EXCELLENCE LOVES COMPANY:

A Tipping Point Turnaround Strategy for California's Low-Performing Schools

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We are all, at heart, gradualists, our expectations set by the steady passage of time. The world of the Tipping Point is a place where the unexpected becomes expected, where radical change is more than possibility. It is—contrary to all our expectations—a certainty.

– Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*

INTRODUCTION

A Startling Comment

In January, 2001, I met for an afternoon with a group of twelve elementary school teachers from a large urban school district near Sacramento. I was preparing to conduct a statewide study of teacher retention and wanted to understand what motivated these teachers, who had volunteered to participate in this focus group, to remain in the classroom. I also wanted to know what kinds of incentives might get them to transfer from their successful, middle class school to any of the high-poverty, hard-to-staff schools in their district. My goal that afternoon was to hear comments that would help me construct the survey I planned to conduct with hundreds of other public school teachers in California. What I didn't know was that their comments would spark an idea that would become the core of a promising new strategy for California's low-performing schools.

This was a time when California had begun to experience a serious shortage of qualified teachers—a shortage due in part to substantial reductions in elementary school class size in 1999, but also due to increasing rates of teacher attrition, especially in schools with high concentrations of poor children. As an educator and researcher, I had come to believe that in order to solve the attrition problem, educators and policy makers would need to understand the reasons why so many teachers leave the profession, why many others stay, and the conditions under which those who stay would consider transferring to schools that are difficult to staff.

The dozen teachers in my focus group explained why they remained in the profession. While their reasons varied, most spoke of being able to make a real difference at their current school and in the lives of their students. When I asked each of them to describe, specifically, what allowed them to make a difference, they cited two things: consistent support from their administration and a strong group of teachers that worked closely as a team.

I probed further to learn what might entice them to another school in the district, especially a "tougher" low-income school. I asked, for example, "How much would it matter if you had enough money to buy all of the supplies and textbooks you needed? What if you had a good principal like the one you have here? What if most of the parents were actively involved in their students' education? Would you be more inclined to go if you were offered a salary bonus? When I finished my line of questioning, I had a better idea of what type of

probing questions to include in my teacher retention survey. Still, after listening to and watching the group react to my hypotheticals, I was not convinced that many of them would have been enthusiastic about transferring to another school in the district, even if one could promise that many of the items on my list—including the dollar bonus—would be there for them.

When I shared this observation with them, one of the teachers made a comment that has truly changed my thinking about teacher retention, in particular, and school reform in general. "Many of the things you asked about are really important," she said, "but there is one thing you didn't mention, and it's probably the most important thing to me. I would go to a tough school if we got the kind of support you have been talking about—the kind we get at this school. But, most important, *I would go if the rest of the teachers in this room went with me*. I have been working with most of them for eight years. We're really close. We share ideas and solve problems together. The administration trusts us and lets us make decisions. We're good friends and we hang out together away from school. This is why we're effective here. I'm not sure there is any amount of money you could pay me to go to another school by myself, and if I did go, I doubt I would be very effective."

I could tell by looking at her colleagues that these sentiments were not hers alone. When I asked how many would go to a tough school if they could go together, all twelve responded affirmatively. This was an admittedly small, but still significant, sample. On reflection, I believe theirs to be optimistic and heartening testimony. Though I could not be certain at this point that these teachers would uproot themselves and drive many additional miles to work in a more challenging, lower-income school, there was no doubt in my mind that I had tapped into something powerful, at least for these teachers. If I asked the right kinds of questions in my teacher retention survey, I began to think it might reveal whether this "incentive"—the prospect of well-trained, inspiring teachers working together in tight-knit, well-supported teams even (and perhaps especially) in a low-income school—would be as attractive to teachers elsewhere.

It would be some time before I would have the data from my retention study to test that hypothesis. (The data from this study which has since been gathered and analyzed confirms this hypothesis.) In the meantime I could not help ruminating on the powerful statement made by that teacher, and her colleagues' affirmation of her opinion. I recalled my own work experiences, not just as an elementary school teacher, but as an apprentice carpenter and a wilderness guide during college. What I had always wanted from a job was an interesting challenge, but when I reflected on the aspect of work that was most satisfying to me, it was great co-workers. It wasn't just the work that was good and satisfying; it was the people I worked with who made it that way.

The "Tipping Point" as a Possibility

This focus group meeting occurred shortly after I had finished reading a book about change: *The Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell. I wondered if the basic theory of that book might explain the unexpected shift in interest among the teachers in my focus group. Gladwell illustrates how situations in our everyday world can change rapidly and unexpectedly under the right conditions. He is particularly interested in "social epidemics" and the circumstances that lead people suddenly to act very differently than they did before. Why,

for instance, does criminal activity in a city suddenly drop? Why do millions of people begin buying a particular brand of shoe? Why, even, might large numbers of teenagers begin smoking despite a barrage of information telling them how unhealthy it is? The interesting thing about social epidemics, Gladwell says, is that they often happen for the same reasons and within similar contexts. That's significant because if one creates the right context then, in theory, one can *cause* social epidemics to happen.

It was fairly easy to see, in Gladwell's well-written book, how marketing experts could pull off a "tipping point" phenomenon with the popularity of hush puppy shoes; it was less clear how city officials in a place like New York could get thousands of people to stop committing crimes. But if even that seemingly impossible challenge were achievable by cleaning up the graffiti in subways, then perhaps there was a way to attract groups of well-prepared teachers to our toughest schools. Perhaps what we had discovered in my focus group was a context that could lead to a positive social epidemic among teachers.

If this were possible, if we had a way to staff the most challenging schools with well-prepared, committed, and caring teachers—the single most important contributor to student learning according to most experts—then perhaps it was possible to get struggling schools to the point where they would "tip." Maybe the reason so few of these schools are able to escape from a cycle of failure is *our* failure to recognize that a tipping point exists for them. Maybe after seeing so many reforms fail and so much money wasted, educators and the public alike have come to believe there really isn't a way to overcome the economic realities preventing so many impoverished schools from succeeding. We invest modestly in one reform measure and another and celebrate even the smallest gains. We urge people in failing schools to imitate "outlier" schools—the few schools that succeed despite their demographics and what appears to be their fated story—but that advice has been of little help because it hasn't provided the means for *becoming* an outlier. Some attempt bottom-up school redesigns that have shown promising results, but such initiatives have been difficult to sustain and even harder to replicate.

If we look at the vast number of high-poverty schools that continue to fail decade after decade, we must admit that the remedies we've tried are capable of producing only limited results in most cases. No strategy that teachers, administrators, and educational reformers have tried suggests that we know how to produce dramatic and lasting change in the vast majority of these schools. What we haven't tried, it seems, is a full-on, holistic approach that creates a context, all at once, for teachers and their students to succeed. If it really were possible to trigger social epidemics among teachers, and if we were willing to create highly supportive and professional environments for them to work in, then maybe it was possible to accomplish what many of us in California still believe is possible: a systematic (and systemic) turnaround of our low-performing schools into the thriving, high-performing learning environments we wish they could be.

Initial Response to the Tipping Point Theory

I started talking to fellow educators about using Gladwell's "tipping point" concepts as the basis of a turnaround strategy in California. Could we really initiate social epidemics by motivating clusters of highly qualified teachers to transfer to struggling schools? If that were possible and if we offered them the right kind of administrative, community, and *collegial*

support, couldn't we jumpstart a process that would transform these schools into healthy and thriving higher performers?

Excellence loves company. This notion seemed so optimistic as to border on being naive, but nearly three decades of my own teaching experience and study of education told me this theory might just be correct and, with adequate state support, one that could be implemented successfully. My own enthusiasm was obvious, but the initial response from colleagues and school reform experts was mixed. Most were intrigued by the story from the focus group, but there were two major concerns.

The first was money. Where would we get the funds for things like program infrastructure, teacher recruitment, lower class size, on-site support staff, and additional team time during school? These were valid questions, especially given the current economic climate, but it seemed that state policy makers or private foundations might fund a pilot to see if a short-term investment in a promising reform strategy could produce significant and, potentially, lasting change. If the pilot were successful in terms of staffing and student achievement, one could make the case that a larger initial investment in turning around low-performing schools was more cost effective in the long run than spending inadequate amounts year after year on poorly integrated reforms that yielded little results. The success of the pilot and the effective management of this comprehensive program might convince policy makers to put more money in failing schools even in a tight economy.

The second concern came from those worried about the staffing implications of my idea. "What about teachers at the low-performing schools who do not want to be part of your new teams? What will you do with teachers who want to stay but who are not selected to be part of the new team? What if you need a different kind of administrator?" Some were more blunt on this point: "You're talking about reconstitution. That's never worked and the teachers' unions will never support it." This, too, was a legitimate concern since several forms of reconstitution—making large staffing changes at a school—not only had failed to turn many failing schools around, but had led to long-lasting bitterness and resentment among those teachers (and parents) involved. Since my Tipping Point plan admittedly included an element of reconstitution, I would need to deal with these problems.

I dived into the reconstitution literature and discovered two factors that help explain its failings. First, reconstituting the staff was the *sole* reform strategy employed at many of the schools where it was tried, rather than one piece of a larger redesign and capacity-building strategy. That went a long way toward explaining why reconstitution failed to transform failing schools into more successful ones. The second factor shed light on the reasons for the deep and pervasive ill-will reconstitution caused in most cases I read about. In reconstituted schools many, and sometimes all, of the existing staff were transferred involuntarily to other schools in the district. District administrators defended such moves by pointing out that something drastic had to be done and that the collective bargaining agreement with teachers permitted such moves. These administrators were probably right on both counts, but the fatal mistake they made was conveying a message, wittingly or not, that the teachers forced to leave were the *reason* for the school's failure. Therefore, rather than welcoming the new hand-picked staff to their school, parents and community members and the students themselves with loyalties to the teachers forced out were often resentful of their replacements. This, combined with the sympathies felt by the replacements themselves

for their displaced colleagues, along with protests from the union, often created climates that were less than ideal for those who were now expected to turn around a failing school.

This re-immersion in school reform literature also made me reflect on the problems of a rather scattershot approach to educational change. For example, I found a consistent call for strong leadership, coherent and appropriate professional development programs, and smaller and more personal learning environments, especially within large high schools. Some argued for higher and clearer standards, more direct instruction, and a concentrated focus on curriculum essentials. Others suggested that we pay teachers a lot more to attract the best and brightest and that we make it easier to get rid of the ones that aren't effective. While proponents of these ideas offered evidence that their solution made a difference, I found little to demonstrate that any one of them, or even a combination of a few, led to sustained and widespread change. From a tipping point perspective, perhaps this dismal yield was because implementing just a few of the improvements—no matter how sound any of them might be—was not enough to counteract the habits and myriad forces that resist change so effectively in these schools. I needed to define the set of interlinking, essential supports a failing school would need to turn itself around.

Over the next several months, and with input from numerous teachers, administrators, union leaders, and school reform experts, I constructed a comprehensive school redesign plan based on a tipping point theory of change. The plan would place teams of well-prepared teachers in our lowest performing schools where they would find a broad range of supports including each other's teaching strengths, time for planning and professional development, on-site technical assistance, class-size limits, and strong leadership. The plan also included measures to avoid the pitfalls of reconstitution. (For a fuller discussion of the reconstitution issue, see pp. 43-47.)

In October, 2001, I shared this plan with Dennis Chaconas, then superintendent of Oakland Unified School District. There were plenty of failing schools to pick from in Oakland, and the district was struggling to staff its classrooms with qualified teachers. Mr. Chaconas liked my Tipping Point plan, but was unwilling to sell it to the district until we could secure enough money from outside sources to implement it. After obtaining a commitment for $3,000,000 from an Oakland-based community foundation to conduct a pilot in three schools, Mr. Chaconas, some of his senior administrators, and I began taking steps toward implementation. At a day-long retreat in January, 2002, we asked for input from a large group of teachers, administrators, union representatives, and local community members about how a Tipping Point pilot could be implemented in Oakland. We responded to concerns and carefully documented their suggestions for conducting a successful pilot. There were some skeptics and a few with serious reservations, but the majority expressed overwhelming support for the plan.[1]

Problems with the Initial Pilot Projects

Unfortunately, we lost momentum during the ensuing months. I worked and lived two hours away from Oakland and was unable to perform the daily tasks necessary to keep things moving, and we could not find a district employee with enough time to champion the pilot. In the end, after months of collaboration, after getting buy-in from key stakeholders, even after getting $3,000,000 in foundation money to pay for the pilot, we had not done

enough to tip the district into conducting the pilot. What I didn't fully appreciate then was the nature and depth of the district's problems. The administration was already struggling to implement an ambitious small-schools reform agenda for its high schools. Acrimony between the school board and the superintendent was building and there were signs of an impending budget crisis. One year after the January, 2002, Tipping Point retreat, Dennis Chaconas was gone and the district was under the control of the state.

