WHOLE SCHOOLING RESEARCH PROJECT

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

As we began this study, our fundamental hypothesis was that practices associated with the Five Principles of Whole Schooling -- inclusive education, authentic and constructivist teaching, support for teachers and students, and school restructuring are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The following research question regarding this relationship was articulated in the original research proposal:

> What is the relationship among effective and successful inclusion, effective curriculum and instructional practices, building of community and support, school improvement and restructuring efforts, and increased learning of children with and without disabilities?

To this we added additional related questions:

1. To what degree are inclusive schooling, authentic curriculum, and related school reform practices (identified in the "whole schooling" and other related models) being implemented in selected schools in Wisconsin and Michigan? How do these practices influence and relate to one another?

2. In a representative sample of schools, what is the interplay between inclusion, supports, teaching practices, and other aspects of school reform practices and successful supports for teachers and outcomes for students?

3. What is happening in school settings that are identified as having successful inclusion. What do the exemplary models look like with regard to curriculum, instructional strategies, supports, adaptation, levels of engagement, etc? What are the student outcomes in such settings?

4. What are the dynamics of change and school improvement in urban and rural schools that have committed to school reform in which inclusive education is a central component.

Student with the label of cognitive impairment writing in his daily journal in a multi-level teaching class.

Research Hypotheses

We hypothesized that the degree to which a set of practices relating to one of the Whole Schooling principles is in place influences the degree to which practices relating to other principles occur. Authentic, multi-level learning, we believed, promotes and supports effective inclusive education. We expected to find more implementation of inclusive education, broadly defined, in schools in which authentic instructional practices were used, higher satisfaction rates on the part of teachers, parents, and students, and higher levels of achievement on the part of all students.

Conversely, we thought that quality implementation of inclusive education should support effective, authentic learning practices. We expected that where the highest quality of inclusive education were being implemented we would find high quality and diverse uses of authentic instructional practices. When inclusive education for students with disabilities, authentic curriculum, and other diverse teaching practices were implemented together, outcomes for students in the areas listed above *and* those more narrow skills being assessed by typical state examinations would be higher.

Similarly, we expected to find that support for teachers and such effective instructional practices play an interactive role. However, we did not believe that support for teachers could compensate for poor teaching practices. We further anticipated that when schools commit to school reform with inclusive education as a central component, but where the focus is on improving education for all children, teachers and the school community will embrace inclusive education. Ultimately the measured and perceived achievement of children and satisfaction with the school would increase substantially. We did expect to find areas of substantial conflict regarding these principles and struggle regarding how they become part of the practice of the school. We expected to find that the capacity of schools to struggle through these issues and to obtain support and assistance themselves, would determine their effectiveness in improving education for all children and their continued commitment to inclusive education.

The anticipated interaction between inclusive education and practices associated with the other four principles of Whole Schooling is graphically represented in the figure below. These are highly complex interactions that raise critical questions. Taken together, they address the entire culture of a school. In the course of the project, as we have engaged these questions, struggling to find answers, we have become increasingly aware of the impact of political dynamics and the interrelationships with race and class in all the schools we studied.
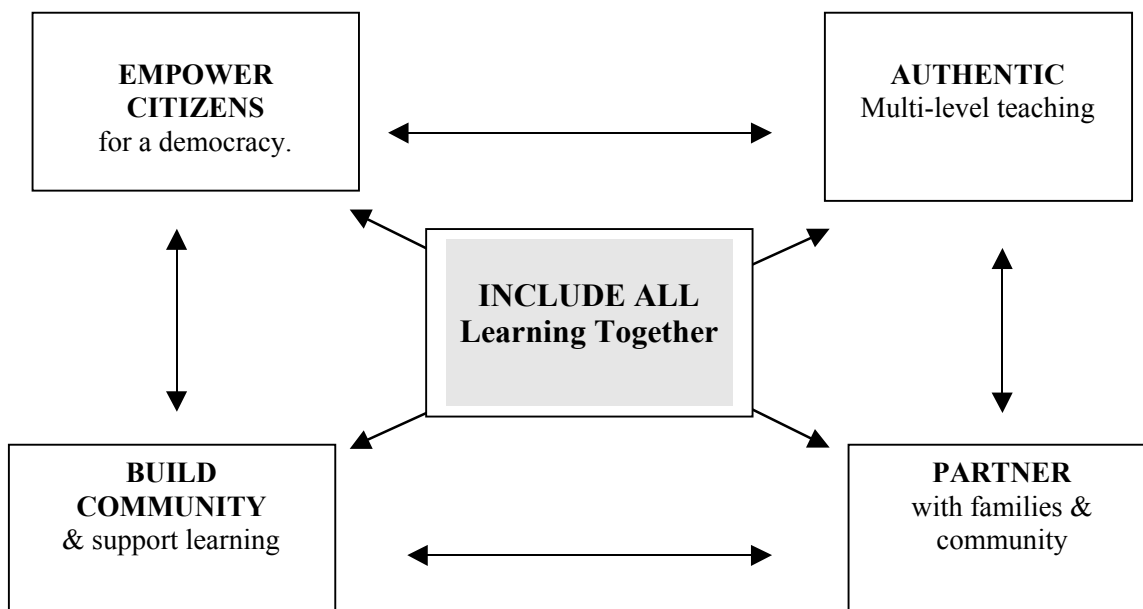
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│    CITIZENS     │ ◄──────────────►   │ Multi-level     │
│  for a democracy.│                    │   teaching      │
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         │              │ INCLUDE ALL  │         │
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│ & support learning│                    │   community     │
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Table II-1: The Five Principles of Whole Schooling

