nonetheless, the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group all knew there

were going to be some tough calls; they were going to have to change the way the district did business, and they were going to have to change policies and practices while they collectively set the vision to become the best urban district in the country by 2010.

Concurrent with communicating the determination to become the best urban district in the country by 2010 was the articulation of the publicly stated core beliefs that (a) effort creates ability, (b) all children can get smarter through hard work, (c) an academically rigorous learning environment that prepares all children is a right, and (d) all children deserve equal access to resources that prepare them for college and the work force.

Visibility and accessibility. The board, the commission and the executive leadership team maintain that without the superintendent's visible leadership, commitment and support the transformation effort would not have become a reality. The fact that the superintendent and his executive leadership team make themselves available to the schools by maintaining weekly visits reflects a philosophy of visibility and accessibility at the campus level. The quarterly meetings with the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, and the frequent informal and formal meetings with potential funders attended by the superintendent and various members of his executive leadership team, board members and *Dallas Achieves!* Commissioners, signal to all stakeholders transparency and community presence.

Empowering others. Recognizing that the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational reform effort would require a coordinated and collaborative effort, the formation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the board's involvement with the Reform Governance in Action were two of the most significant empowering actions. A major portion of the

*Dallas Achieves!* transformation plan involved over 60 community members from all walks of life, who took about six months and convened 51 meetings of subgroups and big groups to come up with 109 recommendations, which are all nested inside the six vision rings that make up the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

This transformational theory of action framework with its final 109 recommendations was the first time in the history of the city of Dallas that such a monumental collaborative effort between the superintendent and his executive leadership team, the school board and community members produced a product that received a supermajority from the Commission as well as the board. Reform Governance in Action, with their focus on transformational governance, has empowered the board to create an exemplary system through the power of a policy that is focused on children, their achievement and all the resources necessary to have all the district's children graduate college and workforce ready.

#### *Political frame*

Effective political leadership is characterized by its ability to negotiate. Accordingly, effective political leadership is built on advocacy and coalition building (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p.359). In this case study, the effective political leadership characteristics, (a) clarifying what they want and what they can get, (b) assessing the distribution of power and interests, (c) building linkages to key stakeholders and (d) persuading first, negotiating second and coercing only if necessary, are exhibited in the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the following manner:

Clarifying what they want and what they can get. In order to become the best urban district in the country, *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group realized that the fulfillment of the recommendations nested in the transformational theory of action framework was going to require financial resources beyond the district's means; therefore, they embarked on a fundraising campaign.

The superintendent and his executive leadership team, the school board, business leaders, community leaders, members of the teacher's organizations and other individuals who were involved in the *Dallas Achieves!* effort raised over 11 million dollars to pay for a best practice study of successful urban districts, the plan development, logistics of bringing the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission together and the administrative support that it takes to manage the whole *Dallas Achieves!* concept. The initial investment of private funding played an important role in legitimizing the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational effort.

Assessing the distribution power and interests. Without support from the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees, the notion of transforming DISD into the best urban school district in the country would have been an impossible task. With a grounding in best practices and a focus on student achievement, the eleven initial *Dallas Achieves!* Commission recommendations carried unanimously, setting the stage for the supermajority approval of the 109 *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations. Capitalizing on the momentum of that supermajority approval the board consistently voted in support of items critical to the transformational effort. The

board did not vote against an item that had a direct connection with the *Dallas Achieves!* transformation.

Building linkages to key stakeholders. Recognizing the lack of credibility of the Dallas Independent School District, the transformational effort was anchored in the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and in the strategy to employ expertise from outside consultants. The coalition of over 60 people that comprised the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission operated and was successful because of the politics of Dallas. The individuals on the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission were recognized and accepted as having solid integrity and ethics. The Commission expressed its willingness to stay together, independent of board, superintendent or leadership turnover, thereby positioning itself as a body that would stay constant. Three other key linkages were the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission's utilization of the Foundation for Community Empowerment (FCE) as the third party fiscal and accountability agent, its use of the Boston Consulting Group as the external consultant responsible for the fact base and strategic planning and Dallas Independent School District's employment of the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) as the external consultant responsible for the curriculum audit.

Transformation was catapulted into action by the relationship that grew between Don Williams and the superintendent, the timing of which made it the single most significant linkage. Mr. Williams' work for social justice and equity was well known and respected throughout the city. Despite an enormous expenditure of personal time and money, Mr. Williams had come to the conclusion that the transformation of social justice and equity relied heavily on the quality of education in the community. After failing to

sell the merits of transformation to the previous superintendent, Williams' initial meeting with the current superintendent left him with a feeling that transformation was indeed a reality. The current superintendent knew that the scale of transformation he was proposing was beyond the scope, resources and expertise of the district; however, that first visit with Mr. Williams gave him the confidence to move forward with the notion of truly transforming the Dallas Independent School District.

Persuading first, negotiating second and coercing only if necessary. Based on the premise that command decisions are easy to make but hard to implement, while consensus decisions are hard to make, take a long time to message, but are much easier to implement, the superintendent acknowledged that, in order to influence the people and resources necessary for transformation, he would have to understand the communities' concerns and interests. In order for the superintendent to address the real doubters in Dallas, who did not think transformation or systemic change was possible for the district, his entry plan canvassed the majority of the primary stakeholders within the district and the Dallas community. What emerged was a clear mandate to abolish the status quo. Utilizing the data gathered in this fashion, the superintendent was able to persuade over 60 key members of the community to invest their personal time and effort into developing a plan that would transform the way the district operated and support their education plan. Leveraging the ideas that everyone wants to be part of something great, and people are willing to set aside some of their individual wants and needs for the greater good of being a part of something greater than they have ever known, the

superintendent and his executive leadership team, the board and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission produced the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework.

### *Symbolic frame*

Effective symbolic leadership is characterized by its interpretation of experience so as to impart meaning and purpose through phrases of beauty and passion (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Accordingly, effective symbolic leadership is built on inspiration and the framing of experience (p.349). In this case study, the effective symbolic leadership characteristics of (a) leading by example, (b) using symbols to capture attention, (c) framing experience, (d) communicating a vision, (e) telling stories and (f) respecting and using history are exhibited in the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken by *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group, in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework, in the following manner:

Leading by example. There were three distinct instances critical to setting the example of leadership: the superintendent initiating the notion of transformation, the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission placing their reputations on the line, and the Board's commitment and participation in the Reformed Governance in Action training. The superintendent realized that the notion of transformation was asking the city, the African-American, Hispanic, business and political communities and the board of trustees to suspend their biases and agendas in order to build a system focused on the academic achievement of children and excellence throughout. Acknowledging full well that the margin for error was small and the timing unforgiving, all were aware that calling for the type of change necessary during a transformation was chock full of reasons to fire a

superintendent. However, the board of trustees recognized the sense of urgency and supported the call to action. While simultaneously supporting the transformation effort with policy and approval of resources, all but one of the trustees participated in Reform Governance for Action. The time, commitment and dedication required for successful implementation of the philosophy were extensive. Therefore, the leadership exhibited by the board has manifested into codified vision and policy statements that support the transformation. The idea of attaching one's personal and business reputation to a transformation plan for the Dallas Independent School District was a risky proposition. The 60 plus members of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, felt the notion of transformation was worth the risk. Over a six month period of time, the members of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission were able to suspend their agendas in order to bring forth 100-plus recommendations to assist in the transformation.