I worried that my Tipping Point plan was flawed. If it were as compelling as I thought, if it really could lead to dramatic change in our most struggling schools, then why wouldn't it fly in a place like Oakland, where schools consistently rank among the lowest in the state? On reflection, I realized the lessons from the Oakland pilot attempt were about the difficulties of getting school districts to change, about the tipping points that would need to be reached at the *district level* before embarking on the work of getting their individual failing schools to tip. The fundamental concept of the Tipping Point plan was not the problem. Finding a receptive environment to implement it was.

While working in Oakland, I had had emailed and then spoken with Malcolm Gladwell and explained how I was hoping to utilize his ideas about momentum and social epidemics in a plan for improving California's low-performing schools. He captured fundamentals of this idea in the Afterword to the second edition of *The Tipping Point.* After describing the problem I was attempting to solve, Gladwell offered this observation:

> *On playing fields and battlegrounds, challenges that would be daunting and impossible if faced alone are suddenly possible when tackled in a close-knit group. The people haven't changed, but the way in which the task appears to them has. Futernick thinks the same principle ought to hold true in the classroom, that teachers would be willing to take on a daunting assignment if they felt they were surrounded by other experienced, high quality teachers. That's a lesson from The Tipping Point that I never thought could have application in the inner city of Oakland.*[2]

By the time this edition of Gladwell's book hit the streets, my Tipping Point plan was dead in Oakland, but I received an unexpected wave of interest from readers around the country eager to learn more about the project. A number of educators from northern California wanted to know how they could get involved. I explained what had happened in Oakland and told them that I was now working with another school district, Del Paso Elementary, a few miles north of Sacramento. Here, in this smaller district closer to home, I had gotten the school board and teachers' union to agree to a Tipping Point implementation plan for one of its five schools. While I was working to raise money for the project, both the superintendent and the principal he had selected to lead the effort resigned, a sobering reminder that administrative turmoil was a fact of life in most of the districts I wanted to work with.

At this point I needed help developing a better strategy for getting a Tipping Point pilot off the ground. In November, 2004, I convened a meeting in San Francisco with a group of education experts from whom I had received input on my initial plan. I was especially eager to share the findings from the teacher retention survey which I had now completed and

which, to my pleasant surprise, reinforced the hypotheses I had formed after meeting with the initial twelve teachers in my focus group. One of the participants at our strategy meeting was Linda Darling-Hammond, a leading authority on teacher quality and school reform issues, and education professor at Stanford. She underscored her support for the underlying concepts of my plan and volunteered to have Stanford's School Redesign Network assist with the project once we found places to test it.[3] All of the participants offered to serve in an advisory capacity, and some expressed interest in providing the external support to our pilot schools (see Appendix E for a current list of advisors). Our challenge now became clear: to obtain enough funding either from the state or private sources to conduct a pilot that would be a sustainable incubator for the turnaround, Tipping Point strategy.

The foregoing has been an account of how I came to believe that Malcolm Gladwell's Tipping Point theory of change could be applied to a turnaround strategy for California's lowest performing schools. It is also an account of the formidable challenges I have encountered in my quest to test the strategy in a live setting, despite the overwhelmingly positive response it has generated within the education community. In the next section, I offer a brief analysis of the problems faced by many low-performing schools in California and a description of recent reforms undertaken by the state to solve these problems. I then present a turnaround strategy based on Tipping Point principles.

CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS FACE SEVERE CHALLENGES

Fourteen years ago, the writer Jonathan Kozol revealed in chilling detail the "savage inequalities" experienced by millions of poor children in America's schools. Describing the filth and disrepair in the inner-city schools he visited, he wrote, "I often wondered why we would let our children go to school in places where no politician, school board president, or business CEO would dream of working."[4]

Today in California the inequalities are particularly severe. Students in the poorest and lowest-performing schools are subjected to insufficiently maintained, overcrowded facilities, outdated textbooks, and a shortage of materials.[5] Not surprising, there are hundreds of poor and low-performing schools in California where few teachers would even think of working. In addition, a critical shortage of teachers throughout the state has forced many districts to hire people who do not meet the licensing requirements for teachers. These "underprepared" teachers have not demonstrated subject matter competence, do not have formal training as teachers, and many do not have prior experience teaching children. The problem is especially severe in schools with high concentrations of poor children because they have the greatest difficulty attracting and keeping well-qualified teachers.

As reported recently by SRI International, approximately 9% of all teachers in California were underprepared in 2003-04. In the state's poorest schools—those in which 90% or more of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch—15% of the faculty lack teaching credentials. Making matters worse, these high-poverty schools also employ disproportionately higher numbers of beginning teachers because the experienced ones gravitate to other schools where poverty is not such an intractable and dispiriting problem. While these figures are lower than they were four years ago, a new wave of teacher retirements is expected to cause an increase in underprepared faculty in the coming years.[6]

Just thirty years ago, California's K-12 public schools were among the best in the nation. They were well-funded in comparison to other states and there was no teacher shortage. Today, state funding for schools is well below the national average and many poor children in this, one of the wealthiest states in the country, are subjected to sub-standard classroom environments. Most alarming, many of them lack the single most important contributor to educational success: a qualified teacher or, even better, a qualified teacher highly committed to that particular school and the students in it. Therefore it should not be surprising that academic performance of public school students in California ranks among the lowest among all states.[7]

Some argue that California's schools will never earn the excellent reputation they once enjoyed until the state regains the will and capacity to fund these schools adequately. Until then, the argument goes, they will have to get by with limited resources and hope for greater support in the future.

There is no guarantee, however, that the arrival of new money for education will lead to the improvements we hope for—especially in high poverty, chronically-failing schools. What these schools will need is a proven, comprehensive strategy that anticipates and counteracts the powerful factors that will resist these efforts for reform. In the absence of such a

strategy, we run the risk of investing significant new money, once again, in large-scale, untested reforms with little to show for it. Failed investments would serve only to bolster the claim made by some that money is not the solution to school failure, making it even harder to obtain money for promising alternatives.

At a time when resources are scarce, the state would be well-advised to conduct pilot studies of promising turnaround strategies such as the Tipping Point plan outlined in this proposal. If successful, these pilots could yield critically important knowledge to guide large-scale redesign initiatives in the future. What follows in the remainder of this proposal is a plan for such a pilot. Before describing the plan, I will look briefly at California's recent school reform efforts and offer reasons why they have not succeeded in turning many of our poor-performing schools around.

Education Reform in California

In recent years, California has adopted a number of initiatives to strengthen its public K-12 schools. In 1998, it reduced class size in grades K – 3 to 20 students. Soon after, it adopted a rigorous set of content standards for grades K – 12. To attract and retain fully-prepared teachers, it has offered financial incentives such as tax credits and forgivable loans to teachers who would agree to work in hard-to-staff schools, and performance bonuses to teachers whose students scored exceptionally well on achievement tests. The state has also invested millions of dollars in teacher recruitment campaigns as well as programs providing support and professional development for beginning teachers.

In 1999, California passed the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of their students. A key component of PSAA was the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) that provided financial support to low-performing schools for changes leading to improved student achievement. Schools failing to make adequate progress after three years would be subject to a variety of state sanctions, including state takeover and loss of control by local school boards.

These reform efforts were reinforced by the federal No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2001. This legislation states that in 2005-06, schools receiving federal assistance will be prohibited from employing teachers not deemed "highly qualified" – and when their students do not demonstrate adequate academic growth their schools will be subject to federal sanctions that include reopening them as charter schools and turning school operations over to private companies.

The results of these efforts have been mixed. While the percentage of underprepared teachers has declined marginally, high-poverty public schools in California continue to employ disproportionately higher numbers of teachers who lack credentials and appropriate knowledge of the subjects they teach.[8] And according to the state's own evaluation of II/USP, the considerable financial investment in this program has yet to produce added value when achievement results of participating schools were compared with those from similar schools that did not participate in the program.[9] At present, 144 of these II/USP schools representing over 100,000 students have done so poorly they are now subject to state takeover. That said, the state has not revealed its intent to take control of them, nor

have experts suggested that doing so would be a good idea. Without a plan, the future for these schools and their students' education appears bleak.

Why Change is so Difficult, and Even Harder to Sustain

Failing systems tend not to operate very long in an intermediate state: they either get enough of what they need to thrive or they return to a state of failure. Anyone who has had an illness treated with antibiotics knows one must take the full regimen in order to get well. Even though one is likely to feel better after a couple of days of treatment, doctors caution that the illness or infection will return if we do not take all of the medicine. Here, a little help is equivalent to no help; in fact, with too little medicine we are probably worse off. Since some of the bacteria remain alive, the body figures out how to resist the therapeutic effects of the medicine, making it less capable of curing the disease the next time it is needed.

And so it is with failing schools. Unless they can be improved to a point of stability, most will eventually return to their prior state of dysfunction. In fact, they may be worse off than before. Just like the patient who builds up resistance to antibiotics when too little is taken, the school builds up its own resistance when too little is done to turn it around. When people are asked to adopt new programs or new ways of teaching and the results fall short of expectations, many become cynical and uncooperative. Not only have resources been wasted, but the school may be less able to respond effectively the next time a new plan is introduced, no matter how promising and potentially effective it might be. And those in a position to support and fund future reform efforts may be less inclined to try *anything* similar to what was done before.

The state's approach to reforming the lowest-performing schools appears to have been guided by the conventional wisdom that educational change can only occur gradually, a view expressed in James Stigler's popular book, *The Teaching Gap*. "Because teaching is a system that is deeply embedded in the surrounding culture of the schools," he says, "any changes will come in small steps, not in dramatic leaps."[10] The belief implicitly expressed is: We do the best we can with existing resources and, even if we do not succeed in getting them to a level comparable to schools in wealthier districts, well at least we will have made some improvement. Some help is better than no help.

But if this theory about failing systems is valid and applicable here, if dysfunctional schools are bi-modal and prone to regress unless they reach a threshold of stability, then this gradualist approach to reform is misguided. The theory presented in this Tipping Point proposal, by contrast, suggests that whatever is done for these schools, it must be sufficient to ensure they reach a threshold where change can be sustained. And it suggests that offering *some* help may be the equivalent of offering *no* help. In fact, more harm than good may be done if all that is provided to dysfunctional schools is the equivalent of two days' worth of antibiotics.

Why "Outliers" Can't Really be Imitated

But what about the small number of schools in high-poverty areas that are able to attract competent and committed teachers; schools in which parents play an active role in the academic lives of their children, that offer a rich and engaging curriculum and achieve at exceptionally high levels despite the economic disadvantages of their students? Though there is an impressive body of literature that describes how these so-called "outlier" schools operate, simply telling (or expecting) struggling schools to act like them does little good. The problem is that policy makers and educators do not know how to jump-start the process of turning failing schools into outliers.

For instance, how does a low-performing, rundown school with few qualified teachers and little parent involvement suddenly get the strong, collaborative principal that is found in most outlier schools? Even if such a school is lucky enough to attract such a person, how does she go about building a stable and committed teaching staff? When accounting for the health and even the whereabouts of the school's students is, by necessity, a higher priority than accounting for student learning, the school is operating in a crisis mode. Further, if there are no substitutes to take the place of teachers who call in sick, when will she have time to meet with parents and persuade them to get involved with their own children's education? When will she have time to evaluate and refine the school's curriculum? Where will she find the resources to create a clean and safe learning environment, or to purchase up-to-date books and materials? How will she do all of these things while simultaneously meeting the day-to-day demands of a school that is operating in such a suboptimal mode?

