DISSERTATION

A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THE GOVERNING BOARDS OF TWO MULTILEVEL COLLABORATIONS

Submitted by

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY KERRY YOUNGBLOOD ENTITLED A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THE GOVERNING BOARDS OF TWO MULTILEVEL COLLABORATIONS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THE GOVERNING BOARDS OF TWO MULTILEVEL COLLABORATIONS

This study explores the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of members of two organizations charged with the responsibility of leading their respective multilevel educational partnerships. In this situation, the cases are two multilevel partnerships, while the participants are the members of the two multilevel governing boards. The two cases are set in the Western United States, each one representing a local school district, a community college and a four-year institution of higher education.

The method of study selected for this effort was a qualitative research design analyzed for emergent themes, using a multiple case study. In order to gain insight into this unique board culture of multilevel partnerships, the following research questions were asked:

1. What is the scope of feeling and perception of those who have experienced the challenges of merging disparate resources, differing cultures, and competing goals into a functional multi-level partnership?
2. How do board members view the various elements of structure that form the multilevel collaboration?

The primary vehicle for acquiring the interview data was a series of unstructured open-ended interviews analyzed for emergent thoughts and themes.

Two major themes emerged from the data: Collaboration and Community. Collaboration is a strong component of both cases and is consistent with the review of

literature. Community is a robust theme that emerged from the data but does not emerge as a strong aspect of the literature. Participants displayed a strong commitment to community viewing population density as a significant factor in how they interact. In addition participants' reasons for participation were similar regardless of the scope of governing board responsibilities.

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After more than six and a half years of work, study, worry, writing, and wonder I find it curious that now I struggle to write. These words are presented without a damn bit of academic scrutiny or APA compliance.

Without the unwavering encouragement, mentoring, and support of many people my story would have a very different ending. Starting the process at all would not have happened without the encouragement, modeling and mentoring Dr J. Bob Moorman. Thank you Jerry Bob for showing me that scholarship, humor, intellect, family, and humility can all happen at once and that there is life after 70. Working full-time and studying would not have been possible without the daily back-up and support I received from friends and co-workers. You will hear from me in person.

I close with four specific thoughts. *First,* thank you Roni Man for your intellect, your enthusiasm, and your keen insight in helping me learn to write more better, to edit, and to drink without falling down. *Second,* thank you Tim, you have no idea how much you have done for me. *Third,* I owe all that I am and will ever be to my daughter Jessie, you are such an inspiration to me, thank you for your patience and support. *Forth,* Kregg I know that you can see these words from another place. I thank you for relentlessly encouraging, goading, pushing, pulling and loving me through the most rigorous moments of life and helping me see things that only your wisdom could impart. And most importantly, I thank you with all greatest sincerity for showing me how to live and how to die with such extraordinary grace and dignity.....sorry I took more time to finish than you had to watch....this one's for you.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Multilevel partnerships described as collaboration involving K-12 (kindergarten through 12th grade) school districts, community colleges, universities & four-year schools (which will for the purpose of this paper be used interchangeably) and local stakeholders have the potential to constitute an important point of connection between schools and their communities at all levels. Mattessich and Monsey (1992) state that collaboration is a well-defined, mutually beneficial relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. Banjac (2000) views collaboration as the close union of dissimilar organizations in a mutually beneficial relationship, in which those in charge are willing to share authority. This supports Winer and Ray (1994) who found that, in successful collaborations, organizations followed a guideline of shared leadership and control as well as shared risks and resources. Regardless of exactly how they are structured, the literature demonstrates that multilevel collaborations are fragile, difficult to lead and hard to define (Azinger, 2000 Fall).

From the participants' perspective, these multilevel partnerships hold the promise of increasing available resources and thereby increasing services to staff and students (Gershwin, 1999). For example, tech-prep programs are specifically designed to connect high school students to technical training facilities and faculty expertise available only through collaborations with higher education. Similarly, creative enrollment programs offer high school students an opportunity to take honors, advanced placement, or instructionally unique courses otherwise unavailable to them. The advantages to community college and four-year schools are illustrated in areas such as enrollment increases, recruiting opportunities and access to collaborative grants. At a time when tax dollars are thinly spread, cooperation among K-12, community colleges, and four-year schools would appear to offer each a valuable resource (Callan, 1997).

Multilevel partnerships are challenged by the embedded and differing cultures of each organization and the struggle for control. At the K-12 level, the local school is expected to reflect community values as the designated social institution assigned to help the community raise its children (Azinger, 2000 Fall). At a time when concerns about the quality of K-12 schools are being measured through standardized test scores, many public schools feel as though they are under attack, making multilevel partnerships all the more fragile. As a result of concern over standardized test scores, the high school curriculum tends to be centrally controlled at the district or even state levels, and teachers' academic freedom is limited by boundaries unfamiliar and unacceptable to most college faculty. This, combined with the community college, situated between and overlapping both the K-12 and the four-year niche, produces a culture that can be hard to define and difficult to lead. Such a cultural gap produces a dynamic that can challenge an instructional partnership regardless of other factors (Azinger, 2000 Fall).

It may seem that cultural clashes such as the one above should be minimal between K-12 and community colleges, since many of the first community colleges were originally viewed as extensions of the K-12 system. However, the direction community colleges have taken in the past several decades has resulted in their operational values being shaped by four-year colleges and universities (Baker, 1992). The effect has been a culture that fosters a more open climate to explore controversial topics of study at a level typically unacceptable in the K-12 system (Zwerling, 1976).

The common roots and the potential benefits of collaboration make it appear that the motivation for, and interest in, partnerships between K-12 school districts and community colleges is very high. However, a review of the agenda of two recent annual conferences of the American Association of School Administrators, which represents the nation's K-12 school leaders, reveals no sessions devoted to community college partnerships with high schools. A similar review of the meetings of the American Association of Community Colleges indicates that there were at least eight forums recently devoted to this topic. This fact might lead one to believe that community colleges are more interested in partnering than their K-12 counterparts, an assumption that goes unproven (Azinger, 2000, Fall).

A clear empirical measure of interest in collaborations is difficult to assess. While the literature does not reflect an even distribution of research efforts across the entire scope of participants, it should not be construed that collaborations are in decline. Studies indicate, via the number of research efforts and publications focused on collaboration, that there has been an increase in collaborative efforts since the early 1980s with the trend continuing and increasing through the 1990s (Gershwin, 2000).

The increasing emergence of collaborative partnerships and their respective governing boards, within which multiple entities pool resources and work together to achieve common goals, is a significant development in both practical and theoretical terms. The call for such an emergence has been sounding loudly for over two decades with predictions coming from all segments of the educational community. Leroy Keith, President of Morehouse College, Georgia, identified a strong need for K-12 schools and higher education to eliminate “disjointed relationships” and called for a continuum of services from kindergarten through graduate school. In addition, other scholars saw collaboration and partnership as a means to serve both a larger number and a more diverse population of students. Dale Parnell, former president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, recorded predictions for education in the 1990s where he saw partnership among multiple levels of education and the communities they served as a fundamental tool in dealing with the socially complex challenges facing education. In Parnell’s view, the decade of the 1990s would be seen as a great boon time in education if institutions could look critically at themselves and respond to the challenges presented by an increasingly complex and diverse society (Parnell, 1990). This diversity, in the form of race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, economic status, single parent families, blended families, and other complex social factors, demands that successful schools present a much broader and more accessible form of education (Hoopingarner, 1996). The National Association of School Boards (2002) reports that issues relating to cultural diversity have not only increased dramatically in efforts centered on staff development but also have become evident in school board policies and goals at the local, state, and national levels. There have been significant increases in enrollments in higher education and in creative enrollment options for high school and college students across the nation. As a specific example in support of Parnell’s prediction, Colorado enrollments in higher education nearly doubled during the 1990s, with the fastest growing segment accredited to the community colleges (Colorado

Commission on Higher Education, 2002). These increased enrollments continue to bring a more diverse and complex array of students.

These issues of diversity, multilevel cultural clashes and other forces, are shaping education in America, and the responses from educational institutions are as varied as the institutions themselves. As Parnell and others predicted, the 1990s focused much greater attention on the need for change in how educational institutions looked at themselves and their colleagues. This opened the door for greater inter-institutional collaboration and more options for students to matriculate in non-traditional ways, acquire instruction from multiple sources, transfer coursework, articulate credit, and access higher education in general. The common thread running through these efforts, and clearly evident in the literature in general, is the idea that schools must not operate as individual entities without consideration of, and collaboration with, other partners within the scope of the areas they serve. And yet, little focus on the study of multi-level partnerships can be found (Glowacki-Dudka, 1999). This begs for multilevel partnership research efforts focused on the perceptions of those charged with the highest level of oversight, i.e., members of governing boards.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the practical experience of board members who are governing multi-level partnerships involving K-12, community colleges and four-year schools. It would appear that these board members face complex challenges, as they must represent their initial constituency while compromising individual control. The boards and the members who comprise them are unique in that they are involved in specialized collaborative efforts requiring a high level of cooperation and a combining of cultures. This "multilevel hybrid board culture" can be understood best through the eyes of those who have experienced it firsthand.

Research Questions

In order to gain insight into this unique board culture of multilevel partnerships, the researcher must be able to answer the following research questions:

3. What is the scope of feeling and perception of those who have experienced the challenges of merging disparate resources, differing cultures, and competing goals into a functional multi-level partnership?
4. How do board members view the various elements of structure that form the multilevel collaboration?

While the literature is replete with information about governing boards and their efforts within each of the stratified structures of K-12, community colleges, and four-year schools, there has been little effort focused at multilevel boards and the challenges they face due to the complex nature of the partnership itself.

The challenges that these multi-level boards face are illustrated by Azinger (2000, Fall). He points out that the fundamental cultures of boards at the K-12, community college and four-year levels are inherently conflicted, illustrated by the fact that community college and four-year boards often are appointed and charged with the oversight of a large region or an entire state while K-12 boards are generally elected by public vote and charged with the representation of a specific constituency. K-12 boards typically have the ability to take taxation issues such as bonds and mill levies to a public vote and, within prescribed limits, can adjust property taxes in response to district operational needs. This taxation profile varies from state to state but in general far more limits four-year boards than community college and K-12 boards. These and other differences give rise to significant challenges in the establishment and operation of multilevel collaborations. In order to understand the challenges facing board members involved in multi-level collaborations, it is important to explore these collaborative efforts in greater detail and to answer questions such as: When did the call for greater collaboration begin, how is it affected by culture, and how did it manifest in the earliest stages?

An example of the early call for greater collaboration came twenty years ago in a report from the National Commission of Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk: An Imperative for Educational Reform (U.S. Department of Education, 1983), which detailed a need for fundamental changes in our public education system. One of the most frequently suggested restructuring strategies was that of cooperation among various institutions, agencies, and communities to provide more complete services to students while maximizing resources (Grupe, 1990). This suggested restructuring has resulted in numerous collaborations focused on enhancing the delivery of education to the masses.

Wagner (1988) states that there is nothing new about cooperation in education. Sharing facilities, programs and the use of technology (Parnell 1990) are longstanding and common examples of cooperation. In some cases, entire works were published for the purpose of developing guidelines to support cooperative agreements among institutions (Neal, 1988; Greenberg, 1991). The call for and the practice of collaboration have long been seen among leaders in the field, however, Grupe's (1990) comprehensive collection of citations on inter-institutional cooperative agreements noted a deficiency in the literature when it comes to factors that affect cooperative inter-institutional relationships. Although Grupe's comments are typically centered on consortia agreements, they are also applicable to the entire scope of partnerships identifying multi-level partnerships as an area of omission in the literature. Greenberg (1991) also supports the need for deeper study of multi-level partnerships and further believes that "we have a concomitant need to gain greater insight into all aspects of their creation, operation, success, or demise" (p. 86).

Examples of Collaboration

In reviewing the literature for examples of collaboration, the expansive nature of these efforts becomes more evident as initiatives encompassing entire state systems evolve. Since the early 1980s, state policy makers and local boards alike have increasingly placed a high priority on creating K-16 partnerships that often require the creation of a multi-purpose board to provide representative oversight. These boards are charged with efforts as diverse as the aligning of curricula, matching student progression from one grade level to the next, coordinating of testing requirements from elementary school through college, and encouraging the development of inter-institutional student services, staff development, and direct delivery of instruction (Boswell, 2000, Fall). Three examples of broad collaborations encompassing state systems are Maryland, Georgia and Ohio.

Maryland has established six types of collaborations between K-12 schools and higher education institutions: (1) professional development at all levels, (2) fieldwork within and outside schools, (3) early drop-out intervention, (4) continuing education and teacher training, (5) job training and tech preparation, and (6) distance learning.

Maryland's K-16 initiative includes recommendations regarding assessment, sequencing of curricula, and community involvement (Boswell, 2000, Fall).

Georgia's regional and local educational consortia link the otherwise disparate educational bureaucracies of P-12 (preschool through 12th grade) and postsecondary education by coordinating governing boards, community members, and legislative and business leaders. Georgia's P-16 initiative calls upon these leaders to find collaborative ways to improve student achievement at all levels, facilitate student transitions, improve postsecondary access for minority and low-income students, and focus teacher preparation and professional development programs on meeting high standards for every student.

The Ohio Learning Extension Network links the K-16 community, builds a common agenda through a partnership council of state, local and higher education board members, and targets or reallocates existing fiscal resources via these board members. All of these efforts are targeted in support of changes that will improve student success across multiple levels of instruction (Boswell, 2000, Fall).

These examples of the involvement of board members in each state's initiative and the need for multiple boards to work collaboratively are indicators of the importance of the governance structure to the overall success of such efforts, yet little research is focused at these multi-level partnerships. A deeper understanding of the complex factors faced by multiple-level boards is critical to educational partnerships among K-12, community college and four-year schools (Boswell, 2000). Governing boards are expected to play a much larger role in seeking funding both inside and outside of traditional funding mechanisms and in providing consistency of vision and leadership

(Callan, 1997). Each multilevel partnership brings with it an inherent responsibility to maintain stability and focus in long-term leadership, creating yet another possible cultural clash as board members strive to deal with their own intrinsic differences. These factors all combine to support a study aimed at better understanding the perceptions of board members charged with the responsibility of leading these multi-level partnerships.

Regardless of the board structure, the intentions or the level of support, there are numerous factors that can and do affect these complex partnerships. The cultures of each of the different participants provide challenges for governing boards. This is supported by the widespread agreement that the custodial function of the K-12 system fosters very different institutional environments than the life-long learning adult function of community colleges (Banjac, 2000). Their disparate constituencies, organizational cultures, values, purposes, and functions can interfere with collaborative efforts. Challenges that may arise include: resistance or lack of coordination at administrative, departmental, program and/or instructional levels, poor communication with parents or between and among bureaucracies and governing boards, lack of student interest and difficulty coordinating allocation of necessary resources between organizations (Azinger, 2000, Fall). In assessing this culture it is important to take a macro-view of both the K-12 and community college culture that dominates public education in this country.

Policymakers increasingly believe that these differences in culture and structure are creating roadblocks for students who seek to move between systems, and political pressure is growing to overcome these disconnects. Recognizing the need for postsecondary education or training in the highly competitive world economy, elected officials are at the center of the effort to create K-16 systems that overcome the traditional turf battles (Education Commission of the States, 2000).

Evidence of the significant disconnects between high schools and colleges are illustrated in a number of incongruancies between institutional policies and practices. In particular, the difference between high school graduation and college admission requirements has become a concern among policymakers. In their final years of high school, students typically take state assessment tests composed primarily of multiple-choice questions reflecting skills taught between middle school and lower high school. Because these tests are not used to determine college admission, students are required to take one or more college admission tests that often cover content not included in the K-12 assessments. When students arrive at the college or university, they are administered still a third set of tests to measure their academic preparation for placement into college courses (Adams, 1997). These exams often cover content not included in either of the previous examinations and require students to do significant amounts of writing for the first time. This system of uncoordinated tests and requirements can create significant barriers for students, particularly for poor and minority students who often graduate from high schools that do not do a good job of preparing students for college success (Haycock, Barth, Mitchell, Wilkins, 1999).

A recent report, *Statewide School-College (K-16) Partnerships to Improve School Performance* (Tafel and Eberthart, 1999), argues that if board members, education leaders and state policymakers want to meet their desires for educational improvement and enhanced student achievement, current structures and practices need to be revamped and new systemic approaches need to be identified. Such actions might include early outreach and preparation for college, a focus on improved teacher quality, and stronger more clearly defined board relationships between collaborative systems. With these kinds of changes and complex responsibilities, the origin and manner of governance and funding can present significant challenges, particularly during times of lean finances or political instability.

Definition of Terms

Cooperation: Two or more entities working together toward a commonly agreed goal but essentially independent of each other.

Collaboration: Two or more entities working on joint planning, implementation and evaluation of efforts. Requires collaborators to embrace individual compromise for the greater good of the effort and a vision of mutually developed long range planning combined with a deep commitment of resources.

Multilevel Partnerships: The combination of a K-12, community college and four-year school or culture bringing together three distinct entities and/or cultures.

University/Four-year schools: While there are distinct differences between Universities and four-year schools, this study is viewing them as a single entity and will use the term four –year to represent both.

Significance of the Study

Interorganizational relationships among educational institutions have become critical in the struggle to provide more services with increasingly scarce and declining resources. With internal and external pressures facing governing boards to reduce costs and simultaneously increase access and ensure quality, an increasing emphasis on multi-level collaborative initiatives is likely to occur over the next several years (Cunningham, 2000). As collaborations increase in number and depth, the involvement of their governing boards also will continue to become more important and complex. This increase in collaboration will require multilevel board members to demonstrate skills rooted in a culture that is only beginning to emerge. There is a direct correlation between collaboration and board involvement (Cunningham, 2000). Indeed, Congress has recently called for greater collegial efficiencies and collaboration in the 2002 National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education report. Most, if not all, collaborations operate under some kind of board governance structure, causing the role of the board to become increasingly vital and more complex (Horgan, 1999). Understanding the characteristics, strengths, risks and models of collaboration, and the boards that serve them becomes crucial when considering the large number of collaborative activities being undertaken now and predicted for the future.

In order to provide research aimed at supporting multilevel collaborations, scholars must understand the unique role played by the individual partners involved. K-12 with its elected board and local focus embraces a quasi-parental responsibility differing significantly from its higher education partners. In contrast to the more narrowly defined K-12 environment, the community college, with its eclectic roots and wide scope of responsibilities, is one of the most difficult entities to understand and define (Boswell, 2000, Fall) This differs from the four-year schools which are more clearly understood by the masses and usually are responsible to a large region or an entire state (Ratcliff as cited in Baker, 1994). In order to find success, each partner in a multi-level effort must be committed to collaboration. This places the community college in a critical position to provide the bridges necessary to build a multi-level collaboration (Hoopingarner, 1996).

As they are unique, community colleges find themselves in a distinct position with regards to multilevel partnerships. Even in a state where much of the industry and demographic base is similar, community colleges have their own individual fingerprint (Hoopingarner, 1996). The word "community" in community college is an indicator of the philosophical underpinning of each school. Community colleges are reflections of the communities in which they reside (Parnell, 1990). Accompanying this sense of community is a governing board, typically one for each participant in a multi-level collaboration. As each board is a reflection of its respective community, it also reflects the mission and culture of its individual environment (Schein, 1992), creating a complex social setting in which multi-level partnerships must exist.

If the agenda for effective partnerships is to be advanced, leaders from all areas of responsibility must be aware of the diverse needs of the systems and students they are charged with serving. Yet the envisioned working relationships between K-12 districts, community colleges and four-year schools, however desirable, are very difficult to achieve and even harder to assess once in place (Gershwin,1999; Garland as cited in Baker, 1994).

This study is poised to give the reader an inside view of the feelings of board members involved in multi-level collaborative efforts. It poses a better understanding of the perceptions of these board members and their thoughts on how effective they feel they are in their current roles. In addition, it proposes to look for common themes among board leaders and to evaluate those themes in a manner that would allow other partnerships to benefit from a greater understanding of the board perspective. This increased understanding of the board perspective will provide valuable information to other partnerships charged with establishing, managing, and assessing multilevel collaborative efforts. By better understanding the issues that often confound board members and complicate their involvement, practitioners can address these issues in a more proactive manner, by using insight and understanding to create a foundation that is more likely to succeed.

The lack of formal, qualitative research resources available to community college efforts often prevents an individual school or a partnership to study itself in a rich and meaningful way. Limited time and resources allow only for simple and quick surveys targeted at customer satisfaction and other perceived needs, but the deeper questions go unanswered and perceptions unnoticed (Schein, 1992).

This study will be useful for communities and educators desiring to establish, assess, and evolve unique and complex partnerships involving board-level leadership (Merriam, 2001).

Researcher's Perspective

My interest in this research comes from three fundamental perspectives. First, I have taught at the high school and community college levels and served as a high school principal and community college dean for 23 years. For the past eleven years I have served as a dean charged with designing, implementing and leading a multilevel partnership involving a school district and a comprehensive four-year college that also has the role and mission of a community college. During this time I have observed numerous situations in which board-level involvement was the critical ingredient in both success and failure, most often manifesting in issues related to funding. I have come to believe that inadequate funding is due more to inadequate priority at the board level than to actual unavailability of funds, and I have witnessed first hand what harm a disjointed board can do and what miracles a focused and well-led board can accomplish.

Second, my roots are in the working class as I was raised in rural Oklahoma in a family in which my older brother was the first to attend college. I did not graduate from high school but eventually managed to send myself to college utilizing the viable skill of welding. I believe very strongly in open access to higher education in general but moreover, in education that can meet students "where they live." In other words, students should be able to access education regardless of academic abilities, financial standing or other traditional measures. I truly believe that the life-long learning and open access of the community college is the heartbeat of future opportunities for many people.

Third, I speak as both a researcher and a taxpayer. I believe very deeply that collaboration is a critical, fundamental approach to dealing with increasingly limited funding. The "sacred cow" of traditional liberal arts at the higher education level must learn to be more open to collaboration as a form of true cooperation and not simply reluctant compliance toward requests from elected officials. Likewise members of K-12 education systems must look beyond the traditional 12th grade classroom and realize that they and the traditional liberal arts institutions are not the only educational options available. One of the most effective educational expenditures of limited tax dollars is the community college. Community colleges are often the only means of access to a substantial portion of the population. I do not believe that one dimension of the educational community must live or die at the expense of the other. Our separatist tendencies will however, facilitate that reality if we do not become more proactive, particularly with governing boards and elected officials.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter Two will review literature concerning: support for collaboration, theoretical perspectives on collaboration, levels of collaboration, partnering among educational entities, characteristics of successful collaborations, institutional culture, board members' roles and responsibilities, and perceptions of interorganizational collaboration.

Policies Supporting Collaboration

Collaborative efforts between education and business have existed since the early 1900s (Averbak, 1988). The term "collaboration", however, was not commonly used prior to the mid- 1970s (Glowacki-Dudka, 1999); such enterprises were more typically referred to as partnerships (Cunningham, 2000).

One early form of business and education collaboration, which established a foundation for future policies, was known as cooperative education. Cooperative education (co-op) focused on career exploration for high school students. It began at the turn of the twentieth century and involved students working jobs in the community, supervised by their teachers (Averbak, 1988). These cooperative experiences were integrated with, or at least supported by, in-class instruction and were tied to grade performance and credits for graduation. Schools collaborated with local businesses to provide a realistic work environment and an opportunity for students to gain experience using modern equipment, learning about organizational culture, and sometimes earning wages (Barton, 1983). These supervised work experiences often led to permanent jobs for students and a better faculty perspective on the needs of employers.