Using symbols to capture attention. A very powerful symbol was the naming of the transformation and the associated vision. The idea to call the transformation plan *Dallas Achieves!* indicated that transformation was about the entire City of Dallas and stressed its impact on economic development and quality of life issues. The vision of rings, with the high achieving, engaged child nested in the center surrounded by an effective teacher, an empowered principal, campus focused central services, engaged parents and guardians and a supportive community, was the basis for the entire transformation. It was something that everybody could visualize while simultaneously capturing a very extensive transformation.

Framing experience. The plausible interpretation created to frame the experience was that transformation was the initial step on the “Road to Broad.” The aspiration to win the Broad Prize by 2010 gave the district a tagline and a way to communicate a bold ambition in terms that all stakeholders could understand. Additionally, the alignment of resources to achieve this accomplishment sent the message to the community that there was a genuine intention to become the best urban school district in the country.

Communicating a vision. The persuasive and hopeful image of the future coalesced around the idea of becoming the “best urban district in the country.” The superintendent and his executive leadership team began executing the education plan. The board embarked on reform governance and adopted a set of rigorous performance expectations plus an official policy for the Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment theory of action. The *Dallas Achieves!* Commission brought forward over 100 recommendations and focused energy on the broader community. All this supported the district’s vision to become the best urban school district in the country.

Telling stories. While symbolic leadership usually emboldens a story of a golden past, a challenging present and hopeful vision, the *Dallas Achieves!* stories focused on the present and the future. The present was marked with pockets of excellence, inequities in funding, low levels of college and workforce ready students, unaligned resources, a focus on programs, an over reliance on consultants, a lack of instructional leadership at the campus level and little or no coherence in the district’s education plan. The future was marked with demonstrating that an elective board in an urban community could create a great school system, with the belief that effort creates ability and that all children deserve

access to an academically rigorous learning environment that prepares them with equal access for college or the work force, and with dispelling the myth that poor kids can't learn; in the future demographics would not mandate destiny, and ultimately the Dallas Independent School District could indeed be the best urban school district in the country.

### *Major Implications*

#### *Theoretical Implications*

In addition to the well-delineated Bolman & Deal (2003) four frame constructs, 1) structural, 2) human resource, 3) political and 4) symbolic, the findings of this study are congruent with the literature as it pertains to large-scale organizational change as defined by Ledford *et al.* (1989), and to leadership and transformational organizational change as described by Burns (1978), Fullan *et al.* (2004), Kotter (1998) and Nutt & Backoff (1996).

#### *Large-scale Organizational Change*

The *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework reflects large-scale organizational change as defined by Ledford *et al.* (1989). Their reference to three dimensions of large-scale organizational change—depth, pervasiveness and size are reflected in the following:

1. *Depth*. The dramatic rejection of the old beliefs and the acceptance of the new ones are exhibited in the redesign and realignment of direct supervision of schools, the codification of managed instruction with earned empowerment, and the belief that effort creates ability. Converting to horizontally aligned geographic learning

communities that cut across traditional north-south-east-west boundaries, indicated a new era of collaboration, one that sought to break the hold of the traditionally polarized neighborhoods of Dallas. The notion of managed instruction with earned empowerment signaled the end of a culture of entitlement and the inception of a culture of accountability, with autonomy at a campus level being earned by meeting absolute student performance targets, student performance growth targets and organizational health index targets. The notion that effort creates ability anchored an education plan that solidifies the core idea that all children will have equal access to a rigorous curriculum in preparation for college or the workforce.

2. *Pervasiveness*. The idea of realigning and redesigning campus supervision and central staff to focus on supporting instructional leadership within the learning communities, the six vision rings that make up the transformational framework with students nested in the middle and performance management throughout, and the 100-plus *Dallas Achieves!* Recommendations, spread throughout eleven work teams that cut across all divisions and departments of the organization, pointed to the large proportions of the organization's elements and subsystems that would require change.
3. *Size*. The Dallas Independent School District is one of the largest major school districts in the United States, with over twenty thousand employees and a 1.3 billion dollar budget; its sheer size reflects the nature and breadth of the change needed to alter its character and performance.

## *Leadership and Transformational Organizational Change*

The initiating and sustaining leadership acts of the *Dallas Achieves!*

Transformational Leadership Group, in the development of the transformational theory of action framework, are congruent with Burns' (1978) five characteristics of leadership.

1. *Leadership is collective.* While it was evident the superintendent was the commander-in-chief, the involvement of the executive leadership team, the board, the tri-ethnic chair of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, and the external *Dallas Achieves!* project personifies the collective nature of the initial and sustaining leadership actions.
2. *Leadership is dissensual.* The natural conflict germane to the multifaceted *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the conflict between the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the board and discrepancies between the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission's theory of action and the Superintendent's theory of action typify the idea that conflict relevant to popular aspirations is also the key democratizer of leadership.
3. *Leadership is causative.* The superintendent's entry plan, the formation of the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the formulation of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations personify the belief true leadership both responds to and elevates the wants, aspirations and values of those affected by the events.
4. *Leadership is morally purposeful.* The district's core beliefs and commitments, as codified in policy, that every child can perform at or above grade level and that effort creates ability solidifies the idea that all children will have equal access to a rigorous curriculum in preparation for college or the workforce. These core beliefs and

commitments serve as an exemplar transformational leadership tapping the needs, raising the aspirations, and shaping the values of the district.

5. *Transforming leadership is elevating.* The vision to become the “best urban district in the United States” as agreed upon by the superintendent and his executive leadership team, the board and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission asks that stakeholders in the city of Dallas sacrifice their individual agendas for the greater good; hence they will fulfill the promise of an education that prepares every child to graduate, college and workforce ready and with the ability to compete in the global economy.

Fullan *et al.* (2004) identified ten components critical to successful large-scale systemic improvement. The initiating and sustaining leadership acts of *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the transformational theory of action framework reflect these ten critical components.

1. *A compelling conceptualization.* The idea of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework, co-constructed among members of the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group, places high achieving, engaged students at the center of all actions; this clearly articulates a coalition of leadership pursuing a clear, coherent strategy.
2. *Collective moral purpose.* The commitments by the district, the district’s board of trustees, the city and the community, plus their willingness to think beyond their respective agendas in order to build a system of excellence that affords every child access to a rigorous curriculum that prepares them for college and the work force, embolden the collective moral purpose principle.