Unfortunately, many who try do not succeed, which is why even the most capable principals of these high-poverty schools leave (or want to) within a few years after arriving. The problem these principals face is captured by Suzanne Pardington in the *Contra Costa Times*:

> *With or without extra money to offer, the hardest thing for schools in poor, urban areas to overcome may be their reputations.*
>
> *At Pittsburg High School, where nearly half of the teachers last year were not fully credentialed, a history of labor disputes, a revolving door of principals, low test scores and a mistaken perception of tough discipline problems have made it hard to recruit qualified teachers, said Principal Steve Ahonen.*
>
> *'Once we begin to show stability and when we begin to improve academically, I think people will be willing to come here,' he said. 'But it will take time to show stability and growth on our part."*[11]

How does a principal like Mr. Ahonen create the stability and academic success, the kind of partnerships that can overcome the school's reputation as a failure? Will he have the stamina and patience to see it through? Given what we know about thousands of schools just like his, chances are the school will have the same dismal prognosis—and Mr. Ahonen will be gone.

The educational researcher, Paul Hill, explains the dilemma this poses for poor schools: "No wonder schools in poverty neighborhoods are turbulent and parents cannot develop relationships with teachers and principals. The only principals who stay in such schools are

the heroes, who will fight for children whatever the odds, and the incompetent, who have no choice."[12]

Another factor that makes it difficult for low-income schools to successfully imitate outliers is the lack of transferability. According to organizational psychologist Robert Evans' reading of Roland Barth, an expert in educational administration, many leadership programs design their training on the following model:

> 1. *Find schools where pupils are achieving more than what might be predicted by their background.*
> 2. *Observe principals in those schools and find out what they are doing.*
> 3. *Identify these behaviors as "desirable traits."*
> 4. *Devise training programs to develop these traits in all principals.*
> 5. *Enlist principals in these programs.*
>
> *This model, Barth suggests, is straightforward, compelling, logical—and* surprisingly ineffective*, in good part because conditions in one school are seldom similar to those in another.*[13]

Echoing Barth, educational theorist Michael Fullan offers further insight into the problem of transferability:

> *…the products of other people's reform efforts hide many of the subtleties of the reform in practice. [The] conditions that made it possible for an initiative to succeed in one location may not exist in another. 'Successful innovations,' argue Healey and De Stafano, 'fail to be replicated because the wrong thing is being replicated—the reform itself, instead of the conditions which spawned its success.'*[14]

There is much to be learned from outliers because they reveal important insights into the practices of high-achieving, high-poverty schools. Outliers also serve as important reminders that these low-income schools are not destined to fail. But if we hope to get hundreds of high-poverty schools to perform like outliers, we will need an integrated, multi-tiered (in the case of the Tipping Point plan, 9-tiered) strategy that can not only jump-start the process, but also maximize the possibility of ongoing success.

Gladwell's Theory of Change

In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell reminds us that change does not always occur gradually; it sometimes happens suddenly and dramatically—the way a flu virus can sweep through a community in a matter of days. Such a phenomenon is not confined to the worlds of biology and physics. It can occur in much the same way in social settings, just as it did in the 1980's when the suicide rate among teens skyrocketed in Micronesia. Social epidemics, as Gladwell refers to them, can be positive, too. Such was the case in New York City, which for decades experienced an exceedingly high crime rate before that rate suddenly plummeted in the mid-1990's.

The main point of Gladwell's book is "to answer two simple questions that lie at the heart of what we would all like to accomplish as educators, parents, marketers, business people, and policy makers. Why is it that some ideas or behaviors or products start epidemics and others don't? And what can we do to deliberately start and control positive epidemics of our own?"[15] In other words, how do we trigger that "magic moment when an idea, trend or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire?" According to Gladwell:

> *There is more than one way to tip an epidemic… Epidemics are a function of the people who transmit infectious agents, the infectious agent itself, and the environment in which the agent is operating. And when an epidemic tips, when it is jolted out of equilibrium, it tips because something has happened, some change has occurred in one (or two or three) of those areas.*[16]

The school reform proposal presented in this paper is designed to spark small social epidemics that draw some of our best teachers and administrators to our most troubled schools. It is based on the belief that when given the opportunity to work on a team with other qualified teachers who share the same vision, when placed in a carefully constructed, continually reinforced professional environment, teachers can actually jolt the school out of its disequilibrium or malaise and transform it into the high-achieving school where they themselves will want to continue to teach.

Trying to Solve the Staffing Challenge

In 1998, California instituted a program that capped class-size at 20 students in grades K-3. This created a significant demand for new teachers, but because the supply was not sufficient to meet this demand, many school districts were suddenly faced with a serious shortage of qualified teachers. In 2000, 1 in 7 teachers in California taught without a credential; in high-poverty schools, it was 1 in 4.

To increase the supply of teachers, the state offered forgivable loans and fellowship grants to new teaching candidates who agreed to teach in high-poverty schools. To keep veteran teachers from leaving the classroom, California offered other monetary incentive programs such as tax credits, signing bonuses, and monetary performance awards. While some of these programs lost their funding soon after they were created, several observers questioned whether these efforts, even if they received ongoing financial support, were sufficient to ensure that all children would, once again, have access to qualified teachers. In its analysis of state initiatives designed to solve the staffing problem, the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL) warned, "[a]lthough all these programs target a critical need, it remains

to be seen whether they, along with other investments, are focused and powerful enough to reverse the concentration of underqualified teachers in schools serving high numbers of poor and minority students."[17]

Unfortunately, the percentage of underprepared teachers working in California's public schools has declined only marginally since 2000. Nearly 15% of the teachers in high-poverty schools are still working without a credential, and many teachers who have a credential are assigned to courses for which they lack appropriate subject matter background.

A recent study examining the effects of teachers' signing bonuses in Massachusetts may provide insight into the disappointing results of California's monetary incentives. To lure people to the profession, school officials in Massachusetts offered $20,000 signing bonuses, but they soon discovered the bonus plan did not work as expected. Researchers found that the bonus had not brought many new people to the field since most of the bonus recipients had planned to become teachers before they received the bonus. In addition, the bonuses did not figure into the recipients' decisions to continue teaching. Unfortunately, many of them left within four years—before they had taught long enough to collect the entire bonus.

The factor that did have the most impact makes intuitive sense. According to educator Edward Liu, "[W]orking conditions at the school site, which affected the new teachers' ability to realize the intrinsic rewards they expected of teaching, played the biggest role in their decisions."[18] The stories told by the early "leavers" in Liu's study reveal the kinds of working conditions that came into play: "whether they had assignments and teaching loads that were appropriate and manageable; *whether they received adequate support and guidance from their principals and colleagues* (italics mine); and whether they had the curriculum and resources they needed to do their work."[19]

Nonmonetary incentives

A recent study of teacher retention and attrition in California, of which I was the principal investigator, corroborates these findings and my hypotheses about the real 'draw' of teaching. Survey participants who said they plan to continue teaching cited the following as the 10 most important among 35 factors that were presented to them:

1) The administration and teaching staff are given appropriate authority over curriculum, instruction strategies, school governance, and budgeting.
2) I have close professional relationships with other members of the staff.
3) The staff as a whole works effectively as a team and relationships generally are strong.
4) I am able to make an important difference in the lives of my students.
5) The principal is a supportive and effective educational leader.
6) The salary and benefits package was adequate.
7) I am assigned to classes that are appropriate given my credential and/or subject matter preparation.
8) The district office provides reliable and appropriate administrative support.
9) My credential program coursework prepared me to be successful in this school.
10) There is positive morale among staff.[20]

Findings from studies like these reveal the weaknesses of retention strategies that rely solely on monetary incentives. They suggest that a more promising approach to retention would entail creating conditions that enable teachers to be successful and, to use a word we don't often use in education, *happy* in their work. Data from the teacher retention study also tell us something important about the nature of the working conditions that matter most to teachers. Several of the reasons cited most frequently for staying where they are point to the *strength of the relationships they have with colleagues*. In reading teachers' narratives in response to the study's open-ended questions about these factors, it becomes clear that being part of a team, having close personal and professional relationships with staff, and having a supportive principal are extremely important because they contribute so powerfully to the condition that matters most to them: being able to make a difference for their students.

Many people who decide to become teachers don't do it for the money; above all, they want to positively affect the lives of children and, in some small way, the society at large. This is what leads many beginning teachers to seek work in low-income schools where they believe they can make the biggest difference. But large numbers of the teachers who begin their careers in these schools transfer away or quit altogether within a few years. Not because they are paid too little or because the work is too hard, but because they lack the materials and support they need, they work in isolation, and their efforts do not appear to matter. (It would be disingenuous, however, to imply that teachers do not care about monetary rewards. The Tipping Point plan allows veteran teachers recruited from other school districts to maintain or see an increase in their salaries. In addition, the summer intensives, discussed on pages 42-44, allow all of the teachers to receive stipends for an additional 24 days of work.)

The lack of a vibrant community of fellow teachers can be the most dispiriting factor of all. If we want to attract well-prepared teachers to struggling schools and want to increase the potential that the school will retain them, we must devise a strategy to ensure these schools are rewarding places to work. Places where teachers and principals, working collaboratively as teams, are able to succeed, and that means making a real and positive difference in the lives of their students.

The Tipping Point plan that follows represents such a strategy.

FEATURES OF TIPPING POINT SCHOOLS

In this section I will describe nine features of the Tipping Point plan that can help persuade teachers and administrators that they can make a sustainable and positive difference in our lowest-performing schools. Many of these features will look familiar to those acquainted with the literature on school reform, but what's unique about the Tipping Point plan is the requirement that *all* of them become part of a comprehensive redesign strategy for the school. The nine features are:

- Teams
- Time
- Physical Environment
- Class Size Reduction
- Autonomy and Shared Governance
- Leadership
- A Well-Rounded Curriculum
- External Support
- Parent/Community Involvement

Teams

> *[W]hen a team becomes more aligned, a commonality of direction emerges, and individuals' energies harmonize. There is less wasted energy. In fact, a resonance or synergy develops, like the "coherent" light of a laser rather than the incoherent and scattered light of a light bulb. There is commonality of purpose, a shared vision, and understanding of how to complement one another's efforts. Individuals do not sacrifice their personal interests to the larger team vision; rather, the shared vision becomes an extension of their personal visions.*[21]
>
> – Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*

The creation of highly competent, collaborative teams is central to the Tipping Point plan. Unfortunately, most schools in America operate on a model that discourages collaboration and makes schools isolating places to work.[22] Teacher quality expert Linda Darling-Hammond observes:

> *Teachers and students have limited time together, teachers do no joint planning, and curricula and materials are designed by others. When this approach is not effective, more special programs, and thus new slots in the bureaucratic matrix, are created. In this assembly-line conception of teaching, relationships matter little. Policy makers see little need for collegial consultation and planning, for close work with individual students and parents, or for substantial professional development. Thus teachers have little time for these activities.*[23]

Teaching in low-performing schools can be an especially lonely experience. Parents seldom volunteer their time in the classroom. Each teacher is segregated in his or her own classroom for the bulk of the school day. The daily challenges that accompany teaching students who live in poverty—e.g., serving as a "surrogate" parent, providing snacks to

those who are hungry, keeping students safe from violence while at school, making sure they have a safe place to go to after school—further limit the time teachers have to plan, evaluate, and problem-solve together. And it is virtually impossible to build strong professional relationships with low morale and high teacher and administrator turnover. Even harder when a significant percentage of the staff is underqualified and therefore unable to offer much assistance to their colleagues.