Data Collection

This project involved two teams of researchers in two states, Michigan and Wisconsin. Our primary source of data in both states was intensive involvement in the lives of seven schools in Michigan and either in Wisconsin. Other schools were involved in less intensive but important ways. Information sources included the following:

- Intensive involvement in "project schools" (7 in Michigan and 8 in Wisconsin): (a) classroom observations; (b) focus and dialogue groups with educators and parents; and (c) interviews with educators and parents.
- Telephone interviews with 35 schools and site visits with 25 schools in each state as part of the selection process for schools for intensive study.
- 250 observations in the Detroit Metropolitan area of diverse schools engaged in various forms of inclusion and mainstreaming.
- Participant observer documentation of school reform efforts associated with the five principle of Whole Schooling taking place at three schools on Detroit's east side.

Below, we discuss the systematic process we used to select schools for intensive study and discuss briefly other forms of data collection.

Selection of exemplary schools through interviews and site visits.

We used a comprehensive, systematic process in selecting schools for intensive observations in this study. We developed two tools to assist us in identifying exemplary schools. First, a simple *Nomination Form* was developed so that schools might nominate themselves as being

exemplary schools based on the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. Additionally, we developed a *Self-Assessment Tool* by which schools might assess their degree of implementation of specific Whole Schooling practices (see Appendix D-1 and D-2).

We sent a letter and nomination form to all building principals, superintendents, and special education directors of public schools in Michigan and to all building principals and superintendents in Wisconsin. In these letters, we invited nominations of schools for participation in the Whole Schooling Research Project based on their exemplary implementation of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. In addition to the nomination form, we included a description of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling, an Information Sheet regarding the project, and a return envelope.

Principal of Sunset Lake Elementary School

We received 35 nominations from schools throughout each states. Upon receipt of a school's nomination, the school was sent another letter requesting that they complete the Self-Assessment Tool. Options were given regarding how this might be done – by an individual principal, by a team working together, or by multiple staff members separately. The returned Self-Assessment Tools were studied by each of the respective state research teams in preparation for telephone interviews with school staff.

The teams in each state conducted conference call *telephone interviews* with staff in each school that returned a Self-Assessment Tool. The purpose of these interviews was expansion of information we had about the school and gauging the interactive style of each group. The Wisconsin team divided their schools between the researchers so that individual research members made individual calls and site visits. In Michigan, telephone interviews were conducted by the research team on a speaker phone. We asked each school interviewee to describe the situation at their school:

- The local community, the school, numbers of students.
- Background of the principal of the school and other staff if they participated.
- The types of students with disabilities were included in the school, the degree to which some students were referred to segregated programs.
- The degree of inclusion, whether pull-out instruction or separate classes were utilized.
- The school's approach to literacy instruction – eg. Phonics, whole language.
- The approach to dealing with behavioral challenges utilized.
- Partnerships with parents and the community.
- The reason the school was interested in participating in the research project.

We kept narrative records of these conversations and utilized these and other information received from the school to disqualify some schools and select others for site visits. These

records have also provided valuable sources of data as the project has progressed. We disqualified 10 schools out of this process for the following reasons:

- *The school was not inclusive*. We were surprised that some schools had all students with disabilities in self-contained special education classes.
- *The school did not have exemplary practices associated with other Whole Schooling principles*. For example, the principal of one school was proud of the use of punitive, rigid enforcement of rules of conduct including searches by local police. This approach is inompatible with the principles concerning building community and democracy.