3. *The right bus*. The education plan, anchored in a rigorous curriculum for all children, realignment of schools into learning communities and redesign of central staff in support of the learning communities, is the primary driver of a common and collective purpose; there is a laser like focus on teaching and learning for both adults and students, and a close alignment of structures and roles.
4. *Capacity Building*. The *Dallas Achieves!* institutes serve as a key component to capacity building. These sequenced institutes focus on improving pedagogy, leadership and results.
5. *Lateral Capacity Building*. The learning community configuration, which clusters and connects schools horizontally within the district, and the lead principal strategy to maintain a vertical feeder pattern strand, promote teams working together; in this way, they develop clear operational understandings of their goals and strategies, foster new ideas and skills and share a commitment to district-wide implementation.
6. *On-going learning*. Performance management's development of a data warehouse, the development of outcomes tied to college and career readiness and dashboard reporting based on end-user needs are initial tools that provide real time data for informing whether district staff and systems are supporting the needs of children.
7. *Productive conflict*. The creative tension within the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission members, the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission and the board and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission's theory of action and the Superintendent's theory of action personified the view that disagreement is a normal part of change. However, these disagreements

did not deter from creating a transformational structure focused on closing the achievement gap.

8. *A demanding culture.* Altering the district's composition to one that is focused on becoming "the best urban district in the United States," with support from a board adopted set of rigorous performance expectations and an official policy for the theory of action, established the standard for engaging in great effort and performing difficult and demanding work.
9. *External partners.* The collaboration between the district and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission, the Foundation for Community Empowerment, the Boston Consulting group, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the Institute for Learning and the National Center for Accountability provided well-placed pressure and valuable expertise.
10. *Focused financial investment.* The redesign of central staff, that transferred \$10 million to the campuses, and the \$5 million Michael and Susan Dell grant earmarked for performance management, were two key initial investments that redeployed existing resources in the service of teaching and learning and thereby amplified current resources. The external fundraising effort focused on financing the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* recommendations and the transformational framework.

Kotter (1998) suggests that the most general lesson learned from the more successful cases is (1) the change process goes through a series of phases which usually requires a significant length of time, (2) skipping phases only creates the illusion of speed

and never produces satisfactory results, (3) critical mistakes in any of the phases can have a devastating impact and (4) most people have relatively little experience in renewing organizations; therefore, everyone is capable of making at least one big error. Six of Kotter's eight steps are highlighted in the initiating and sustaining leadership acts of the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the transformational theory of action framework.

1. *Establishing a sense of urgency.* The superintendent's entry plan, the pockets of academic excellence, the curriculum best practices audit, and the Boston Consulting Group's comprehensive best practice research base with respect to instructional and operational aspects of the district served as the basis for establishing the sense of urgency.
2. *Forming a powerful guiding coalition.* The *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group gathered members with enough power to lead the change effort.
3. *Creating a vision.* The collective notion to become the "best urban district in the United States," as espoused by the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group, assisted in directing the change effort.
4. *Communicating the vision.* The vision rings, with high achieving engaged students nested in the center of effective teachers, empowered principals, campus focused central services, engaged parents and guardians and a supportive community, are prominent examples of communicating the vision, as are curriculum audit reviews, *Dallas Achieves!* Commission quarterly meetings and academic progress reports.

5. *Empowering others to act on the vision.* The conversion from areas to horizontal learning communities, the redesign of central staff in support of the learning community structure and the request for principal process personified systems and structures to support the vision.
6. *Planning for and creating short-term wins.* The execution of the initial *Dallas Achieve!* recommendations for reducing central administrative costs, the introduction of collaborative planning time and smaller class sizes at the secondary level and the adoption into policy of the managed instruction with earned empowerment theory of action were examples of immediate short-term wins.
7. *Institutionalizing new approaches.* The dramatic academic gain and improvements in the '07-'08 school year, when the number of recognized and exemplary schools doubled from the '06-'07 school year to 103 schools, reveals that implementing the plan, with discipline, could have a payoff. The implementation of the Principles of Learning, especially Learning Walks, collaborative planning time, smaller class sizes at the secondary level and the principal's focus on instruction, contributed to the district's success and will allow for increased connections between the new behaviors and increased student achievement.

Nutt & Backoff (1996) contend that transformational change requires “walking the vision, by walking the talk” with key people inside and outside the organization. They have identified fourteen propositions for realizing transformational change. Twelve of the fourteen propositions are characterized in the initiating and sustaining leadership acts of

*Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group in the development of the transformational theory of action framework.

1. *Public organizations are more apt to be successful in carrying out transformation when the strategy is co-developed with key stakeholders.* The *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework was co-developed by the superintendent and his executive leadership, Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees and the 60- member *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.
2. *The prospect of successful transformation is influenced by the leadership practices of a successful leader.* The transformation was highly influenced by the superintendent, the board president, Don Williams, the *Dallas Achieves!* project manager, and the Chief Academic Officer and Chief Transformation Officer.
3. *Organizational leaders who draw on best practices of both development and implementation are more apt to be successful in producing transformations.* The development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework was informed by best practices within industry, across industry and across the globe.
4. *Tailoring a guidance process for strategic leadership to meet the needs of the public sector organizations will improve prospects of a successful transformation.* The *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework obtained support from many people and interest groups inside and outside the organization by involving the superintendent and his executive leadership, Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.

5. *The prospect of transformational change improves when a Strategic Management Group, chaired by the strategic leader and made up of exemplary followers as well as key outsiders, develops the strategy.* The superintendent chaired a strategic management group made up of his executive leadership team, the Dallas Independent School District's Board of Trustees and the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission.
6. *The prospect of a successful transformation depends on the extent to which strategy is innovative.* The notion of engaging the community, through formation of the multifaceted, 60-member *Dallas Achieves!* Commission to develop a transformational framework for the district, was recognized as a bold and innovative move.
7. *Determining stakeholder support and resources before taking action increases the prospect of a successful transformation.* Before taking action, the superintendent executed his entry plan to determine the parameters by which to garner stakeholder support and resources.
8. *The prospect of a transformational change increases when the nominal leader shares implementation leadership with Strategic Management Group members who have high volition.* The superintendent and his executive leadership team, the board, Don Williams and the *Dallas Achieves!* project manager were all widely recognized for their energy and will to make things happen. This collective body exemplified the commitment to make change that had enduring value.
9. *Strategy that is enlarged to incorporate interests of key stakeholders is more apt to produce transformation.* The *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action

framework incorporates 100-plus Commission recommendations as elements of the education plan.

10. *Transformations described through filters selected according to preferences of an interest group and which take into account context are more apt to be successful.* The six vision rings and the performance management arrow, which collectively make up the *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational framework, define the context utilized to describe the transformation.
11. *Strategic leaders who create positive energy as they seek a transformation are more apt to be successful.* The *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group utilizes the mantra of becoming the “best urban district in the United States,” the notion that effort creates ability and the idea that all children deserve a rigorous curriculum that prepares them for college or the workforce, as the lens by which to push the action and create positive energy.
12. *Strategic leaders who accept the role of path clearing for key people are more apt to secure transformational change.* The *Dallas Achieves!* Transformational Leadership Group leveraged its members’ social and political capital in order to get the message out. Individually, collectively, privately and publicly the respective leaders staked their personal and professional reputations on their belief in the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational framework.