As cooperative education experiences increased, they were supported by the federal government. An example of this support is the Smith-Hughes Act, which appropriated federal funds for agricultural, industrial, and home economics subjects. This support was further demonstrated when the Smith-Hughes Act provided money for cooperative education, teacher training, salaries, and new vocational programs. Smith-Hughes was the first special purposes grant made available to public schools (Johns & Morphet, 1975) and required a dollar-for-dollar match by states. In addition, it provided incentives for local schools to work together with the federal government to enhance relationships with local businesses and facilitate better collaboration. The career nature of vocational programs made the local business community enthusiastic partners in providing real work examples and expertise (Glowacki-Dudka, 1999). However, these collaborative efforts were not without controversy.

Literature from the early 1900s suggests vocational programs were met with resistance by professional educators and the middle class, who typically favored liberal arts education (Averbak, 1988). From the dawn of the United States' educational system, the definition of a proper education oscillated between two central concepts: a traditional liberal education designed to maximize one's mental faculties and educate socially, and a more practical, utilitarian approach structured to teach the pupil useful, work-oriented skills (Crimmel, 1993). This dichotomy left the business community as the primary locale for hands-on, employment-related collaboration and set the stage for continued discussion and revolution around the need for deeper interaction among all levels and types of schools. According to Butts and Cremin (1953), business leaders of the early

1900s felt the classical and literary emphasis of the then-current college curriculum was a "worthless undertaking for any young man who wished to succeed in the business world" (p. 370). Nevertheless, strong support still existed for curricula with broad liberal arts objectives, effectively hindering the evolution of relationships between vocational and academic educators (Parnell, 1985). Despite this, the federal government continued to support in-school programs designed and perceived to improve vocational skills. Spurred by concern over the 1957 Russian Sputnik launch, Congress passed The Vocational Education Act of 1963, substantially increasing funding to the states to maintain and increase vocational education (Averbak, 1988).

Even with federal support, the influence of business in the public schools diminished during the 1960s and 1970s as issues of civil rights, equity, and empowerment of parent and community groups took precedence (Timpane, 1984). Through the 1970s, K-12 enrollments declined and districts were required to close schools and lay off teachers. At the same time, the economy was plagued with sluggish economic growth and high inflation. School districts were forced to pay higher costs to educate fewer students while the public perceived a decline in educational standards and student achievement. Public attitudes toward education showed eroding public confidence in the schools. Between 1974 and 1982 the number of people who were willing to give a letter grade of A or B to their local schools' performance fell from 48 percent to 37 percent (Gallup, 1986), while expectations of the role of schools continued to expand. Along with eroding confidence was a perception that schools were not maximizing their financial resources and that fragmented systems were inefficient and unproductive, which might be offset by greater collaboration.

Concurrent with the belief that the quality of American education had declined was the perception that American competitiveness in the global economy also had waned. Business leaders in the United States were seeing their global market share disappear into the hands of foreign competitors (Bonstingl, 2001). The 1980s brought a loss of economic dominance in favor of Japan, contributing to a greater dependence on foreign capital and undermining the United States' ability to compete in world markets. It also signaled the beginning of an era of national attention to the system of schooling in the United States and an impetus for schools to more effectively collaborate to meet the growing challenges facing them (Goodlad, 1994).

Prompted by in the national decline in economic competitiveness, education and economic policy makers called for increased involvement of the business community in the schools (Averbak, 1988). The case for business involvement was based on anticipated benefits the American economy could derive from school improvement, including a better trained work force and the ability to develop superior technology. The complexity and scope of skills required to design, build, operate, and maintain this superior technology meant that students needed higher levels of technical skills and that without these skills growth would be severely limited (Grubb, 1999). Other business and policy officials saw resolution of deficits in the educational system as a prerequisite to the deficits in budget and trade (Mickelson, 1999).

In 1981, in response to the public's dissatisfaction with the public schools, the U.S. Secretary of Education established the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). The Commission's report, proclaiming the "nation at risk," appeared on the front page of the national newspapers. Four hundred requests for the report were received the day after its release and six million copies were distributed that year. The report called for reformation of the educational system to maintain and improve the country's slim competitive edge (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). One of the most frequently suggested restructuring strategies was that of cooperation among various institutions, agencies, and communities to provide more complete services to students while maximizing resources and utilizing partnerships as a fundamental tool in the process (Grupe, 1990). The report pointed to the schools' mediocre performance as the root cause of the nation's economic crisis (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). The literature reflects a substantial increase in collaborative activities during the 1980s accompanied by a sharp increase in research (Whetten, 1981; Neal, 1988; Gray, 1995) targeting collaboration. The push for greater efficiency and effectiveness had begun in earnest, providing the pathway for future collaborations and challenging the current paradigms. It was not until the National Commission on Excellence published *A Nation at Risk* that a national movement of educational reform truly took hold (Gross, 1988).

The Education Commission of the States (1983) report soon followed *A Nation at Risk*, affirming the importance and need for business sector interest in the reform of education and increasing the support for collaboration as a tool for restructuring. The Education Commission of the States was a group of executives, politicians and educators brought together to assess and make recommendations regarding education's economic affairs. They stated that high-level education was the most important key to economic growth and further reported that national defense, social stability, and national prosperity depended on the ability to improve education and training for millions of citizens

(Education Commission of the States, 1983).

The National Science Board's Commission on PreCollege Education (1983) furthered support for collaboration by stating that students' inadequate grounding in mathematics, science, and technology was a significant contributor to the economic and competitive woes. This Commission recommended including private sector resources and the using of all available resources to upgrade the quality of science and technology education. It recommended the private sector be used to upgrade the knowledge of science and math teachers and recognized the tie between education and economic vitality (National Science Board Commission on PreCollege Education, 1983).

Economic concerns influenced business involvement in education as did President Reagan when he helped revitalize business interest in public schools by declaring the 1983-1984 school year as the National Year of Partnership in Education (Adams, 1984). The President encouraged all federal departments to adopt schools in the Washington area. He set a personal example of commitment to partnerships by having the White House adopt Washington D.C.'s Martin Luther King Elementary School. Mickelson (1999, Spring) contends that the business critique of education was intensified and strengthened during the Reagan and senior Bush administrations because they embraced both market principles and the precept that privatization was the antidote to flawed, inefficient government bureaucracies into which schools were lumped. Not only did this level of critique provide a greater emphasis for collaboration, but it also called attention to other factors associated with weak and ineffective schools, including teacher preparation.

More commissions and reports followed. *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the*

21st Century (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) stressed the need for high-level education standards to keep America competitive in a changing global economy. Similarly, the National Governors' Association (1986) supported the pressing need to restructure faltering schools and bolster economic competitiveness or suffer a decline in America's standard of living. The National Governors' Association called for and encouraged a partnership with local school boards in initiating and monitoring business involvement in education.

In 1984, federal financial resources were redirected from community colleges and diverted directly to state educational agencies through the Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Act (1984). This legislation granted funding directly to state education agencies to be used to organize educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing students for employment in current or emerging occupations. It provided grant funds and technical support to local school districts and community colleges aimed at facilitating what was referred to as "Tech Prep" or "2+2" programs. All of these efforts had, at their cores, a fundamental strategy of collaboration between K-12 and higher education and a mission to access a broader range of students (Parnell, 1985). Funding continues today and is available to secondary and postsecondary schools. In 2002, the total Perkins appropriation was $1.288 billion dollars, awarded to states through grants (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

The Educational Partnership Act of 1988 (Title VI, Subtitle A, Chapter 5 of Omnibus Trade and Competitive Act) provided funding to states to focus specifically on educational collaboration. Likewise, the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 was another source of federal funding designed to involve students with the business community and the world of work. The act was based on an implicit assumption that business/education partnerships benefit multiple institutional and individual stakeholders. Opponents, however, questioned the benefits and goals of School-to-Work and argued that direction and fundamental relationships between business and education were unclear (Ryan & Imel, 1996). Some educators also shared this opinion and held the continuing view of school/business partnerships as mere job training (Boyles, 1999), which caused a skepticism and reluctance by some educators to allow representatives from the business community into the schools (Bailey, 1995).

In the early 1990s, the focus of the business critique, to support the reform of mediocre school performance, shifted when the economy showed signs of improving. The business press began to report that the U.S. economy had regained its position as the most productive in the world (Mickelson, 1999). The new economy required skilled workers who could compete in a global economy (Cate, 1992). Accordingly, business leaders emphasized the need to prepare students for high-tech jobs (Mickelson, 1999). Although the U.S. had regained its economic position, the perspective of a link between the economy and education, conceived during the economic downturn of the 1970s and 1980s, persisted into the 1990s. Keeping the workforce competitive was a continued focus of legislation. The complexity and scope of skills required to design, build, operate, and maintain this superior technology meant that students needed higher levels of technical skills regardless of their level of study and that without these skills growth would be severely limited (Baker, 1994). The Workforce Investment Act (1998) was major federal work-related legislation designed to keep the workforce competitive. In 1999 the U.S. Committee on Education and the Workforce reported that, because the quality of the U.S. educational system had a direct impact on the skills of American workers, it ultimately affected the ability of American business to compete. Educational reform was clearly an economic issue as well as a social concern (U.S. CEW, 1999).

With the change in the economy came new legislative policy. On March 31, 1994, President Clinton signed into law the GOALS 2000: Educate America Act (1994) designed to encourage local community-based actions to meet pressing educational needs, help more students achieve to higher standards, increase parental participation, and improve teaching. The Act provided great flexibility in how states and communities developed and implemented their reform plans, but was clear in its expectation that greater collaboration was essential.

The passage of the GOALS 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 heralded a new role for the federal government in support for education. The federal focus on narrow categorical programs shifted to promote a comprehensive approach to help all students succeed academically. The new focus on achievement grew out of a bipartisan recognition that too many U.S. students were not achieving at the levels necessary to succeed in the modern economy (U.S. Department of Education, 1998 April). Legislation and public perceptions supported Goodlad's (1994) position that how we feel about ourselves as a nation is reflected in how we feel about our schools.

Although the presence of the business community in education fluctuated in the 1960s and 1970s, it was revitalized when the public began to view education as key to economic success. Various policies throughout the 1980s promoted collaboration of public, private, and non-profit agencies. Like past legislations, President Bush's recent 21st Century Grants, part of his No Child Left Behind Act (Title IV, Part B), aim to strengthen education and promote the continued strength of the U.S. economy. Montague (1987) reports that business planners regard a region's quality of education as a key element to consider when choosing a site, and that the level of student preparation is seen in direct correlation to how well regions can meet future workforce and community needs.

The evolution of collaborative efforts among K-12, community college and four-year schools is clearly evident in the literature as are the federal legislation, state and local policy initiatives that identify multilevel collaboration as a viable option for increasing the efficacy of all levels of education. Both public and private sector leaders are embracing the idea of combined resources and collaborative efforts. These efforts in partnering and in collaboration come from a wide range of initial motivators; whether from federal legislation such as the Vocational Act of 1963 or state-wide initiatives that call for increased cooperation of efforts across all levels of instruction, the message is clear: collaboration is a key element to increased effectiveness and efficiency that is vital to the success of public education. Economic strength, resource utilization, taxpayer satisfaction and quality of instruction are reflected in the policies aimed at providing motivation and support for multilevel collaborations, all of which will have a governing board in need of understanding and insight (Gerswhin, 1999).

Theoretical Perspectives on Collaboration

From their research, Gray (1989) and Ring (1997) hypothesize that collaboration occurs in stages. Gray (1989) theorizes that collaborative relationships emphasize fluid; continuously emerging qualities of the organization and the changing web of interactions woven among its members, and suggests that it requires constant work from its members.

This constant work refers to all levels of leadership including the governing board (Smith, 2000), which will be fully developed in the final section of the literature review.

According to Gray (1989) the primary stages of collaboration are problem setting, direction setting, and implementation. Problem setting can be the most difficult stage as it involves bringing people together. In this stage, stakeholders and the issues they share are identified. Bingham's (1986) research found that those stakeholders having positions of authority within their organizations were most appropriate to bring together because they were more able to implement decisions about collaboration. Rahilly's (1997) findings also indicate that leadership is a key variable influencing the methods of administrative coordination, keeping conflict to a healthy level, and influencing perceptions of success.

Once potential collaborators have come together, Gray (1989) suggests they enter a second stage called direction setting. In Gray's theory, rules and guidelines are developed during this direction-setting stage. Here tasks are defined and subgroups may be organized. Here, too, stakeholders acknowledge some degree of interdependence. No one stakeholder can perceive himself or herself as able to control the situation unilaterally, but must come to the table willing to share the leadership responsibilities. It is at the shared leadership level that governing boards become a key point of successful collaboration (Carver, 1990).

Gray's (1989) final stage, implementation, is a process in which stakeholders manage issues of their organizations, deal with constituencies, and structure and monitor the agreement. Doughty (1995) found that implementation is constrained when rules are not known to all stakeholders and/or attempts are made to distort the plan. Likewise, Mattessich and Monsey (1992) demonstrate that collaborators can be successful when they commit to mutual authority and accountability, joint development of goals, and sharing resources and rewards.

Like Gray's theory, Ring's (1997) interorganizational theory of collaboration is comprised of stages. However, Ring's involves formal and informal stages that deal largely with processes. Negotiational, transactional, and administrative processes define Ring's formal stage. His negotiation process involves expectations regarding risk and trust. A review of the literature reveals that trust is a fundamental issue critical for development and maintenance of interorganizational collaboration (Johnson, 1997; Adams, Galarza, Rosario, & Westhoven, 1997) and is a vital component for governing boards as they interact both internally and externally (Smith, 2000). One party's willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another party is based upon the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to building trust, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party (Mayer & Davis, 1995).

The transactional process, the second stage of Ring's (1997) theory, involves commitment to formal agreements. Whetten (1981) believes potential partners recognize their complementary needs through informal contact and interaction, which leads to the conveyance of formal agreements concerning resource and service opportunities. In the final formal stage, Ring (1997) describes the administrative process as the execution of commitments which must be recognized across the entire scope of leadership. Oliver (1990) stresses that interorganizational commitments are based on reciprocity; that is, they are characterized by balance, harmony, equity, and mutual support rather than by coercion, conflict, and domination. However, Banjac (2000) warns that equity does not mean equality creating feelings of disparity among board members and opening the door for challenges to collaboration. Benefits evenly distributed rarely exist for stakeholders on all sides of the collaboration (Banjac, 2000).

Ring's formal processes substantiate other organizational theorists' assumptions that support collaborations (Gulati, 1995; Ingram & Baum, 1997). Collaboration can lead to positive sum gains, providing partners mutual benefits they could not achieve independently, such as reduced costs and increased ability to deal with complexity (Gulati, 1995). Likewise, collaborations reduce the experience curve for entering new markets and allow the transfer of technologies from partners who already have implemented innovations (Ingram & Baum, 1997).

Ring's (1997) informal stage is similar to his formal stage as it also involves processes, but these are defined as sensemaking, understanding, and committing. The sensemaking process is viewing one's preferences in relation to others in the collaboration. This ability to see differences is essential to the collaboration's continuance (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992). When and if stakeholders' goals conflict, the sensemaking process assists stakeholders as they interact in the collaborative environment. Similar to sensemaking is the informal process of understanding, which helps stakeholders view and construct relationships of understanding and sharing (Ring, 1997). Collaborators must feel that they share a common understanding of the groups' interorganization role (Essex, 2001).

In his final informal stage, Ring describes a process of commitment to a psychological contract among collaborators. These contracts, rarely studied and seldom communicated effectively at the Board level, are often the unspoken expectations about each other's obligations (Ring, 1997). In addition, Johnson's (1997) work supports the notion of a psychological contract where collaborators mentally confront tensions as they learn how to collaborate, how to set the tone of their relationships, and how to prioritize and address concerns in an effective way. According to Neal (1988), inattention to tension and unanswered differences in expectations can lead to the demise of collaborative linkages.

A synthesis of theories of collaboration demonstrates that organizations most often collaborate when there is a willingness to collaborate, a need for expertise, a need for financial resources and shared risk, and a need for adaptive efficiency (Alter & Hage, 1993). Other factors that make collaborative formations possible include the willingness of the member organizations to agree and define the common needs and goals (Rahilly, 1997). Further, they must be prepared to commit necessary resources and prepared to make public its commitments (Pritzen, 1988).

There is a clear pattern of consistency in the literature as it looks at theories and perspectives in collaboration. The stages of evolution described in the previous section indicates that researchers have long agreed that there is a consistent set of issues, concerns, variables and processes that decision makers go through in order to build effective collaborations. Efforts, which increase in complexity, risk and reward as partnerships move through these stages, will require a similar increase in governing board skill in order to succeed. Regardless of the specific label or stage assigned to a process, it is clear that the role of the governing board is central to the success or failure of each individual effort.

Degrees or Levels of Interorganizational Collaboration

Forces and objectives leading to interorganizational collaboration may influence the degree of closeness within the collaboration (Rahilly, 1997). The term used to describe the collaboration can be of some assistance in distinguishing degrees of closeness of the collaborative relationship; however, terminology used to describe the collaborative relationships between organizations varies in the literature (Glowacki-Dudka, 1999). Neal (1984) uses the term consortia to describe a cooperative relationship among institutions of higher education. Consortia (Neal, 1988) are semi-permanent organizations typically supported by financial contributions from its partners. In Neal's view they are formed for linking fundamental aspects of institutions, such as libraries, as opposed to more advanced consortia that come together for joint programming.

Alter & Hage (1993) see coordination as a special case of cooperation. Winer and Ray (1994) agree that joint efforts can be distinguished as cooperation or coordination, defining cooperation between organizations as working together on a project without either organization changing the way that they do business or sharing in the responsibility of decision making, while coordination involves the sharing of leadership and decision making. The work of Winer and Ray (1994) speaks to "levels" of collaborations that have consistent traits. In Winer and Ray's (1994) assessment, leadership, control, risks, and rewards all are shared to some extent, while accountability falls to the individual organizations.

Ahles (1993) makes a clear distinction between cooperation and collaboration among educational institutions as they move along a continuum of increasing complexity. Cooperation involves organizations working together toward a commonly agreed upon goal but essentially independent of each other. Collaboration, in contrast, means joint planning, implementation, and evaluation. The later is viewed typically as the more desirable and effective of the two approaches in meeting a common objective (Ahles, 1993).

Although descriptive terms vary, all seem guided by the view that the amount and degree of cooperation and coordination define the nature and degree of collaboration (Alter & Hage, 1993). In general, the degree of collaboration can be viewed along a continuum. According to Sanchez (1990), education/business collaborations operate at levels ranging in scope from one-time collaboration to broad-based, long-term relationships involving the ongoing use of shared resources such as money, time, and physical resources. Whetten (1981) also asserts that collaboration ranges from simple ad hoc agreements between two organizations to participation in formally organized coordination councils.

The Boston Consortium for Higher Education (2002) presents its Level I collaborations as those with broad-based participation designed for information exchange, data collection, and cost reduction through leveraged scale. Tourse and Mooney (1999) see this type of collaboration as multidisciplinary participation in assessment and planning involving individuals from different disciplines planning together but not collaborating for service delivery. Level II (Boston Consortium, 2002) collaborators are self-selected participants who utilize a facilitative method of leadership. They share sites and educational practices in a real world application. From Tourse and Mooney's (1999) human service perspective this represents coordination in program planning and delivery through significant interaction between collaborators and systematic sharing of information. Advancement to Level III collaboration requires commitment to large-scale change and improvement efforts. Level III (Boston Consortium, 2002) collaboration implements transformational learning methods and seeks to network leaders for change. Such comprehensive collaborations (Banjac, 2000) are the most sophisticated and fully developed efforts. They are typically broad-based and involve multiple organizations, thus requiring joint planning, governing, and long-term commitment (Bettina, 1995). Tourse and Mooney (1999) describe this type of collaboration from a human service perspective as integrated service delivery, in which partners share roles, responsibilities, and communication while co-facilitating collaborative activities.

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (2003) describes collaboration in education along a continuum from informal to contractual. Activities such as mentoring and job shadowing are considered somewhat informal collaborations. While joint facility use may be considered a more contractual collaboration, a more comprehensive model of collaboration types that addresses typology components is needed. In addition to including the specific governing board aspects, the model should expand on the dimensions represented by the current work of theorists and researchers.

While details and descriptions may vary, the literature is clear in that levels of collaboration have been identified just as they have in theories addressing the motivators for these efforts. These levels placed along a continuum increase in complexity and scope, and require an understanding of an increasingly complex environment. This multilevel or "hybrid" environment, as a subset of the participating cultures, calls for specific study and identification of factors indigenous only to the blended social landscape created by collaboration This study is focused at the deeper, more permanent level II and level III type collaborations that are becoming increasingly more common and challenging for the boards charged with their oversight.

Partnering Among Educational Entities

Economic conditions clearly influence collaborative relationships not only between business and education, but also among education agencies. Concern for shrinking resources, workforce preparation, equity, and access converged to support partnerships among community colleges, K-12 school districts, and universities (Dougherty as cited in Townsend & Twombly, 2001). Perhaps an even greater influence on collaboration among education agencies has been capitalism's historical dominance in educational policymaking e.g., the community colleges (Dougherty as cited in Townsend & Twombly, 1994). Workforce development underpins educational policymaking in such a way that Grubb and Associates (1999) report that national and state-level policies relating to community colleges have been dominated by workforce development as the overarching goal. Entering the 21st century, state and local policy issues affecting community colleges increasingly focused on the central importance of workforce preparation, K-14 system building, and developmental education (Dougherty as cited in Townsend & Twombly, 1994). The influence of capitalism shows at even deeper levels as illustrated by Gross (1988), who argues that capitalism and economic conditions prompted universities to collaborate because they needed increased student numbers, as opposed to a desire to interact more closely with the K-12 system. He believes that universities did not become involved in collaboration as part of a national movement for the improvement of instruction, but were motivated by a decline in enrollment during the late 1970s (Gross, 1988).

Community colleges have carried out their collaborative mission within a wide policy framework, encouraging the development of high-quality human capital through workforce preparation while offering access for the broadest possible segment of society. While community colleges are successful in developing human capital through broad access (Zeiss as cited in Baker, 1994), they are viewed as less successful in carrying out the traditional academic transfer function (Nora, A., Attinasi Jr., & Matonak, 1990).

Great emphasis has been placed on community colleges and their ability to transfer students to traditional four-year schools. Much of the fuel for this concern comes from the value associated with the completion of a four-year degree. Grubb (1999) shows that a baccalaureate degree completion leads to greater economic returns than either high school completion or some college. Community colleges are placed in an even more complex role as data from 1996 showed more second-year college students (56 percent) enrolled in two-year institutions than in four -year colleges (38 percent), while concerns over the transfer rate continued (Horn, Berktold, & Malizio, 1998). In 1999 the U.S. Department of Education predicted that, over the next decade, higher education enrollments would increase steadily, this projection including community college enrollment. Estimates of students who transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions are at approximately 15 to 20 percent. Grubb's research challenges community colleges to find ways to increase retention and assist students in the transition and transfer to four-year institutions.