Twenty-five schools were selected for site visits. The Michigan staff conducted site visits through the middle of April of Year One. Because of the locations of the schools, several requiring over-night lodging, it was impossible for all four Michigan rearchers to visit all schools. However, the team scheduled visits so that at least two researchers could be present. At ten of the local schools, three researchers were able partipate in the site visit. In Wisconsin, individual researchers visited schools alone.

Site visits involved approximately one-half day engaged in the an interview with the principal, observations in classrooms the school considered "inclusive", and discussions with teachers and staff. Each site visit team documented its observations in reports that described what was seen and heard.

Following the completion of the site visits, teams in both states began the process of narrowing down the list of schools to be selected for intensive study. The Wisconsin team rated each school based on their implementation of the five principles of Whole Schooling, developing a ranking of schools. Researchers then compared their relative rankings and made selection decisions with the input and guidance of their Advisory Committee.

The Michigan team carefully considered schools based on the following criteria: degree of implementation of inclusion and the other principles and practices of whole schooling; the racial, socio-economic, and other demographic characteristics of the schools and communities in which they were located; the dynamics of the school district related to movement towards inclusion; and the degree of comfort, connection, and acceptance felt from school staff. We grappled with whether our research would be more informative with a greater number of schools, representing a wider geographic area, or whether fewer schools would allow us to immerse ourselves in greater depth in each school. Ultimately, we realized that there was so much to see and understand about the cultures in every single school, that we wondered at times whether we spread ourselves too thin in taking on the seven schools that selected.

Originally we thought that the Wisconsin team would find schools in rural areas, and the Michigan team would select schools from urban areas. In reality, each state received nominations from both rural and urban areas. In addition to the

substantive criteria, logistical considerations had to be considered. As mentioned, several of the schools involved a day's drive from the researchers' homes. On the Michigan team, there were also four researchers: three full-time faculty members and one research assistant, a position that would be held by different students year to year. The number of schools selected had to be limited to a number we could comfortably visit given our other responsibilities. The original plan called for selecting six schools for intensive study with two "runners-up" in the case of drop-outs,. This would permit two researchers to be assigned in staggered fashion to each of the schools. Still, we found it very difficult to narrow down our selection to six schools. Therefore, in both states, we decided to increase the number of schools intensively studied, from 6 to 7. In both situations, we felt that we have much to gain from these additional schools.

The Wisconsin staff selected schools by mid-March of Year One. They began observations and data collection in April which allowed more than a month of data collection prior to the summer break. In Michigan, team members met with the principal and staff at each school to discuss logistics and conducted some informal observations at the end of Year One. Data collection in these schools began in earnest in August of 1999, the beginning of Year Two. The following schools were selected for in-depth study in both states.[1]

Michigan
Armstrong Primary School (Rural)
Drummond High School (Suburban)
Evergreen Elementary School (Rural)
Hamilton Elementary School (Suburban)
Meadowview Elementary School (Semi-urban)
Rogers High School (Suburban)
Westover Elementary School (Rural)

Wisconsin.
Colby Middle School (Rural)
Frank Elementary School (Urban)
Gilman Elementary School (Rural)
Lily Elementary School (Rural)
Lincoln Elementary School (Suburban)
Verona Area Senior High School Walker International Middle School (Urban)
Washington Elementary School (Rural)
(Suburban)

Exemplary school observations in selected classrooms.

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[1] We have coded the names of the Michigan schools, as well as of individuals mentioned elsewhere in the report, to maintain confidentiality.

In each school in the study, a small number of teachers, four in most cases, were selected on which to focus our observations. However, we received permission letters to observe in all classes in the schools. In Michigan, while we spent more time with these focus teachers, we would randomly visit other classes throughout the school. We were seeking to understand the overall culture of the school as well as practices within specific classrooms. We conducted intensive observations for two years in the seven schools identified as having exemplary inclusive education as well as practices associated with the other principals of Whole Schooling.

In each state we established a schedule by which schools were visited every one to two weeks for three or four hours each time. In each school, researchers identified four classes which were 'focus classes'. Data was collected via the following methods:

1. Observations of classroom practice (using laptops to take detailed observational notes and digital cameras and video-cameras to record pictorial data);
2. Notes taken during interviews with teachers, administrators, and parents; and
3. Notes taken during focus groups with staff and parents.

In Michigan, formal data collection in project schools began in the Fall of 1999. Each team conducted more than 200 observations in schools. The Michigan Team conducted 230 observations generating over 1,000 single spaced pages of reports, took 310 photographs, and recorded 52 hours of videotape. The Wisconsin staff selected schools by mid-March of 1999 and began observations and data collection in April of 1999, involving some 146 observations.