Michael Fullan pinpoints the consequences of isolation and how they severely restrict the potential of a school to grow:

> *Isolation is a problem because it imposes a ceiling effect on inquiry and learning. Solutions are limited to the experiences of the individual. For complex change you need many people working insightfully and committing themselves to concentrated action together.*[24]

The findings from the teacher retention study cited earlier point to another serious consequence of school environments in which a sense of team is absent: it drives teachers away from the profession.[25] An eleven-year veteran teacher who recently left his high school described the "silo" mindset this way:

> *A mentality of getting the most for your own department prevented the school from working as a team. The English department wanted smaller learning communities and that was their mission. The World Language Department wanted a language lab. The PE department wanted to reduce its class size. Math was struggling to raise student achievement in Algebra. What each department wanted conflicted with another department. We all had our own buildings for our departments and we stayed in them. Never did we eat lunch in each other's building unless it was a staff luncheon. Thus, each department went ahead with its own agendas, never checking with another department to join forces.*

Elsewhere in the world, schools are not so isolating. In Japan, Italy, and Australia, for instance, teachers spend only about 15 to 20 hours of each workweek in direct contact with their students—considerably less than the time teachers spend here with students. With extra time away from their classrooms, teachers engage in a variety of professional activities: They observe other teachers, discuss instructional strategies, plan and conduct research, participate in shared school governance, and work with parents.[26] This is accomplished by having more teachers at the school and restructuring their schedules to provide the time necessary to engage in these activities. But even with additional teachers, the overall costs to operate schools in these countries do not exceed ours because they rely much less on non-teaching support staff.

There is evidence that when schools in America create collaborative environments they, too, benefit. In fact, this collaboration is a common characteristic of the outlier schools described in the University of Texas-sponsored report, "Hope For Urban Education: A Study of Nine High-Performing, High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools":

> *[A]ll educators shared a sense of responsibility for school improvement and the attainment of the school's goals…Principals at these schools emphasized the importance of each individual's contribution to the work of the school. Principals modeled their commitment to*

> *collective responsibility by including the input of various staff members in decisions. Often teachers were given the responsibility of making important decisions. In other cases, principals made key decisions but they gave teachers and other staff substantial opportunities to contribute their thoughts and ideas…, [E]ducators talked about themselves as part of a "family" of adults responsible for the well-being of "their" children.*[27]

Elsewhere in the report, researchers attempt to explain "exemplary status" results achieved at Baskin Elementary School in San Antonio, Texas:

> *The deepening levels of mutual support, respect, and trust that developed among the school members have led to conversations that have played and continue to play a critical role in the transformation of the school. Initially, discussions among school members centered around grade-level issues and concerns, but as teachers came to view themselves as part of the same endeavor, the conversations broadened to include school-wide organizational teaching practices and their impact on student learning and performance. The principal said, "Eventually it became necessary to create a second opportunity where teachers could discuss and problem-solve instructional issues across grade levels. We created networking sessions held after school on a regular basis." It was during the networking sessions that teachers began to engage in reflective dialogue on a consistent basis.*[28]

The instrumental value of collaboration is indisputable, but the *intrinsic* value of teams should not be underestimated. Most people like working with others, not just because the interaction enables them to be more successful and knowledgeable, but because the interactions and the sense of human connection are fulfilling in their own right. In *The Fifth Discipline*, a book about systems, Peter Senge observes:

> *When you ask people about what it is like being part of a great team, what is most striking is the meaningfulness of the experience. People talk about being part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative. It becomes quite clear that, for many, their experiences as part of truly great teams stand out as singular periods of life lived to the fullest. Some spend the rest of their lives looking for ways to recapture that spirit.*[29]

A similar view is expressed by the authors of *The War for Talent*, a McKinsey & Company-researched book about recruiting, developing, and retaining talent within companies.

> *[T]he very nature of managing means being plunked into the messy, marvelous path of human traffic. For so many people the most enjoyable part of work is the other people they work with. Colleagues can vex and peeve and disappoint us, but mostly, if we're lucky, they engage and stretch and inspire us. Each person at work has the opportunity to learn upward, downward, and laterally, and that is often the real reason we enter our offices each day.*[30]

The success of the Tipping Point plan depends heavily on the ability to tap into the desire many people have to achieve something significant as part of a great team. The administrators and teachers who become the school's Tipping Point team must have the

desire and the capacity to work effectively in highly collaborative settings. It cannot be overstated: the rewards are rich for the teachers, and the students are the true beneficiaries.

Time

> *The managers of many organizations seem to regard time to talk and get together as an unaffordable luxury, but we believe that this apparent luxury is in fact a necessity, an essential social capital investment. Building relationships takes time. We are not talking about large chunks of free time or even about time away from work—trust relationships develop in the course of working together—but relationships and networks need some time, some breathing space to grow.* [31]
>
> – Don Cohen and Laurence Prusak*, In Good Company*

It is not enough simply to assign people to teams. If they do not have ample time to work with one another and have a sense of shared mission, they will be mere collections of individuals—not true teams. The Tipping Point model provides a significant amount of time for the team to work together *before* they begin their work at the target school. The process for selecting a Tipping Point team is described later in step 7 of the implementation plan (p. 38), but once formed, it will have several weeks of concentrated time during the summer "intensives" (described in step 8 of the implementation plan, pp. 39-40) to study and plan for the challenge that awaits them. The team will meet with parents and learn about the surrounding community. They will establish a common mission and adopt a set of educational goals for their students. They will construct and embark on a professional development program to strengthen the specific instructional skills they will need at the target school. And they will develop a strategy to ensure there will be sufficient time for team activities *after* they begin their work. Through this process, they will learn to communicate, compromise, and trust one another.

As mentioned earlier, many teachers elsewhere in the world have considerably more time for professional collaboration than do teachers in the United States. With lower teacher-to-student ratios, they have opportunities to meet and plan while their students continue to receive instruction from other qualified instructors. To achieve similar opportunities, the Tipping Point plan calls for a teacher-to-student staffing ratio that exceeds, by 10%, the normal district ratio. For instance, a school that would normally be staffed with 30 teachers would be staffed with an additional 3 teachers.

During the summer "intensives," the team will have an opportunity to examine staffing and time management practices and to decide how best to ensure the team's having adequate time for collaboration once their work begins at the school.[32] Some of these practices are discussed in Peter Senge's *Schools That Learn*, a book sure to be a valuable resource to the teams:

- Scheduling time and space for teachers to meet and talk
- Interdependent teaching structures
- Physical proximity
- Communication structures

- Teacher empowerment and school autonomy
- Rotating roles[33]

The team will also be encouraged to consider how they will enable *new* teachers and staff to become fully functioning members of the team once school is in session. As Cohen and Prusak note, "Some of the most important time investment is made during the first hours, days, and weeks that new employees spend in organizations—an investment that companies where new staff must 'hit the ground running' refuse to make."[34]

In schools, new teachers are usually hired at the moment they are needed in the classroom. Either a teacher unexpectedly leaves or enrollment at the beginning of the year is higher than expected. While these circumstances cannot be avoided, the Tipping Point teams will be encouraged to develop a plan to ensure that new members of the team will become fully functioning members of the team.

Physical Environment

> *Worrying about graffiti at a time when the entire [subway] system was close to collapse seems as pointless as scrubbing the deck of the Titanic as it headed toward the icebergs. But [David] Gunn insisted. "The graffiti was symbolic of the collapse of the system," he says. "When you looked at the process of rebuilding the organization and morale, you had to win the battle against graffiti. Without winning that battle, all the management reforms and physical changes just weren't going to happen.*[35]
>
> – Malcolm Gladwell*, The Tipping Point*

When David Gunn, director of the subway system in New York, insisted on cleaning up the graffiti, critics thought he was crazy. But Malcolm Gladwell cites his decision and the results it achieved as the "power of context," which holds that people are so sensitive to their immediate environment that when surroundings change in just the right way, it can tip an epidemic. This, Gladwell believes, is exactly what led to the sudden drop in crime in New York City. It is true, he says, that other factors such as an improving economy and declining drug use played an important role, but none fully accounts for the suddenness of the change. What caused the crime rate to drop so precipitously, Gladwell posits, was something quite small: eliminating the graffiti in the subways. But how could something seemingly so insignificant lead to such dramatic change? According to Gladwell, it is the Broken Windows phenomenon:

> *Broken Windows was the brainchild of the criminologists James Q. Wilson and George Kelling. Wilson and Kelling argued that crime is the inevitable result of disorder. If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge. Soon more windows will be broken, and the sense of anarchy will spread from the building to the street on which it faces, sending a signal that anything goes.*[36]

When one applies this to the education system, it seems quite plausible that if one were to walk into a school and see broken windows, graffiti, leaky roofs, dirty classrooms and bathrooms in disrepair, one would conclude that no one cares, that no one is in charge and

anything goes. If students (or, by referral, their parents) draw these conclusions, how can they be expected to take their education seriously, much less succeed academically? If teachers draw these conclusions, how can they be expected to stay at these schools, much less succeed in teaching their students? The dilemma for students is that they are forced to stay in these inferior schools while their teachers are free to leave—which, we know, many do shortly after they arrive.

Just how bad is the physical environment in California's schools? In a class action lawsuit brought against the State of California (Williams v. California), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) alleged that many schools with students of color suffer from "degraded, unhealthful facilities and conditions" that include:

- Extremely hot or cold classrooms, with broken or nonexistent air conditioning or heating systems
- Toilets that don't flush; toilets that are filthy with urine, excrement, or blood; toilets that are locked
- Lack of working water fountains
- Unrepaired, hazardous facilities, including broken windows, walls, and ceilings
- Vermin infestations
- Leaky roofs and mold

In August, 2004, the State of California and the ACLU reached a settlement in the Williams case. This settlement led to legislation which allocated close to one billion dollars to correct these conditions.[37]

Because of the importance of environmental conditions, the Tipping Point teams will be encouraged to identify every available resource early in the planning year to resolve the health and safety problems at their target school. School officials must also ensure that Tipping Point schools have sufficient facilities to accommodate new classes of students generated by class-size reductions. Working together with volunteers from the community, with parents and with students, these teams should develop a plan to create an environment that is not just safe and clean and properly maintained, but also celebrates learning, creativity, and a sense of community. Imagine what message would be sent to students, parents and staff if these newly designed schools were tastefully painted, if artwork representing the local culture hung from the walls, and if the school did not repel or intimidate but, instead, invited people in. Imagine what could be accomplished if the place where children came to learn instilled pride and ownership among the entire community.

There is, of course, nothing novel about this particular feature of the turnaround strategy. Indeed, many who have worked in low-performing schools have succeeded in creating remarkably attractive, student-friendly workplaces, but with little to show in terms of improved student learning. This serves to underscore a central thesis of this proposal: doing what is necessary to effect dramatic and lasting change (in this case, improving the physical environment in coordination with *all* the other elements of the turnaround strategy) is not the same thing as doing what is simply palliative or sufficient.

Class-size reduction

> *Smaller class sizes allow much more one-on-one time with children—more time to meet their individual needs. It's a total management issue. It's not nearly as stressful having a smaller class size, especially in preparation, in delivery, in planning, in talking and meeting with parents. When you have fewer students, you have more time to do all those things.*[38]
>
> –Elementary teacher in a high-poverty school in Los Banos, California

In 1996, California adopted an expensive class size reduction program (CSR) in grades K – 3, limiting the number of students per classroom to 20. The program was implemented statewide in 1998. Despite state budgetary constraints in recent years, policy makers continue to support this highly popular and costly reform.

And they should. Teachers and parents overwhelmingly support smaller classes because they are more manageable and allow for more individual attention. The research on class size reduction, most notably the large-scale, longitudinal evaluation of Tennessee's STAR project, has shown a positive link between reduced class size and increased student achievement, especially in high-poverty settings.[39] Class size also plays an important role in retaining teachers: 50% of the "stayers" who participated in the recent study of teacher retention in California said this was an important factor in their decision to remain in the profession (see Appendix A). There are, however, some educators and policy makers who question the wisdom of further CSR investments in California because research findings correlating its implementation with increased student achievement have been inconclusive.

This Tipping Point proposal calls for class size reductions in all grades in which the turnaround strategy is implemented. But given the substantial costs of class size reduction in Tipping Point schools, as well as concerns that certain individuals may rightfully have surrounding CSR's efficacy in California, it is worth taking note of the findings and recommendations from the research on CSR in California. It is equally important to counteract the concerns that have been raised by researchers and show how each potential pitfall of CSR can be avoided in the Tipping Point strategy.