Universities also have become involved in collaborative arrangements. Callan (1997) concludes that K-16 collaborations have become more prevalent over the last decade with a proliferation of various collaborative arrangements between schools and universities. He points out that these focus primarily on transition-related collaborations to improve minority and low-income students' access to higher education rather than School-to-Work transition programs. Rosenbaum's (1999) research supports the concept that K-16 linkages can communicate the idea that high school achievement is an important indicator of degree completion and that community colleges play an important link in communicating the message. This further supports the notion that K-16 collaborations play a role in enhancing the rate of degree completion and the necessity of assuring smooth transition from high school to college, whether that is a community college or a four-year school (Grubb, 1999).

Universities have also become involved in collaborative efforts known as school/university partnerships. A school/university partnership is an effort for schools and universities to work together simultaneously to improve student achievement and teacher development. Although schools and universities have distinctively different cultures, each has overlapping interests and offers benefits to make each more effective (Goodlad, 1994). Because school communities have become increasingly complex, they require leadership at all levels, which embraces change, collaboration, and expanded partnerships (Sergiovanni, 1995).

Regardless of the initial motivators for collaboration, these complex efforts are on the rise with calls for even greater levels of intercultural involvement. Whether the objective is employment skills for K-12 graduates, higher levels of student achievement, increases in community college to four-year transfer or greater access for minorities and low income students, the issues faced by leaders charged with addressing these goals is one of increasing complexity. Social, economic, and political factors are and will continue to be a major factor in the decision-making process of administrators and governing boards making them a critical part of the solution and one that should be studied.

Characteristics of Successful Collaborations

Certain characteristics common in successful collaborations have been identified by Chrislip and Larson (1994). Their research analyzed over fifty community collaborations and discovered common aspects present in the multi-level collaborations. Among the common factors were (1) good timing and clear need, (2) strong stakeholder groups, (3) broad-based involvement, (4) credibility and openness of the process, (5) commitment and/or involvement of high-level, visible leaders, (6) support of acquiescence of established authorities or powers, (7) ability to overcome mistrust or skepticism, (8) strong leadership of the process, (9) interim success, and (10) a shift to broader concerns. According to Chrislip and Larson (1994), in order for collaboration to succeed, participants must focus less on local, inward interests and more on the larger interests of the community, thus shifting from the backer of a particular interest to a problem-solving partner.

Chrislip and Larson's (1994) findings concerning success through broad-based involvement are supported by Kanter's (1994) study of collaborations among businesses. As collaborations progress, more people in more levels of individual organizations become involved in working with members across organizations. Those entering as new players in a collaborative effort may not feel the same enthusiasm or sense of broad commitment to the initial concept of the collaboration as those who have been involved for a long period of time. Such challenges to success emphasize Ring's (1997) and Gray's (1989) assertions that all parties to the collaboration may not traverse the stages of collaboration in sequence. Conflict within collaboration may signal a need to revisit issues that may not have been addressed for some partners (Gershwin, 1999). Kanter's (1994) work also supported Chrislip and Larson's (1994) as he identified the characteristic of a need for strong leadership of the process. Kanter (1994) found that lack of leadership or facilitation was another hurdle to successful collaboration that forced collaborative partners to cycle back to earlier unaddressed issues. Similarly, Bingham (1986) demonstrates that persons in positions of authority are needed to support the larger interests of the collaborating community, again reinforcing the key role of boards, and the perspective they bring to any partnership (Smith, 2000).

Mattessich and Monsey (1992) reviewed 18 studies of collaborative processes influencing successful collaborative efforts. Through their research they identified key factors to success similar to those found by Chrislip and Larson (1994). They grouped these factors into six categories they identified as environment, membership, process/structure, communications, purpose, and resources. Their study revealed that the environment of organizations in successful multilevel collaborations had a history of collaboration among the parties, an expectation in the community for the collaborative parties to assume leadership, and a political and social climate favorable to the collaborative group activities (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992).

As important as environment was the membership category, which they further defined by sub-characteristics: a mutual respect and trust among members, an appropriate representation from the cross section of affected groups and individuals, an agreement among most participants that the collaborative process is beneficial, and a capacity and practice of members to compromise on decisions (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992). Through their experiences with collaboration, Adams, Galarza, Rosario, and Westhoven (1997) and Johnson (1997) identify interorganizational trust as a critical need in establishing and growing successful collaborative relationships. An example of the importance of mutual respect and trust among members can be seen within the confines of a school/business partnership. Some educators perceive school/business partnerships as mere job training and are skeptical and reluctant to allow representatives from the business community into the schools (Averbak, 1988). This perception, according to current research (Bailey, 1995), can hinder collaboration because sustaining a relationship between schools and business depends on interaction between teachers and employers (Bailey, 1995). This problem of differing perceptions between teachers and employers reinforces Gray's (1989) theory of stakeholder understanding as a fundamental component of collaboration and raises the value of a well-informed governing board (Smith, 2000).

Mattessich and Monsey (1992) specifically named resources as a factor to collaborative success. They found that successful collaborative endeavors need sufficient support to and a skilled convener to bring the groups together. The literature is clear on the need for greater communication and transition of collaboration levels that may occur at different times, but rarely is it understood that manpower to facilitate this communication is a major factor in adequate funding. The availability of long-term and broad-based funding affects the success of collaborations (Ascher & Schwartz, 1989) and is of particular interest to this study.

Research indicates that funding is one of the most overlooked challenges within collaboration (Offerman, 1985). Often partners join together to increase resources or to do more with the same or even less. Offerman's (1985) study of failed consortia found that the loss of funding was a key reason for the consortium's demise. Mattessich and Monsey (1992) support Beder's (1978) resource identification as a key factor in collaborative success. According to Beder (1978) it is important to establish resource-producing linkages with a diverse set of organizations within the environment, whether those are through direct or in-kind investments.

Successful collaborative efforts yield tangible short- and long-term benefits and intrinsic rewards for all stakeholders (Banjac, 2000). Collaborative relationships are successful when they master issues of environment, membership, process, communication, purpose, and resources (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992) and are viewed as consistently serving the needs of all partners. As collaborators needs are met, synergy in the form of tangible benefits radiates from one partner to another, resulting in rewards for all constituencies (Banjac, 2000).

Researchers agree that leaders of successful multilevel partnerships consistently display similar paths of evolution and distinct characteristics. They are committed to building trust through open communication and have managed to create clarity of understanding and purpose among board members (Banjac, 2000). As these partnerships struggle to build consensus around process, communication, purpose and mutual respect, they also have developed an ability to compromise on decisions and to acquiesce to the greater good of the partnership creating a challenging setting for those who follow and one worthy of intense study.

Institutional Culture

Despite the realization that organizations are interdependent and the practical compelling evidence that collaborative alliances are increasing, interorganizational collaboration is difficult to implement (Banjac, 2000; Gershwin, 1999). Collaboration allows organizations to share resources and skills (Neal, 1988) but brings together organizations with dissimilar methods and cultures. Overcoming the barriers created by different institutional cultures is frequently a formidable task and one that provides a critical hurdle in effective partnerships (Gray, 1989).

The sociological foundation views culture as what the organization has (Thompson & Luthans, 1990; Smircich, 1983). According to this perspective, culture is the socially constructed paradigm that is created as organizational members learn how to cope with their work environment (Proenca, 1993; Thompson & Luthans, 1990) and as they learn to solve the problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 1992). Institutions are influenced by powerful external factors such as demographics, economics, and political conditions, and also are shaped by forces that emanate from within (Tierney, 1988). The internal dynamic has it roots in the history of the organization and derives its force from the values, processes, and goals held by those most intimately involved in the organization's workings (Tierney, 1988).

Culture is viewed as learned behavior that serves as the glue holding the organization together and providing organizational identity, stability, and effectiveness (Smircich, 1983). Once a culture is established, it shapes people's behavior, perception, and understanding of events and provides a template for learning (Evans, 1996). An organization's culture can be revealed by examining how that organization expresses itself through its rituals and normative behavior, and by exploring the underlying values and assumptions within the organization (Schein, 1992).

Culture is also reflected in myths, fairy tales, stories, rituals, ceremonies, and other symbolic forms (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Bolman and Deal (1991) believe an organization develops distinctive beliefs and patterns over time. Many assumptions and patterns are unconscious or taken for granted. As groups learn what works and what is valid, they, in turn, teach new members this correct way to think and feel (Schein, 1992). Culture is usually regarded as an asset because it has an important role in fostering social cohesion and reducing uncertainty, particularly for people new to the group (Flint, 2000). Kanter (1994) argues that this requires new employees to adapt their own behaviors and values to fit those of the organization. Culture can help subcultures understand each other and reduce adversarial relationships (Tierney, 1988). Becher and Kogan (1992) suggest that the sub-cultural styles and epistemological traditions to which particular units subscribe are a powerful determinant of their relationships within and outside the organization.

In the 1980s, the concept of organizational culture evolved out of the desire to better understand corporations in order to make them more competitive (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Literature from Ouchi (1981) and Deal and Kennedy (1982) also extolled the virtues of humanizing the work environment, valuing creativity and innovation, and recognizing the importance of symbolic cultural activity to creating unity within the organization (Roe as cited in Baker, 1992). Since the 1980s the theoretical construct of organizational culture increasingly has been used as one of the variables to explain and understand the nuances of organizations.

There are difficulties in studying culture as a single component. Much of an organization's culture is implicit; elements of culture are subtle, unseen, and so familiar to persons inside the organization as to be considered self-evident. The literature, however, is replete with models and assessments aimed at classifying an organization's culture. Quantitative researchers have emphasized the importance of quantifiable data that can be compared to different populations (Uzzo, 2002). The ability to assess and compare cross-sectional data, the ability to replicate the assessment, and the common frame of reference for analyzing the data are advantages of using questionnaires and surveys to measure organizational culture (Sackman, 1991). Conversely, methodologies that focus on feelings, perceptions and understanding organizational culture are becoming more widely accepted (Merriam, 2001). An emerging tool in assessing both the more tangible aspects of culture and the less formal or inferred aspects is the use of qualitative inquiries focused on the perceptions of the participants as gained via direct observation (Merriam, 2002).

According to Lewis (1996), research from the 1980s focused on defining culture. More recent studies (Uzzo, 2002), however, emphasize ways to use information. Uzzo's (2002) research attempted to do so by using Sashkin's (1990) Organizational Cultural Assessment Questionnaire (OCAQ), to measure beliefs of members of an organization, in his study comparing cultures of college administrators by administrative position. The OCAQ presents a rating scale from low to very high. Uzzo's findings showed that both categories of administrators rated their organizations' cultural strength as high or very high. Other instruments like Cooke and Lafferty's (1987) Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI) measure normative behavior in organizations while Cameron and

Quinn's (1999) Competing Values Framework is an instrument designed to categorize an organization's culture type.

Researchers of organizational culture suggest that an organization's structure is underpinned by organizational values, or preferences for certain courses of action and outcomes (Beyer, 1981; Hinnings, Thibault, Slack, & Kilukis, 1996). When working to build collaboration between organizations, it is important to recognize that each organization has its own culture with differences in assumptions, leadership styles, and levels of disclosure (Glowacki-Dudka, 1999). Because organizational culture influences organizational action (Obenchain, 2002), it may also affect successful collaboration. Organizations routinely face strong institutional forces such as values for tradition, organizational culture, and institutional inertia that serve to constrain and regularize behavior (Noone, 2000). But no single organization can answer every need or every skill; thus, organizations may endeavor to collaborate and supplement resources that may be lacking (Neal, 1988). For example, within business/higher education collaboration, business desires the post-secondary community's educational resources and expertise. Whereas, the educational institution believes that the private sector represents an untapped source of students and needed revenue (Schieffer, 1989). Both organizations can see a benefit to working together because they have a knowledge base that uniquely qualifies them to meet the diverse needs of the other sector, and yet, they may have concerns about interacting with one another (Schieffer, 1989).

Higher education scholars refer to colleges and universities as cultural entities whose organizational culture plays a product and process role in organizational decision making (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). In her research Obenchain (2002, p. 182) used the

Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) as a basis for analysis. Obenchain reports that the majority of higher education institutions reported a "clan" type dominant culture. In their model of organizational culture types, Deshpande, Farley and Webster (1993) describe the clan type as having attributes of cohesiveness, participation, and teamwork, leaving a hope that collaborations can be viewed as part of a clan culture. They further suggest that clans bond through loyalty and tradition and place emphases on developing human resources and commitment. Based upon the clan's organization principles (Levin & White, 1961,) organizational behaviors are seen as bound to each other through a central philosophy or value system. Critics argue, however, that this culture neglects other areas such as employee participation in decision-making and diverse individual perspectives (Amey & Twombly, 1992).

Clark's (1997) model describes and classifies four types of academic cultures called discipline, profession, enterprise, or system. McNay (1995), like Clark (1997), presents four cultures of universities that co-exist in differing balances. McNay (1995) categorizes these as collegiums, bureaucracy, corporation, and enterprise. He claims that universities tend to change over time and shift from one quadrant to another, but not necessarily in a set order. Frew (1997) agrees that universities tend to embrace one of four culture types: collegiate, managerial, development, and negotiating. Frew (1997) also believes the three less dominant types are always present and tend to interact with the dominant culture.

The most prevalent culture in higher education is one that values autonomy, individual achievement and independence (Birnbaum, 1988). The collegiate culture uses organizational sagas as tools for institutional identity (Clark, 1980). It is characterized by lifetime employment, individual responsibility, infrequent promotion, and implicit, informal evaluation (Dill, 1982). The reward structure of higher education also provides evidence that collaboration is not valued. Typically, competition is tacitly encouraged among faculty and the promotion of self in teaching, research and service is the most efficient route to tenure and promotion. In fact, the single authorship of research articles and books is often considered to be of greater merit than co-authorship when evaluating professor performance (Birnbaum,1988). Birnbaum (1988), described this culture type as indifferent or even hostile to public K-12 education. These characteristics can be problematic when applied in school/university collaborative arrangements.

There are significant differences in organizational culture between higher education and K-12. Dahlin and Rolff's (1993) model categorizes school cultures into three levels: the transrational level where values are conceived as metaphysical based on beliefs, ethical code and moral insights; the rational level where values are seen and grounded within a social context of norms, customs, expectations, and standards, and depend on collective justification; and the subrational level where values are experienced as personal preferences and feelings rooted in emotion, and are basic, direct, affective and behavioristic in character (Dahlin & Rolff, 1993). From their research they found the dominant school culture type was the *rational level.* Schools are rarely clear about their values at a transrational level but usually show clear values at the rational level. The *rational culture* values are grounded within a social context of norms, customs, expectations and standards and are dependent on collective justice. Interestingly, Dahlin and Rolff (1993) point out that the subrational level also plays a role in school culture. They claim this is so because teachers have a high degree of autonomy and, therefore, power which allows personal preferences to play an important role in school culture. A high degree of autonomy is also characteristic of university lecturers (Dahlin & Rolff, 1993).

But, according to Clark (1997), each lacks knowledge of the other's culture and lacks awareness of how one can work with the other to achieve more than can be accomplished by working separately (Clark, 1997). K-12 and university cultures were previously analyzed using the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI), (Cooke & Lafferty, 1989) with particular attention to values and beliefs aligned with collaboration, affiliation, and team building. Results indicated that K-12 schools scored much higher than the institutions of higher education on how they valued elements of collaboration (Cooke & Laferty 1989).

For many decades, reformers have been touting collaboration among educational stakeholders as the most promising vehicle for school improvement. Goodlad (1984) proposed school/university partnerships as a way to provide a simultaneous, individual and institutional renewal between higher education and K-12. Goodland (1984) described school/university collaborations as a marriage that, in the best of cases occasionally can be filled with tension. They further believe that if the analogy of marriage is applicable, then an important component of success for school/university collaboration would be the will of either side to make a commitment to the union, i.e., make the necessary sacrifices for the good of the relationship. If the collaborators believe the marriage holds little value for them, then it is reasonable to expect a short honeymoon and a short-term relationship. Further, if the union was an arranged marriage, brokered by administrators without the participation of the betrothed members of all organizations, commitment to collaboration will be seriously limited. Those doing the work must value the marriage or it will not last. An arranged marriage between university and K-12 schools to simultaneously reform both organizations will not be enough to change the culture of either system (Goodlad, 1984). The first priority for those engaging in school/university collaboration should be to assess the culture of each organization and carefully articulate agreement on fundamental beliefs, values and respective roles of collaborators (Sergiovanni, 1995). A successful agreement between college deans, school superintendents, and principals must be derived from the planning and support of those professionals most deeply invested in the work (Stacey, 1992). The most effective school/university collaboration occurs when organizations work together in a manner that transcends a symbiotic relationship and creates an organic relationship in which serving organizational self interest is replaced with working together to accomplish common goals for the greater good (Schlechty & Whitford, 1988).

Organizational culture not only influences collaborations among educational agencies but the collaborative efforts between academic institutions and business. Culture plays a role in how an organization structures itself. This, in turn, may affect collaborative endeavors. A very strong culture will resist change and new influences, tending to grow more conservative with age. Interestingly, negative cultures also resist change as people cling to the anxiety-reducing function of the culture and what makes them feel secure (Evans, 1996). When working between academic institutions and business, the way organizations structure and position themselves in the marketplace also can be a sign of the organization's culture that can affect the collaboration. For example, an educational enterprise avoids issues through regulation, introspection, and conflict resolution protocols. Business, on the other hand, prepares by moving to meet a problem and by regarding the problem itself as an invitation to a solution (Neal, 1988). The differences in posturing can frustrate a partner who does not understand the structures and policies embedded within the organization.

A major goal of business is the procurement of resources. The business culture views education as a business (Baker & Associates, 1995). The distinctions between the academic institution and other organizations, such as businesses, are largely ignored by business (Birnbaum, 1988). This environment is not conducive to prolonged discussion or traditional faculty committees that prefer work teams and project units (Baker & Associates, 1995). In the business culture, managers are strategists controlling human and fiscal resources or reorganizing the institution for efficiency and a competitive advantage (Roueche, Taber, & Roueche, 1995). Business stakeholders operate to increase marginal revenue and thus make rational decisions based on maximizing financial, market share, or sales objectives (Banjac, 2000). Traditional business values include competitive individualism, profits as an end, market and shareholder focus, linear rationality, competitive activism, and economies of time (Muller, Porter, & Rehder, 1997). Although scholarly articles on business ethics and corporate responsibility abound (Boatright, 1997; Hitt, 1990), short-term, bottom-line goals continue to dominate business behavior (Makoner, 1994).

Business and education cultures, although distinctively different, share some overlapping values, particularly with the community college. With its' connection to the community, and certainly as a consequence of its workforce development focus, the community college is suitably disposed to adopt the practices and even the values of business and industry (Roueche, et al., 1995). The community college has been viewed as an institution with a unique set of purposes and functions that have evolved in response to societal demands. The community college culture stresses the importance of the college in serving as the center of educational services and culture for the community, as opposed to university culture that is viewed as pathfinders or disseminators of new knowledge (Martin, 1985). This orientation leads the institution to take an entrepreneurial stance and to collaborate with business and industry (Gianini & Sarantos, 1995). Calls for community colleges to respond to national requirements for competitiveness toward the training of the workforce and toward increasing entrepreneurial behaviors were also appeals for community colleges to model the practices of business and industry (Knowles, 1995). While university values have influenced the community college, the vocational and career program focus impelled community colleges to look to the corporate and business world for operational styles (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986).

The literature as a whole conceptualizes the community college as possessing four distinct cultures: a traditional culture, a service culture, a hierarchical culture, and a business culture (Cameron & Ettington, 1988). These four dominant culture types are articulated as characterizing the values, purposes, organizational strategies, actions and history of these institutions (Levin, 1995).

The traditional culture of the community college is contextualized within and related to historical, political, and social forces. Organizational purpose is seen as reflective of external environmental factors such as social conflicts between individual upward social mobility, the preservation of the social status quo, and the institutional drive for legitimacy, prestige, and social class (Clowes & Levin, 1994; Dougherty, 1994).

College missions and goals focus largely upon the intellectual and cognitive development of students and on the traditional role of the institution as a provider of educational opportunities, largely through university transfer and preparation for employment. This is seen as the vertical focus of the community college mission. The role of the institution is not unlike the traditional junior college with the community college placed between the high school and the four-year college. It is this culture which is most forcefully criticized by scholars for the failure of the institution to live up to expectations, including university transfer rates, curricula reflective of the university model, baccalaureate degree performance of students and an intellectual environment (McGrath & Spear, 1991). In this culture, institutional emphasis, in such areas as governance, instructional organization, and programming, is given to the academic aspects of the institution as well as to academic students, academic faculty, and academic life in the community college (Seidman, 1985). This is an organizational model often referred to as *a collegiums* (McGrath & Spear, 1991). Characteristic of the traditional culture, scholars and practitioners emphasize curriculum and instruction, particularly from the academic perspective, ignoring numerous other aspects of institutional life (Levin, 1995).

In the service culture, it is assumed that institutional progress, or improvement, is underway, ongoing, or can be made, whether such progress is in the area of university transfer rates, institutional retention of students, social equity, or in the quality of learning (Nora, Attinasi Jr., & Matonak, 1990). The community college possesses the characteristics of a human service organization: people are its focus and its clients; and the institution has a mandate to protect and promote the well-being of those whom it serves (Hasenfeld, 1983). The culture is influenced and maintained by those who attribute performance of an institution to improvement of students (Roueche & Roueche, 1993). The community college mission to serve students as lifelong learners regardless of their current standing is aligned with an educational philosophy based upon student development theory and practices; these strive to nurture those served and are dominated by student service personnel and those with student service and counseling backgrounds (Cohen & Brawer, 1994). Rather than emphasize cognitive development alone, these agents of student welfare see their role in the community college as, at one extreme, breaking the cycle of poverty and despair and, in the main, as promoting the interests of students, particularly by upholding notions of equality and opportunity (McGrath & Spear, 1991) and by ensuring student success. This philosophy is often out of synchronization with traditional four-year views and faculty culture (Richardson, 1983). New faculty, educated, trained and with experience in environments as disparate as graduate schools, the military, business, industry, and unionized shops, are not only disconnected from each other, but also when new to the community college, alien to the culture of open access and student service orientation. They soon are drawn into and reshaped by the culture of open access (McGrath & Spear, 1991), which is one of the integrating functions of the service culture. This is the culture that is praised for innovation and student focus (O'Banion, 1989) but which also is criticized for devaluing intellectualism (McGrath & Spear, 1991), reducing the quality of programs (Richardson, 1983), and frustrating the opportunities for students to proceed to baccalaureate studies (Dougherty, 1994).

Although two extensive studies in the early 1980s (Richardson, Fisk,&Okum 1983) clearly enunciated the flaws and failures of the service culture, one in Texas and the other in Arizona, the efficacy of this culture has strong determinants and conditions for its prevalence. First, the open access mission of the community college with its emphasis upon equality and opportunity is easily interpreted as a mandate for community colleges to pursue such goals as minority advancement, student enrollment retention, developmental education and multilevel collaborations. Second, the imperative for growth, particularly in student numbers as a measure of institutional achievement, is usually rewarded with financial resources (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

The hierarchical culture is a result of the missionary zeal which sustained the development of community colleges in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s (Cohen & Brawer, 1996) and accompanied a set of ideals for the community college that have endured to the present. These include the ideal of social transformation to achieve democratic values such as equality and individual mobility through education. These ideals are reflected in the concepts and principles associated with the institution and are the cornerstone of the hierarchical culture. Mission, vision, and values are terms that underlie the hierarchical structure and moral domain of community colleges (Roueche et al., 1995). The specific morality is clearly revealed in characterizations of community college leadership (Amey & Twombly, 1992). This concept of leadership is hierarchical, presidential, and often seen as embodied in a single individual. This individual must possess particular traits and behave according to defined expectations of a leader, one who upholds and extols particular values. Some have suggested that autocratic leadership behaviors in decision making are common in the community college (Levin, 1995).