Focus and dialogue groups.

In our original plans, we anticipated having periodic focus groups with both teachers and parents. For complex logistical reasons, such focus groups did not systematically occur in all schools. However, in several schools we did hold focus groups related to inclusive education and topics that included authentic multi-level teaching. In several schools we held focus groups on particular topics, as part of the school improvement planning or professional development efforts within the school. In Michigan , during the last year of the project numerous professional development sessions were held that provided additional opportunities to listen to and engage in staff dialogue. Topics related particularly to authentic multi-level instruction, use of support staff, building community, heterogeneous placement, and other grouping issues.

Interviews with administrators, teachers, and parents.

In each school, we had ongoing conversations with teachers, parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, and students. In some cases, these were set as formal interviews; in others, such interactions were informal conversations. The Wisconsin team was particularly active in documenting formal interviews with educators and parents. In Michigan, we also systematically collected and used information from other related sources. **Interviews and observations in 35 schools**.

In a process described below, we conducted telephone interviews of 35 schools and half-day site visits of 25 schools in each state. In Michigan we documented both interviews and site visits and used this information as data for analysis in exploring our hypotheses.

Observations of randomly selected schools in the Detroit Metropolitan area.

Michael Peterson required that students in classes on inclusive education conduct observations and interviews in schools engaging in some version of inclusive education in the Detroit Metropolitan area. Over the course of the project, some 250 such observations were conducted and reports generated. We used this information as another data source in exploring the hypotheses in the project. While selection was not random in the statistical sense, it was not systematically controlled and depended on numerous extraneous factors, such as proximity to the students' homes, personal connections with school staff, and so forth.

Whole Schooling school renewal projects.

As the project progressed, parallel research and demonstration projects were underway in both states that allowed us to gather additional information connected with this study. Two

Principal greets gathering of 300 parents from 3 schools to a dialogue on how the schools might be improved.

project researchers in Michigan worked with a cluster of three schools on Detroit's east side to formulate and begin implementation of a plan for comprehensive school improvement based on the Whole Schooling principles. These schools had many challenges but had committed to use of the Whole Schooling framework to guide their school improvement efforts. Similarly, in Wisconsin, one school, with support from a Wisconsin researcher, used the Whole Schooling framework to obtain funding for a school reform effort. Throughout the last year of the project, Michael Peterson worked with a school on the southwest side of Detroit helping to support that school's effort to initiate inclusive education based in part on the principles of Whole Schooling. Data gathered through participant observations in these schools also has added to our understanding and analysis.

Another team member implemented a service learning project with students in a Wayne State University art therapy program in one of the project elementary schools. Yet another team member has been very active in two controversial areas: promoting resistance to the use of standardized tests across the country and in Michigan, and studying the dynamics of the abolition of the elected school board of the Detroit Public Schools by the Governor of Michigan, and the installation of a school board appointed by Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer. The entire team was involved in organizing two conferences centered around the Whole Schooling principles that brought together school teams, national experts, and other interested parents and educators. During the last year of the study, five of the seven schools came together to develop a Michigan Leadership Network for Inclusive Schooling. Finally, one of the Michigan team members is also the parent of a student with significant disabilities who is working toward full inclusion of her son in an elementary school not formally connected with the project. Documentation of her son's story is also a source of data for this study.

Research Team Interactions

This study was conceptualized as a joint effort to study schools in Michigan and Wisconsin using the same processes and based on the same research questions. We were successful in this to some degree. However, the complexity of data collection and analysis, along with differing dynamics in our two states, has forced us to work separately as well. Our final research reports represent both sharing of information and dialogue across the two states and parallel with individual efforts and analysis by each team.

We sought to utilize several processes to work as a team across our two states that included the following:

- We conducted conference calls during the first year and a half of the project of the total teams along with Dr. Rick Reardon, a specialist in qualitative research who was retained to provide us assistance in shaping the project.
- Local teams met every two to four weeks throughout the project to share observations, data collection methods, and discuss interpretations of what we were seeing.
- All team members emailed copies of observational reports to all other members of their local team.

Within and across state team dialogues, our discussions were rich and lively. We were aware that action research methods are often described in terms of cycles and spirals of consecutive steps including formulation of a problem, gathering and analysis of data on the problem, planning improvements based on the data, execution of the plans, monitoring, reflection on the outcomes, and reformulation of the problem. We aimed to engage in careful data collection and analysis, keeping in perspective the importance of a strict sequence of steps.