One of the reasons it has been difficult to determine CSR's effect on student achievement is the lack of statewide achievement data prior to its adoption in 1996.[40] There were also three problems with implementation that further complicated the analysis, according to a consortium of research organizations that published a report, in 2002, of the effects of CSR in California.[41] First, CSR was implemented very rapidly, preventing many schools from finding adequate facilities in which to house additional classes. Second, teachers were not given an opportunity to adopt instructional strategies designed to take advantage of small class sizes. Third and most serious, the sudden increase in demand for new teachers led to increased reliance on underqualified teachers, particularly in schools with high concentrations of poor children.

Authors of a report on CSR in California, by the Public Policy Institute of California offered the following major recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of CSR. Below each point, I will show how each recommendation dovetails with the Tipping Point strategy:

Recommendation 1. Improve the effectiveness of the current CSR program by integrating and aligning it with other reforms.

Dovetail with the Tipping Point Strategy: CSR is but one component of a comprehensive, systemic set of reforms designed to produce significant and lasting improvements in California's low-performing schools.

Recommendation 2. Further test CSR's potential to improve the achievement of low income/minority students by providing additional resources to create and evaluate pilots with even smaller class sizes in selected schools.

Dovetail with the Tipping Point strategy: While the Tipping Point strategy does not call for class sizes smaller than 20, it is designed specifically to effect change in California's lowest performing schools whose students are predominantly from minority and low-income families. In addition, the proposed pilot would provide an opportunity to evaluate CSR in grades 4 – 12.

Recommendation 3. Further explore why and how CSR works by identifying best instructional practices in small classes.

Dovetail with the Tipping Point strategy: On-site, external support teams will coordinate professional development activities at Tipping Point schools. These activities will provide an opportunity for teachers to learn about instructional practices that take advantage of smaller class sizes.

Recommendation 4. Before undertaking any statewide effort to expand CSR to additional grades, policymakers should ensure the state has sufficient facilities and qualified teachers.[42]

Dovetail with the Tipping Point strategy: A central component of the Tipping Point strategy is the formation of effective, collaborative, highly qualified teams of teachers. As discussed in the section on Physical Environment (pp. 21 - 22), Tipping Point schools must have adequate facilities, and they must be clean, safe, and conducive to learning.

CSR, as a component of the Tipping Point strategy, is justified based on the body of research demonstrating its potential to improve student learning, especially in California's lowest performing schools whose students are predominantly from minority and low-income families. In addition, the strategy is not only consistent with all of the recommendations of the CSR research consortium cited above, but it actually exceeds them, especially in the area of teacher qualifications.

The table below shows the student-to-teacher ratios and funding sources that the Tipping Point proposal calls for at various grade levels.

Grades	Maximum student-to-teacher ratio	Funding source
K – 3	20:1	Existing state CSR funds
4 – 8	25:1	Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA)*
9 – 12	25:1	Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA)*

In 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 1133 which provides long-term funding for the state's lowest performing schools. QEIA-funded schools will receive the following amounts per pupil for 7 years:

- $500 per pupil for students in grades K-3
- $900 per pupil for students in grades 4-6
- $1,000 per pupil for students in grades 9-12

QEIA schools must ensure that class sizes conform to the student-to-teacher ratios listed in the table above.

Autonomy and Shared Governance

> *People pursue excellence and strive for improvement because they believe in what they are doing.*[43]
>
> – Robert Evans, *The Human Side of School Change*

Much has been written about the merits of site-based management and shared decision-making in education. Many experts correctly believe that democratically run schools are positively associated with higher job satisfaction, stronger professional commitment, better teacher retention rates, increased parent involvement, and increased academic achievement. In her analysis of restructured schools, Linda Darling-Hammond found that the successful ones consistently provided opportunities for ownership and invention:

> *The greater control over their work that staff gain from their participation in decision making is a powerful incentive to remain in the school and in the profession as well as to continue the work of change. The psychology of positive action—of doing rather than being done unto—is important for developing self-efficacy and for motivating purposeful effort.*[44]

Democratically run schools are often more successful not just because parents and teachers acquire a sense of ownership and commitment; they are also more successful because critical decisions about the mission of the school, the way it is organized, what is taught and how, are better informed. And teachers in these schools are far less likely to leave teaching.[45]

But just because the autonomy gained through site-based management is positively correlated with educational success, this does not mean autonomy is easily achieved—especially among people who are not used to having it. Robert Evans observes:

> *Participation and collegiality may ultimately improve a school's effectiveness, but they are very difficult to achieve. They ask of people a remarkable sophistication and commitment, a fundamental shift in roles and perspective that is hard for any workforce to develop, especially if it must maintain its traditional functions and master other innovations at the same time.*[46]

Evans believes that the most serious challenges to autonomy come in two forms: resistance and complexity. Resistance is evident among teachers who prefer the status quo and see no reason for change—particularly from those who doubt that their ideas for improvement will be taken seriously. Resistance also comes from teachers who are unwilling to give up the little free time they have for additional meetings. And because the governance process can be complex, teachers often struggle because most have little training and experience with such matters. Then poor decisions get made and participants begin questioning their collective ability to make sound decisions.

Michael Fullan, a strong advocate of site-based management, also warns of the perils of "hyper-collaboration." Simply giving people the power to make decisions and the opportunity to collaborate does not necessarily lead to improvement. He argues that misguided collaboration can lead to a culture of "groupthink" in which participants do not dissent and they conform to a single norm. And it can lead to "balkanization" when factions form and begin working against one another, or when the entire school cuts itself off from the outside.

We know that it is important for all members of a team to participate in an effective collaborative environment, but we also know that it is unrealistic, even counter-productive, to involve teachers in every administrative decision that is made at a school.

With these challenges and pitfalls in mind, how then do the Tipping Point teams take advantage of the benefits associated with increased autonomy from the school district? Clearly, they begin by avoiding the assumption that merely giving teams the authority to make decisions will lead to positive outcomes. Instead, they continue by learning from the experiences of those who have attempted to conduct schools democratically.[47] To be successful, the teams may want to follow these steps:

Before the teams are formed, obtain clear and specific guidelines from the superintendent's office (and, if appropriate, the Board of Trustees) regarding the level of autonomy that will be given to the school. For example, to what extent will the team be allowed to set the school's educational mission, educational goals, curriculum, instructional approach, and methodologies for evaluating student and teacher performance? What funds will be available to the school? What discretion will the team have in allocation of these funds? Recruit administrators and teachers who thrive in a dynamic, changing environment. Not everybody falls into this category. Despite the way people want to see themselves, many really are more comfortable working in settings that are somewhat static and predictable.

During the planning period, teams should develop an arrangement that ensures democratic participation but does not interfere excessively with instructional activities. These arrangements should enable the team to make decisions and move forward with plans even when a consensus among team members cannot be achieved.
As discussed earlier, the school must be structured so that teams have sufficient time away from the classroom in order to participate in a variety of activities including school governance.

Leadership

> *The Law of the Few says that there are exceptional people out there who are capable of starting epidemics. All you have to do is find them.* [48]
>
> – Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*

One thing common to almost every successful urban school is a strong and competent principal. Unfortunately, the conditions principals face in these schools are often so demanding and stressful that many—even the successful ones—do not stay long. What are the qualities that effective administrators bring to these schools and what, specifically, are the qualities needed to lead the Tipping Point teams? How do we create an environment that enables principals to be inspiring and effective leaders and entices them to stay? Much of the current literature on school leadership paints an image of an effective school administrator that contrasts sharply with ideals popular in the past.

> *Our traditional views of leaders—as special people who set the direction, make key decisions, and energize the troops—are deeply rooted in an individualistic and nonsystemic world view. Especially in the West, leaders are heroes—great men (and occasionally women) who 'rise to the fore' in times of crises…At its heart, the traditional view of leadership is based on assumptions of people's powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master the forces of change, deficits which can be remedied only by a few good leaders.*[49]

The fact that so many urban schools have such a difficult time attracting good principals is surely due to the perception, even if it is not the reality, that they must perform heroically. But not only are principals-as-heroes hard to come by, they are not as effective as we might think. This is because they leave untapped the wealth of skill, expertise, and leadership potential of many teachers and parents. An overly dominant, take-charge administrator who lacks confidence in others' ability to make important decisions usually makes matters worse by alienating staff and lowering morale. Without an opportunity to lead or to take an active role in the governance of the school, many teachers become passive and simply do what they are told. Others, of course, resist and refuse to cooperate.

"By contrast," Fullan says, "the new leader's work for the future is *building learning organizations*."[50] An effective administrator develops capacity for success within the school and the community, not just through his or her intrinsic skills and talents. He or she must have genuine confidence that teachers, staff and parents are capable of constructing a coherent vision for the school, managing change, and serving as competent leaders

themselves. Many principals who are successful in today's schools are engaged in the following types of activities, precisely the kinds in which a Tipping Point team leader should be engaged:

- They help establish and preserve a school mission that is learning-centered and child-focused.
- They have a vision but are willing to have it shaped by teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. They work to ensure that every policy, practice, and decision is guided by the mission of "what we, together, can do for children."
- They build a team by developing trust and loyalty, and by maintaining an environment that encourages dialogue and cooperation.
- They know how to manage conflict and how to avoid the common pitfalls of collaboration. Unlike many principals who failed in reconstituted schools, they understand that the needs of students and those of teachers are not mutually exclusive—that one cannot support students without also providing support for teachers.
- They recruit teachers with potential for effective leadership and cultivate leadership skills among existing staff.
- They provide opportunities, time, and support for those who want to lead. Such a principal might, for example, call upon a group of teachers to construct and coordinate the professional development plan for the school. A group of teachers and parents might be called upon to review the school's evaluation practices and recommend changes that would make them more useful.
- They encourage experimentation and risk-taking in order to establish the school as an organization that learns. In such an environment they expect mistakes to be made but insist on "failing forward."[51]
- They engage constantly with others in inquiry, data gathering, and evaluation of performance against the school's mission and appropriate standards and benchmarks.
- They seek to understand the systemic complexities of the school and its relationship to other entities (e.g., the district, the union, parent and community groups, and the state).
- They facilitate a process of shared governance. They strive to achieve consensus but insist on moving forward even when a consensus cannot be reached.
- They understand and have experience dealing with the kind of challenges presented at the target school.

This is a tall order and arguably describes the better meaning of "heroic." But there is one additional skill that will be especially important to this person, something that Gladwell discovered people have when they start social epidemics. She must be an effective salesperson. She must be capable of selling the Tipping Point team concept and, just as important, herself, to prospective teachers. After all, this is a significant commitment—even a leap of faith—that she will ask these teachers to make. Many of the teachers will have job security and be successful and satisfied in their current assignment. Joining a Tipping Point team would require some to drive considerable distances to unfamiliar and unsafe neighborhoods, to work in a school where few have wanted to teach before, and teach children who may be far less prepared to learn than those they are accustomed to. The

concept of the Tipping Point team is a compelling one, but given the tough, challenging environment of the high-poverty schools that will be targeted, no one should underestimate the recruitment challenge faced by the people who will be asked to sell the program.

In *Why Teams Don't Work*, Harvey Robbins and Michael Finley say one of the myths of leadership is that it ensures success. "Strong leadership is useless if the people following the leader are incompetent or uninterested in the team task. A fundamentally bad team cannot be 'led'—except perhaps to a place of execution."[52] Even if a principal selected to lead a Tipping Point team possesses all of the other characteristics necessary to make the school a success, it simply won't matter if she, or perhaps someone else working with her, cannot sell the idea at the outset to the pool of competent prospects.

This is key, for unless competent teachers are willing to go to and stay at these low-performing schools and create an aggregation of excellence and collegial support, no amount of leadership will be sufficient for turning these schools around. If effective teachers *do* choose to create vital and supportive clusters, then this positive educational epidemic stands a chance of tipping low-performing, high-poverty schools toward sustainable success. Excellent leaders are necessary. So are excellent followers.