Initially, ideals of social transformation and democratic values were established in the foundational years of the organization, when the philosophy and resultant mission were embodied in a single, powerful figure who represented the aspirations of the organization (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). Based upon the organizational principles of the clan or collective (Levin, 1995), organizational behaviors are seen as bound to each other through a central philosophy or value system. Committed to concepts of excellence and largely driven by administrative and board priorities and values for increasing access and maintaining or developing high academic standards, the hierarchical culture promotes achievement and seeks legitimacy as well as increased social status for the community college. Administrators foster an institutional work ethic, noting methods to improve individual and institutional performance, identifying approaches and programs that stimulate improvements, and promoting the results of these approaches and programs (Baker, 1992). The handful of faculty who are part of this group usually are inspired by career development and promotion, and such advancement in community college is limited to administrative career paths (Siedman, 1985). In this culture the president is not only the institutional manager and creator of organizational climate but also the interpreter and communicator of mission. Institutional achievements are framed as the accomplishments of leaders (Roueche et al., 1995).

The limitations of the hierarchical culture are likely based upon its strength, an emphasis upon highly motivated, energetic, and even inspirational formal leaders. This culture neglects other areas such as employee participation in various forms of decision making and governance and recognition of multiple cultural values and diverse individual perspectives within the organization (Amey & Twombly, 1992).

The business culture has its roots in the forces of the external environment. Regarding community colleges and four-year colleges the 1980s are characterized by the emphasis on financial and human resources. Higher education is vulnerable to economic and social forces in a way similar to business and industry (Levin, 1995). Pursuing production through sound management, the business culture views education as a business. Guided by a business and industry ethos of efficiency, productivity, and survival, the members of the business culture, like entrepreneurs, are both acquisitive and market sensitive. Their market sensitivity helps them engage their college in current trends and practices in the corporate world. They are externally focused and value a business approach, which they impose or attempt to impose on the operations of the community college (Gianini & Sarantos, 1995). The business culture is unlike the traditional descriptions of community college, which emphasizes the institution as a vehicle for social and economic mobility, whether as a success or failure (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The success and dominance of the business culture stem from the utilization of part-time and temporary employees. These part-time employees lack association with the goals and purposes of the community college and are detached from the beliefs and values of the organization (Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron, 1995). This culture is not bound by the community college concepts of the open door, comprehensive curriculum, and student-centered, learning institutions. Instead the culture is pragmatic, highly responsive to its clients, and adaptable to the marketplace (Knowles, 1995).

The literature suggests multiple cultures exist within the community college (Levin, 1995). Likewise, differing cultures exist in all levels of education as well as in business organizations. This multiple culture association with community colleges is consistent with the eclectic roots of its roots. Not all effective and efficient institutions will have similar cultures (Tierney, 1988). However, Dill (1982) points out that culture can be particularly important when institutions face declining resources and it serves as a means to empower organizations in decision making to solve critical dilemmas (Tierney, 1988).

Levin (1995) points out that multiple cultures exist within the community college environment just as they do in business or other educational entities. Key distinctions associated with the community college culture lie with both its points of origin, and with the clear community reflection of each individual school. Each community college is a reflection of the community(s) or region it serves and carries with it the individuality of its respective communities. This identification of the community college functioning as a unique replication of its constituents is key element in the community college culture. Just as the community college culture has been affected by political, economic, historical, and social factors, the culture of the multilevel partnership is affected in a similar manner. In many ways the multilevel partnership is a replication of the community college environment, creating a hybrid-like entity, which eventually evolves its own fingerprint in the cultural landscape.

It is clear that scholars have long studied culture and its implication on individual organizations and society as a whole and that the connections between education and economic vitality exist at all levels. The distinctions among business, K-12, community college, and four-year cultures is evident in the literature, as the previous section illustrates. This calls for the study of a newly emerging culture comprising all levels of instruction. This multilevel culture has characteristics that are present only when all levels are representing a distinct culture. This blended culture is relatively unstudied in the literature, creating a void in the research and a call for studying its key elements. Is the key element in a multilevel culture the community college with its history of responsiveness to consumers and its overlap with K-12 and four-year cultures, the social responsibility of the K-12 system which complements the role of parent, or the four-year culture which is viewed as a cornerstone of free thought and creative thinking?

Diverse individual and organizational values, perceptions, and responsibilities are all factors which contribute to the multilevel culture, a culture which must be lead and supported by board members who come from very different backgrounds and are charged with differing goals. It is the blending of these disparate foundations into a common collaborative board culture that is the focal point of this study.

Perceptions of Interorganizational Collaboration

Successful collaborators come together with a spirit of cooperation in support of shared visions, goals, and objectives (Chrislip & Larson, 1994). These expectations pose challenges for potential collaborators. For instance, business and education leaders may cite the need for a better-educated citizenry, and at the same time debate what constitutes a proper education. Is the purpose of education to train a highly-skilled workforce or to secure superior academic performance from students (Ryan & Imel, 1996)? Critics have charged that most businesspersons believe that the main purpose of education is job training (Kozol, 1985), rather than general education.

Scholarly works on school reform from the 1980s (Goodlad, 1984; Boyer, 1983) suggest that the consequence of melding the full scope of educational possibilities including academic, social, vocational, and personal into all schools, would be that each school might be viewed as inadequate in some ways. They suggest the rhetoric about good schools is a matter of feeling good about ourselves as a nation. According to

Goodlad (1994), when we feel positive about ourselves as a nation, we tend to perceive our schools as great, but when we feel negative as a nation, we tend to perceive our schools as terrible. This pattern of creating unrealistic expectations of individual schools is part of the collective calling for greater collaboration and cultural linkages in order to more effectively meet these complex challenges.

Likewise, Cuban (1992) challenges the popular myth that links economic problems to educational solutions. Rather than assume that education provides a causal link to economics, Cuban (1998) notes that fundamental changes in the global economy, including a rise in technology and the shifting of labor sources to lesser developed nations, combined with corporate mismanagement and greed, have contributed to economic woes. Therefore, Cuban believes it is incorrect to assume that declining economic competitiveness can be attributed solely to bad schools. Similarly, Boyles (1999) raised concerns over corporate school-reform efforts that assume the main purpose of schools is to prepare students for jobs, and reciprocally, to supply companies with workers who meet the companies' skills specifications. He cautions that emphasizing training-oriented schooling over education-oriented schooling risks undermining the potential for democratic citizenship.

Despite differences and challenges, business, industry, and education continue to enter into collaborative endeavors. Because of this, it is advantageous to learn about collaboration. How do those within an interorganizational collaboration perceive the collaboration itself? How do they assess success and failure?

Averbak (1988) surveyed board members, administrators, and teachers in 85 school districts in 15 states for their perceptions of school/business collaborations. The results showed that most participants felt that the motivation of the business community to collaborate with education was to train future employees. They also responded that the most successful strategy to ensure successful collaboration was direct face-to-face meetings, thus supporting the clan culture as optimum for effective collaborations. Eighty-seven percent of those surveyed expected growth in the number of education business collaborations. Twelve percent felt a drawback to collaboration was the potential for the business community to have too many *quid pro quos* attached to agreements. The selection of states in Averbak's study was influenced by prior research by Dale Mann (1984). Mann's study showed superintendents as key players in school/business collaboration.

Banjac (2000) studied K-16 administrators' perceptions of barriers to successful and satisfying business/education partnerships. Eighty-one percent of respondents affirmed that administrators believe business involvement yields results. Factors noted as restraining collaborative success were insufficient time, different organizational cultures, divergent goals and agendas, and lack of resources dedicated to the collaboration. Administrator respondents complained of turf issues, at the administrative and the board governance level, observing that academic institutions are too insulated (Banjac, 2000). In general, administrators who held more positive views of business partners ranked their collaboration experience as more satisfying than those with less positive views of their partners.

By contrast, parties in collaboration may experience relationship outcomes at differing levels. Members of the collaboration in Glowacki-Dudka's (1999) study perceived the opportunities from collaboration in different ways. Each of the collaborating organizations believed they had specific opportunities beyond those that all the organizations shared. Although a multitude of opportunities may exist, the only way the collaborative partners will be aware of and act on them is if the opportunities are tied into what the organization expects from the collaboration. Glowacki-Dudka (1999) also found that agreement on funding policies is another tension imposed by the structure of the collaboration. The difference in financial structures of the organizations is a primary tension when combining organizations from non-profit, for-profit and public sectors. It must be clear from the start what each organization will contribute and how the collaboration will be funded. As literature suggests (Alter & Hage, 1993; Kanter, 1994), for a collaboration to be successful, each partner must have unique strengths that complement each other. The challenge is to remain focused on the shared goals that brought the organizations together, rather than the differences that keep them apart (Glowacki-Dudka, 1999).

In a study of interorganizational relationships between secondary school academies of travel and tourism and higher education institutions, Cunningham (2000) found that eighty percent of respondents categorized their relationship as a formal collaboration in which boards of directors held regular meetings. Cunningham found that lack of interest from higher education and lack of time for leaders to build relationships were factors influencing the success of the collaboration. Adams, Galarza, Rosario, and Westhoven's (1997) case study supports Cunningham's findings, as their work observed that creating successful, trusting, collaborative relationships was time-consuming and required a shared decision-making process.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) (1996) studied five collaborations that had been funded through the Educational Partnership Act of 1988. These collaborations had differing concerns, objectives, and foci. One case study was a partnership providing health and social services through schools; another was a program that focused on students who had dropped out of school; the third was concerned primarily with the transition from school to work, the fourth, improving school curriculum, and the fifth, a complex partnership with multiple objectives. The case studies revealed the problems and successes of educational collaborations through illustrations, giving the reader a sense of the life of a partnership. Among their findings was the recognition that each participating organization is challenged to change policies and procedures to accommodate a new way of working with others. Interestingly, they found that a shared vision and deep commitment among partners could overcome weaknesses in program design and implementation. Like other studies (Kanter, 1994; Chrislip & Larson, 1994) this one found leadership to be critical in a complex collaboration. Concerning funding, the study found that collaborations were more effective than stand alone efforts in seeking additional funding for activities deemed important by the community.

Evolution, Roles, and Responsibilities of Governing Boards

The idea of the governing board can be traced back as far as the Middle Ages, originating in Italy in the thirteenth century, when university faculties petitioned local governments for financial support. However, with financial support came a measure of local control manifesting through the governing board (Carlsen, as cited in Baker, 1994). At that time, a primary role of the governing board was to insure the financial integrity of the institution, a responsibility that remains to date. However, this role and responsibility changed significantly over time, but changed most dramatically when public universities were established in the late 1880s (Piland, as cited in Cohen & Brawer, 1994). These newly-established public schools had local, regional, or state-wide boards whose responsibilities were expanded to include policy management of all kinds. Boards were typically charged with responsibilities such as establishment of mission and goals, short- and long range planning, guidance and approval of policies, evaluation of programs and services, approval of property transactions and procedures, evaluation, hiring, and termination of the president, community relations, and collective bargaining (Tatum, 1985). Even though many states had differing fundamental processes for establishing boards and their scope of responsibility, the common expectation of governing boards at all levels was to insure that all aspects of the operation, including curriculum and instruction, would reflect the needs and values of their respective constituencies (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). This process becomes far more complicated when complex blends of multiple boards are required to embrace responsibilities and cultures that differ from their individual primary settings.

The range of structures that form these boards serves to illustrate the differences in their primary responsibilities. It is common for K-12 boards to have a much closer relationship with a community than their university counterparts and to be more involved in the daily operations of the school (often characterized as local control), functioning as social monitors and parents via curriculum and policies (Gershwin, 1999). Boards for K-12 systems are elected from specific geographic regions of the "district" to represent the wishes of their local constituency. This often includes moral and religious implications leading to direction of curriculum, instruction and assessment of students. It is common for K-12 governing boards to exercise local control in a way that would be unacceptable to college faculty at any level (Azinger, 2000, Fall).

The United States is unique in its emphasis on local control of public education at every level. One reason that calls for collaboration are increasing is that, according to scholars, American K-12 and higher education systems are among the world's least linked education structures (Boswell 2000, Fall). Unlike most countries, the United States does not have a central board or ministry of education with the authority to dictate a national curriculum or to set standards for either the K-12 schools or public colleges and universities. Michael Kirst of Stanford University argues that the historic attempts to provide mass education have resulted in significant disconnects between K-12 and college faculties, curricula, and standards (Education Reform, 1999).

In contrast to universities, community colleges and K-12 share a common history. In the early decades of the twentieth century, the "junior" colleges were organized in many states to provide an extension of the high school experience with grades 13 and 14. This was done under the authority of local K-12 school districts. It was not until the late 1960s that this culture started to shift when states began moving governance of two-year schools to post-secondary coordinating and governing boards (Garland, as cited in Baker, 1994). Currently, twenty-nine states align their community colleges in a common postsecondary system with four-year universities and colleges, and sixteen states have created independent state community college governing or coordinating boards. Only six states continue to place primary authority for governance or coordination of their community colleges with the state board of education (Education Commission of the States, 1997).

K-12 origins also are reflected in the eighteen states where trustee candidates for local community college boards still stand for general election, much like members of local school boards. However, thirty-four states have adopted a governance model more typical of universities, with community college board members appointed by the governor or the legislature. Like K-12 districts, locally governed community colleges typically have the authority to levy at least some level of local taxes, while community colleges' appointed boards are much more likely to get their support directly from the state (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Despite these common origins and a tradition of being open-door institutions, community colleges have become much more like traditional four-year schools, particularly when operating under combined two-year/four-year role and mission expectations. Funding mechanisms and governance patterns contribute to the perception that two-year colleges are competitors of, rather than collaborators with, K-12 systems (Boswell, Fall, 2000).

Public governing boards generally fall into one of three categories, e.g., state-wide, regional or local, with their members coming either through election or appointment. The overwhelming majority of K-12 school boards are local, made up of elected members who represent a specific geographic constituency with the rights and responsibilities typical of public officials. The responsibilities of K-12 boards are very different from their higher education contemporaries, with activities that include such things as daily transportation of students between home and school, feeding of students, enforcement of federal laws targeted as specific issues and populations, and educating the public as a whole. This "public as whole" aspect of K-12 education brings with it a legal obligation to accept and educate virtually all students, with no ability to screen or select. In addition, local K-12 boards are responsible for the review of all curriculum and instructional methods and the censoring of all instructional materials.

This local control, which lends itself to all aspects of operation including instruction, is in sharp contrast to the responsibilities of higher education boards at both the four-year and the community college level.

Summary

The need and the support for collaboration are well established in the literature as illustrated by policy development from the federal, state and local levels. These policies support collaborations with financial, legal and political elements clearly establishing a tie between education and quality of life, between education and workforce development and between education and economic vitality. Policy support has led to innovations that range from focused local efforts to statewide initiatives, thereby increasing the involvement of governing boards at all levels. These partnerships move through a logical sequence of evolution, predictably increasing in complexity and leading to a distinct entity, which is theoretically described as a level II or level III collaboration. These deep collaborations have their won distinct set of values and goals contributing to a unique culture. It is the board aspect of that culture that is of critical interest to this researcher.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and the rationale supporting a qualitative multiple case study. The design, rationale, sites, participants, data collection methods and trustworthiness are described, as well as an explanation of the data analysis process.

Research Design and Rationale

This study explored the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of members of two multi-level governing boards charged with the responsibility of leading their respective multilevel educational partnerships. The method of study selected for this effort was a qualitative research design using a multiple case study.

According to Merriam (2002), research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education. It is the intent of this researcher to contribute to the knowledge base through observation of two multilevel education partnerships. Merriam (2002) goes further to describe this specific type of study as "basic interpretive," in which learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world and the meaning it has for them is considered an *interpretive* qualitative approach. In-depth qualitative analysis of the observations allows the researcher to study the participants from their own experience, placing the researcher as nearly as possible into the thoughts of those charged with the governance of multilevel education partnerships.

The qualitative approach selected for the study is a multiple case study which can be described as an intensive description of a phenomenon or social unit such as an institution or a group that comprise a bounded integrated system (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2002). In this situation, the cases are two multilevel partnerships, while the participants are the members of the two multilevel governing boards charged with the oversight of their respective partnerships. By focusing on these two cases the researcher will have the opportunity to examine the lived experiences of these board members, and to study the complexity of their organizational model.

One key factor in determining the use of a multiple case study is the unit of analysis. This study identifies the units as two multilevel partnerships which are further bounded by the limitation to current and past board members. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the purpose of a case study is to "reveal the properties of the class to which the instance being studied belongs" (p. 371). In this study, the class to which the participants belong is that of "board member" and more specifically, "board member on a multilevel board." This effort to bind the study to a specific set of limitations is again defined by the two settings and the types of boards that govern them.

Another key factor involved in determining the use of a case study as the research strategy is the type of research question being posed (Yin, 1994). In this study the researcher is interested in gaining insight into the experiences of two groups of board members in order to better understand the "how" and "why" of their daily functioning, e.g., their methods and motivations. The utilization of a multiple case study will allow the researcher to study board perspectives as contemporary events, keeping the data current and evolving through the process of interviews guided by "why" and "how" questions.

The primary vehicle for acquiring the interview data will be unstructured open-ended interviews analyzed for themes.

Yin (1994) links case study strategies with efforts to explore those situations in which the case being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes. This study proposes to allow outcomes to emerge through careful analysis of board members' comments making it a solid fit for a case study model. The researcher is not attempting to prove or disprove a theory or to manipulate or control variables in order to establish cause and effect, but more specifically is looking deeply at two bounded settings in order to understand organizational collaboration from the governing board perspective.

In this case the researcher is attempting to understand how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon without attempting to predict, or to control potential outcomes. A rich, descriptive account of the findings will be presented and discussed using references to the literature that first framed the study. The objective is to inductively analyze the information, coming from interviews and observations, in order to identify recurring patterns or common themes that cut across the data.

For the purpose of this study, whether described as the thing, the class, or the bounded system, it is made up of two partnerships set in the Western United States, each one representing a local school district, a community college and a four-year institution of higher education.

The Sites

The sites are two multilevel partnerships located in separate states in the Western region of the United States, differentiated as the Northern and Southern sites. They were selected using purposeful, convenience sampling methodology (Patton, 1990, Merriam,

2001) targeted at accessible sites in the Western United States. The Northern site is comprised of a K-12 school district, a regional comprehensive community college, and a state university. The Southern site is comprised of a K-12 school district, and a regional four-year school that has a community college, a baccalaureate, and a graduate role and mission.

The Northern site is located in a community of approximately 50,000 and incorporates three educational partners. A nine-member elected Board of Trustees governs the first partner, a K-12 school district serving about 12,000 students. Two of the K-12 trustees are appointed by their peers to serve on the partnership board. A seven-member elected board of trustees governs the second partner, a comprehensive community college serving 1,800 full-time and 2,000 part-time students. Two of the community college trustees are appointed by their peers to serve on the partnership board. The third partner, a state university serving about 12,000 students, is governed by a legislatively appointed twelve-member board of trustees. Two of the trustees are selected by their peers to serve on the partnership board. The final picture is a multilevel board with a total of six members, two from each of the three partners.

The Southern site is a branch campus located in a community of approximately 120,000 and incorporates two educational partners combined with formal community representation. A five-member elected Board of Education governs the first partner, a K-12 school district serving about 20,000 students. Two of the K-12 members are selected by their peers to serve on the partnership board. A nine-member, legislatively appointed board of trustees governs the second partner, a regional education provider that serves a combined role and mission of a community college and a four-year institution. Two of the trustees are selected by their peers to serve on the partnership board. These four members then select one additional member from the community at large, bringing the Southern partnership board number to a total of five.

The Participants

The participants are the current or past (within the preceding three years) board members of the two partnerships. There are a total of eleven sitting members, six from the Northern partnership, and five from the Southern partnership. Eleven sitting members were interviewed with the option of including past members if warranted. In the event that a sitting member does not wish to participate or that a sitting member has been involved for only a short time, past members will be considered as participants until saturation has been reached.

The participants were contacted via written communication through the respective executive board secretaries at each organization; they were selected using a simple purposeful, criterion sampling methodology based on their respective roles as board members involved in multilevel collaborations (Patton, 1990, Merriam, 2001). These two criteria of 1) a sitting board member 2) on a multilevel board were done both purposefully and for convenience. The group that was being studied was based only on these simple factors in order to study specifically their perceptions as defined by the group, regardless of the individual factors that the board members themselves brought to the study.

Northern site board members brought with them the greatest gender diversity with four of six members female. All but one of the Northern members had served on at least one board prior to becoming a member of the partnership board. Ages of the members ranged from 36 to 65 with four of the five board members falling between 50 and 66. Four of the five board members had lived in the community for over 30 years while one had been a community member 6 years. Four of the five Northern members had two or more children who had attended the local public schools.

Southern site members told a similar but slightly different story in that 5 out of 6 were males and 100% had served on other boards prior to their involvement with the partnership. Southern members ranged in age from 47 to 72 with 100% of them residing in the community for at least 30 years. 100% of board members had at least two children attend the local public schools.

The strong connection to community is demonstrated by the factors such as the length of residency, the role as parents, and the willingness to be involved in volunteer board activities. These factors appear in the data in a variety of ways that connect board participation to family and community as an expression of personal and community values.

Communication with board members included a comprehensive introduction of the researcher, a complete overview of the project, and the methodology to be employed. Full assurances of confidentiality were provided, with an opportunity to discuss the project, as a board and as individual board members, prior to asking for a commitment of participation. The researcher asked for both individual and comprehensive board approval for the study, including formal board action to participate. Once written communication was established and an acceptable degree of receptivity was documented, the researcher asked to attend and observe the boards during at least one formal meeting. The researcher also met individually with participants in order to answer any questions or provide further information they might need about the study. After the respective board members indicated an appropriate receptivity to participation, the researcher asked for formal board action in support of the research and began scheduling of interviews. No more than two participants were interviewed in a given day, allowing the researcher to simultaneously gather and process data. As one set of interviews was reviewed, another set was scheduled, allowing adequate time for reflection and analysis of data. This approach allowed for adjustments in the interview process in the event that the data analysis indicates a need for adjustment.

Data Collection

The data was collected via unstructured interviews, observations, field notes and reflective journaling. Reflective journaling occurred before during and after board meetings and participant interviews. The researcher also spoke into a tape recorder during reflection to capture information which was then placed into field notes. Prior to interviews being scheduled, all participants were provided comprehensive written information imparting the details of the study and outlining the process used to ensure confidentiality. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form indemnifying voluntary participation, personal commitment to confidentiality, and permission to be audio taped during the interview.

Participants were privately interviewed individually in their respective working environments, or a mutually agreed upon site, some chose their place of employment, some chose their own homes. Interviews were audio taped, ultimately generating transcripts from each interview. The researcher used exploratory questions designed to reveal each board member's personal experiences and feelings, encouraging participants to wax philosophical. During interviews participants were given the opportunity to express themselves freely and in great detail, with encouragement for elaboration. This type of rich data collection allowed for issues to emerge essential for the identification of deeper meanings and themes (Merriam, 2002). Through data collection and analysis, the researcher identified connections, commonalities and divergences in the descriptions and phrases offered by the participants.