### *Practical Implications*

Based on the findings of this study, there are implications for superintendents and their executive leadership teams, school boards and community organizations, affecting

their leadership actions and the development of a transformational theory of action framework, systemic change, and replicable models of transformation. The study identified the following practical implications:

1. The superintendent's entry plan served as the basis for the development of the transformational theory of action framework. Before pursuing a transformational effort, superintendents and their leadership teams, boards and community organizations need to consider a comprehensive internal and external qualitative data-gathering instrument to supplement the quantitative data.
2. In order to set the context for development of the transformational theory of action framework, best practice audits, conducted by external agents against the curriculum, administrative practices and central staff systems and structures are very important.. Superintendents and their leadership teams, school boards and community organizations need to examine the utilization of external agents to conduct external audits in order to set the context for transformation.
3. The multifaceted community based *Dallas Achieves!* Commission was an integral participant in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework. Superintendents and their leadership teams, boards and community organizations must consider involving a multifaceted community based group of influential stakeholders as part of the development team.
4. The development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework required a high degree of expertise. Superintendents and their leadership

teams, boards and community organizations need to study the use of external consultants to bolster any identified human or structural deficiencies.

5. The development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework required a significant investment in human and financial capital. Superintendents and their leadership teams, boards and community organizations must plan for an external fundraising campaign.
6. The development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework required transformational leadership. The superintendent must be a transformational leader.

#### *Recommendations for Future Study*

This study of the initial and sustaining actions of the superintendent and his executive leadership team, board and *Dallas Achieves!* Commission in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework was an intrinsic single-case study. The inherent limitations of an intrinsic single-case study lead to the following recommendations for further study:

1. The single case study limits the opportunity to generalize; therefore, it is recommended that the initial and sustaining leadership actions in the development of transformational framework in other major urban districts (e.g. Chicago Public Schools, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, New York Public Schools, and Baltimore Public Schools) be a focus of study.

2. This study was conducted in a major urban setting with a student population of over 150,000 students; therefore, it is recommended that the initial and sustaining leadership actions in the development of transformational framework in school districts that are nonurban and smaller in student populations be a focus of study.
3. This study utilized a single case study; however, multiple-case studies of the initial and sustaining leadership actions in the development of transformational framework can result in a transformational model that concentrates on proven frameworks for transforming school districts.
4. This single case study focuses on the initial and sustaining leadership actions from the time period April of 2005 to the end of the 2007-2008 school year; therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted to study the leadership actions and the transformational effort beyond the 2007-2008 school year.

### *Conclusion*

So it's basically identifying and getting the superintendent and the leadership team on board, identifying the commissioners and get the board on board with helping that identification, getting them together, getting the outside consultant, handing them the document of the work product of the recommendations, and tell them to go for it. Put money behind, we know about how much it will cost, we know about how long it will take and these are the things you should do. I think while it looks complicated, it's

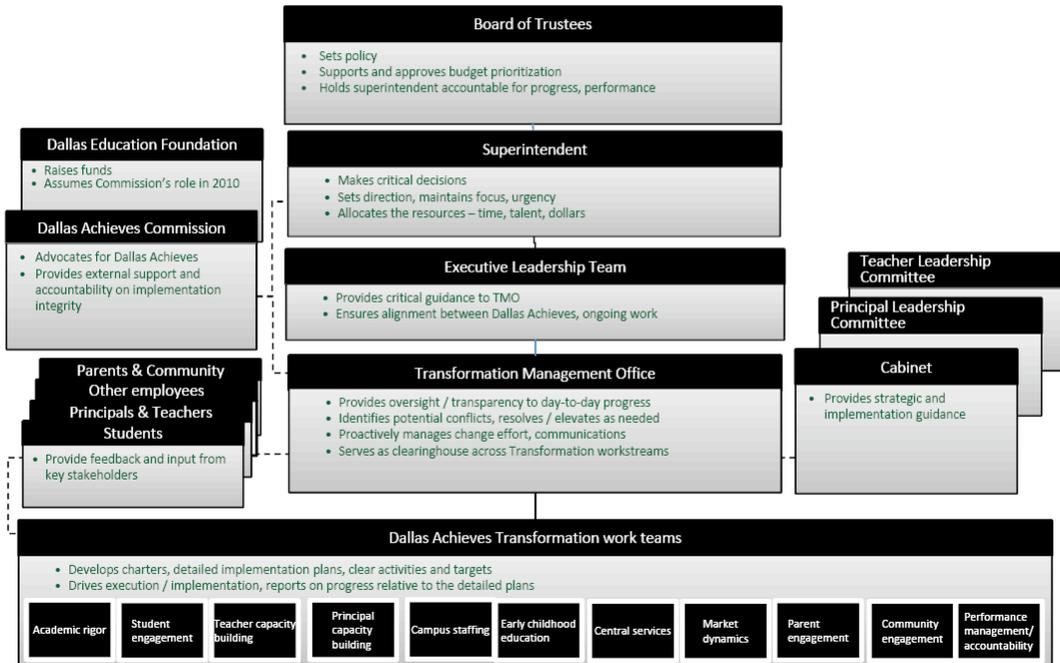
really very simple, but that now requires a lot of communication (INT A19:15).

This single case research study of the initial and sustaining leadership actions taken in the development of the *Dallas Achieves!* transformational theory of action framework provided insight into the foundational dealings undertaken by the Dallas Independent School District's superintendent and his leadership team, the Dallas Independent School District's board of trustees, and an external group of stakeholders formally assembled into the *Dallas Achieves!* Commission. While there is some level of legitimacy in the perception stated above, this study revealed that beyond this basic notion there is a level of sophistication that is infused into the development of a transformational framework. The complexity comes in the execution and sustainability of the constructs that are inherent in the transformational framework. In the case of *Dallas Achieves!*, this is evident in the dichotomous nature of events that have recently defined this transformational effort. On the one hand, there is an \$84 million fiscal crisis, which manifested in the Spring of 2006's budget process and surfaced in the Fall of 2009, that nearly cost the superintendent his job and the end of *Dallas Achieves!* On the other hand, the most recent February 25, 2009 Brookings Institution publication of The Brown Center on Public Education Policy reports that the Dallas Independent School District has improved more than any other urban district in Texas and more than all but one urban district in the United States. Given the level of sophistication necessary to initiate and sustain a transformational framework and the complexity of executing and sustaining a

transformational effort, more research studies are needed to gain further insight into the leadership actions involved in all aspects of education related transformational efforts.

## Appendix A

Transformation Management Office established to execute the plan



Source: Transformation Management Office 2006

## Appendix B



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SUPPORT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

P.O. Box 7426, Austin, Texas 78713 (512) 471-8871 -FAX (512 471-8873) North  
Office Building A, Suite 5.200 (Mail code A3200)

FWA: 2030

Date: 10/06/08

PI(s): Ruben D Olivarez  
James J Ponce

Department & Mail Code: EDUC ADMIN

D5400

IRB Approval-IRB Protocol #: 2008-08-0057

### EXEMPT DETERMINATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**Title:** Transformational Theory of Action Framework: the initial and sustaining actions taken by the Superintendent and members of his executive leadership team, the board of education and the Dallas Achieves! Commission.