A Well-Rounded Curriculum

> *Many teachers' instinctive discomfort with rationalized curriculum schemes is supported by recent research on learning. This research has found that students taught to memorize bite-sized pieces of information and to apply simple algorithms are able to parrot back information on exercises that resemble the style in which the information was delivered, but these students have little capacity to use the information in novel circumstances or to connect ideas across lessons, subjects, or domains of thought. That is, they have not truly understood.*[53]
>
> – Linda Darling-Hammond, *The Right to Learn*

As pressure mounts on schools to produce higher test scores, many have begun to narrow the curriculum: to eliminate or reduce time spent on tasks that do not appear to have an immediate impact on achievement scores. It is not just art and music that have been cut. Many elementary teachers have virtually abandoned mainstream subjects like science and social studies, although some teachers willing to take the risk admit that they "sneak" these other subjects in from time to time.

Those who defend the heavy emphasis on "basics"(i.e., reading, writing, and computation) argue that if students do not know how to read, they cannot possibly learn about science and social studies. Those who are far behind academically, the argument goes, cannot afford to take time for non-essential subjects. How can they be expected to gain an understanding of the world or to think critically if they cannot read, write, and compute?

However, one could argue that *unless* these students have an opportunity to experience a rich, varied and stimulating curriculum, there is little chance any of them will really get the "basics." Nor will they learn much about art, music, science or social studies—some of the most fundamental and meaningful aspects of life. The fact is that no matter how much time is spent teaching a subject or how much pressure is exerted on students to score well on

tests, in the absence of a stimulating, well-rounded curriculum, little learning of any kind will take place. Most students will become disengaged, only confounding the problem of poor academic achievement. And when *will* students learn about social studies and science? Can we assume these students will somehow pick up all the richness that was set aside sometime later in their education? Students in low-performing schools do not need more exposure to highly-scripted, teacher-proof reading programs; they need well-prepared teachers who know how to teach reading and who will present a balanced and stimulating curriculum—the same things most students in wealthier schools get.

Ironically, the prospect of teaching disinterested students, the inability to offer a well-rounded curriculum, and the pressure to raise achievement scores only make it more difficult for these schools to attract and retain qualified teachers. Teachers who take their craft seriously and have devoted considerable time to strengthening their pedagogical skills, who have learned to construct meaningful learning activities that lead to a genuine understanding and appreciation of subject matter are not drawn to schools in which their expertise is largely irrelevant.[54]

If, however, we offer teachers the opportunity to construct and teach a rich and varied curriculum in a low-income school, there is good reason to believe many more will be drawn to these schools, especially if we give teachers the time, resources, and a supportive team environment in which to work. This is evident in many successful high-poverty schools where considerable attention is paid to subjects not typically deemed basic.

> *Teachers at KIPP [in New York] are in school during the week from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., four hours on Saturday, and for two months during the summer. Yet KIPP has no difficulty attracting good teachers. As Mike Wallace reported in a recent episode of 60 Minutes, many teachers leave their posts in other public schools and come to KIPP precisely because they want to be a part of a school that works—no matter what the demands are. "We put in 60, 70, 80-hour weeks here," says Josh Zoia, a science teacher at KIPP in New York. "I was doing that in my old school and it wasn't working. I was driving myself crazy. Here you put those hours in and look what happens."*[55]

At another "outlier" school, George Washington Elementary in Chicago, music and the arts are popular categories of discretionary spending. The school's principal, Craig Ergang, maintains that any successful school must invest in the arts. " 'Art is the key to success for so many students. For low-income children it exposes them to so much they would never get elsewhere.' Ergang even pays his music teacher extra to assemble the band in the morning before school starts."[56] Researchers who studied what 21 outlier schools have in common report that, "[a]t KIPP in New York, Rozelle in Memphis, and GAMP in Philadelphia—all high-achieving, low-income schools—the arts comprise the largest component of the school's spending on instruction."[57]

Contrary to the belief that subjects like art and music are unnecessary and costly frills, the evidence from outlier schools demonstrates that an engaging, well-rounded curriculum may be a necessary condition for attracting good teachers and achieving academic excellence. When Tipping Point principals begin recruiting teachers, they will want to take full advantage of the selling power of this "incentive."

To some, this argument may sound glib, even slightly smug. After all, not even the most die-hard "Back to Basics" reformer would completely discredit the benefit of music and art to public school students. But, California's current content standards consist of five separate strands: English Language Arts, Mathematics, History-Social Science, Science, and Visual and Performing Arts. The fact that schools are tested on and held accountable primarily for results in English and Math has led many schools to place less emphasis on, and in come cases, completely ignore student learning relative to the other standards.

Still, one should not assume that a call for a rich, well-rounded curriculum is a radical one or extends beyond what is expected by the state. This proposal simply calls for a curricular emphasis upon *all* of the state's content standards and not just the ones that are tested. The evidence from outlier schools indicates that an emphasis upon a well-rounded curriculum by well-supported, committed teams of teachers will lead to increased student learning in all areas.

External Support

> *…all of the success stories in this book are founded on strong ongoing relationships between external support groups and internal teams.*[58]
>
> – Michael Fullan*, Change Forces*

Successful school reform efforts begin with strong internal leaders who share a promising reform agenda and the confidence of their colleagues. But the likelihood of ultimate success is dramatically higher when this internal team has a strong partnership with an effective external school-reform partner or support provider.[59]

What particular value does the external partner bring to the reform process?

- Advocacy for the future: Few activities face greater day-to-day operating pressures than schooling: The teacher must deal right now with the unexpected needs and problems that arise in the course of his day, and he must be prepared for tomorrow (or experience a terrible day). The principal faces similar pressures. As each of the many daily demands for action presents itself, it is hard to refer constantly or sometimes even at all to the school's reform vision and values, and even harder to devote time on a sustained basis to planned reform initiatives. Share of mind is generally dominated by the urgent. External partners can serve as a powerful counter-balance to the tyranny of the day-to-day. Since they are engaged explicitly to advance the reform process, their presence alone reinforces awareness of the reform agenda. Moreover, external partners can prompt meetings on key reform initiatives and otherwise keep the reform process alive in people's minds and actions.

- An insider-outsider perspective: Leaders of school-reform processes, like anyone trying to accomplish something important and difficult, need both to immerse themselves totally in their organization *and* step back conceptually. An "outsider" to the organization—if sufficiently knowledgeable about the organization and

committed to the leaders' vision and values—can serve as the mirror and thought partner that leaders need in order to take that step back and see, think, and interpret afresh.

- Organizational disciplines that may be new to the internal team: In order to develop the kind of organizational effectiveness that high-performing schools need, their leaders and staffs must develop ways of thinking and working that generally are new to most of them. For example, Partners in School Innovation, a school-reform organization that concentrates on serving schools in low-income communities throughout the Bay Area, has identified three "core competences" that such schools need to develop:

    1) A systemic approach to teaching and learning—constantly examining diagnostic assessment data and other information to ascertain what's working for which students, and continuously making adjustments in order to advance the learning of all students. This helps close the achievement gap between students from low-income backgrounds, most of color, and their more affluent peers.

    2) Learning-focused leadership of the school as a whole—organizing and running the school so that priority attention and active leadership are given to progress in students' learning and to teachers' continuous learning and improvement in performance (rather than to the behavior management and administrative requirements that become preoccupations in so many schools).

    3) Sustained management of ongoing reform processes—management that internalizes continuous-improvement disciplines and ultimately makes the "advocacy for the future" role of the external partner unnecessary.

Whatever the organizational development agenda of a particular "tipping point" school, it is much more likely to establish effective new ways of working—different from those that its staff members have experienced in the past—if it has an external partner with expertise in building the kind of organization that the school aspires to become.

Practical implementation help: In the best circumstances, an external partner can take on some direct reform responsibilities (under the overall guidance of internal leadership), thus deepening and accelerating the process. This can involve facilitation of internal discussions and, occasionally, conflict-resolution processes that can be difficult for insiders to handle. And with certain external partners, it can include delegating staff work in preparation or follow-up of specific meetings, analyzing data more extensively than school staff have time for, or doing some of the legwork to establish relationships with community organizations.

Parent/Community Involvement

> *Members of the [neighborhood] association reported that the school is committed to helping the residents restore pride in their neighborhood. One parent who served on the committee reported three different events involving the school and the community: "[First,] we had a barbecue two months ago. Everybody came. [Secondly,] when school first started, the school identified children who couldn't afford school supplies. They bought everything they needed. [Finally,] the last two Saturdays, everyone came out to work: the superintendent, board members, high school and middle school students, Centerville kids [more than 50], the residents, with and without children, and teachers. We had our trash bags and we spent the entire day cleaning up and trying to make it beautiful again, the way it used to be."60*
>
> –The Charles A. Dana Center*, Hope for Urban Education*

Highly effective schools have several things in common. At the top of the list is a competent and caring staff, but most also have strong participation and support from parents. In these schools parents don't just show up at parents' night or assist with school fundraisers; they help set goals, assist in the evaluation and planning process, and communicate regularly with teachers. Most important, they know how their children are doing and provide the kind of support at home that enables their children to succeed in school. Members of the community and local organizations also play an active role in helping these schools achieve success. They, too, participate in setting the reform agenda, developing change strategies and, in many cases, bringing additional resources to the school.

Unfortunately, such support is often missing in high-poverty, urban schools. Many assume the reason for this is parents' lack of formal education and their inability to assist their children with academic subjects. Some suggest that these parents simply don't care.

The existence of more plausible explanations reveals the fallacies inherent in these assumptions. While many parents are unsure how to help their children academically, few whose children attend high poverty schools receive specific guidance on what they can do. Many poor parents avoid contact with teachers because of their own negative experiences in school settings; others because they are not proficient English speakers. Consequently, many feel intimidated, even resentful. A shortage of qualified staff also contributes to the lack of parent involvement in high-poverty schools. The inexperienced teachers working in these challenging environments often operate in a survival mode, attending only to the most rudimentary elements of their work. Few have the time or knowledge necessary to promote effective parent involvement. If the school itself lacks stability, if it's been without strong leadership, chances are it also lacks an on-going, well-organized parent involvement program. These conditions only reinforce parents' reluctance to get involved. Furthermore, if the school is dysfunctional and the parents are not involved, there is little chance these schools will get support from the community—not for lack of concern, but because their support is perceived to be unlikely to make a palpable difference.

When urban schools develop the capacity and commitment to involve parents and the community, results can be significant. In their study of outlier schools, for instance, authors of "Hope for Urban Education" concluded that "[c]hanges in parental and community

relations were central to the success of each school."[61] The following is part of a case study of Burgess Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia:

> *Principal Carter, teachers, and parents highlighted the increase in parent involvement as one of the most noteworthy changes at Burgess. Six years prior, only one or two parents would help out regularly at the school; now, in contrast, ten or fifteen parents are generally at school on any given day. Likewise, attendance at the PTA meetings has grown tremendously. In the past, only 10 or so parents would attend sporadically held meetings. Currently, PTA meetings are held monthly without fail and attendance has soared. More than 100 parents attended the last meeting.*
>
> *At Burgess, efforts to increase parent involvement are primarily aimed at enhancing parents' ability to support their children's schooling. Carter, for example, constantly spoke of "raising parents' awareness" so that they would push their children to perform and be better able to help their children with schoolwork. Toward that end, Burgess staff have worked hard to incorporate parents in the classroom and include them in special academic programs.*[62]

Developing support from parents and the community does not come easily or without a concerted effort from the school. When parents and members of the community learn that their dysfunctional school is about to undergo significant reform, some will undoubtedly react with skepticism or resistance, especially if they have seen reforms come and go without making a lasting difference. The first thing Tipping Point teams will want to establish with parents and community members is trust and communication. To this end, they would be well-advised to follow a simple recommendation of the Education Commission of the States: "Listen to people first, talk later."[63]

Overcoming resistance and developing strong relationships with parents and the community will be vital to the success of the Tipping Point initiative. Early in the initial planning phase, teachers and administrators will need to reach out and listen to all parents and community leaders, not just the ones who have come forth in the past. They will need to discuss the rationale for the changes and invite interested persons to take an active role in the project. After the planning phase is complete, they will need to conduct regular assessments of the quality of involvement and take whatever actions are necessary to ensure that it remains strong and healthy. This aspect of the project will undoubtedly prove challenging and time consuming for the Tipping Point teams, but the benefits will justify the effort.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Michael Fullan observes that "[m]ost reform initiatives at best have a theory of education, and rarely have a theory of action that addresses the local context or conditions."[64] What has been presented thus far in this proposal represents a theory of education and a theory of change based on concepts in Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*. The following section lays out a theory of action and a broadly defined plan designed to guide the implementation of the Tipping Point model. Since it purposely lacks specificity and local perspective, the plan is intended to serve only as a starting point for discussion. A more comprehensive plan should be constructed by local stakeholders who understand the unique challenges that must be overcome in order to achieve success. Further refinements will be made by members of the Tipping Point teams as they learn about the model and the conditions presented by the schools in which they will work.