At best, learning and acting are reciprocal, mutually reinforcing processes. In many ways, this project has involved such a reciprocal process, demonstrating action research in the truest sense. We have gathered and attempted to sort through, analyze, and understand information from a variety of sources. Most centrally, we spent substantial amounts of time in schools, typically with two researchers assigned to each school. In these observations, we focused on the classrooms of selected teachers, but also sought to develop an understanding and sense of the culture of the entire school, seeing how the Five Principles of Whole Schooling, as we have

articulated an understood them, interacted with respect to inclusion of students with disabilities. The process by which we have analyzed information to develop findings and understandings has been iterative. On the one hand, we have sought to understand each school in which we have been observing, to develop a sense of the story of the school, its culture, dynamics of change in which it is imbedded. We have developed collegial relationships with teachers, administrators, and other school staff. On the other hand, those very relationships, together with our work on understanding the life of each classroom and school, often inviting us to become part of the very change processes we were studying.

Our two teams took somewhat different philosophical approaches to our involvement in the schools and to the roles of researchers within the schools. The Wisconsin team took what we will call an 'ethnographic' approach, seeing their roles as impartial observers recording what they see and attempting to identify patterns in those records. The Michigan team took a the approach generally described as "action research", becoming actively involved in the very processes being studied. Indeed, the difference in approaches itself became topic of considerable discussion, at least within the Michigan team.

Discussion about what we were seeing became a source of data in the project. We wrote numerous analysis memoranda to one another, in addition to reporting and discussing our observations in team meetings. In particular, how differing researchers considered our relationship to change dynamics in the school has provided rich perspectives. For example,. Rich Gibson explained that "this project is about change. Either research helps an entity change in a direction or, by the nature of passivity, promotes status quo and conservative resistance to change or change towards a non-progressive direction." Other researchers on the team disagreed indicating that "research should not be about change but about learning and watching. We don't know how a school should change. We shouldn't try to make them". School personnel in interviews and site visits, however, invited the research team into their schools reflecting the following sentiment: "We want you here to help us learn, be better, improve." They asked that project staff give them feedback, ask hard questions, connect them with resources, and otherwise support change. These differences resulted in spirited conversation and dialogue that has assisted in sharpening the understandings and clarity of each research team. Our collaboration engaging these two different project perspectives is an important part of the research project itself and yielded metacognitive analysis as a part of the project data set.

Data Analysis

We have utilized several analysis strategies that have served to build on and interact with one another.

Informant dialogue. Ongoing dialogue, interviews, and informal conversation were used to explore and verify emerging hypotheses emerging from the data collection processes described above. Together these iterative processes have aided in building an understanding of practices and issues from the ground up.

Interpretive dialogues. Throughout the life of the project, the Michigan team held meetings every two weeks and the Wisconsin team also met periodically. For the first year we conducted telephone conversations once per month between the teams in both states; in the last two years we met twice per year for several hours. During team meetings we discussed our experiences

regarding observations, questions that had arisen, and our interpretations of what we were seeing. These meetings provided team support for the research process and deepened understandings of issues and findings.

Memo writing. Beginning in the early part of Year Two, we began writing interpretive memos to summarize key findings and issues. These memos were shared via online communication with all team members and helped to focus conversation in face to face interpretive dialogues. These memos helped to clarify issues and shape next steps in the research process.

Thematic analysis. We reviewed the observation notes and videotapes, coding both. The Michigan team used the program Q.S.R. NUDist to assist in this process while the Wisconsin team did such coding by hand. In both cases, we used the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as a beginning framework upon which we built as coding schemes expanded.

The research teams also utilized several interacting strategies to enhance the **reliability and validity** and multiple interpretive perspectives on the information we obtained.

Multiple eyes. In each school, two researchers were assigned. In some cases, this became problematic to implement. However, ultimately all schools were observed by 3-4 researchers who shared perspectives and information. Dialogue across the Michigan and Wisconsin teams helped to enhance respective ways of seeing the schools. Analysis of audio and video tapes of school observations provided opportunities to review observations multiple times by several parties to increase the reliability and validity of interpretation.

Dialogues and forums. As we describe below, during the course of the project, staff were

involved in numerous forums that provided opportunity for sharing of initial findings and engage in dialogue with staff of the project schools as well as other experts. We wrote publications, held forums in schools, organized three local and two national conferences, made numerous presentations in state and national conferences, taught courses in which our findings were shared with current and prospective teachers, and developed publications describing initial findings and analysis.

Member checks were also used to add validity to the findings. Final narrative reports on each school in Wisconsin were read by at least one school-based member in order to verify the accuracy of content and increase the validity of the school-based findings. In Michigan such member checks were more informal and verbal.