**Approval Period:** 10/06/2008 - 10/05/2011

**Approval determination was based on the following Code of Federal Regulations:**

45 CFR 46.101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:  
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

#### Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator(s):

Research that is determined to be Exempt from IRB review is not Exempt from protection of the human subjects. The following criteria to protect human subjects must be met:

1. The investigator assures that **all investigators and co-investigators are trained in the ethical principles**, relevant Federal Regulations and institutional policies governing human **subject research**;
2. The investigator assures that **human subjects will voluntarily consent to participate** in the research when appropriate (e.g. surveys, interviews) and will **provide subjects with pertinent information**, e.g. risks and benefits, contact information for investigators and IRB chair, etc.;
3. The investigator assures that **human subjects will be selected equitably**, so that the risks and benefits of the research are justly distributed.
4. The investigator assures that the **IRB will be immediately informed of any information, unanticipated problems** that would increase the risk to the human subjects and cause the category of review to be upgraded to Expedited or Full Review;
5. The investigator assures that the **IRB will be immediately informed of any complaints** from participants regarding their risks and benefits; and
6. The investigator assures that **confidentiality and privacy of the subjects** and the research data will be maintained appropriately to ensure minimal risk to subjects.

The above criteria are specified in the PI Assurance Statement and as the Responsible Investigator, you acknowledged you understood and accepted these conditions with the submission of your protocol. Investigators can refer to the University website [www.utexas.edu/irb](http://www.utexas.edu/irb) for specific information on training, voluntary informed consent, privacy, and how to notify the IRB of unanticipated problems.

1. **Closure:** Upon completion of the research project, a closure request must be submitted to the Office of Research Support (ORS).
2. **Unanticipated Problems:** Any unanticipated problems or complaints must be reported to the IRB/ORS immediately. For a description of unanticipated problems, please refer to the ORS webpage: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects/policies/section7.html#7.3>
3. **Informed Consent:** The informed consent procedures laid out within your research proposal must be followed.
4. **Continuing Review:** If the study will continue beyond the three year approval period, a continuing review application must be filed.
5. **Amendments:** Amendments do not need to be filed with the ORS if the amendments do not change the risk level of the study (for example: increasing sample size, adding or removing co-PIs, adding or removing research sites, or minor modifications to the research protocol that do not affect the risk level). Changes that alter the level of risk to participants must be requested by submitting an amendment application and revised proposal to the ORS prior to those changes being implemented. For a description of the types of modifications that require an amendment application, please refer to the ORS webpage: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects/policies/section6.html#635b> , or call 471-8871.

If you have questions, please call your IRB Program Coordinator for consultation.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jody Jensen, Ph.D., IRB Chair

## Appendix C

### Rating Summary--NCEA Curriculum Audit Implementation Status Report November 2006

#	Rating	Recommendation	Areas for Focused Attention/Action
<b>Curriculum and Academic Goals</b>			
1	3	Define clear, specific, and rigorous academic objectives by grade and subject, beginning in the core content areas (Math, Reading/ELA, Science, Social Studies), that are aligned from 12 <sup>th</sup> grade to Early Education to prepare all students for advanced work in high school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Improve technology access to curriculum</li> <li>• Continue enhancing CPGs for addressing ELLs and Special Education students</li> </ul>
2	3	Ensure that principals and teachers know the specific knowledge and skills to be taught and learned at each grade and in each subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Communicate clear expectations about C&amp;I non-negotiables (parameters)</li> </ul>
3	2	Ensure that all students learn the same curriculum by monitoring principal and teacher use of district curricular documents for all grades and subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Clarify and specify plan to ensure principal monitoring of the curriculum</li> </ul>
4	3	Create and implement a curriculum development plan to include continual review and refinement of district curriculum by the Curriculum Advisory Council and PreK-12 vertical teams of teachers, organized by subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Clarify curriculum feedback processes to teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Selection, Leadership, and Capacity Building</b>			
5	2	Breakdown silos of communication that exist throughout DISD to improve/broaden access to principals by district administrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Improve clarity of communication and messages between divisions and content-area/support departments</li> </ul>
6	4	Structure principal evaluations to emphasize the importance of the time principals spend observing classroom instruction to monitor the instructional program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Clarify and specify plan to ensure principal monitoring of the curriculum</li> </ul>
7	3	Develop internal principal candidates to maintain program consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> </ul>
8	3	Build the instructional leadership capacity of principals and district administrators through differentiated, engaging, and rigorous professional development that is focused on specific academic goals and tied to student achievement needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Increase/enhance principal professional development focused on specific academic goals and student achievement</li> </ul>
9	3	Organize use of instructional coaches to ensure co-accountability for learning by maximizing contact with teachers in schools with the greatest need to ensure that evidence-based teaching strategies are being implemented effectively in every classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Clarify/enhance support systems for campuses without instructional coaches</li> </ul>
10	2	Ensure that all professional development activities, especially the use of consultants, are tightly aligned to demonstrated student need and the stated district academic goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Implement coaching improvement process recommendations to ensure consultants' consistency with district initiatives</li> </ul>
11	2	Focus role specific staff development on the core process of teaching and learning, as opposed to simply requiring seat time, and build collaborative work time into the structure of the school day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation plan</li> <li>• Build additional collaborative work time into the structure of the school day</li> </ul>

R#	Rating	Recommendation	Areas for Focused Attention/Action
<b>Instructional Programs, Practices, and Arrangements</b>			
12	3	Select instructional resources that are proven effective with similar student populations, aligned to district academic objectives, and thoroughly supported with district resources to ensure fidelity of implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation plan (including MLEP and Special Ed. enhancements to CPGs). Ensure transparency of the CPGs across MLEP, ELA, PK</li> </ul>
13	2	Require that schools use district-selected materials when student achievement does not reach determined goal levels while providing flexibility to high-performing schools (as measured by campus Exemplary status and a high percentage of students reaching the Commended standard) to continue successful practices that may differ from others in the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation plan</li> <li>Communicate clear expectations about curr. and instr. non-negotiables to all role groups (finalize parameters asap)</li> </ul>
14	3	Fully implement Bilingual Education Program and staffing plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation plan (including MLEP enhancements and transparency in CPGs)</li> <li>Ensure clear expectations of the dual language program requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring: Compilation, Analysis, and Use of Data</b>			
15	2	Monitor student learning beginning in the early grades with a comprehensive, coherent district assessment system that includes district benchmarks to supplement state and standardized tests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation plan</li> <li>Reconsider the recommendation for exemption from ACPs for TAKS passing</li> <li>Design and implement formal beginning of year and Fall math benchmarks PK-1 and systemic data collection and reporting for reading benchmarks for PK-1</li> </ul>
16	2	Develop the capacity to translate the wealth of DISD data (TAKS, ITBS, district benchmarks, ACP, CEI, SEI, etc.) into actionable information that will impact instruction for teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation plan (development of integrated information systems "one stop shop for teachers")</li> <li>Improve technology access to curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Recognition, Intervention, and Adjustment</b>			
17	3	Develop an intervention plan that targets support and expert assistance to Tier 1 and Tier 2 schools and provides additional instructional time and resources to ensure that all students master the stated curriculum rather than lowering the expectations for some students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation plan</li> <li>Enhanced focused intervention efforts for tier 1 and 2 schools</li> <li>Strengthen interventions in CPGs to be specific and resourced (math was identified as a model for others)</li> <li>Update intervention resource guide as needed.</li> </ul>