Step 1. Learning About the Tipping Point Plan

The Tipping Point plan is doable though perhaps a bit daunting in its comprehensiveness, for the plan only works if sponsors make a strong commitment to the fiscal, educational, and unabashedly hopeful components of the plan. To help initiate this commitment, Dr. Futernick and members of the Tipping Point Advisory Team (listed in Appendix E) will present this proposal to:

- state education officials
- officers from foundations that support educational innovation.

Once all questions have been addressed and a commitment to conduct a pilot of the Tipping Point plan has been made from either or both of these sources, those who choose to sponsor the pilot will need to inform school districts of the opportunity to participate, the criteria that will be used in selecting Tipping Point schools (criteria described below in Step 5), and the district's role and responsibilities if some of its schools are selected.

Step 2. Local Commitment to the Tipping Point Strategy

A critical first step is developing a consensus for the Tipping Point strategy among major stakeholders: the school board, administration, teachers and their union, school site council, parent groups, and local community organizations. Representatives from these groups should have ample opportunity to hear and read about the plan and engage in open dialogues so that questions and concerns can be shared. There is little chance the strategy will work if it is sought by, or imposed by, just one group or a small number of people, no matter how strongly they believe in it or how much authority they have to make it happen.

Step 3. Formation of a Tipping Point Design Team

Once the district's administration, board of trustees, and teachers' union have agreed to implement the Tipping Point plan, the first step will be to form a design team consisting of a diverse group of stakeholders committed to the Tipping Point concept. Suggested membership:

- Project leader
- District administrator
- Several teachers
- Classified staff person

- Parent representative
- Community representative

The initial tasks of the design team would include:

- Seeking support for the project from parents and community members
- Selecting the target schools
- Selecting the principal
- Refining the implementation plan

Step 4. Recruitment and Selection of Principal

The selection of a strong collaborative educational site leader is vital to the success of this project. At the very start, this person must be capable of selling the Tipping Point concept in order to obtain a large pool of suitable teaching candidates from which tipping point team members can be selected. Many of the qualities sought in this principal are described in the section on leadership (pp. 26-28), but the most important is that this person have a proven track record as a team-oriented leader willing to make a multi-year commitment to this project.

The district's "administrator application and interview process" should be examined and modified as appropriate for this position. Interviewers should be knowledgeable about the Tipping Point strategy and qualities required by principals who will be asked to lead the turnaround effort.

Step 5. Selection and Preparation of Target School

Principals hired to lead Tipping Point schools should work closely with the design team to determine which of the district's schools are best suited for this project.

Alternatively, specific site selection criteria might include:

- Low academic performance despite ongoing participation in school improvement programs (e.g., II/USP, High Priority Schools Grant Program, NCLB Program Improvement)
- High concentrations of students from poor families
- High concentrations of English learners
- High concentrations of underqualified and inexperienced teachers

Step 6. Recruitment of the Teams

The recruitment of strong Tipping Point teams, which will ultimately include teachers administrators, and classified staff (e.g., classroom aides, secretaries, custodians), is crucial to the success of this initiative. In order for effective recruitment to happen, the principal and hiring committee will want to draw from a large pool of qualified candidates from which to choose. The following suggestions are offered to guide the recruitment process:

- Establish a small recruitment team. The recruitment process is a critical step, taking considerable time to do well. The principal should seek the assistance of a core group of teacher-advisors who can:
    - Identify prospective teacher candidates
    - Help sell the Tipping Point team concept to prospective candidates

- Assist with the screening, interviewing, and selection processes

Persons the principal might ask to serve in this capacity include:

- Members of the Tipping Point design team
- Teachers and school administrators whom the principal has determined will be part of the school team
- Parent representatives
- Members of the external support team
- Representatives of the district personnel office

- Construct the right message. The principal and design team should construct a clear and compelling message that will be conveyed to prospective team members. A written document should describe the underlying features of the re-designed school, provide a realistic picture of the challenges, and identify the kinds of teachers he or she is seeking. (As starter material, certain items can be used from this document.) The principal should take full advantage of the features that will be attractive to teachers including:

  - Being part of a carefully selected team of teachers
  - Having significant, concentrated time for planning and professional development
  - Additional compensation for summer "intensives"
  - Additional teachers on staff to allow for team activities and time away from the classroom
  - Reduced class-size
  - Local decision-making authority
  - Opportunity to offer a well-rounded curriculum
  - Support for professional development
  - On-site, external support team
  - Strong, collaborative leadership

- Finding promising candidates. One approach could be to advertise positions throughout the region. Certainly the position will be advertised throughout the district, but rather than casting a wide net through a highly visible advertising campaign, a more efficient and effective approach would be for the principal and recruitment advisory team to obtain recommendations on prospective candidates from trusted colleagues. These persons could be contacted personally and invited to attend informational meetings.

- Teacher pools to draw from. Teachers who have worked at the target school should be invited to become part of the applicant pool. Some will have considerable local knowledge that could be of great value to the team.

  Other teacher pools that can be drawn from include:

  - Easy-to-staff schools within district (pulling good candidates away from other hard-to-staff schools should be avoided)
  - Neighboring districts

- Local teacher credentialing institutions

- Selling the idea. The principal and hiring committees must be committed to participating in dialogues with candidates. They must listen carefully to the questions, concerns and suggestions offered by prospective teachers and be prepared to incorporate sensible suggestions into the implementation plans.

  After the initial meetings, time must be given for teachers to think about the idea and to talk among themselves. Opportunities should be given for interested persons to meet again, ask more questions, and get to know those who might be part of the team.

  Customized employment applications should be given to interested parties. This document would re-state the basic features of the plan and contain a personal message from the principal and design team. Applicants would be asked, among other things, to explain their reasons for wanting to be part of this particular Tipping Point initiative and to describe the unique contributions they believe they could make.

  Classroom observations, follow-up phone calls with applicants' references, and additional one-on-one interviews with applicants should be conducted to assist the hiring committee in making the final selection.

Step 7. Selection of the Team

Individual qualities. First and foremost, teachers selected for Tipping Point teams should be competent and committed individuals. Preferred characteristics include:

- Instructional skills match needs of target population
- Strong desire to work in diverse, low-income setting
- Interest and ability to work collaboratively in team environment.

Team qualities. Selection of teachers should also be made with careful consideration to the makeup of the team as a whole. Preferred characteristics of the team include:

- A majority with experience. While there are good reasons to include some beginning teachers on the team, there must be enough veterans who have the time and expertise to mentor them.
- Optimal match of teacher experience and expertise with needs at target school (e.g., technology, EL instruction, literacy, art).

Screening process. The principal, along with the recruitment team, should employ multiple methods to gather information on teacher candidates including:

- A review of their applications
- Interviews (individual and group)
- Classroom observations

- Observations in group setting (at this point, candidates will have participated in several group functions associated with this process. It is important to see how well they interact with and listen to others.)

Final selections. Ultimately the principal in consultation with a hiring committee should have final authority in selecting candidates for the team.

Step 8. Summer "Intensives"

The Tipping Point plan calls for two "intensives"—one held during the summer before the redesigned school opens and the second during the summer after the first academic year is completed. If planned and conducted thoughtfully, they will achieve several critical objectives: building strong relationships and a team ethic, an opportunity to establish a clear vision of what it expects to accomplish in the following year, and a plan for achieving this vision. If it's a second summer intensive, it should also reflect on achievements and mistakes of the previous year.

Planning the "Intensives"

Careful planning is necessary to maximize the value of the summer "intensives" and the principal and several team members would be well-advised to begin this process several weeks in advance. Clearly defined goals and a detailed agenda should be established. Given the advantages of conducting these types of events away from the school, alternative venues that are affordable and accessible to all participants should be explored.

Participation

In addition to the principal, teachers, and the external support team, everyone who works at the schools (e.g., aides, secretaries, custodians, volunteers, resource providers) should be considered part of the Tipping Point team. In addition to all of the teachers and administrators, representatives from each of these groups, along with selected parents and community members, should be invited to participate in the summer intensives.

Building Relationships

The success of this initiative is predicated on building strong, trusting relationships among all members of the Tipping Point teams. Those selected to work in these schools will have attitudes and dispositions conducive to collaboration, but this alone will not guarantee the formation of teams. Building trust and community among all members will require deliberate action starting at the first summer intensive and it will require ongoing cultivation throughout the school year.

As already mentioned, establishing strong connections with parents and the local community is central to the Tipping Point model, and it must occur early in the process. Members of the Tipping Point team will doubtless be excited about the opportunity that awaits them, but many stakeholders away from the school site may have no knowledge of what's taken place. Some will be misinformed and confused. Others will be skeptical or resentful of the changes that have taken place. These questions should be raised at the first summer intensive:

- What has been conveyed thus far to parents and the community about the school?
- How extensively has this information been conveyed?
- Are there misconceptions and resentments?

- What short-term strategies can be employed to respond to concerns?
- What long-term strategies can be employed to ensure strong parent involvement at the school and with their own child's learning?

Developing a Shared Vision
The development and articulation of a common vision should be one of the team's earliest undertakings. Teams should work together in identifying a sense of purpose, a core set of values, and the overarching goals that will guide their work.

Identifying and Addressing Challenges
Early in the planning process, teams must begin learning about the context of the work that awaits them. For some team members, the school, the students, the parents, and the community will differ from what they are accustomed to. Team members should spend time listening to teachers and staff who have worked at the school (before it became part of the Tipping Point team) and with students and parents in order to understand the specific challenges, opportunities, and critical issues that await them.

Developing an Approach to Curriculum and Instruction
The team will need to adopt an instructional plan that will best enable them to achieve the new mission for the school. They will need to determine whether they want (or must) use district-adopted programs and materials, and whether they have sufficient resources to use alternatives. They will need to determine the degree to which some or all of the instructional staff will adhere to particular instructional approaches such as project-based or integrated-thematic learning. Teachers across grade levels should determine how best to achieve and maintain continuity from one grade to another.

A problem encountered by many charter schools is that they attempt to accomplish too much too soon. Tipping Point teams would be well-advised to focus initially on achieving those goals that are most essential and achievable. Though the basic vision of Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* is non-gradual and non-incremental – i.e., all social epidemics are meant to take off 'like wildfire"—in truth, all change invariably seeks and celebrates small and early wins.

Participating in Professional Development Activities
The team should construct a professional development plan that takes into account:

- The specific instructional objectives it established for the school
- The professional development needs of individual team members
- The people and organizations that will provide professional development assistance (e.g., other teachers on the staff, members of the external support team, district and county personnel, outside agencies)
- The timing and location of professional development activities
- Budget requirements.

Decision-making
As discussed in the section on decision-making and shared governance, the team should develop an arrangement that ensures democratic participation but does not interfere needlessly with instructional activities. This might be accomplished by having the team

delineate the kinds of decisions that need to be made at the school and then agree how and by whom these decisions will be made. This process will help diminish resistance and enable the team to deal effectively with the complex problems they will face. It will also enable the team to make decisions and move forward with plans even when a consensus among team members cannot be achieved.

The Second Summer Intensive
A specific agenda for the second summer intensive should be constructed by the team sometime in the spring. This event will provide an opportunity to assess progress made and lessons learned from the first year. The team will again want to set new goals for the coming year and establish a plan to achieve them.

Step 9. Execution and Continual Recalibration

Once a plan is established and the school year begins, the team moves forward and implements its plan, continuing to collaborate and fine tune as the year unfolds.