In our analysis of project results, we have engaged in looking at data from several different perspectives, gradually producing reports and information drawing from these. These perspectives include the following:

1. **School change: Process and outcome.** We sought to analyze the stories of each school and their dynamic of change, showing the interaction of various practices with other complex demographic variables.

2. **Analysis of Practices for Inclusive Schooling.** For each of the Five Principles of Whole Schooling we conducted an analysis that focused on the following:

    - **Options in practices within and across schools.** Analysis of ways in which practices are being implemented in schools using the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as an organizing framework including samplings of best observed practices.
    - **Impacts of practices.** Analysis of when, why, where, and how differing practices are used, the dynamics influencing use.
    - **Interactions of practices.** Analysis and description of the way we observed one set of practices interacting with and impacting on other practices.
    - **Towards guidelines for excellence.** Analysis of lessons based on best practices drawing guidelines.

Based on this process, we have developed a document that is organized in the following way. We first describe what we have called *school stories*: reasonably detailed descriptions of each school. We then have provided a cross-schools analysis chapter organized around each of the Whole Schooling principles. These include:

- Including all: practices and dynamics for inclusion.
- Democracy in the school and classroom: power and decision-making.
- Authentic multi-level instruction: Instructional practices supportive of inclusion.
- Community building and positive responses to behavioral challenges
- Support for learning: support structures and collaboration between support staff and general education teachers.

In the reports from each state, we both describe variations or options in practices we saw in the different schools and use our data to move towards the formulation of guidelines and examples of exemplary practice. We are continuing to conduct additional detailed analyses and anticipate additional subsequent publications based on our database.

Project sponsored conferences and institutes.

Michigan Whole Schooling Forum. In October of 1998, the project sponsored a Whole Schooling Forum in Detroit as a beginning event for the research project.

Whole Schooling Summer Institute. Both teams sponsored summer institutes to facilitate sharing and networking among the schools who nominated themselves for participation in this research study. In Wisconsin, a one-day conference of 200 people is being sponsored prior to the Annual Inclusion Conference. In Michigan, a 3 day event was sponsored as a collaborative event

of several entities – the Whole Schooling Research Project, College of Education of Wayne State University, Neighborhood Transition Project, Eastside Detroit Whole Schooling Cluster, and the Rouge Forum. This event brought together urban, suburban, and rural schools throughout Michigan and Ohio. Some 100 individuals attended and had opportunities to share and network. We drew national leaders and speakers related to inclusive education, whole language, critical pedagogy, and standardized testing.

Education Summit 2000. Building on this success, the Michigan team joined with the Rouge Forum and Whole Language Umbrella to sponsor a second conference June 26-28, 2000. The event drew 240 people from 4 countries and 18 states and involved 25 national leaders in whole language, inclusive education, critical pedagogy, social studies, alternative assessment, and other arenas. The conference provided an opportunity for sharing across urban, rural, and suburban schools, engagement with national leaders, and organizing a research and action agenda to help promote effective inclusive education in the context of other effective educational practices.

Wisconsin Whole Schooling Summer Institute. Six of the eight Whole Schooling Research schools attended the third annual Whole Schooling Research project Summer Institute in July, 2001. Wisconsin researchers presented the findings from each of the schools as well as the across-schools findings. This was well received by all. Whole Schooling teams built relationships and discussed ideas with each other throughout the day, and some made plans to visit each other's schools. School teams received some financial support for their travel, given that some school staff had to travel 5 hours one way to attend the Institute. The Whole Schooling Institute was immediately followed by the Eighth Annual Summer Leadership Institute on Inclusive Education. A few of the Whole Schooling Research School teams stayed for three days and attended both Institutes, and some of the whole schooling Research School teams also presented at the Inclusion Institute.

Publications related to project.

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Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. (July, 1999). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project: What have we learned thus far.* Whole Schooling Summer Institute. Wausau, WI.

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Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. (November, 1999). *Whole Schooling: Taking Inclusion to the Next Level***.** Wisconsin Association for Children with Behavior Disorders State Conference. Madison, WI.

Beloin, K. & DeHart, P. (December,1999). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Chicago, IL.

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Peterson, M. (June 22, 1999). *Building the whole school for inclusive, democratic communities.* Keynote address at the Whole Schooling Summer Institute, June 22-24, 1999. Detroit, Michigan.

Peterson, M. (November 16, 2001). *Key elements of building an inclusive school: Connecting students with disabilities to whole school reform.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps. Anaheim California.

Peterson, M. (February 28, 2001). *Whole schooling principles: Guiding school renewal towards inclusion and democracy.* Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling: Organizational meeting. Farmington Hills, Michigan.