Participants were identified by number, while sites were identified by pseudonyms known only the researcher. The personal identities of the participants and the specific identity of the schools and communities will remain confidential, keeping all details of the data within a framework of ethical, confidential standards.

In addition to one-on-one interviews, the researcher attended at least one formal board meeting at each site. Additional observations also included information gathered about the site, casual interactions with participants before and after board meetings and interviews, and the overall environment within which their daily business was carried out. Field notes were generated during all stages of data collection, before and after interviews, and include observations of non-verbal communication and other perceptions of the researcher. Reflexive journaling also provides introspective data from the researcher, which is intended to stream out the researcher's biases. Reflexive journaling occurred shortly after each observation opportunity and after each interview, allowing the researcher to reflect critically in order to guide the reader to better understand how the researcher arrived at a particular interpretation of the data.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the highest possible level of integrity and reliability, the researcher ensured trustworthiness utilizing the following seven methods (Merriam 2002). 1. *Triangulation.* All interview data was confirmed against field notes, reflexive journaling, and consistency in collection methods in order to confirm emergent findings. Transcripted interviews were compared against corresponding field notes and journaling for accuracy and consistency. 2. *Member checking.* Transcripted interviews were provided to the individuals interviewed for feedback and validation as to the accuracy and the intent of the comments. Each interviewee had the opportunity to review the interview transcript before data analysis. 3. *Peer review.* All data is reviewed by the researcher and his advisor for congruency of findings and tentative interpretations. This includes triangulation among field notes, journaling and interview transcripts. 4. *Researcher's reflexivity.* Through the process of reflexive journaling and peer review, the researcher provided for self-reflection regarding assumptions, biases, theoretical orientation and relationship to the study that could affect the investigation. The researcher consistently engaged in self-reflection and sought peer review from his advisor as to the role the researcher is filling in the process. 5. *Adequate engagement in data collection.* Adequate time was spent in the collection and processing of data to the extent that the data became saturated. 6. *Audit trail.* A detailed account was maintained of the methods, procedures, field notes, journaling and interview transcripts which can clearly identify decision points and specific paths of evolution. 7. *Rich descriptions.* Descriptions are of such depth and scope that the reader will be able to determine the extent to which their situation matches the research context and whether or not the findings can be generalized to their own situation.

Data Analysis

The coding process or "data analysis" began by creating a transcript of the interview tape. The researcher used a professional transcriptionist to convert from tape to written format, creating an accurate written record of each interview. Transcripts were designed to allow for careful analysis and triangulation of the data including margins for notes, identification of interviewers comments, and individually numbered lines throughout the entire document. Individually numbered lines allow for line-by-line analysis and tracking of individual words and phrases within specific lines. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that the researcher "let the data speak" through careful and detailed analysis of each word and line, while Merriam (2002) describes the process as moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, leading to a clear and understandable conclusion. It is this "speaking through the data" that the researcher sought; it is this moving back and forth between individual words and concepts and analyzing the data for categories of thought which gave rise to the recognition of themes or patterns. Strauss and Corbin (1990) further describe this moving back and forth as "coding" and categorize it into three levels or stages. The first level is *open* coding where general themes or categories emerged within each individual document. At this stage, the researcher and his advisor used Microsoft Word to analyze the data, looking for common words, phrases, and ideas appearing across the data, both in individual and multiple transcripts. The emergent ideas, words and themes were cross-referenced and triangulated against all sources of data including field notes, reflexive journaling and other transcripts.

The second level is *axial* coding where the emergent ideas or themes were linked into categories across documents, providing for strands that were woven across the data as a whole. This linking of categories lead to the third level of coding known as *selective.* This is the point at which the themes began to emerge as the process of integrating and refining categories moved into a much deeper level. This increasing level of focus in the analysis process allowed for copious, rich descriptions to be discerned in a manner that revealed themes, patterns and trends that might not otherwise have been evident. As the data were collected and analyzed, the researcher looked for saturation points where individual themes or ideas were apparent and widely supported across the data. This saturation point indicates that adequate data are available and that the process of moving through the development of theories or linking themes across the data can move forward.

Analysis of the data began as they were collected in order to allow for adjustments to be made as the process evolved. Interviews were scheduled in sets of two but were performed one at a time, allowing for analysis and adjustment to occur prior to the next set of interviews. Merriam (2001) believes that it is essential to analyze data simultaneously with collection. It also allowed the researcher to alter questions and content of the interviews in such a way as to keep the data on track. The researcher was unaware of what would be discovered, what or whom to concentrate on, or what the final analysis would be. The entire process of collection and analysis shaped the final product. This simultaneous collection and analysis occurred both in and out of the field with analysis occurring as an ongoing effort during the entire collection process.

The large volume of data was managed utilizing, hard notes and Microsoft Word a computer program known for its capabilities in managing word based data. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that the utilization of such a program can support the researcher in making connections between categories of information and in developing more complex assertions while accurately tracking specific sources within multiple files. The program can aide in categorizing types of comments, sentences, and individual words in a manner that is supportive of this type of data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: CROSS CASE COMPARISON

In this chapter I provide each site's profile listing the communities' general information, the governing boards' legal charge, and the participants' daily responsibilities in each case. After the profiles I analyze the participant interviews, pertinent documents, and my personal observations recorded in my field notes. This analysis occurs in two sections. First I present the commonalities existing between the two cases, and second, I present the unique distinctions of each case.

Northern Case Profile

The community of Goodville is the largest urbanized area for many miles serving as a regional hub for banking, health care, industry, education and tourism. From a physical perspective Goodville city limits encompasses 21.37 square miles supporting a current population of about 50,000 people making it the second largest city in the state of Windham. It is located in Generic County, which has a total population of about 69,000 residents. The largest economic sector in the county is service, followed by energy, manufacturing, and agriculture.

Goodville Community College (GCC) is the labeled as the "most comprehensive" community college in Windham serving more than 5,000 students annually. GCC offers traditional academic core classes as well as two-year associate, one-year certificate and training programs. Students at Goodville can choose from among 50 different academic majors and more than 30 technical and career field options. GCC bills itself as very committed to training the local workforce, touting partnerships with local business and industry to provide on-site training and business partnership programs.

GCC is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors who are elected in non-partisan races from within Generic County. Three of these elected board members are appointed by the Generic County School Board chair, to serve on the Generic Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

There is only one school district in Generic County, serving approximately 12,000 students in grades K-12; it is the largest employer in Generic County. The stated goal of the Generic County school district is to meet the educational needs of every student in the district. The Generic County school district is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors who are elected in non-partisan public elections to represent specific geographic assignments.

Generic County BOCES, sometimes referred to as the "partnership" or the "multi-level board" is governed by a six-member Board of Directors, three each appointed from GCC and the school district. The membership number was targeted deliberately to require a cross-membership majority for all votes.

The BOCES has the responsibility for administering revenues generated by a taxation formula based upon property assessments. The total annual budget of about 700,000 dollars is created by a tax assessment supported by the GCC and Generic school district, with each of the two contributing 50% of the total budget. The money is allocated annually to support special projects that are solicited by the BOCES via an RFP process and assessed by the members of the BOCES Board. The BOCES board members are charged with allocating all funds under the premise of equal benefit to both partners regardless of the focus of the grant. Resources for these projects are allocated for a funding period not to exceed three years. Board members meet monthly between September and June to assess the value of existing grants and new proposals.

Southern Case Profile

The community of Weston lies in a remote region serving as the demographic hub for a very large geographic area. Located in an area rich in outdoor activities, Weston serves as a regional medical center as well a providing hub services in banking, law enforcement, tourism, retail, education, and agriculture. Weston city limits encompasses about 24 square miles, supports a population of about 46,000 and is the 7th largest city in the state of Highland. It is located in Snow County, which has a population of about 120,000 residents.

Rock State College (RSC) is designated by the state of Highland as a regional education provider. RSC has an annual enrollment of about 6000 students in 39 four-year majors and 17 two-year options. It serves as an educational and cultural center for Snow County and has been a mainstay of activity for over 80 years. RSC is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the senate.

Snow County school district serves 99% of the population of Snow County (about 20,000 students). Snow County school district prides itself on educational excellence. It is governed by a six-member Board of Directors who are elected in non-partisan races assigned to specific geographic districts throughout Snow County.

Snow County BOCES, sometimes called the "partnership", is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors and is comprised as follows: One member of the board from RSC, the President of RSC, one member of the board from Snow County school district, its Superintendent of schools, and three members selected from the at-large business community.

The BOCES has the charge of overseeing two campuses totaling about 32 acres that support vocational and technical programs serving students from Snow County school district, RSC, and the general public. The BOCES is responsible for the daily operation of approximately 15 technical programs including all staffing, facilities, equipment, and curricular support as designated by the participating partners. The BOCES oversees and annual budget of approximately 3.5 million dollars.

Common across Both Sites: Collaboration.

Collaboration as defined by the participants in both cases encompasses a wide range of interactions, from simple cooperative activities between two or more people or entities, to complex legal and financial arraignments among multiple organizations. At both sites participants used the term "collaboration" as a way of describing their efforts to work together towards a greater good. Even though the word is not used in the following statement, it is evident in the perspective of Northern Participant #1 as she describes her view of collaboration: "...both boards are trying to look out for each other...the college sees the benefits in supporting the school district, because that brings more students their way... plus the people who serve on the college board and public school boards are interested in their community and they see the benefit to the community overall..." In this case the participant is describing the efforts of the participating boards to work together towards the mutual benefit of all parties, which demonstrates collaboration. Commitment to working toward a greater benefit to all concerned was evident in both cases and was manifested in a variety of ways. The following quotes demonstrate the participants' beliefs regarding the value of collaboration by illustrating that many of their activities would be difficult or impossible to accomplish as separate entities.

> *Southern Participant #10* …in today's fiscal environment it is very important where one entity couldn't provide a program, or the other entity couldn't provide a program, you consolidate resources and you can provide an adequate program for both postsecondary and secondary students, that neither could do alone.
>
> *Northern Participant #2*…we can do so many things through the BOCES that neither the school district or the college can do alone, sometimes our students can take two or more classes at a time that would not be available if the BOCES didn't make it available…
>
> *Southern Participant #7* …delivering vocational/technical programs in a joint manner between the district and the college is saving both money, and it is creating a better setting, with jointly owned facilities that are more robust...
>
> *Northern Participant # 2* …we are really county-oriented for both the college and the school district… realize that we are here to serve the county and the region as well as the city.

The first two examples above show the participants' understanding that through collaborative efforts a synergy is created; participant #7 believes that part of this synergy is "creating a better setting, with jointly owned facilities that are more robust". This is consistent with the comments of participant # 10 and participant #2, who both state that through collaboration the partnership can do things that "neither could do alone." These two participants use almost the same verbiage to assert that they believe the multi-level partnership creates a sum larger than the individual parts. The third comment reflects the understanding that both educational entities are there to serve the region by working together, and in the words of participant #2 “are here to serve the county” reinforcing the idea of the greater good in serving the community.

In examples such as the ones below, participants give specific insight into the dynamics of spending resources to benefit both partners equally while remaining cognizant of their primary responsibility. This commitment towards and equal expenditure of resources is an extension of the commitment to participate jointly on activities designed to provide mutual benefit to both partners. This overarching commitment to sharing in costs and rewards is seen consistently in both cases. Participants illustrate recognition of their responsibility as elected officials and their acceptance of the charge of expending resources equally in order to bring benefit to the full range of participants.

> *Northern Participant #5* …I realize that I was elected to serve on the Goodville College board and I feel like when I go to the BOCES board I’m still representing Goodville College…it’s not hard to figure out the money we have is BOCES money…it is not money that I can out and say, I’d like to take this for Goodville College use…it has to be a joint function…

> *Southern Participant #6* …no matter what we do, the college and the school district both need to know that their investment in the partnership is serving their needs…

> *Northern Participant #3* …it’s all public money, half for the school system and half for the college…they have to have a cooperative emphasis together to make the program go…

The commitment to allocating resources in a manner that benefited both parties was seen by participants as a critical aspect of collaboration and one that is essential to the ultimate goal of serving the community. Comments above such as “…it has to be a joint function”, “both need to know” and “they have to have a cooperative emphasis” reflect direct statements about participants' acceptance and support of this commitment to collaboration. This understanding and commitment is further observed in field notes outside of interviews, with comments such as "some days we pay, some days they pay, it works out in the end" and "its an equal deal, that's what we strive for, regardless of how we slice the pie."

Participants sometimes referred to the challenges in balancing individual activities or decisions and understanding individual needs and board culture in order to equally benefit both parties. It was clear that participants saw the difficulty in this type of collaboration as illustrated by the comment below.

> *Southern Participant #10*...I do see the wisdom in collaboration, when I say collaboration, I mean the formation of multi-partnerships like this one, but recognizing that it is not easy, and there are a lot of hurdles out there.
>
> *Northern Participant #2*...anytime you have a board like this one, conflicts and disagreements are due to arise.
>
> *Southern Participant #9*...I can tell you that I would recommend a multilevel partnership to other communities; the tough part is that it has its own culture, it is unique, and can be difficult for board members and community to understand...

Comments such as "it is not easy", "disagreements are due to arise", and "it is unique and can be difficult" are all illustrations of the level of understanding possessed by participants with regard to the challenges of operating complex multi-level partnerships. Along with recognition of the challenges, participants often stated their support of these efforts and the high value they placed on their own participation. Participants provided consistent statements about the value they placed on collaboration and the environment they saw as critical to its success. This environment included supporting students, getting dropouts back into school, and staying focused on the ultimate goal, as illustrated in the comments below.

> *Northern Participant #2*...There are BOCES rules about how these programs must be set up so that it does involve both the college and the school district...to benefit the ultimate goal...

> *Southern Participant #9*.....so why would we not want to collaborate to support those clients, those children, or those community members? It creates a strong, unified program for a community...we place a really high value on people who are willing to come forward and work collaboratively.

> *Northern Participant #5* ...getting these kids back that dropped out of high school... it may be worth the long term benefit; if you get students better educated they are going to be better college students in the future.

> *Southern Participant #10*...it is incredibly important that we understand our role as board members as supporting the sense of community...boards that do not work together can divide a community.

The comments above illustrate a consistent pattern of value that participants placed on collaboration as a way to work together and benefit the community and the students. Statements such as "it does involve both the college and the school district...to benefit the ultimate goal", "we place a really high value on people who are willing to come forward and work collaboratively", and "it may be worth the long term benefit" are all supportive of collaborative activities in order to benefit the partnership and thereby serve the goal of helping the community. The final comment above by Southern participant #10 clearly demonstrates the tenets of collaboration with the statement "...boards that do not work together can divide a community." This statement, which focuses on the possible negative outcomes from a lack of collaboration is a good example of how past experiences can affect board members providing them with greater basis for motivation to work collaboratively.

Fundamental components of collaboration are further expanded through the participant comments below to include examples such as, providing students with choices, valuing flexibility, and seeking people who have passion. Participants see these characteristics as essential components needed for successful collaboration.

> *Northern Participant #1* ...the school district sees the benefit in working with the college so that you can inspire your students to continue their education... It's beneficial to the college... but it also helps us to keep our high school students engaged in their education because it offer them different choices...
>
> *Southern participant #9*...when I think about collaboration, it really is a willingness to make sure that your thoughts, your opinions, your values, are represented... true collaboration must understand the strengths of every member of the board and allow for those strengths to come through...
>
> *Southern Participant #10*...for collaboration to work you have to be more flexible...old parameters are essentially thrown away with everybody expected to be open to new ways of doing things...you have to have people who really have passion and want to be involved in a constructive way...

Comments above such as "you can inspire your students", "it offers them choices", "when I think about collaboration it really is a willingness" and "for collaboration to work you have to be more flexible" are illustrations of the level of understanding that participants demonstrate across both cases regarding the benefits and the essential components necessary for effective collaboration. By "inspiring students" participants inspire themselves, and by seeking "flexibility" participants become more flexible, growing both as individuals and as a collaborative-minded organization.

In summary, participants recognized that in a collaborative board setting, cooperation and understanding of individual strengths lead to greater benefits for all involved. They understand what the financial challenges and benefits are and they understand the numerous facets of collaboration and how it can affect their ability to deliver programs. In addition, participants had a clear understanding of why they could not afford to operate as completely separate organizations and how their willingness to compromise benefited all parties. Participants clearly demonstrated a commitment to the idea that the foundation of a multi-level board partnership has the core objective of finding common ground and willful compromise in order to better serve the needs of the community as a whole.

Common across Both Sites: Community.

The construct of community broke down into two major facets, literal and perceptual. These two aspects of community were present in both cases with community permeating participant values and strategies. Community is the largest and single most ubiquitous theme in these data, manifesting in numerous ways, some literal, some perceptual and some metaphorical. Participants consistently reflected a deep commitment to the community, which seemed to provide a source of ongoing motivation for many members and contributed to their willingness to work collaboratively on challenging and disparate issues. I will give illustrations about the two primary facets of community, literal and perceptual, using the metaphor of an umbrella, using the ribs of the umbrella to describer the subcomponents of each main piece. The first facet of community I will explore is the "literal." The literal umbrella contains two ribs, 1) population density and

2) geographic designation. The second umbrella will be the perceptual, which contains 10 ribs that I will illustrate immediately following the literal.

The Literal Community Umbrella: Population Density. Literal, simply stated, is concrete, physical, or tangible in some meaningful way allowing participants to quantify it by assigning numerical values. One clear example of a literal aspect of community is population size or density. While precise numbers are not used in participant comments regarding population, they did refer to the number of residents as a factor in comments outside of interviews and how the number of residents had grown at both sites. In the examples below participants express their belief that the small population of the community is a significant factor in influencing the type and range of board interactions both in and out of the boardroom.

> *Northern participant #2*...if you had a larger community where people didn't know each other as well, when they came together they were strangers, it may be harder to get something accomplished because you don't know and value what each of the other people sitting around the table are there for.
>
> *Southern participant #10*...especially in a community like this one, we are not a large community...there is a lot of interaction between board members, especially with a small community as we have, you run into all your board members at some social function, or some other function outside of this formal setting.
>
> *Northern Participant #2*... people in larger communities don't know each other as well...this community is very close-knit. There's a lot of people sitting around the room that were there at the meeting last night who have known each other in many capacities over the years. We see each other out at dinner and in many other ways.

I observed that this personal interaction among board members as described above occurred both in and out of formal board settings and is common to both sites.

Participants believed that in this "small town interaction" the small community, defined by small population, contributed to their own levels of familiarity with each other in a variety of ways. The examples above given by members from both sites about social interactions are illustrations of how the board members view the impact of a small community on their workings as a governing board. The statements "if you had a larger community where people didn't know each other as well", and "people in larger communities don't know each other as well" represent how the participants view the impact of a small community on their level of understanding of each other. Regardless of whether there is empirical proof that the small town does indeed engender this phenomenon, participants had a clear perception that people in small towns know one another in a more personal way than do members of larger communities. Participants believe that because they interact in numerous ways outside of the boardroom and that they have known each others' families and business activities for years; this gives them a greater comfort level in board interactions and keener insight into the needs of the community. Population density is only one facet of how participants define the literal community. The second facet or "rib" is also a concrete or quantifiable way of assigning substance to the definition of community in the form of geographic designation.

The Literal Community Umbrella: *Geographic Designation.* Participants sometimes defined the literal community as a specific geographic region using terms such as "the county" or "the valley". In both sites these colloquial terms were used and, as defined by the participants, meant a specific geographic area as illustrated below.

> *Southern Participant #9*...the link to the community is that the board members are elected from the community and they actually have a geographic constituency base...and so they are representing that constituency base, but they also

represent their values, their beliefs, and that is a part of the fabric of the community.

> *Southern Participant #10*...the valley we serve is a big area in terms of square miles and acres...

> *Northern Participant # 3*...our school district serves the entire county, which is bigger than some states and sometimes has great distances between populations...

Participant comments such as the ones above, relating to such things as "geographic constituency base", "square miles and acres", and a school district being "bigger than some states" illustrates the manner in which they assigned numerical or concrete ways of defining the literal community.

It was common across both cases for participants to refer to the community in these two literal facets of geography and population, sometimes expressing their belief that the literal community was an important way of defining the boundaries of their responsibility. Participants' definition of community in this literal way reflects their understanding of the legal and physical definition of their scope of responsibility and demonstrates one facet of how they define the scope of their role in the community.

The consistency with which both cases define their view of literal community is also seen in how they define the broader "perceptual" community. The perceptual community is more abstract and much broader than the literal, manifesting in numerous ribs to create the umbrella of the perceptual community.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Education. Not only is community defined as a location, it is also defined by segments of its residents and the complex entities such as BOCES that are created to serve those residents. Participants consistently referred to community as a primary aspect of education, illustrating the relationship between the two and establishing education as a key aspect of community. The following comments connect education and community and identify BOCES, as a tool for interacting with and serving the educational needs of the community.

> *Southern Participant #10* ...I feel the community has to be involved number one in education...you just have a healthier educational culture with community involvement, community support...
>
> *Southern Participant #9*...an educational system cannot exist without the support of the community.
>
> *Southern Participant #10*...The county plays and incredibly important role in partnership. We have to understand that we rely on the support of the community connection for our continued existence (in education)... that we are all part of the community...
>
> *Southern Participant #9*...Even though we have two major educational partners most of what we do here is driven by the community...
>
> *Northern Participant #5*...education is a very critical aspect of community health and well being...it plays a very important role in the economy ...

Comment such as "the community has to be involved number one in education", "we rely on the community", and "education is critical and community driven" reflect the deep connection between education and the community and the participant's belief that community and education are inseparable and must be viewed as vital to each other existing in a kind of symbiotic partnership. The vitality participants assign to the partnership is clearly seen in the comment above by Participant #5 ("education is a very critical aspect of community health"). By making a direct connection between education and community health, Participant #5 used the analogy of health to illustrate the importance of education and community working together for the betterment of both. The comments below demonstrate the participant's belief that the BOCES is a way to connect with and serve the needs of the community by serving the needs of students.

> *Northern Participant #2*...BOCES is a tremendous collaborative tool...both the college and the school district realize that they are here to serve the county and the region...
>
> *Southern Participant #6*...I think at the BOCES level we have such an opportunity to interact with students and to change the delivery of education...
>
> *Northern Participant #5*...it also helps us to keep our high school students engaged in their education because it offers them different choices...I think that the programs that BOCES offers does do that, whether they're traditional students coming out of college or out of high school...

In the comments above participants referred to the BOCES as a "tremendous collaborative tool" and viewed it as a mechanism to "change the delivery of education", this is a clear statement about the value that participants place on the BOCES as an instrument for serving the community. Valuing education as a distinct part of the community facilitates the creation of the BOCES, a vehicle that provides a mechanism for broad input and participation by disparate aspects of the community focused on serving the full range of educational needs of the students and the business sector through community partnership. A second rib of the umbrella is business, sometimes referred to as the "business community." Participants see business as being tied very closely to education and as a part of their definition of community. The comments below expand on "business" as an additional facet of the perceptual community.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Business. The business sector emerges as a perceptual facet of community; board members consistently expressed a desire to serve the needs of the business community, verbalizing the high value they placed on interacting with business and serving its needs. Participants expressed a belief that listening to business in order to better serve these business needs was a part of their governing board responsibility. This is illustrated by the following comments:

> *Northern Participant #1*...We try to get information from the community in terms of what programs we want to sponsor, what is going to be beneficial to the community...we've met with businesses to talk about what they needed, employees coming into their business, with regard to some of the associate degrees that the college offers and also what we offer on the high school level, the joint programs we offer...