## Appendix D

### Editorial from Dallas Morning News

# Several important landmarks in recent months

Dallas Achieves Transformation plan was

- Endorsed by supermajority of the Commission
- Approved by the Superintendent
- Strongly endorsed by the Dallas ISD Cabinet
- Approved by the Board of Trustees 6-0

Questions about Transformation Plan development process or the Commission?



# Appendix E

## Managed Instruction

Dallas ISD  
057905

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY  
VISION, BELIEFS, COMMITMENTS

AEA  
(LOCAL)

THEORY OF ACTION:  
MANAGED  
INSTRUCTION WITH  
EARNED  
EMPOWERMENT  
PURPOSE

To bring together the above Vision, Core Beliefs, and Commitments, we, the Board of Trustees of the Dallas Independent School District, reiterate our vision and commitment to create the best urban school district in the United States that educates and graduates students who are college and workforce ready. Accordingly, we hereby set forth a theory of action for achieving our mission and putting our core beliefs and commitments into action. Our theory of action will provide a framework to align goals, strategic plans, policies, budgets, and administrative actions. Over time, we believe our theory of action will transform the culture of Dallas Independent School District and result in sustained high student achievement and closing of achievement gaps between and among student groups.

THEORY OF ACTION

Our theory of action is one of managed instruction combined with earned performance empowerment, or Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment (MIEE). We believe that Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment combines the efficacy of an instructional management system with the dynamics of performance empowerment. In Dallas ISD, as in other MIEE districts, the central office accepts responsibility for directly managing the District's core business, teaching and learning, within flexible parameters that balance accountability with empowerment according to the needs and performance of individual schools.

Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment districts begin with standards (academic content, graduation/promotion, business process, etc.), have tight accountability systems, centralized formative and/or summative assessments, and data management and data-driven, decision-making systems.

MANAGED  
INSTRUCTION  
DEFINED

A Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment culture is built upon the system-wide implementation of rigorous common learning standards for all students, coherence in instructional content, data-driven accountability for performance, data-driven processes for earned empowerment and innovation, and human capacity building to improve teaching and learning.

- Standards – High, rigorous learning standards enforced by specific performance goals promote excellence and demand equity in access for all students. Common, rigorous academic learning standards shall be established for all grades and subjects, and performance goals shall be established for student achievement of the learning standards.
- Instructional Coherence – Managed instruction does not necessarily mean managed pedagogy. We recognize that all schools are not the same. However, because of the importance of core subjects and high student mobility, all schools,

DATE ISSUED: 11/5/2008  
LDU 2008.14  
AEA(LOCAL)-X

3 of 5

even high-performing schools, must manage instruction within District parameters. Instructional coherence is characterized by:

- A District curriculum that addresses every subject for every grade. It includes the content standards (what students should learn) and planning guides by grading period (when students should learn it).
- A curriculum that is aligned, coherent, and includes detailed instructional best practices, teaching materials, assessments, and intervention supports for struggling learners.
- Curriculum-based assessments that are conducted, and the results are analyzed and disaggregated to inform instructional practice, leadership decision making, and to improve services to students.
- All instructional staff participate in comprehensive professional development focused on successful implementation of the District's managed instruction system.
- Data-Driven Accountability – Accountability for student learning is supported through the development and implementation of a performance-management system in which:
  - District and campus performance targets are established and monitored.
  - Leadership decisions are driven by the gap between the performance targets and actual student results.
  - Resources are allocated based on student and school need.
  - Results are reported to all internal and external stakeholders and used to drive performance and practice improvements.
- Earned Empowerment – Schools that meet or exceed performance expectations may earn empowerment and autonomy from some components of the managed instruction system and other leadership and/or operational mandates.

OVERSIGHT

To implement our theory of action and its intent, it is the expectation of the Board of Trustees that the Superintendent of Schools shall develop procedures and practices in accord with the Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment (MIEE) theory of action. On an annual basis, the Superintendent of Schools shall provide a status briefing and/or performance report to the Board of

Dallas ISD  
057905

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY  
VISION, BELIEFS, COMMITMENTS

AEA  
(LOCAL)

Trustees related to one or more components of the Managed Instruction with Earned Empowerment system. The briefing reports shall include, but should not be limited to, information regarding the student achievement, curriculum and instructional issues, and major educational programmatic changes.

DATE ISSUED: 11/5/2008  
LDU 2008.14  
AEA(LOCAL)-X

ADOPTED:

5 of 5

## References

- Alexander, F. (1992). Accountability and Assessment California Style. In C.E. Finn & T. Rebarber (Eds.), *Education Reform in the 90s*. New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- Argyris, C. & Shon, D. (1974). *Theory in Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Avolio, B., Walderman, D. & Yammarino, F. (1991). Leading in the 1990s: The Four I's of Transformational Leadership. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *15(4)*, 9-16.
- Avolio, B., Bass, B. & Jung, D. (1999). Re-examining the Components of Transformational and Transactional Leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *72*, 441-462.
- Bass, B. (1985). Leadership: Good, Better, Best. *Organizational Dynamics*, *13(3)*, 26-40.
- Bass, B. (1990). From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, *18(3)*, 19-31.
- Bass, B. (1997). Does the Transactional-Transformational Leadership Paradigm Transcend Organizational and National Boundaries? *American Psychologist*, *52(2)*, 130-139.