Peterson, M., Chair, (December 8, 2000). *Strand: Whole School Reform & Inclusive Education.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Miami Beach, Florida.

Peterson, M. (December, 2002). *Inclusive Teaching: Reinventing the mainstreaming course.* To be presented at the annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Boston.

Peterson, M. and Beloin, K. (August, 1998). *Whole Schooling: Inclusive education and whole language.* Whole Language Umbrella. Charlotte, North Carolina.

Peterson, M. and Beloin, K. (December, 1998). *Teaching the inclusive teacher: Restructuring the mainstreaming course in teacher education.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Seattle, Washington.

Peterson, M., Beloin, K., Gibson, R., Feen, H., and DeHart, P. (December 8-11, 1999). *Linking Inclusive Education to School Reform: The Whole Schooling Consortium.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Chicago, Illinois.

Peterson, M., Beloin, K., Gibson, R., Feen, H., and DeHart, P. (December 8-11, 1999). *Rural-Urban Whole Schooling Research Project.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Chicago, Illinois.

Peterson, M., Beloin, K., Gibson, R., Mayfield, Y., Feen, H., DeHart, P., Arnold, A., Ferrito, D. . (December, 1998). *Whole Schooling: Linking Urban and Rural Educational Reform.* The

Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Seattle, Washington.

Peterson, M., Colliton, J., Mick, B. & Roberts-Levi, S. (July 27, 2001). *Building Inclusive Schools: We are all the thread and the needle. Freedom to teach, Freedom to learn.* Annual conference of the Whole Language Umbrella, Chicago, Illinois.

Peterson, M., DeHart, P., Beloin, K., Gibson, R., Goslee, A., DePew, J., and Ross, W. (November 19-21, 1999). *Teaching for Inclusion, Community & Democracy: The Whole Schooling Consortium.* National Council of Social Studies. Orlando, Florida.

Peterson, M. & Gibson, R. (August 4, 1999). *Whole Schooling: Literacy, Inclusion, and Democracy.* Whole Language Umbrella. Rochester, New York.

Peterson, M. and Tamor, L. (December, 2002). *Inclusion and School Reform: You can't have one without the other.* To be presented at the annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Boston.

Peteronson, M. and Tamor, L. (December, 2002*). Creating Inclusive School Renewal: Joining the struggle to create effective schools for all.* To be presented at the Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Boston.

Peterson, M., Tamor, L., Creech, N., and Sharon, Tanya. (July, 2002) Multi-Level Teaching: *Teaching students with vastly different academic, social-emotional, and sensory-physical abilities together well.* To be presented at the annual meeting of the Whole Language Umbrella, Washington, DC.

Peterson, M., Tamor, L., O'Brien, M., McKenzie, B., Johnson, K., and Sharon, T. (October, 2001). *Welcoming All Our Children Home: The Interdependence of Inclusive Education and Democracy.* Presented at the annual meeting of the Institute for Democracy in Eduction, Athens, OH.

Peterson, M., Widmer, S., Hittie, M., and Tamor, L. (November 16, 2001). *Building Inclusive Schools: We are all the thread and the needle.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Anaheim California.

Peterson, M., Widmer, S., Hittie, M., and Tamor, L. (November 16, 2001). *Inclusive Classrooms as Inclusive Communities.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Anaheim California.

Peterson, M., Ntiri, G., Freeman, M., and Murphy, S. (December, 1998). *Building community circles in Detroit.* Annual meeting of TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps). Washington.

Peterson, M. and Gibson, R. (October, 1998). *Whole schooling for a democratic society.* Whole Schooling Forum. Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

Peterson, M. and Murphy, S., and Ntiri, G. *Building community circles. A one and one half day training seminar.* June 25-26, 1998. Detroit, Michigan.

Ross, W., Gibson, R., Baber, C., Sleby, K., Peterson, M Pruyn, M., Douglas, R., Vinson, K. (November 19-21, 1999). *The Rouge Forum: Teaching for Democracy, Equality, and Social Justice.* National Council of Social Studies. Orlando, Florida.

Tamor, L. (July, 2002) *Whole Language: It's More Inclusive than You May Realize.* To be presented at the annual meeting of the Whole Language Umbrella, Washington, DC.

Tamor, L. and Peterson, M. (May, 2001). *Inclusive Education and Progressive Education: What is the Relationship?* Response to discussion at the Progressive Education Summit sponsored by the John Dewey Project on Progressive Education , Bloomington, IN

Recognition

College of Education, Wayne State University. Faculty involved in the project were invited to make a presentation at the Faculty Retreat of the Teacher Education Division of the College of Education on Whole Schooling and this research project to provide a framework for discussion of implications for improving the teacher education program.