> *Southern Participant #10*...the input from the community and the people who live in the world of work, help education at any level...those of us in the business sector, we're essentially the users of the end product.

The two quotes above, "we've met with business" and "people who live in the world of work help education at any level" illustrate the importance that participants place on "listening to business", since they identify "input" and "getting information" as key components of their efforts to gain information in order to make informed decisions about programs and services that are targeted at meeting the employment needs of the business community. This can be seen from another perspective in the statement "those of us in the business sector, we're essentially the users of the end product"; this is representative of the degree to which participants understand the relationship that business plays in the community and in education viewing business as a primary customer, as further illustrated below.

> *Southern Participant #9*...One of the strongest attributes of our program is the support of the business community; it was essential to the genesis of this organization... the business community has been there from day one...

> S*outhern Participant #9*...Even though we have two major educational partners most of what we do here is driven by the community and its needs and the needs of the business community.

I believe the comments "strongest attributes of our program is the business community" and "we have two major education partners" indicate the high level of appreciation and understanding governing board members have regarding the role that business plays in education. This recognition (of the importance of the business community) stimulates participants' willingness to listen to the business sector and to utilize that input to serve both businesses and students. Participants gave credit for the "genesis" of the organization to the business sector and further illustrated the importance of business by stating that "what we do here is driven by the business community." This type of sentiment was common across both cases. Not only did the governing boards believe that they benefited from listening to business, they embraced the idea of putting business members directly into the decision making process by assuring that some of the participants came from the ranks of employers, providing a direct link to specific aspects of the employment needs of the community and facilitating a better understanding on the part of all concerned. This understanding was clearly enhanced by the participation of business in the educational process, the results of which can be seen in the importance that education places on economic development. Economic development, sometimes referred to as workforce development, is a major component of the partnerships at both sites, as seen in the following section.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Workforce Development. An additional facet of the perceptual community that is closely linked to education is the effort to create quality jobs through workforce development. The concept of workforce development as a community responsibility is illustrated by the fact that both communities had formal economic development organizations that were closely connected to the educational entities. There were cross-case examples of board members understanding the importance of workforce development, describing it as "vocational education", "technical education", "skilled workforce" or "education for employment." Clearly, participants feel (in the paradigm of the perceptual community) that this is an important part of their scope of responsibility, as reflected in these quotes.

> *Northern Participant #2*...the current challenge is ...to do a better job of vocational education... getting the idea to kids who are in families that don't give a damn what they do...some idea that there are interesting jobs out there that are fun and pay a lot of money...like the oilfield...these jobs are out there that need workers...
>
> *Southern Participant #10*...I feel the community has to be involved number one in education... you just have a healthier educational culture with community involvement, community support...we want a skilled, well equipped work force...that takes cooperation between the community, especially the business community and education in general.
>
> *Southern Participant #10*...I had always had an interest in the overall governance of education... to understand the delivery of technical education you are talking about real educators whose focus and reason for being is to educate for employment.

The quotes above identify a "healthier educational culture", "community involvement", "a well equipped work force", and "education for employment" as distinct parts of the mission of education as it connects with the business sector to provide education targeted at direct employment for its graduates. Once again the analogy of "health" or "healthy" as connected to the relationship between business and education arises, illustrating that the participants and the community place importance upon that relationship. Participants consistently spoke freely both in and out of formal interviews about the importance of jobs for students and for graduates, as illustrated by the statement above by Participant #2: "There are interesting jobs out there that are fun and pay a lot of money..." I believe this represents the participants' recognizing their role in the employment scheme and their concern that students can find employment upon departure from school.

The perceptual link between workforce development and the business sector is stated in both sites and further demonstrates the numerous ribs of the perceptual umbrella as participants define community. As the definition of community continues to emerge it is worth mentioning that several individual participants in both cases were involved in formal economic development activities across the breadth of the community as part of their roles as governing board members. In both cases board members also sat on economic development boards as representatives of the educational system, illustrating the strong ties between both entities. This idea of participants serving on other boards and experiencing community service through a variety of mechanisms is common across both sites, which leads to the next item of discussion.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Previous Board Interaction and Experience. To further illustrate the degree to which board members interact in numerous and complex ways across the community, in both sites a board member had taught the children of another board member and of participants previously serving together on other boards, both public and private. Looking in my field notes I found discussions that were held outside the board meetings where board members made statements such as "she taught all four of my kids in grade school", "she was a nurse at my kids school" or "he coached both of my boys." These interactions were common across both sites and appeared to be of significant importance to participants. I believe these comments illustrate the degree to which participants were familiar with each other's lives, causing participant definitions of community to become more intimate. This is further illustrated as participants describe their personal motivators for getting involved in education at the governing board level.

> *Northern participant #5* ...I had been actively involved in several other non-profit boards before running for the College board, that interaction in other board activities led me to get involved with the college where many of my elected colleagues had similar histories of community involvement...
>
> *Northern participant #4*...I'm on two other (boards) in the community, so I get to see a lot of different things... I think being involved in other things gives you a broader perspective to see how other entities in the community interact.... I think the community largely drives these things and enables them to be successful.
>
> *Northern participant #5*...I had been on some other boards, Meals on Wheels...one to do with teenage pregnancy that had school district people involved...I could see how my participation affected the community...
>
> *Southern participant #10*...because of my family's background we have always been civic minded...I have served on numerous community and business boards over the years including the chamber board and the Coop board, I've had extensive experience in community involvement and serving on boards of directors... I just have a feeling that we are all part of the community.

The above quotes show a common pattern of board members' participation in a range of other board-type activities both before and during their tenure on an educational board. In addition, participants consistently link their board experience to the community with statements such as "I could see how my participation affected the community", "being involved in other things gives you a broader perspective..." and "I have a feeling that we are all part of the community", which further illustrates the degree of importance that participants place on their community involvement. The comments above also show that participants have complex and long-term involvement in their community and that their personal values place board participation as an important part of their service to community; this was a consistent pattern across both sites. This personal level of participant value is illustrated by the comments of Participant # 10 when he states "...because of my family's background..." This reference to family provides insight to the breadth and scope of the participant's definition of community and how they see their own responsibilities apropos community service. Participants expressed support for engaging and supporting fellow board members as part of this process. In the following section they provide examples of how highly they value diverse opinions.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Diversity. The interaction among governing board members permeates many facets of the community, illustrated by casual comments that occurred outside of the formal board setting such as "see you at soccer practice tonight..." and "when I was a county commissioner we never thought about involving the schools, perhaps we should involve the current commissioners more now..." Participants across both sites demonstrated specific knowledge of each other's lives and discussed openly their efforts to support actions or activities that often times had no direct relationship with their specific governing board responsibility but were more community or personally-oriented.

Each board member's personal background appeared to give that board member greater insight into the issue at hand, leading other board members to readily engage them in issues perceived as germane to their backgrounds. Participants at both sites displayed a specific understanding and appreciation of the experience and expertise of other board members, and showed a clear commitment to appreciating different perspectives, as voiced by the following:

> *Northern Participant #5*...we have had some changes in our college board. We have one person in particular in our college board who has a much bigger view of things than the rest of us and is looking at things more on a bigger picture...she tends to have a bigger ear to the community... I think we are getting some diversity we weren't getting before..."
>
> *Northern Participant # 3*...She was a big asset on the development of the park... she has a perspective on what's, you know, good for this community that... none of the rest of us have. I think we respect her for that.
>
> *Southern Participant #10*...when I think about collaboration, it really is a willingness to make sure that your thoughts, your opinions, your values, are represented, but at the same time, not expecting, or demanding that other must think as you do...the strength of collaboration comes from the richness of diverse thought...

I believe that the comments above illustrate how participants engage diverse opinions with statements like "she was a big asset", "I think we respect her for that" which show appreciation for new and different opinions. In addition, the comment "the strength of collaboration comes from the richness of diverse thought" is a clear statement about valuing and appreciating different perspectives and the expertise of fellow board members thereby embracing the idea of diversity in board leadership. Offering a positive assessment of a fellow board member combined with a statement about respect is an indicator of members willingness to engage diverse opinions. The process of engaging diverse thought and reaching consensus on issues is illustrated below as participants speak of their perspective on turfism and working together.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Turf and Coming Together. Both sites placed value on diversity of opinion and cooperation, embracing the idea that compromises must be made, turf issues must diminish and be replaced by trust and cooperation in order for the partnership to succeed. This is illustrated by the following comments:

> *Southern participant #10* ...the BOCES by nature is designed to be a partnership, but when you get into partnerships it requires people to give up some of their turf...it requires a great deal of trust...partnership is incredibly important...

> *Northern participant #2*...When you bring everyone together, you get everyone you're able to... hear the insights from all different views you get a better decision and also, because it has to be a thumbs-up process to adopt things everyone is bought into it. You can decide...it's not the preferred solution but I'll live with it....

> *Northern participant #3*... I think one of the things I'm proudest of is this whole board and the learning process and the honesty and the discussions... there wasn't a selfish, hidden agenda come forward with anyone and it was just wonderful discussion.

The meaning that participants assigned to comments such as "bringing everyone together" and "give up some of their turf" clearly support the idea of working together towards a greater good. This commitment to work together was evident not only in interviews, occurred during individual conversations at both sites, often in what I would call a familial environment. The comment "we keep our disagreements at the board table in order to work together when we get outside" is an illustration of participants' willingness to deal with challenging issues but remain focused on the cause. The analogy of "bringing people to the table" was common across both sites and, I believe, is symbolic of the family dinner table as participants consistently displayed a strong influence from their family-type relationships. It was clear that participants viewed the community as part of the "the family", as illustrated by this comment from Southern Participant #6, "we would sit at the dinner table nightly and talk about what they learned today, what they got to do, if they got and internship, a job during high school, it had a real affect on our choices then and now...how those choices affect the community." As the family metaphor emerged from participant comments it was clear that the family values and dynamics were a strong part of the board experience; participants were committed to "knowing" one another and the community as a part of the greater family. It is through this intimate "knowing experience" and commitment to community, that a strong facet of "family" as part of community becomes evident.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Family and Children. Family as a part of community (in both the literal sense and also used in a much broader and more analogous way) appeared in participant comments across both sites. The literal idea of family and, or family values, sometimes mentioning children, was often a motivational focus for participants to initially engage in public service and a guiding value when they made decisions on their respective governing boards. The idea of family as a part of community, and community as a part of family, served as a catalyst for participant's involvement in their communities as illustrated by these comments:

> *Southern Participant #10* ...since I was very young I had a belief that it was my responsibility to get involved with education to try and make it a better place for my children to live and learn.

> *Northern Participant #3*...my husband and I place a very high priority on community service and we expect the same kind of behavior from our children, it is a family value for us...

> *Southern Participant # 9*...board participation has a community element, and by that also I'm sure a family

> element…the community is the most essential core belief that I carry.

The quotes with components like "since I was very young", "it is family value with us" and "participation has a community element and by that also I'm sure a family element" show how participants link long-held family values to community service and family, as well as how these values motivated participants to get involved. Participants verbalized their own family values; the comments below give specific examples of how family issues played a role in their value structure.

> *Northern Participant #1*…one of my children was challenged and needed special programs that eventually lead me run for the school board…I guess I almost feel that if your child's not getting a good education that you, as a parent, should take some active steps and change your child to a different school. You can't blame it all on the school district if they are giving you choices and don't use those opportunities or choose to try and make them better.

> *Southern Participant #9* …I have three children, and I want them all to be a part of their community, that is part of why I am so committed to my own community.

> *Northern Participant #5*… I actually got on the college board before any of my children started college and I think there was some motivating factor there that I was interested to see how Goodville College developed.

The participants above mentioned their own children as a specific factor in their personal motivation to serve the community through board participation. Whether the specific issue was a child with special needs or broader issues such as modeling behavior for children, participants clearly saw their own children's future as motivation for community involvement. This personalizing is common across both cases and is illustrated by the following statements that identify family values and desires for their children's future as key factors in their choice to be involved.

> *Southern Participant #7* ...I think you are either raised to appreciate or you naturally appreciate the value of these nonprofit entities that do things for a community and make the place that you live better.

> *Southern Participant #9* ...the greatest endeavor of any community is to promote education... I want my children to have every opportunity they can have as adults to be successful...I believe they will get there through a good educational system, an educational system that cannot exist without the support of the community.

> *Southern Participant #6* ...I am hoping my kids want to be involved in their own communities as they grow up, and I think they will...they know the importance of involvement in their community.

> *Northern Participant #5*... I think that's the family part of it that I feel...we helped... getting these kids back that dropped out of high school... it may be worth the long term benefit if you get students better educated they are going to be better college students in the future.

In the quotes above participants use statements like "I think you are either raised to appreciate", "I want my children to have every opportunity", " I am hoping my kids want to be involved", and "that's the family part of it..." to illustrate the backgrounds and the motivators that each one of them brought to the board room. By stating that "how I was raised" was important, participants credited the modeling of their parents and that modeling to their respective children is a deliberate effort to show that they value community involvement in themselves and for their children. In the comments below participants give specific examples of student concerns and how their own background and / or upbringing affected their view of community.

> *Northern Participant #5* ...If I hear a student say, "I can't go to college, I don't have any money," I'll say, "have you talked to them about scholarships? Do you know that most of our students are working part-time?" I feel like I am an

> advocate to try to get students into the system...if they could just take a class and find out it wasn't so bad.
>
> *Southern Participant #6* ...I've been brought up that you give back to your community... mine stems from my mom and dad and the fact that you give back and you try to help solve people's problems...I enjoyed going on to these boards... they are like family to me.

The two comments above provide insight into the family value structure at work in the minds of participants. The comments made by Participant #5 show her deep understanding and sympathy for students who lack family support and are forced to deal with challenging situations on their own. Participant #6 states that "you give back and try to help solve peoples problems" and further, that "they are like family to me." I believe these comments specifically illustrate the degree of compassion that participants have for students and ascribe family-type commitment and values to participants' involvement in education.

> *Southern Participant #6* ...because I felt that just knowing what the mission statement was, because I had children go through the programs, I really knew what BOCES is all about, and as a result I could promote that in the community.
>
> *Northern Participant # 5*...I feel like I am an advocate to try and get students in the system. And I feel kind of the same way at the BOCES board...I feel I'm more connected...I can personally connect with groups of people or with individuals to say these thing can make a difference in your life."
>
> *Southern Participant #10*...community awareness was really instilled in me by my family, especially my dad, who was very active in the community, and the state and national organizations... it is a family tradition to be involved in education and community... my dad set an example for me and I set one for my children; they have been very involved in activities. I guess it is a family

> tradition, or a family trait. We've developed a sense of civic responsibility as a family.

Participant #6 states that "knowing the mission" from having his own children in school enhanced his ability to "promote" education. Participant #5 uses a term similar to "promote" in that she sees herself as an "advocate" to try and get students into the system; she goes further to use the phrase "I'm more connected" in describing her feelings toward participation on the BOCES board of directors. Connection for Participant #10 stems from the modeling of his father and clearly extends to his own children believing that involvement in education is a "family tradition" stating that his family has "developed a sense of civic responsibility."

These comments regarding community and family were very similar across cases, carrying the construct across both data sets they are representative of the degree of consistency with which board participants placed value on family. Participants referred to their civic responsibility as a family value providing motivation for participation in education, as illustrated by southern Participant #10:"...I have three children, and I want them all to be a part of their community; that is part of why I am so committed to my own community...board participation has a community element, and by that also I'm sure a family element...the community is the most essential core belief that I carry."

I believe this illustrates that participants see their participation as modeling behavior and their membership in education as embracing a core belief, reflecting their commitment to community and to family. This is further illustrated by participant comments expressing their desires for their children to be involved or in citing how they were raised as a factor in their participation. The depth and consistency with which participants regarded family as a key factor in community service was clear in their comments.

The metaphor of the "perceptual family" and gathering around the family dinner table as a place for communication and collaboration supports the idea of "gathering around the board table" for conversation and decision-making, thereby recognizing the perceptual family and providing a safe place for both agreement and discourse.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Appreciation of Participation. Just as relationships with family members evolve, so too do governing board relationships progress and change. Participants across both sites commented that they grew in their appreciation and understanding of their board member roles and how they evolved, eventually coming to enjoy their own participation on the governing board.

> *Northern Participant #3* ...the new group grew so much together, what we were talking about is education. What we felt was the most important things for education and for the future of our community and what our responsibilities were to the community...
>
> *Southern Participant #* You have to build relationships. There is a lot of work that goes into it; ultimately the situation is so much better that it is absolutely worth every ounce that you put into it...it is going to be beneficial for people."
>
> *Northern Participant #1* ...I wasn't really sure what we did or how the other folks came to the meeting, fit into the picture, but the more I learned about those things using the programs we started, we initiated together, the more honored I feel to be a part of that board.

The three comments above show transition or growth in participants as they gained time and experience on the multi-level board. Participant # 3 uses the phrase "we grew so much together" while Participant #9 refers to growth as "you have to build relationships." Participant #1 illustrates this growth by going from "I wasn't really sure what we did" to "the more I learned... the more honored I feel to be a part of that board." This type of "growing appreciation" was common at both sites with a clear deepening of understanding as participants became more familiar with the multi-level board environment. This growth is further illustrated as participants comment about connections with the community through board participation and how they perceived their impact on the board.

> *Northern Participant #5*... I feel like I am a really good advocate and that's what I think I like the most about being on the board is that I feel like I can personally connect with groups of people or with individuals to say these things that I know about, can make a difference in your life.
>
> *Southern Participant #6* ...from the first day we met we had an impact on what was going on, I enjoyed it I think at the BOCES level we have such an opportunity to interact with students and to change the delivery of education, I believe I have a lot more impact on BOCES than I do at Rock State.

Connecting personally, as if with members of your own family, and connecting in a more intimate way brought deeper meaning to participants in both cases as they grew in understanding and appreciation of their fellow participants and also of their responsibilities as members of a governing board. Participant #5 stated that what she appreciated most about being on the board was feeling like "I can personally connect with groups of people", allowing her to say to fellow community members that "these things can make a difference in your life." This ability to connect seems to give participants a feeling of gratification and appreciation that their efforts have a positive impact on the community. Participant #6 expressed his feelings about participation in the statement "from the first day we met I enjoyed it... I have a lot more impact on BOCES than I do at Rock State." Participants consistently seemed to enjoy their participation on the multi-level board as they worked to support students and the community.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Students. Participants viewed students as members of the community/family. Students and student-oriented quotes consistently appeared across both cases, reinforcing the idea that participants view the student as a key part of the "community family", as illustrated by these comments.

> *Southern Participant #9*...we talk about it being for the students, for the kids as we say, but students are the community.
>
> *Northern Participant #4*...it's one student at a time that you impact, but both the boards feel that it's the commitment to the community and the commitment to the youth of Generic County...
>
> *Northern Participant #4*... I think it is a wonderful institution...this is the next stop for a lot of the students when they leave the school district...we can enhance the competitiveness of their fortunes in life...not only while they are students in the district but possibly when they get here (the college)...

The three quotes above identify students as a facet of community and literally identifies students as "the community" by stating "students are the community" and in reference to board commitments it being "one student at a time that you impact." Participants also referred to students and board efforts to support them by stating that a large part of the educational effort is to "enhance the competitiveness of their fortunes in life", reflecting the participants' commitment to students and reinforcing the idea that students are a significant part of the participants' definition of community. The construct of student is expanded by the comment "youth of Generic County" where "youth" is a more general term, and one more closely related to a younger student/member of the community family. Participants identified with their responsibility to help students and to provide ways to keep them motivated and engaged in school with comments such as the ones below.

> *Northern Participant #5*...I feel like I am an advocate to try and get students in the system... I can personally connect with groups of people or with individuals to say these things can make a difference in your life.
>
> *Southern Participant #9*...so why would we not want to collaborate to support those clients, those children, or those community members? It creates a strong, unified program for a community...
>
> *Northern Participant #3*... we talk a lot about our goals for the students, keeping them in school, moving them forward, keeping them coming, to get college credits, and we just talk a lot about success for students and keeping them in the system and not loosing them.

These comments connect with and provide support for students as illustrated by statements such as "get students in the system...to say these things can make a difference in your life", and "why would we not want to collaborate to support those clients, those children" or "keeping them in school, moving them (students) forward." Participants consistently see the commitment to support students to keep them in school and to find ways to help them succeed as a primary goal of the organization and one that takes on personal significance for many board members. Participant #5 made comments that illustrate a personal level of acceptance and involvement:

> *Northern Participant #5* ...we get some of these kids who take a class and don't pass it and feel really bad about that. Did we not mentor them? Should we have said, "you shouldn't of taken that hard class...there is something that you could have succeeded in..." How many high school kids don't have any family support systems either? They are living in their cars, they are living in a broken home,

> they are taking care of their brothers and sisters; that really upsets me.

In the quote above, Participant #5 takes personal responsibility for her own efforts toward getting students into school and creating an opportunity for their success once they are in school. I believe this level of understanding and compassion for students demonstrates a familial level of commitment. This is further illustrated by a comment that came from my field notes "…sometimes my husband thinks I took all these students on to raise…" I believe this participant was literally stating that she had an invitation to treat all students as though they were her own children and therefore she was responsible for them in a very meaningful way. The focus on supporting students is further illustrated in the comments below.

> *Northern Participant #5* … getting these kids back that dropped out of high school…it may be worth the long term benefit if you get students better educated they are going to be better college students in the future.
>
> *Southern Participant #10*…we have a governance team as a board…and make quality policy decisions, give solid direction to the organization with an understanding that all of our efforts are to benefit the children in our community.
>
> *Northern Participant #1*…as we develop interests and opinions, for whatever issue we are dealing with, each one of those has to be tied back in some way, shape or form to student achievement.
>
> *Southern participant #9*…so why would we not want to collaborate to support those clients, those children, or those community members, it creates a strong, unified program for a community...

The comments above reflect participant's support of students illustrated with comments such as "getting these kids back that dropped out of high school", "all our efforts are to benefit the children in our community" demonstrating that, regardless of the case site, participants see students and children as part of the community and as part of their reason for serving. Participant #1 puts a very specific perspective on this by focusing on student achievement with this statement "for whatever issue we are dealing with, each one of those has to be tied back in some way to student achievement." While Participant #9 believes that working together to support students "creates a strong unified program for a community…" The "unity" that Participant #9 refers to in his previous statement it is consistent with the unity often seen in a family setting and further illustrates the parallel between community and family.

The family metaphor is one that emerges consistently across both cases, whether it appears in the form of student, business, or board participant as a member of the conceptual family, the message is strong that community and family are very closely related. Participants consistently use terms such as "bringing them to the table" and "family values" as they speak about their own board experiences. I believe that this familial metaphor extends beyond the more literal references and appears in ways that would be typically found in any family such as those based in conflicts or challenges.

The Perceptual Umbrella: Conflict. Participants often verbalized both the rewards and the challenges associated with establishing these kinds of multi-level partnerships or, to extend the family metaphor, "marriages". The use of the analogy of marriage is very insightful regarding the challenges and rewards of complex partnerships. Just as in a marriage, participants initially are excited about the positive things that the marriage can accomplish with little appreciation for the challenges that will befall even the most successful partnerships. Participants' understanding of these dynamics can be seen in the following quotes:

> *Southern Participant #8*...Even though we get along with each other and I think we all have the same basic desire of where we want to move, each of us have our own little niches and tend to kind of push for one thing. That's something I've noticed...I don't see a lot of resistance to change but it just seems to be more difficult to achieve it inside of a complex partnership.