- Bass, B., Avolio, B., Jung, D. & Berson, Y. (2003). Transformational Leadership in Organizations: An Environment-Induced Model. *International Journal of Manpower, 27(1)*, 52-62.
- Beugre, C., Acar, W. & Braun, W. (2006). Predicting Unit Performance by Assessing Transformational and Transactional Leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88(2)*, 207-218.
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2008). Education Fact Sheet. Retrieved June 8, 2008, from <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/UnitedStates/Education/RelatedInfo/EducationFactSheet-021201.htm?version=print&et=021201.htm?version=print>
- Blum, R. (2008). Standards-Based Reform: Can it Make A Difference. *Peabody Journal of Education, 75(4)*, 90-113.
- Bolman, L. & Deal, E. (2003). Reframing Organizations: Artistry Choice and Leadership. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Borman, G., Hewes, G., Overman, L. & Brown, S. (2003). Comprehensive School Reform and Achievement: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 73(2)*, 125-230.
- Boston Public Schools (2001). Focus on Children II. Retrieved May 18 2008 from <http://bostonk12maus/bps/bpsglanceasp#improve>

- Boston Public Schools (2005). Transforming Boston's Public Schools: A Decade of Focus on Children and The Challenge of the Future. Retrieved May 18 2008 from <http://bostonk12maus/bps/bpsglanceasp#improve>
- Bovey, W. & Hede, A. (2001). Resistance to Organizational Change: The Role of the Defense Mechanisms. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 167, 534-548.
- Broad Foundation (2008). The Broad Prize for Urban Education. Retrieved May 18 2008 from [www.broadprize.org/prize.shtml](http://www.broadprize.org/prize.shtml)
- Bunda, M. (1979). Accountability and Evaluation. *Theory into Practice*, 185, 357-362.
- Burns, J. (1978). Leadership. New York NY: Harper & Row.
- Center for Reform of School Systems (2009). RGA for Urban School Boards: Improving America's largest school districts through reform leadership. Retrieved March, 2009, from [www.crss.org/rga-for-urban-school-boards.html](http://www.crss.org/rga-for-urban-school-boards.html)
- Childress, S., Elmore, R. & Grossman, A. (2006). How to Manage Urban School Districts. Retrieved March 2, 2008, from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/ehost/detail?vid=5&hid=114&sid=42fd55ca-7267-43e4-9cab-ee046e7788ba%40sessionmgr107>
- Clark, D. & Astuto, T. (1994). Redirecting Reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 75(7), 512-520.

- Coburn, C. (2003). Rethinking Scale: Moving Beyond Numbers to Deep and Lasting Change. *Educational Researcher*, 32(6), 3-12.
- Cohen, D. (1996). Standards-Based School Reform. In H. Ladd (Ed.), *Holding Schools Accountable*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute.
- Conger, J., Kanungo, R., Menon, S. & Mathur, P. (1997). Measuring Charisma: Dimensionality and Validity of the Conger-Kanungo Scale of Charismatic Leadership. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 14(3), 290-302.
- Conger, J. (1999). Charismatic and Transformational Leadership in Organizations: An Insider's Perspective on These Developing Streams of Research. *Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 145-179.
- Cooper, E. & Sherk, J. (1989). Addressing Urban School Reform: Issues and Alliances. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 58(3), 315-551.
- Council of the American Education Research Association (2006). Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications. *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), 33-40.
- Dallas Independent School District (2006). Dallas ISD Performance Management District Assessment. Internal Document.
- Dallas Independent School District (2009). 2008-2009 Facts. Internal Document.

- Datnow, A. (2000). Power and Politics in the Adoption of School Reform Models. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 22(4)*, 357-374.
- Desimore, L. (2002). How Can Comprehensive School Reform Models be Successfully Implemented. *Review of Educational Research, 72(3)*, 433-479.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Dougherty, C. & Mellor, L. (2007). Executive Summary-Dallas ISD Urban Macro Goals Progress Report. National Center for Educational Accountability.
- Dufour, R. & Eaker, R. (1992). *Creating the New American School: A Principal's Guide to School Improvement*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Services.
- The Education Commission of the States (2008). *Closing the Achievement Gap*. Retrieved May 18, 2008, from [www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/publications/home\\_publications.asp](http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/publications/home_publications.asp)
- Elmore, R. (1996). *Getting to Scale with Good Educational Practice*. Retrieved March 9, 2008, from [www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/harvard96/1996/sp96/p96elmor.htm](http://www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/harvard96/1996/sp96/p96elmor.htm)
- Elmore, R. (1997). *The Politics of Education Reform*. Retrieved March 9, 2008, from [www.issues.org/14.1/elmore.htm](http://www.issues.org/14.1/elmore.htm)

Elmore, R. (2004). Change and Improvement in Educational Reform. Retrieved March 9, 2008 from [www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/hep/elmore.htm](http://www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/hep/elmore.htm)

Fenstermacher, G. (1979). Education Accountability: Features of Concept. *Theory into Practice, 1*, 28-May.

Fullan, M., Bertani, A. & Quinn, J. (2004). New Lessons for Districtwide Reform. Retrieved March 8, 2008, from [www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/harvard95/1995/sp95/p95good.htm](http://www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/harvard95/1995/sp95/p95good.htm)

Fullan, M. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. (2000). The Return of Large Scale Reform. *Journal of Educational Change, 18*(5), 330-335.

Goodman, J. (1995). Change without Difference: School Restructuring in Historical Perspective. Retrieved March 2, 2008, from [www.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=2&hid=19&sid=dc2f1d41-e426-4b92-bbb7-d6456329298%40sessionmgr103](http://www.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=2&hid=19&sid=dc2f1d41-e426-4b92-bbb7-d6456329298%40sessionmgr103)

Goodwin, V., Wofford, J. & Whittington, J. (1993). A Theoretical and Empirical Extension to the Transformational Leadership Construct. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 22*(7), 759-774.

- Hargreaves, A. (2002). Sustainability of Educational Change: The Role of Social Geographies. *Journal of Educational Change*, 3, 189-214.
- Harris, D. & Herrington, C. (2006). Accountability, Standards, and the Growing Achievement Gap: Lessons from the Past Half-Century. *American Journal of Education*, 112, 209-238.
- Herman, J. (2007). Accountability and Assessment: Is Public Interest in K-12 Education Being Served? *National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing*.
- Howell, J. & Avolio, B. (1993). Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Locus of Control, and Support for Innovation: Key Predictors of Consolidated-Business-Unit Performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(6), 891-902.
- Kent, T., Crotts, J. & Azziz, A. (2001). Four Factors of Transformational Leadership Behavior. *Leadership & Organizational Development Behavior*, 22(5), 221-229.
- Kirst, M. (1992). The State Role in School Restructuring. In C. Finn & T. Rebarber (Eds.), *Education Reform in the 90s*. New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- Kliebard, H. (1988). Success And Failure of Educational Reform: Are There Historical Lessons? *Peabody Journal of Education*, 65(2), 144-157.

- Kotter, J. (1998). Leading Change: Why Transformations Efforts Fail. In Harvard Business Review (Ed.), *Harvard Business Review on Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Kotter, J. & Schlesinger, L. (1988). Choosing Strategies for Change. *Harvard Business Review*, 57(2), 106-114.
- Kuhnert, K. & Lewis, P. (1987). Transactional and Transformational Leadership: A Constructive/Developmental Analysis. *The Academy of Management Review*, 12(4), 648-657.
- Laszlo, C. & Laugel, J. (2000). Large-scale Organizational Change: An Executives Guide. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Ledford, G., Mohrman, S., Mohrman, A. & Lawler III, E. (1989). The phenomenon of large-scale organizational change. In A. Mohrman (Ed.), *Large-Scale Organizational Change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Leedy, P. & Olmrod, J. (2001). Practical Research (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Leithwood, K. (1992). The Move Toward Transformational Leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 49(5), 8-12.
- Leithwood, K. & Earl, L. (2000). Educational Accountability Effects: An International Perspective. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 75(4), 1-18.

- Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. & Mascal, B. (2002). A Framework for Research on Large-Scale Reform. *Journal of Educational Change*, 3, 1-22.
- Lessinger, L. (1971). Accountability for Results: A Basic Challenge for America's Schools. In L. Lessinger & R. Tyler (Eds.), *Accountability in Education*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Levin, H. (1974). Success A Conceptual Framework for Accountability in Education. *The School Review*, 82(3), 363-391.
- Linn, R., Baker, E. & Betebenner, W. (2002). Accountability Systems: Implications of Requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. *Educational Researcher*, 31(6), 3-16.
- Malen, B., Croninger, R., Muncey, D. & Redmond-Jones, D. (2002). Reconstituting Schools: Testing the Theory of Action. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 113-132.
- McDermott, K. (2000). Barriers to Large-Scale Success of Models for Urban School Reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 22(1), 83-89.
- McLaughlin, M. & Mirta, D. (2001). Theory-Based Change and Change-Based Theory: Going Deeper, Going Broader. *Journal of Educational Change*, 2, 301-323.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D. (2005). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (2008). *Urban Education Portfolio Overview*. Retrieved June 8, 2008, from [www.msdf.org/News\\_and\\_Resources/Quick\\_Facts.aspx](http://www.msdf.org/News_and_Resources/Quick_Facts.aspx)

Miles, M. & Haberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Murdock, S. (2004). *Population Change in Texas: Implications for Human, Socioeconomic and Natural Resources*. Retrieved June 8, 2008, from <http://recenter.tamu.edu/speeches/land04murdock.pdf>.

Murdock, S., Hoque, M., Michael, M., White, S. & Pecotte, B. (1995). *Texas Challenged: Implications of Population Change for Public Service Demand in Texas*. The Center for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research and Education.

Murphy, J. (1989). Educational Reform in the 1980s: Explaining Some Surprising Success. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 209-221.

Murphy, J. (1992). Restructuring America's Schools: An Overview. In C. Finn & T. Rebarber (Eds.), *Education Reform in the 90s*. New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Company.

National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. *The Elementary School Journal*, 84(2), 112-130.

New York Department of Education (2007). Children First. Retrieved March 9, 2008, from [www.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=2&hid=19&sid=dc2f1d41-e426-4b92-bbb7-d6456329298%40sessionmgr103](http://www.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=2&hid=19&sid=dc2f1d41-e426-4b92-bbb7-d6456329298%40sessionmgr103)  
[www.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=2&hid=19&sid=dc2f1d41-e426-4b92-bbb7-d6456329298%40sessionmgr103](http://www.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=2&hid=19&sid=dc2f1d41-e426-4b92-bbb7-d6456329298%40sessionmgr103)

Nutt, P.C., & Backoff, R.W. (1996). Walking the Vision and Walking the Talk: Transforming Public Organizations with Strategic Leadership. *Public Productivity & Management Review*, 19(4), 455-486.

O'Day, J. (2002). Complexity, Accountability, and School Improvement. Retrieved March 8, 2008, from [www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/harvard02/2002/fa02/fa02oday.htm](http://www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/harvard02/2002/fa02/fa02oday.htm)  
[www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/harvard02/2002/fa02/fa02oday.htm](http://www.edreview.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/harvard02/2002/fa02/fa02oday.htm)

Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1998). Fitting the Pieces Together, Education Reform that Works. Retrieved March 8, 2008, from [www.ed.gov/PDFdocs/reform1.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/PDFdocs/reform1.pdf)

Ornstein, A. (1988). The Evolving Accountability Movement. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 65(3), 12-20.

- Pawar, B. & Eastman, K. (1997). The Nature and Implication of Contextual Influences on Transformational Leadership: A Conceptual Examination. *The Academy of Management Review*, 22(1), 80-109.
- Pielstick, C. (1998). The Transforming Leader: A meta-ethnographic analysis. Retrieved May 19, 2008, from www.ebscohost
- Porter, J. (1971). Accountability in Education. In L. Lessinger & R. Tyler (Eds.), *Accountability in Education*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Ravitch, D. (2000). *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Resnick, L. & Hall, M. (1998). Learning Organizations for Sustainable Education Reform. *Daedalus*, 127(4), 89-97.
- Rowen, B., Barnes, C. & Cambum, E. (2004). Benefiting from Comprehensive School Reform: A Review of research in CSR implementation. In C. Cross (Ed.), *Putting the Pieces Together: Lessons from Comprehensive School Reform Research*. Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform.
- Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Shamir, B., House, R. & Arthur, M. (1993). The Motivational Effects of Charismatic Leadership: A Self-Concept Based Theory. *Organization Science*, 4(4), 557-594.

- Stake, R. (1994). In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stein, M.K., Hubbard, L., & Mehan, H. (2004). Reforms Ideas That Travel Far Afield: Two Cultures of Reform in New York City's District #2 and San Diego. *Journal of Educational Change*, 4, 161-197.
- Stewart, J. (2006). Transformational Leadership: An Evolving Concept Examined Through the Works of Burns, Bass, Avolio, and Leithwood. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 54, 1-12.
- Stringfield, S. (2002). Big Change Questions: Is Large-Scale Educational Reform Possible? *Journal of Educational Change*, 3, 63-73.
- Traver, A. (2006). Institutions and Organizational Change. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(5), 497-514.
- Tyack, D. & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- U.S. Department of Education (2002). *No Child Left Behind: A Desktop Reference*. Retrieved November 20, 2007, from [www.ed.gov/search/Results.jhtml](http://www.ed.gov/search/Results.jhtml)

Vinovskis, M. (1996). An Analysis of the Concept and Uses of Systemic Education Reform. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33(1), 53-85.

Waclawski, J. (2002). Large-Scale Organizational Change and Performance: An Empirical Examination. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 13(3), 289-305.

Yin, R. (1994). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Second Edition. London: Sage Publications.

Zmuda, A., Kuklis, R. & Kline, E. (2004). *Transforming Schools: Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

## Vita

James Joseph Flores Ponce, son of Jimmy and Socorro Ponce, was born in Silver City, New Mexico on February 18, 1967. Upon graduating from Dallas Independent School District's Seagoville High School in 1985, he attended The University of Texas where he earned a Bachelor in Business Administration in 1990 and a Master in Education in 1998. He has served the Dallas Independent School District for 16 years in the capacity of a teacher at L.O. Donald Elementary, an assistant principal at W. H. Adamson High School, a principal at James Bowie Elementary, a director of Reading First, an area superintendent at Area 6, and an executive director of the Transformation Management Office. He currently serves the Dallas Independent School District in the capacity of Deputy Chief of Staff.

James was selected into The University of Texas Cooperative Superintendency as a Cycle XVII fellow. He began work towards his Doctorate in Education Administration in the summer of 2006.

Permanent Address: 114 Mathis Seagoville, Texas 75159

This text was formatted by Chuck Gregory from the original typed by the author.