Nomination for Urban Impact award. The College of Education has nominated the Whole Schooling Research Project and Consortium for the Urban Impact award of the Council of Great City Colleges of Education.

Project Impact

Hamilton Elementary School. This school was involved in many exemplary practices. However, we were interested in assisting staff in strengthening inclusion in their building. They had co-teaching in many classes for students with mild disabilities and were including several students with autism and one student with severe multiple disabilities. However, the school also housed three special education classes for students with "educable mental retardation" (EMI) and severe learning disabilities. In addition, other students with severe disabilities and moderate disabilities residing in the neighborhoods served by the school were sent to special education programs other schools. As part of ongoing data collection and school observations, we engaged in the following activities: (1) dialogue with the principal and staff ,continuing to query people regarding their opinions and suggesting options for consideration, (2) connecting the school with two other project schools to allow staff to visit each other's schools, (3) a full staff focus group to discuss inclusion and these issues, (4) a focus group and ongoing informal dialogue with support staff ; and (5) involving staff in a multi-school working group on 'multi-level teaching'.

Westover, Michigan. In this school, staff has had ongoing intensive and personal interaction and support with key leaders in the building who have supported inclusion and are interested in strengthening inclusion in the building. As part of the involvement of the project, the school narrowly passed an important school bond issue and a project staff member was invited to be co-grand marshall of a community parade. These interactions provided both opportunity for understanding school dynamics at a deep level as well as to support positive change in the school.

Urban Cluster. Three urban schools– Bonaventure, Hoover, and Hastings Elementary Schools –adopted the Five Principles of Whole Schooling as their framework for school reform. We linked these schools with two schools involved in the research project for site visits and expected ongoing supportive relationships as these schools pursued inclusion and other Whole Schooling practices.

Meadowview Elementary. Project staff were active in partnering with teachers we came to know in this school. On the border of Detroit, with a multi-racial, mixed socio-economic status student population, Meadowview experienced change from district administration that increased student

referrals for special education and eliminated some exemplary practices, most notably looping and multi-age instruction. We engaged in dialogue with school staff, made presentations, and facilitated problem-solving with the entire staff in meetings. Despite changes, Meadowview continues to provide a model program of inclusive education and many university students and staff from other schools visit this school to observe its practices.

Buckley Elementary In the Fall of 2000, project staff were invited to assist Buckley Elementary School in becoming Detroit's first inclusive school. Staff development sessions were held every other week during the school day and consultation held with the school principal and special education support teacher. Buckley has also joined with Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling and has connected with other schools.

Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling. In February of 2001, project staff and leadership of two schools invited twelve schools to form the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling as a program of the Whole Schooling Consortium. This effort was a direct outgrowth of the research project involving several project schools, including Hamilton and Armstrong Primary, who provided the initial leadership. The Network has developed a substantive strategic plan, held several conferences, and facilitated school to school interactions and visitations, all towards the goal of strengthening inclusive education in each school and promoting inclusive education in the state.

School administrator and parent – researcher dialogue at multi-level teaching forum sponsored by the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling.

Whole Schooling Consortium. We have invited others in the Whole Schooling Consortium to participate in the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling. We have shared initial learnings from this project and encouraged individuals to join the work of the Whole Schooling Consortium. Active engagement for collaborative work is underway from individuals and schools in the following states: Ohio, New York, Florida, California, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Washington, and New Mexico.

Project products published via the Whole Schooling Consortium

Harting, C. (2000). Authentic, multi-level teaching: Using best practices in inclusive teaching. Field study report. Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University, College of Education.
Peterson, M. (2000). Key elements in building inclusive schools. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.
Peterson, M. (2000). Whole schooling: Towards a guide for action planning. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.
Peterson, M., Beloin, K., and Gibson, R. (1998). Whole schooling: Education for a democratic society. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

Peterson, M., Feathers, K., and Beloin, K. (1998) Inclusive literacy learning: A whole language partnership. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

Peterson, M. and Tamor, L. (2001). Authentic, multi-level teaching. Detroit, Michigan: Renaissance Community Press, Wayne State University.

Other products.

    Web site: http://www.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/WSC.html This site on Whole Schooling includes information regarding the Whole Schooling Research Project and the Summer Institutes. We expect to add information about findings in schools as the project progresses. On this site, the Michigan Network for Inclusive Schooling has its own web presence: http://www.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/MI-NIS.html