> *Northern Participant #2*...But the conflict that can arise is sometimes the representation of internal constituents for instance, in the school district who may not understand, really understand, the operation of BOCES and there are barriers and turfdom that exist. So I think usually when there is conflict it really comes down to trust and not taking the time to really understand another person's position.

The two comments above could also be describing a familial or personal relationship. Statements like "each of us have own little niches" and "it really comes down to trust" represent the familial-type relationships that participants describe, validating the personal aspect of board relationships and illustrating the process and the dynamics of conflict are similar in board relationships and family settings.

> *Northern Participant #3*...problems arise where partnerships are not necessarily looking, their vision is not necessarily the same or their direction is not necessarily the same as the other partner and no one notices until it is a problem...anytime you have a board like this one, conflicts and disagreements are due to arise.

> *Southern Participant #8*...I think that multilevel boards are vital...I would just encourage anybody who is thinking of doing those kind of things to do it, but also to understand the pitfalls when you have partnerships, they are more difficult to work with, but more rewarding in the end.

> *Southern Participant #10*...an organization like we have is very difficult to really communicate the partnership and the organization to outsiders. And sometimes it's even harder for us who are part of it to really fully comprehend it.

Comments such as "where partnerships are not necessarily looking", "when you have partnerships, they are more difficult to work with" and "an organization like we have is very difficult to communicate..." could also describe an intimate relationship or marriage. The idea of conflicts arising and the dynamics of how they are dealt with are consistent with those present in a family situation and are sometimes viewed by participants as being familial in nature.

Participant comments reflect an understanding of the fundamental nature of conflict in a complex partnership and of the challenges in combining disparate entities to create a decision-making authority via a governing board. Participants provide more focused comments on specific issues that shed light on the nature of the relationships within the governing board in the following remarks. The language used by participants can easily be associated with similar issues that could arise at the dinner table or inside a marriage counselor's office as individuals struggle with relationship dynamics. These comments reflect some degree of concern over who is responsible, who is in charge, and a willingness to point fingers at other facets of the organization to shift blame to specific individuals as well as parents.

> *Southern Participant #8*...I was conflicted and have been conflicted in the past. It is very difficult to work with a board that has multi levels of ownership or whatever you want to call it. Even though people are all very well intended the issue of who's in charge gets in the way and at one point it severely got in the way of our BOCES board...

> *Northern Participant #5*...personally I see some problems in a lot of the things we have to do at the college especially in remedial areas because they haven't done them at high school...

Participants # 8's feelings about the difficulties with multi level partnerships as she references past issues are illustrated by the statement "It is very difficult to work with a board that has multi levels of ownership…who's in charge gets in the way, and at one point it severely got in the way of our BOCES board…" Participant #5 believes that some of the blame for remedial education lies at the feet of the K-12 system; here, she uses finger pointing ("because they haven't done them at high school") to assign responsibility to the local school district for the need of remedial instruction because of what was perceived as failure of the K12 system to impart basic skills. In the comments below participants offer insight into their feelings about one particular board member and about the role that parents sometimes play in the education of their children.

> *Southern Participant #10*…one of the partners caused serious problems, but again and that's probably an example where we…should of handled things just a little bit differently because we did not have open communication and we were dealing with some individuals who didn't have a high degree integrity, and that is very problematic…
>
> *Northern Participant #1*…It amazes me the number of parents who, particularly as soon as they get to junior high, high school, say, well I don't have a high school education, you don't need one…it is just depressing.

These two comments illustrate the participants' willingness to identify specific issues or people as contributing to their challenges. Participant #10 states that "one of the partners caused serious problems" referring to a specific individual whom he believed did not possess a high degree of integrity, thereby causing problems in the partnership while Participant #1 levels the blame at parents verbalizing her "amazement" at the parents who offer no encouragement or provide discouragement to students in regards to completing high school. The statements below further illustrate the understanding that participants held regarding the challenges in operating multi-level partnerships.

> *Northern Participant #5* ...things we do through the BOCES is supposed to benefit both partners and sometimes you look at that money and I'm not sure that this really benefits both sides, sometimes I think the school district is just trying to get money from the BOCES that really should be school board projects...
>
> *Southern Participant #6*...now Rock State has got to look at BOCES all the time because it's creating conflicts or could create conflicts between two-year faculty to four-year faculty... these faculty, particularly the four-year faculty can be very unrealistic in their view of the world.
>
> *Southern Participant #7* ...we had occasion with both the district side as well as the college where all of a sudden there is a change in leadership and, well, you lose partnership that has been very supportive in the past. Now they are saying, I support it, but not if it is going to cost me money. That is where the community members say, yes you are going to support it because this is a good partnership...

In the comments above, Participant #5 verbalized her frustrations with what is supposed to be a mutually-benefiting partnership by stating "sometimes I think the school district is just trying to get money from the BOCES" while Participant #6 sees division among faculty as a problem with this statement: "...it's creating conflicts or could create conflicts between two-year faculty to four-year faculty..." This division among faculty could parallel conflicts between siblings in a family setting. Participant #7's comments illustrate a common point of disconnect in almost any partnership: "...there is a change in leadership and, well, you lose partnership that has been very supportive in the past. Now they are saying, I support it, but not if it is going to cost me money." One partner changing their mind when difficult decisions arise is a common dynamic found in almost any relationship landscape.

The familial terrain is evident across participant comments. Participant #7 identifies the source of the problem as "changes in leadership" and identifies the responsibility for relief in the form of the community members: "...that is where the community members say, yes you are going to support it because this is a good partnership..." I believe this role assignment to the "community members" could be analogous to the family scenario of "wait until your father comes home" with the community members filling the role of father, keeping balance and harmony as high as possible amid conflicts and differences of opinion among partners or siblings.

The trials and tribulations associated with a large family, a marriage, or a multi-level educational partnership are reflected in the comments of participants. The majority of participants can verbalize the challenges and complexities involved in the partnership but also express a very high regard for the value in these kinds of efforts. Participants sometimes used the "bring them to the table" analogy regarding their governing partners as illustrated by the comment below.

> *Southern Participant #10*, ...so I wasn't conflicted but I think there were times when I was able to act as a facilitator to try to work out some of these conflicting directions or visions. Although there were exceptions, when we could at least get them to come to the table, we could usually work out our differences.

I believe the phrase "coming to the table" is synonymous with coming to the family setting with an attitude supportive of cooperation and collaboration. The degree to which participants are willing to embrace cooperation allows the family to continue to thrive and grow in familial synergy.

The family metaphor emerged through a wide range of questions. Participants' expressions of family related dynamics and analogies were not limited to any specific area of questioning. Regardless of the nature of the question, one could observe the familial thread just as in this response from Northern Participant #5 responding to a question about finances "...sometimes I feel like I am handing out allowances to my children; they don't always understand why the money has to be distributed the way it is." Southern Participant #9 gives a very interesting analogy with this comment: "...sometimes the decisions we have to make are like deciding which of your children will get new shoes and you know they all need them", leading us back to the family analogy once again.

In summary, the construct of community and its numerous facets runs very consistently through participant comments connecting on issues that range from motivation for participation and a common desire to support students, to gaining financial efficiencies through collaboration. Collaboration is held up as a value that is demonstrated in family, business, education, and social structures throughout participant comments. Participants offer a perspective that holds collaboration in high regard and places collaboration as a community expectation. In much the same way that family members are expected to work cooperatively and collaboratively within the familial unit so too are community members expected to participate in activities seen as beneficial to the community. Community is seen as an extension of family holding a place of great value in the hierarchy of participant beliefs.

Distinctions of the Two Sites

Regardless of the degree to which both cases showed commonalities there were aspects that appeared discrete to one site or the other. I will offer data and discussion on three areas that were, to a significant degree, present in only site. The three areas of distinction are 1) Tenure, 2) Keeping kids at home, and 3) Partnership. The first two areas of distinction fall into the Northern site and third falls into the Southern site.

Northern Site Distinction: *Tenure.* In the case of the Northern site, participants made several comments that indicated value placed on tenure in the community and/or tenure on the board and its influence on the way the board functioned. This is illustrated by the following comments:

> *Northern Participant #5*…some people have more experience than others and people who have more experience tend to kind of look at things the same way, it seems like, than the people who don't understand the background of why this might be a problem…. It takes a couple of years before you start to really know how somebody is going to feel about things.
>
> *Northern Participant #2*… our family has been involved in politics in this town for over 20 years…it gives me a different perspective.
>
> *Northern Participant #5* …it took me several years to really understand what was going on, it would be very difficult for members with little of no experience to make insightful decisions.

Sentiments such as "some people have more experience", "it takes a couple of years", "our family has been involved for over 20 years" and "it took me several years to understand", show that the Northern participants place significant value on their degree of tenure in the community. There were few if any statements, in or out of interviews, in the Southern site that referenced issues related to time on the board or time in the community. Most of the Northern participants had lived in the area for many years and had served on the Board for a significant period of time.

> *Northern Participant #1* ...I had only lived here a couple of years when I came to the board, it took some of the others a while to accept that I could contribute without having lived my entire life here...
>
> *Northern Participant #3*...I have only been on the board for nine months and lived in the community a few years so I really don't understand the history that comes with some of the issues we deal with, I depend on other board members for perspective...
>
> *Northern Participant #2*... I think that the town involves people who have known each other for years and years; people in larger communities don't know each other as well... This community is very close-knit...

These comments, again citing numbers of years, reflect a high value placed on long-term residency and participation in community affairs. Participants' comments outside of interviews supported this idea, illustrated by a casual but friendly reference to a participant with only five years residency as a "newcomer". One Northern participant referred to her 60+ years of residency in Windham as being of great benefit when it came to an understanding of "where the skeletons were buried" and "how things work at the Capitol". This value of residency was not evident in comments from the Southern site.

Northern Site Distinction: Keeping Kids at Home. In observations during Board meetings and in conversations outside of interviews I perceived that Northern participants possessed a common desire to create educational and economic conditions specifically targeted at making Goodville a more attractive place for their children to reside as adults. This effort had two basic fronts, one aimed at providing a wide array of academic and vocational options that would provide the youth of the community with desirable avenues of study that could lead to a productive career. The second effort was targeted at economic development, to help create good jobs that graduates and business would find appealing from both a financial and a lifestyle perspective. Two participants made similar comments which were recorded in field notes as follows.

> *Participant #2*...if we don't find ways to make this place more attractive for our youth this town will stagnate or die within the next 20 years.
>
> *Participant #5*...we are trying to create a system so that we can grow our own workers providing employers with a steady supply of labor and our youth with real options for employment here at home.
>
> *Participant #3*...our kids and the young workers in general tend to have a bad connotation about working in the oil field. If we can't make them understand that there are good jobs both inside and outside of the energy industry here in Goodville, we could lose an entire generation of workers.

These comments clearly send a message that there is concern over keeping the youth of Generic County in or near the area in order to sustain the community and provide the workers with options that do not require them to move to an urban community in order to survive. Support for students, without specifically stating the objective of keeping them at home, can be seen in the comments below from interviews.

> *Participant #5*...it also helps us to keep our high school students engaged in their education because it offer them different choices...
>
> *Participant #2*...getting the idea to kids who are in families that don't give a damn what they do...some idea that there are interesting jobs out there that are fun and pay a lot of money...like the oilfield...these jobs are out there that need workers...

These comments, along with other statements made outside of interviews illustrate the level of concern that participants had regarding the need for keeping the youth in the community. Participants consistently expressed a concern that too much of the "homegrown" workforce was leaving town due to the perception that there were no viable options for long-term stable employment locally. While the Southern site showed great attention to serving students, the specific issue of keeping kids at home was not evident in the Southern site.

Distinctions of the Two Sites: Partnership. One concept (although not exclusive to the Southern site but much more prevalent) was the idea of the educational partnership. The word "partnership" and the concept of partnership was very consistent in the comments of Southern participants, sometimes emerging as "teamwork". Participants at the Southern site consistently used the words "partnership" and "teamwork" to identify the BOCES or the governing board but were not restricted in their use of the terms. Even though collaborative activities were present in both sites the specific descriptors of "partnership" or "teamwork" were not common to the northern site participants. Examples of the southern partnership language are as follows:

> *Southern Participant #9* ...The team sense is, how do you work together to allow the opportunity to understand the other members of the team, to bring issues forward, while remaining sensitive, and discussing them without becoming personal?
>
> *Southern Participant #7* ...it is that place you think of as a partnership, that is delivering technical and vocational education, and it is doing so through a partnership and saving both partners money.

In the two comments above, participants refer to the "team" and the "partnership" as being of great value and providing key services. Virtually all of the Southern site participants freely used this "language of partnership."

> *Southern Participant #8*...we have unique partnership that is not that common in other parts of the state, I am very proud of our efforts as a community to make this partnership happen...

> *Southern Participant #9*...I am proud that the partnership has remained with changes in superintendents, presidents, changes in board members, and I believe that it is a stronger partnership than it has been in the past...it has really grown...

The two quotes above specifically refer to the unique aspect of the partnership and display a sense of accomplishment, with participants feeling "proud" in regard to the strength and uniqueness of what they refer to as the "partnership." Participant #9 illustrates this with his comment: "I am proud that the partnership has remained." This level of personal vestment and intrinsic value placed on working together as partners was very strong and consistent across the Southern case.

> *Southern Participant #10*...the BOCES by nature is designed to be a partnership, but when you get into partnerships it requires people to give up some of their turf...it requires a great deal of trust...partnership is incredibly important...

> *Southern Participant #7*...being there at the very inception of the partnership, conceptually as well as legislatively, and then watching it function and appreciating the value of the partnership...

> *Southern Participant #10*...sometimes we have people who are really passionate about partnerships and want to be involved, allowing us to be looking out in the community for other opportunities to collaborate with other organizations so that it can enhance the building of additional partnerships, and extend this value to other places.

Southern participants used phrases such as "designed to be a partnership", "being there at the inception of the partnership", "proud of the partnership", and "partnership is incredibly important" to describe their relationship to each other, to their respective boards, and to the community. The construct of a partnership is very consistent with the charges given to both sites, but I only saw the term "partnership" used repeatedly in the Southern site. Southern participants used the term partnership to describe collaborative efforts, resonating in the majority of comments with a very clear message that partnership is at the heart of their charge as a governing board.

Summary

It is clear that the specific legal structure of the two cases is very different, as are their daily responsibilities. On the surface they look very different the Northern site owns no property, has no staff, and allocates formula-driven dollars for special projects, while the Southern board has numerous responsibilities for programs, staff and infrastructure, operates an annual budget four times as large, which is strained and beleaguered by funding restraints and rising costs. It might seem logical to expect significant differences in the way they each viewed their role in the community or their charge to work together, but these data do not reveal those types of distinctions. Clearly the similarities in the two cases do not come from the legal structure or the daily responsibilities; I believe these similarities come from the heart of a parent or a communitarian. Participants across both sites expressed their own growth in learning how to collaborate and in recognizing the value in working together to accomplish those things that neither could do alone. Even though the two charges of the institutions were different it is obvious that their commitment to community, to students, and to family is very consistent regardless of which site they serve.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter five presents the two major themes that emerged from the data: Collaboration and Community. Both themes contain sub-components that will be illustrated by categorizing and discussing them from the perspective of how they are similar across both cases and how they are each either consistent or not consistent with the literature closing with how they are divergent from each other. Through thematic discussion of each theme and their respective sub components I will tell the story of the Northern and Southern sites and the story of the multilevel board.

The first theme of Collaboration is a strong component of both cases and is consistent with the review of literature. It appears in almost every aspect of both sites and is often used interchangeably with the term partnership. The second theme, Community is robust emerging from the data in a variety ways across both sites but does not appear to emerge as strongly in the literature. Both Collaboration and Community will be presented as major themes with sub components in each; the sub components will be identified and discussed beginning with the introduction of each of the two themes.

Following this discussion I will present my personal perspective on possible reasons for the similarities and dissimilarities along with potential areas for further research.

Findings Consistent with the Literature

I will discuss the findings beginning with those constructs that do not deviate from the literature. The first major theme, which aligns well with the literature, is Collaboration. I begin by offering a brief overview of literature establishing the call for an increase in collaboration up to and through the 1990s. The construct of collaboration will unfold through the introduction of its six sub components. The six sub components of collaboration are as follows and will be discussed in the order they appear: (1) Key Leadership, (2) Trust, (3) Flexibility, (4) Business, (5) Economic factors, and (6) Family.

Collaboration

As pressures on education began to increase, particularly in the late 1970s and on into the 1980s the public called for greater efficiencies, more affordability, and better access for students and business. In 1981 in response to the public's dissatisfaction with the public schools, the U.S. Secretary of Education established the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The Commission generated a report proclaiming the "nation at risk" for what the report considered to be ineffective public schools in need of reform. The report called for dedication to reform the educational system (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5). One frequently suggested restructuring strategy was collaboration among various institutions and agencies utilizing partnerships as a fundamental tool in the process (Grupe, 1990).

The impetus for collaborative efforts began to increase significantly after the "Nation at Risk" report was released followed with President Reagan's declaration of 1983 - 1984 as the National Year of Partnership in Education (Adams, 1984). Similarly, the National Governors' Association supported the pressing need to restructure faltering schools and bolster economic competitiveness or suffer a decline in America's standard of living (National Governors' Association, 1986, p. 5). The National Governors' Association called for and encouraged partnerships between schools and business.

The two cases discussed here are consistent with the literature in regard to their reasons for collaboration and many of the expected outcomes of that effort. In addition both partnerships were formed in the early to mid 1990s amid calls for collaborative efforts. Several issues relating to collaboration are evident in the two cases presented and are reflected in the literature.

Key Leadership. The literature supports key leadership. Effective collaborations move beyond simple symbiosis and create a deeper more meaningful relationship upon which both partners are voluntarily dependent (Schlechty & Whitford, 1988). The focus on leadership is evident by Participant #8's statement, "...the responsibility really lies on the paid professional leadership to create an understanding among board members, and if those entities understand the relationship and are willing to work together, it goes a huge way to making the board members more comfortable..." Rahilly's (1997) findings indicate that leadership is a key variable influencing the methods of administrative coordination, keeping conflict to a healthy level, and influencing perceptions of success. Schlechty and Whitford (1988) support this as well with their belief that the most effective school and university collaboration is one where the organizations work together in a manner that transcends a symbiotic relationship and creates an organic relationship in which serving organizational self interest is replaced with working together to accomplish common goals for the greater good. The commitment to collaboration and to serving the greater good is replete across these two sites. Participant #2 illustrates this, " ...we are really county oriented for both the college and the school district...we realize that we are here to serve the county and the region as well as the city." Participants' statements reflect the literature in its support for effective leadership targeted at creating a culture that can support efforts designed to serve the community through partnership and collaboration.

Trust. The literature reveals that trust is a fundamental issue critical for development and maintenance of interorganizational collaboration (Johnson, 1997; Adams, Galarza, Nalle, & Westhoven, 1997) and is a vital component for governing boards as they interact both internally and externally (Smith, 2000). Consistent with the literature, trust emerged as a critical issue for this study's participants. The value placed on trust in my two cases was evident in the data analysis and illustrated by Participant #10 "...the BOCES by nature is designed to be a partnership, but when you get into partnerships it requires people to give up some of their turf...it requires a great deal of trust...partnership is incredibly important..." Participant #1 further elaborates, "I think it does develop some trust between both groups...you both put money into it, and you both put time into it, and you develop some trust issues that you might not have if you just read about it in the newspaper." Both sites placed value on trust and cooperation, embracing the idea that for the partnership to succeed compromises must be made, turf issues must diminish, and trust and cooperation must be developed.

Developing trust is consistent with the work of Chrislip and Larson (1994) who state that for collaboration to succeed, participants must focus less on local, inward interests and more on the larger interests of the community thus shifting from the backer of a particular interest to a problem-solving partner. Participants at both sites consistently demonstrated a willingness to explore the communities' larger interest realizing that compromise was often a key factor in a successful collaboration, and the overall good of the community was always the ultimate goal. This commitment to take the broader view on key issues is illustrated by the following participants. Participant #2, "…there are BOCES rules about how these programs must be set up so that it does involve both the college and the school district…to benefit the ultimate goal…" Participant #9 agreed adding, "…so why would we not want to collaborate to support those clients, those children, or those community members, it creates a strong, unified program for a community..." I believe the statements above illustrate that participants at both sites consistently placed the community at the highest point of consideration, setting aside personal and organizational details for the betterment of the greater good. Researchers agree that leaders of successful multilevel partnerships are committed to building trust through open communication and have managed to create clarity of understanding and purpose among board members (Banjac, 2000). As these partnerships struggle to build consensus around process, communication, purpose, and mutual respect, they also have developed an ability to compromise on decisions and to acquiesce to the greater good of the partnership. The ability to reach healthy compromise and allow board members to make informed decisions hinges on an organization's ability to communicate details and define complex issues.

Governing boards are dependent upon effective communication to reach meaningful levels of collaboration (Boswell, 2000, Fall). This collaboration does produce gains by allowing multiple entities to share resources but also creates challenges by bringing together organizations with dissimilar methods and cultures that exacerbate efforts to communicate (Neal, 1988). An example of the challenges created by different institutional cultures is evident in this comment from Participant #10, "...one of the partners caused serious problems. That's probably an example where we...should have handled things just a little bit differently because we did not have open communication. In order for collaboration to work, you have got to have integrity and communication, open communication with everybody involved." The literature lists communication as a key issue for successful collaboration as illustrated by Mattessich and Monsey (1992), who support the idea that collaborative relationships are successful when they master issues of environment, membership, process, communication, purpose, and resources. Participant #9 sees communication as a critical task in mastering conflict in multiple level partnerships as he states,"...in this kind of partnership, there is the potential for conflict. I think a lot of times that conflict is embedded in misunderstanding and issues with communication more than it is real philosophy." Participant #9 agrees, "...I can tell you that I would recommend a multilevel partnership to other communities...the tough part is that it has its own culture, it is unique, and can be difficult for board members and community to understand..." Participant #9 offers valuable insightful with the comment above regarding "the tough part is it has its own culture." It is the distinct culture of the multilevel partnerships that creates both the benefits and the challenges. The challenges in this unique culture lie in great part in the organization's ability to build trust through effective communication both internally and externally.

Flexibility. Gray (1989) describes flexibility as relationships that emphasize fluid, continuously emerging qualities of the organization supported though a changing web of interactions woven among its members, and suggests it requires constant work from its members (p. 228). This fluid nature of collaborative relationships can be seen in both the Northern and Southern cases described here. Participant #10 illustrates this flexibility, "...collaboration requires flexibility, and by their nature, multi level boards demonstrate all sorts of flexibility." In addition I believe that participants' views on flexibility aligned well with Gray's theories regarding the "changing web of interactions" and the "constant work..." This can be seen in participant statements about the importance of understanding other board members' perspectives and by the value they placed on their own level of interactions across a wide array of community activities. Participant #10 expands on this when he reports "...especially in a community like this one, we are not a large community...there is a lot of interaction between board members, especially with a small community as we have, you run into all your board members at some social function, or some other function outside of this formal setting." I believe participants see this interaction at social functions and other activities as part of the social fabric of the community, part of the "community family" and a vital part of effective collaboration. Gray describes this as part of a "web of interactions" stating his theory that rules and guidelines are developed in this manner and that tasks are defined and subgroups may be organized allowing stakeholders to acknowledge some degree of interdependence though this interaction.

A prominent sub group to emerge in these cases is the business community as a faction of "community." Business community was loosely defined by participants as "employers." Participants placed great value on the involvement and input of the business community and, consistent with the literature, viewed the business sector the primary partner.

The Business Community: A Key to Community Collaboration. The business community is prominent throughout both sites and, as evidenced by the literature, became a more prominent aspect of educational partnerships in the late 1980s (Averbak, 1988). Throughout the 1980s much of the critical focus had been on public schools linking their poor performance to a week economy. Educational reform was clearly an economic issue as well as a social concern (U.S. CEW, 1999). By the early 1990s the focus of the business critique began to report that the U.S. economy had regained its position as the most productive in the world, which removed some of the focus on what had been seen as failing schools contributing to a weak economy. However, this did not eliminate the focus on education but rather shifted concerns to workforce development and technical preparation of graduates (Mickelson, 1999). The link between business and technical education was strengthened further when it was reported that even though U.S. productivity had gained strength the new economy required technically skilled workers who could compete in a global economy (Cate, 1992). Accordingly, business leaders emphasized the need to prepare students for high-tech jobs (Mickelson, 1999). Keeping the workforce competitive was a continued focus of legislation and in the minds of this study's participants it was a driving force behind efforts to collaborate across disparate segments of the community. The complexity and scope of skills required to design, build, operate, and maintain superior technology meant that students needed higher levels of technical skills and that without these skills growth would be severely limited (Bailey, 1995). Community leaders realized that neither a school district nor a community college could stand alone and deliver the necessary scope and sequence of technical instruction and that collaborative partnerships would have to prevail (Johnson, 1997; U.S. Committee on Education and the Workforce, 1999).

In 1999 the U.S. Committee on Education and the Workforce reported that because the quality of the U.S. educational system had a direct impact on the skills of American workers, it ultimately affected the ability of American business to compete. As a result of this perspective, partnerships were formed with business and education that were believed to benefit the ultimate goal of serving the students and the greater community by providing career opportunities for community residents and skilled labor for employers (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Participants studied here consistently cited their relationship with the business community as a very important aspect of their work. In the following examples participants #1 and #10 illustrate how they attempted to listen to the business community. Participant #1 stated, "…We try to get information from the community in terms of what programs we want to sponsor, what is going to be beneficial to the community…we've met with businesses to talk about what they needed, employees coming into their business…" Participant #10 added, "...the input from the community and the people who live in the world of work help education at any level…those of us in the business sector…we're essentially the users of the end product."

In both cases there were members of the governing boards who were employers or "consumers" of the educational product further increasing the sensitivity and insight into to the perceptions of the business sector. Participants were cognizant of the need to work collaboratively in support of employers to create favorable conditions for workforce development and career options for local residents and were aware of the value in cooperating with the business community as illustrated by the following comments from Participant #9, "Even though we have two major educational partners most of what we do here is driven by the community and its needs and the needs of the business community…" Participant #10 elaborates, "One of the strongest attributes of our program is the support of the business community. It was essential to the genesis of this organization…the business community has been there from day one…"

Both Northern and Southern board members felt workforce development and the business community were often considered as interchangeable, with one serving the other, as the schools worked to support the stimulation of jobs and prepare students for the world of work.

Technical education is a component of the business facet and is acknowledged by participants as being just as important. There were cross-case examples of board members valuing and understanding workforce development describing it as vocational education, technical education, skilled workforce, or education for employment. The importance of workforce development in the literature is supported by Grubb's (1999) belief that during the 1990s national and state-level policies relating to community colleges were being dominated by issues relating to workforce development. Entering the 21st century state and local policy issues affecting community colleges increasingly focused on the central importance of workforce preparation, K-14 system building, and developmental education (Townsend & Twombly, 2001).

The idea of workforce development as a community responsibility is illustrated by the fact that both communities had formal economic development organizations that were closely connected to their respective educational entities. These participants' level of understanding and commitment to workforce development can be seen in the following statements from both sites. Participant #2 stated that, "...the current challenge is ...to do a better job of vocational education...getting the idea to kids who are in families that don't give a damn what they do...some idea that there are interesting jobs out there that are fun and pay a lot of money...like the oilfield...these jobs are out there that need workers..." and Participant #10 added, "...I feel the community has to be involved number one in education...you just have a healthier educational culture with community involvement, community support...we want a skilled, well equipped work force...that takes cooperation between the community, especially the business community and education in general." I believe the message is clear that the literature and the participants value and understand workforce development and the role that multilevel partnerships fulfill as they attempt to serve the greater good of the business community through collaborative partnerships.

Economic Factors. Collaborative relationships between business and education and those among educational agencies were noted in the literature and the two cases studied here. Concern for shrinking resources, workforce preparation, equity, and access, converge to provide the impetus to create partnerships among community colleges, K-12 school districts, and universities (Townsend & Twombly, 2001). The literature reviewed gave evidence that the goal of collaboration was to provide services targeted at workforce development that were more effectively delivered than either partner could provide individually. The participants at both sites supported the literature findings.

In collaborative partnerships synergy is a common goal. Offerman (1985) determined that partnerships were often formed with the expectation of synergy delivering more with the same or less money or delivering services that neither partner could effectively deliver alone. Mattessich and Monsey (1992) specifically named financial resources as a factor to collaborative success. They found that successful collaborative endeavors needed sufficient funds to support their work and a skilled convener to bring the groups together. The participants' level of understanding regarding collaboration's financial impact are described by Participant #10, "...in today's fiscal environment it is very important where one entity couldn't provide a program, or the other entity couldn't provide a program, you consolidate resources and you can provide an adequate program for both postsecondary and secondary students that neither could do alone." Participant #2 added, "...we can do so many things through the BOCES that neither the school district or the college can do alone; sometimes our students can take two or more classes at a time that would not be available if the BOCES didn't make it available."

Participants in both sites stated resource allocation and management as primary factors in establishing their respective partnerships Participant #7 illustrated this, "...delivering vocational/technical programs in a joint manner between the district and the college is saving both money, and it is creating a better setting with jointly owned facilities that are more robust..." Participant #8 further reinforces the value placed on this fiscal synergy, "...I think multilevel collaborations are vital to expand resources and opportunities beyond what individual partners can do alone." Both partnerships' board members believed that a type of symbiosis was occurring, and they were able to create more funding, stretch existing resources, provide opportunities, and deliver services that could be provided no other way. The partnership is viewed as "vital." Concerning funding, the study found that collaborations were more effective than stand alone efforts in seeking additional funding for activities deemed important by the community (Kanter, 1994; Bingham, 1986; Chrislip & Larson, 1994).

Family. For some time, researchers have been touting collaboration among educational stakeholders as a vehicle for school improvement that presents specific dynamics to participants (Roueche, Taber, & Roueche, 1995; Rahilly, 1997; Sorenson, 1998.). Goodlad (1988) proposed school/university partnerships, sometimes referred to as marriages, as a way to provide simultaneous improvement in the performance levels of both higher education and K-12. Goodlad further believed that if the marriage metaphor is applicable then an important component of success for school/university collaboration would be the will of either side to make a commitment to the union, that is, make the necessary sacrifices for the good of the relationship. The will of participants' commitment and depth of the family/marriage connection is expressed by Participant #6, "...I've been brought up that you give back to your community...mine stems from my mom and dad and the fact that you give back and you try to help solve people's problems...I enjoyed going on to these boards...they are like family to me." Participant #6's comment reflects the family connection in a very personal way by mentioning his parents and his level of commitment to fellow board members. In the following comments participant #8 uses the term "our own little niches" as a way to describe the dynamics within the board member interactions. "...even though we get along with each other and I think we all have the same basic desire of where we want to move, each of us have our own little niches." I believe these comments are dynamically similar to those that might be heard within a personal relationship or marriage thereby illustrating the marriage metaphor within multi level partnerships. When collaborators are willing to make the necessary sacrifices for the good of the relationship, there is a greater likelihood of long-term success of the partnership (Goodlad, 1988). As with any family situation or marriage, there will be conflicts. I believe that the types of conflicts and challenges faced by participants are consistent with those faced within marriages and families. Conflicts and challenges are seen in participant comments and are noted in the literature.

Challenges presented by multi level collaborations were considered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) (1996) when they studied five collaborations that had been funded through the Educational Partnership Act of 1988. Among their findings was the recognition that each participating organization was challenged to change policies and procedures to accommodate a new way of working with others and in some cases a new set of interpersonal dynamics. This is supported in the two cases as illustrated by the following comments. Participant #3 observes, "…problems arise where partnerships are not necessarily looking, their vision is not necessarily the same or their direction is not necessarily the same as the other partner and no one notices until it is a problem...anytime you have a board like this one, conflicts and disagreements are due to arise." This is further illustrated by Participant #8, "…I think that multilevel boards are vital…I would just encourage anybody who is thinking of doing those kind of things to do it, but also to understand the pitfalls when you have partnerships. They are more difficult to work with, but more rewarding in the end." Implicit in the statement "understand the pitfalls" is the participant's view that multi level partnerships increase both the reward and the risk. The more complex and deeper the partnership, the greater the need for compromise and clear communication leading to challenges that emerge in a variety of ways.

The ability to overcome cultural challenges is illustrated by the OERI study (1996), which found that a shared vision and deep commitment among partners could overcome weaknesses in program design and implementation. I believe that participants in both cases demonstrated a shared vision and deep commitment along with a willingness to make sacrifices. Participant #10 illustrates, “we have a governance team as a board…and make quality policy decisions, give solid direction to the organization with an understanding that all of our efforts are to benefit the children in our community.” I believe that this statement of “an understanding that all our efforts are to benefit the children in our community” is very applicable to the sacrifices and compromises that are often made in family situations and that the participants understood the expectation that they must commit to this behavioral expectation. Averbak’s (1988) survey showed that the most successful strategy to ensure successful collaboration was direct face-to-face meetings supporting the clan culture as optimum for effective collaborations. The clan culture and its relevance to this study can be seen in the following paragraph.

Disparate cultures emerged as key components in collaboration further illustrating the family metaphor by describing it as a “clan.” Obenchain (2002) reports that the majority of higher education institutions reported a “clan” type dominant culture. In their model of *Organizational Culture Types,* Deshpande, Farley, and Webster (1993) describe the clan type as having attributes of cohesiveness, participation, and teamwork leaving a hope that collaborations within education can be viewed as part of a clan culture. They further suggest that clans bond through loyalty and tradition and place emphases on developing human resources and commitment. Participant #9 illustrates this value placed on human resources, "...The team sense is how do you work together to allow the opportunity to understand the other members of the team...to bring issues forward while remaining sensitive and discussing them without becoming personal..." The clan culture is common in the literature, but the term "clan" is often synonymous in this study with terms like "family" or "partnership" although the behaviors described are similar regardless of the terminology used to classify participant activities or feelings. Examples of participant willingness to commit to the clan or familial type partnership are presented by Participant #3, "...the new group grew so much together...what we were talking about is education. What we felt was the most important things for education and for the future of our community and what our responsibilities were to the community..." Participant #9 speaks of building relations as an investment that is ultimately worth the effort,"...you have to build relationships...there is a lot of work that goes into it...ultimately the situation is so much better that it is absolutely worth every once that you put into it...it is going to be beneficial for people." The realization of a longer term commitment to building relationships in order for your efforts to "benefit the people" is, in my onion, a clear example of the collaborators willingness to make sacrifices and compromises for the greater good. However, these efforts do not come freely or without some cost to participants as they cited challenges with communication as significant hurdle.

I believe that the family environment consistently referred to by participants in this study is consistent with the clan culture described above. Participants across both cases exhibited cohesiveness and teamwork and in addition put significant value on human resources. Participants were willing to make commitments consistent with those described in the clan culture often using the term family as a descriptor.

Findings Not Consistent With the Literature

Community

Community, regardless of how it was defined, was a significant element of the findings in both cases but was not as evident in the review of literature. Participants defined community in the literal sense using geography and population density as quantitative measures and in the perceptual sense defining community in ways such as students, business, workforce development, and family. The literature was replete with discussions on collaboration and how it related to certain behaviors citing partnership with community and business as a critical aspect of collaborative efforts. However, I found it noteworthy that the literature generally does not refer to community in the detailed personal manner that participants did, and it seldom referenced activities in the same community framework that was typically used by participants. Neither community nor students appeared as a common part of the collaborative landscape in the literature; yet, they were both commonly cited terms used by participants.

Participants provided quotes referencing community in ways such as "…it can be difficult for board members and community to understand," "it creates a strong unified program for a community…," "I have a feeling that we are all part of the community," and "it is incredibly important that we understand our role as supporting the sense of community…" It was clear that participants at both sites placed great importance on the concept of community. Community was interchanged with family and sometimes viewed as an extension of family referred to as "family community" or "our commitment to community and family" very consistently across participant comments. Support for family and, or family values, was often a motivational focus for participants to initially engage in public service and a guiding value when they were making decisions on their respective governing boards. The connection between community and family is illustrated by Participant #3, "…my husband and I place a very high priority on community service and we expect the same kind of behavior from our children. It is a family value for us…" Participant #9 expands the family aspect, "…board participation has a community element, and by that also I'm sure a family element…the community is the most essential core belief that I carry." Referring to community service as a "family value" and placing it as the "most essential core belief that I carry" illustrates the significant degree of personal and family importance that was placed on community service which appeared as a common value in both sites and a significant contributor to a divergence from the literature in regard to community as a part of collaboration. The literature did reference on occasion interfacing with community and partnerships as a metaphor for marriage, but it stopped well short of the degree to which participants utilized the construct of community. No single aspect of the study was as prominent in the minds of participants as was the construct of community.

I believe that part of the disparity that exists between the literature and the comments from participants in regard to how they viewed and defined community lies in the fact that studies generally found in the literature were usually not centered in one physical location or focused on one community or partnership per se. Research efforts more commonly focused on collaborative constructs or types of partnerships in a broader manner, seldom taking an intimate journey into the perceptions of a small group of participants who reside in the world that is being studied. When the literature did focus on a single coalition or partnership the data typically did not focus on the feelings of participants on governing boards and how their daily experiences affected their interactions and the partnership as a whole.

I believe an additional factor regarding the community focus of participants lies with the fact that they all lived and worked in the communities that were being studied and in each of those cases only one school district and one college were present. This "density of experience" was a key factor in this study and a dynamic that is not often seen in the literature. These factors when combined with a strong sense of community pride and dedication exhibited by participants contributed to the motivators that were most often cited as primary reasons for participation on the part of the participants. Participants most often cited commitment to community and family values as primary reasons for their participation in governance activities.

Geography entered into the logic of participants, in my opinion, because both communities were located in sparsely populated states in a relatively remote part of the Western United States. I was able to ascertain from casual conversation and observation of participants that they viewed their region of residence as a place where neighbors often know one another and a helping hand is typically the mode of the day. Most participants were multi-generational residents and had extended family living in and around the "community." Participants consistently viewed their own relationship with the community as very personal using terms like "these people are like family to me," "my husband thinks I am taking these students on to raise," and "my connection with the board gives me an anchor in the community." Participants' expressions of family related dynamics and analogies were not limited to any specific area of questioning. Regardless of the nature of the question one could observe the familial thread just as in this response from participant #5 responding to a question about finances "…sometimes I feel like I am handing out allowances to my children. They don't always understand why the money has to be distributed the way it is." I believe this personal feeling is a factor in why the participants connected with their communities as if they were connecting with family members.

There was a strong consistency among participants regarding their involvement in other community related activities and other governing boards as illustrated by the comments from Participant #5 "…I had been actively involved in several other non-profit boards before running for the College board." Participant #4 illustrates further, "…I'm on two other (boards) in the community," as does participant #10, "…because of my family's background we have always been civic minded…I have served on numerous community and business boards." This cross-community involvement in other board related activities shows the degree to which these participants were involved in their respective "community families" and further illustrates the depth of their commitment. Participants believed that their level of interaction in other boards and across the community in general contributed positively to their effectiveness as board members. Participant #10 illustrates "…especially in a community like this one there is a lot of interaction between board members…you run into all your board members at some social function, or some other function outside of this formal setting…" and Participant #2 agrees, "… people in larger communities don't know each other as well…this community is very close knit. There are a lot of people sitting around the room that were there at the meeting last night who have known each other in many capacities over the years. We see each other out at dinner and in many other ways." Participants feel that because they interact in numerous ways outside of the boardroom and that they have known each other's families and business activities "for years" that this gives them a greater comfort level in board interactions and keener insight into the needs of the community. The factors of geography, longevity in the community, population density of the community, cross community social interaction, and family history of community service, all contribute to the manner in which participants define and digest their participation in board governance activities. The cumulative effect of these factors creates a personal relationship between community, business, and educational governance which by its nature contributes to the "divergence" from the literature in this study.

Business as Key Aspect of Community. I found it interesting to note that participants delineated only one clear facet of community. That facet was identified in both sites as the "business community." Business community was virtually the only way in which participants labeled any distinct facet of community. I referenced earlier that participants considered students and community to be interchangeable and that many participants considered community to an extension of their own families, but no participants labeled or defined community in any way other than as "business community." Participant #9 provides an excellent illustration of the importance board members placed on the business community, "...the business community was essential to the genesis of this organization...the business community has been there from day one; what we do here is driven by...the needs of the business community." Participant #10 agrees, "...we want a skilled, well equipped work force...that takes cooperation between the community, especially the business community and education in general."

Participants felt strongly that the creation of the BOCES provided a vehicle that provided for broad input and participation by the business sector. In the following comment Participant #5 offers her perspective on the strengths of the organization, "the strongest attribute of our program is the business community." Participant #1 illustrates how the governing board attempts to gather information from the community, "We try to get information from the community in terms of what programs we want to sponsor, what is going to be beneficial to the community...we've met with businesses to talk about what they needed." Participants consistently referenced listening to business, meeting with business, acknowledged business contributions, and linked the business community to their own organization in almost everything that was done.

I anticipated that participants might define other aspects of community recognizing community as culture, health care, retail, outdoor recreation, participation in the arts, political centric, or environmental, but no such definition or illustration was forthcoming. The Southern site had as its major charge the delivery of technical education and by statute had business representation on the governing board. It stands to reason that there would be a very strong "business" presence in that site. However, the Northern site was not restricted in its focus, and they had no specific requirements regarding the business community in any of its activities; yet, the verbiage and the labels were very similar across the data.

Distinction across the Cases. When the two cases are analyzed from the perspective of their daily activities, the complexity of their legal charge, the size and scope of their budgets and their responsibility for policy management, there appears to be little similarity between the two cases. The largest single connection lies in the existence of the BOCES itself. Both cases operate under a BOCES formed between K-12 and higher education thereby creating a partnership and a governance board. The BOCES governance board in both cases is comprised from the membership of the two primary boards, and in this regard the two partnerships are very similar. They are also similar from the perspective of the communities they serve and many of the common demographics between the two sites, which have been discussed previously. The key discussion here lies in how different the responsibilities are for the two organizations, but how similarly they are in philosophy.

With over 15 years of experience in educational administration I expected to see very different issues emerge from the two sites. I anticipated that their philosophies, their challenges, and their concerns would have different motivators, different causality, and therefore would look very different in almost every way. My own biases and understanding of the galvanizing challenges that have beset the Southern partnership caused me to view the responsibilities of the Northern partnerships as being less challenging and therefore less vulnerable to conflict and consternation. I would like to frame this first from the perspective of budget.

Based upon study of literature, observation, and personal experience, I am of the opinion that the management of financial matters is one of the single most challenging issues currently facing education. The two cases studied here are no different in regard to challenging needs and inadequate resources. Partners in both cases were sensitive to fiscal issues offering comments and insight regarding their understanding of financial matters. This level of understanding is illustrated by the following statement from Participant *#3,* "…it's all public money, half for the school system and half for the college…they have to have a cooperative emphasis together to make the program go."

And a similar affirming statement from Participant #6, " …no matter what we do, the college and the school district both need to know that their investment in the partnership is serving their needs…" In addition, the following two examples illustrate awareness of the fiscal synergy that is occurring through the partnership, Participant #10, "…in today's fiscal environment it is very important where one entity couldn't provide a program, or the other entity couldn't provide a program, you consolidate resources and you can provide an adequate program for both postsecondary and secondary students, that neither could do alone." Northern Participant #2 agrees, "…we can do so many things through the BOCES that neither the school district or the college can do alone…" The money for the Northern partnership comes to the governing board through an annual property assessment based on tax formulas. It is designed to generate exactly the same amount of money from each of the two partners resulting in a 50/50 contribution. The fact that neither partner is forced to reallocate or "remove funds" from their limited budgets to support the Northern BOCES partnership seemed like a significant issue to me. In managing the Southern BOCES I have faced significant turmoil during budget cycles with declining resources, living with partners making statements such as "..if we pay you what you are asking, we have to cut three teachers at the high school…" and "..we can't afford the kind of equipment you have here, why should we pay for what we can't afford." Even though the generation of the budget was not a concern for board members at the Northern site, they were very vested in how money was spent and took just as much fiduciary responsibility as did the Southern partners. After careful scrutiny of the data, I have come to the conclusion that my biases were incorrect in regard to how board members and board culture might be affected by the differences in the responsibilities of the two boards. While the generation of the budget, the scope of responsibilities, and the daily activities of the two organizations are very different, the hearts and minds of the participants appeared to be very similar.

Summary

Common elements consistently appearing in the literature regarding partnerships, collaboration, and joint efforts in education are consistent with the findings in this study. The data revealed similar tendencies and levels of cooperation between the two cases that are consistent with what the literature identifies as common practices. Leadership, trust, flexibility, business, and economic factors present issues that can enhance or diminish a collaborative effort. I believe that participants in this study have shown they value community service and through that commitment to community service they further believe that multi level governing boards can collaborate to enhance educational options for a community. This study supports the idea that educational entities can create synergy and stretch limited resources as long as people are willing to support an environment where no one person or entity dominates decision making. This, like many theories in leadership, is deceptively simple in construct, but more challenging in implementation.

The degree to which participants embraced and incorporated "community" in this study was revealing and at times somewhat divergent from the literature. Participants clearly value community and family, often seeing little difference in the two, working diligently to create a climate that is most likely to sustain partnerships and serve the community needs. This study confirms the perspective that effective collaboration is dependent upon the participants' willingness to compromise and seek value beyond their own intrinsic needs.

The degree to which the two cases were similar and ways in which they differed create an interesting set of questions that could be used to generate future research. The participants in this study clearly believe that the population density of their respective communities played a significant role in affecting how the board operates and communicates. Participants believe that people in a small town know each other more intimately and that because of this perceived knowledge they have a better understanding of what is best for the community. It might be of some interest to compare participants perspectives in small communities as contrasted with those in more urban settings in an effort to compare and contrast how board members define community and if there is a relationship between the size of a community and how the members of those communities view their own responsibility to community service. It is noteworthy that the nearly homogeneous makeup of the board members themselves could be viewed as a negative. In both sites 100% of board members came from a socioeconomic perspective that was very consistent. A key question worthy of further study would be to ask if "social class itself is the key unifying concept rather than community?" Is there a possible negative to one group running everything?

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