Evaluation and Documentation

Evaluations will be conducted for the first three years of the project. Since a central purpose of this Tipping Point initiative is to create long-term stability of the teaching community and academic success of the students, provisions should also be made to evaluate progress at five-, seven-, and 10-year intervals. Ideally, longitudinal studies of students who attended participating schools should be conducted in order to compare their educational progress with those in similar, non-participating schools.

The following indicators should be included in the evaluation process:

- Achievement
  - Teacher-adopted assessment tools for assessment of academic outcomes linked to state and district standards
  - Teacher-adopted assessment tools for non-academic outcomes
  - STAR/API
  - English Language Development Test

- Students
  - Satisfaction with teachers, curriculum, and school
  - Personal sense of academic growth
  - Dropout rates
  - Transience rates
  - Truancy rates
  - Disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions, expulsions)
  - Incidence of violence

- Staffing
  - Teacher and principal qualifications
  - Retention rates
  - Satisfaction with project, leadership, external support team, curriculum, and school

- Parents and community
  - Parent and family participation at home and at school
  - Satisfaction with staff, curriculum, and school as a whole
  - Satisfaction with progress of their own students

BEYOND RECONSTITUTION: A STAFFING PLAN BASED ON CHOICE AND CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

During the past two decades, a small number of school districts have employed a reform strategy called "reconstitution" to turn around failing schools. When schools are reconstituted, the faculty is disbanded and replaced by new teachers, a new administration, and sometimes a new approach to instruction.[65] Teachers and staff are typically allowed to re-apply for their positions but, in some instances, all or the majority end up transferring to other schools. This strategy was first employed in the 1980's when 6 schools were reconstituted in the San Francisco Unified School District. Similar programs were implemented soon afterward in Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Philadelphia, and Miami.

In recent years, reconstitution has become less popular, not only because of disappointing results, but because of considerable criticism from those who believe it unfairly blames teachers for problems over which they have little control. In San Francisco, where reconstitution has been put on hold, many teachers "refer to the policy as 'punitive,' 'cruel,' and 'a scapegoating device.'"[66] The National Education Association reported that, "[f]or school staff the process is frequently accompanied by high levels of anxiety and confusion, resentment on the part of those targeted for removal, and a deep frustration caused by blame for factors beyond staff control."[67]

Recent high-profile reconstitution efforts have also been criticized for stripping schools of their autonomy. Teachers speak with frustration about external decision-makers imposing unfair expectations for change. Gary Orfield, a Harvard professor who has studied school reconstitution, explains some of its pitfalls:

> *[S]ome districts may have rushed into reconstitution as a seemingly straightforward—if radical—reform, without committing the proper time and resources to making it work. Another [factor]…is that the negative effects—such as a loss of seasoned staff members to help mentor new recruits—are often quickly and painfully apparent. Your benefits don't come until three or four years down the road, but the costs are immediate, so it's very difficult politically… What seems like a simple idea turns out when you do it to be a lot more complicated.*[68]

Both supporters and opponents of school reconstitution point to the difficulties faced in recruiting qualified faculty to dysfunctional schools. Some of these schools have, in fact, wound up with large numbers of inexperienced teachers. John Flores, principal at a reconstituted middle school in San Francisco, reported reviewing "700 files trying to find veterans, some of whom committed and then backed out."[69] He ended up with a group of mostly young teachers who had no experience working in San Francisco schools.

This example points to one of the problems of recent reconstitution efforts: a failure to implement *systemic change* in the school along with staffing changes. Beyond the recruitment of new staff and the adoption of accountability standards, business in reconstituted schools has in most instances been conducted as usual. Teachers, often with little teaching experience, entered a school facing many of the same obstacles as their predecessors: a lack of time to plan and work as a team, inadequate professional development, little parent and

community involvement, and minimal control over resources and curriculum. Simply replacing teachers with new ones (no matter what expertise or experience they bring) is unlikely to make much of a difference. One of the lessons learned from San Francisco seems to be that a failing school cannot be turned around, even with a reconstituted staff, *unless* systemic changes are made.

There is another dimension of reconstitution that has been overlooked by many who have attempted it, and the consequences of this omission have been just as serious as the ones resulting from a failure to incorporate systemic changes in the reform effort. In many districts, little attention has been paid to the teachers who are displaced by the new staff. While it is true that teachers in reconstituted schools typically have an opportunity to apply to keep their positions, quite often, many of them are not selected. Those who are not, along with those who choose to leave on their own, are either let go (if the district has no contractual obligation to keep them) or are assigned to other schools in the district. Needless to say, most of these teachers are not happy about being transferred involuntarily. This process is particularly painful for those who have worked at a school for a number of years and have established close ties with students, parents and the local community. Perhaps more problematic than the physical move is the humiliation experienced by those who leave—especially the veterans. Even though the district does not call them failures, it's a label most carry with them.

In 1997, after reconstitution had been implemented for three years in San Francisco Unified, about 500 teachers had been affected by personnel changes. Joan-Marie Shelley, then president of the local teachers union observed, "You have walking wounded carrying a lot of depression and bitterness." Beth Reinhard, who interviewed some of the displaced teachers, reported:

> *Three years after her school was reconstituted, Hene Kelly is still fuming. She taught English and health for 20 years at Wilson High School before it was restaffed in 1994. Now, she enjoys developing the district's curriculum on the Holocaust but sorely misses teaching.*
>
> *"I couldn't walk into another school and open myself up again after getting hurt like that," Ms. Kelly said. "The kids were also hurt that their school had been branded."*[70]

But some hardliners might ask, "What difference does it make if these teachers are a little put out? After all, if their schools were failing, they're partly responsible. This is what accountability is all about. Perhaps it will serve as a wake up call to other teachers who are not making the grade."

First, one should not assume that school failure is a consequence of incompetent teaching—not without accounting first for a host of other factors that can contribute to poor school performance such as an unclean, unsafe working environment, out-of-date textbooks, and high administrator turnover.

Second, even if some of the displaced teachers are not ideally suited for the new school environment, implementing the reform in a manner that causes them to feel humiliation and

resentment can jeopardize the entire reform effort. Parents and community members with loyalties toward those being displaced may themselves become resentful and therefore unwilling to support their replacements. If other teachers in the district or the teachers' union decide the displaced teachers have been treated unfairly, then relationships between the replacement teachers and their colleagues throughout the district will become strained. None of this is helpful at a time when the new team requires all of the support it can get from parents and colleagues. Nor does this create the kind of atmosphere the district needs if it hopes to employ a re-staffing plan as part of a re-design strategy in other schools.

A Staffing Plan Based on Choice and Clear Expectations for Teachers

We believe there is a way that re-designed schools can achieve the goal of reconstitution while avoiding the problems associated with involuntary transfers. Rather than requiring teachers to transfer to other schools if others determine they are not a good fit for the re-designed school, teachers should be given the option to remain, *but only if* they agree to a clear set of baseline expectations that have been agreed to by a majority of teachers currently working at the school. If a teacher does not want believe he or she would be happy or effective working in the re-designed school, or could not agree to meet the baseline expectations for teachers that have been agreed to by a majority of the current staff, then he or she should elect to transfer to another school. Ideally, the district would offer teachers who opt out some type of preferential transfer option so they understand they are not being punished for making this decision. One such option would be to allow these teachers to interview first for vacancies in other district schools. Districts might also consider offering an early retirement option to veteran teachers who do not want to remain at the school and who would prefer not to transfer to another school.

Teachers who remain at the school and who agree to the agreed-upon expectations could, however, be forced to transfer to another school if, over time, there was clear evidence that they were not meeting the baseline expectations. For this process to work, the following two guidelines must be followed:

1) The school must have a clear set of observable teacher expectations that are accepted by a majority of teachers at the Tipping Point school and that can be assessed by an elected evaluation committee at the school.
2) Teachers must be afforded due-process and be allowed to appeal a decision made by the evaluation committee before having to transfer to another school.

A sample set of baseline teacher expectations and a teacher evaluation process can be found in Appendix C.

When implementing the Tipping Point model, administrators will be advised to take specific steps such as those listed below to gain widespread support for the plan and to avoid the pitfalls of reconstitution described above:

1. Seek support from, and collaborate regularly with, parent groups and the teachers' union.

2. Convey the message at every turn that teachers who opt out of the plan are not bad teachers. Emphasize that the goal in selecting a Tipping Point team is to find the *best fit* among team members and the *best fit* for the students at the school.
3. Work with the teachers' union to give teachers who "opt out" high priority opportunities to pursue vacancies in schools of their choice.

The following table describes the differences between reconstitution as it has been practiced in the past and what is called for in the Tipping Point model.

Comparison Between Reconstitution and The Tipping Point Staffing Model

	RECONSTITUTION	TIPPING POINT STAFFING MODEL
APPROACH	• Framed as a "sanction" or punishment for failure • Loss of school site autonomy • Blames displaced teachers for school's failures • Generally opposed by unions	• Framed as an "opportunity" • Increase in school site autonomy • Displaced teachers honored for their commitment, and treated professionally • Similar to intervention strategy called "redesign" that has received support from unions
RECRUITMENT	• New principals given little time to recruit and build team	• New principals given several months to recruit, build team, and develop a plan
	• Traditional approach to recruitment; few new incentives offered to attract teachers	• Multiple incentives offered to prospective candidates
	• A short timeframe that often overlaps with key planning activities	• A longer timeframe that doesn't overlap with key planning activities
	• Veteran teachers recruited from outside district typically take cut in salary	• Veteran teachers potentially recruited from outside the district maintain or see increase in salary
PLANNING	• Three to four months of planning • Little support for professional development activities during or after planning phase • Emphasis on meeting external demands	• Ten to twelve months of planning • Extensive support for teacher-driven professional development during and after planning phase • Emphasis on team-building, collaboration, and a shared vision
IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION	• No change in the level of staffing	• 10% increase in staffing during initial years
	• Little or no change in access to resources to implement change	• Increased access to resources to implement change
	• Little increase in time available for teachers to work directly with colleagues	• More time available for teachers to work directly with colleagues; ongoing team development support
	• No on-site external support team	• On-site external support team
	• Most expectations and benchmarks imposed externally	• Many expectations and benchmarks developed internally and linked to local and state standards
TREATMENT OF DISPLACED TEACHERS	• All teachers forced to re-interview for their jobs	• Teachers develop and adopt baseline expectations for teachers who decide whether to remain at or transfer away from re-designed school
	• Displaced teachers left to fend for themselves; nothing offered beyond what's required in collective bargaining agreement	• Given priority options in district transfer process

CONCLUSION: TIPPING SCHOOLS AFTER THE PILOT

From a "tipping point" perspective, each chronically failing school cannot be helped with a slow, gradualist approach to reform even if the effort is led by a dedicated and competent principal. Something more radical and immediate is needed to break the cycle of failure, something that enables a school to reach a tipping point—a point where it begins performing like an outlier. If the idea spreads successfully to other high-poverty schools, perhaps there will come a time when we no longer have to call them "outliers." In other words, what is needed is a positive conflagration of low-performing schools performing uncommonly and improbably well.

This proposal calls for a sustained and dramatic turnaround through a top-to-bottom redesign of these schools and a coherent system of support mechanisms that will attract teams of committed and competent teachers. That is, teachers who will stay at a school and in turn encourage other committed teachers to join them and stay. The image is something like ongoing, healthy cell division. In assessing the replicability and sustainability of the Tipping Point model, the following questions should be addressed within the evaluation framework:

- What aspects of the plan are essential for successful implementation in similar schools? What aspects are desirable, but not essential?
- Where might resources be reduced or utilized differently in the future?
- What were the unintended consequences of this project?
- How can the expertise and enthusiasm from those at existing sites be leveraged to new locations or to a group that would provide technical assistance to new Tipping Point teams?
- Would there be value in creating an institute or technical assistance center to disseminate findings and assist other districts in implementing the model?

In addition to satisfying these concerns, the Tipping Point model must stand up to a variety of anticipated objections (see Appendix D). For example, those who would claim that excessive resources could buy the same success at any failing school need to understand the enormous investment in reforms, financial and otherwise, that have produced little or no results.

In the end, the success of the Tipping Point model will be measured on the ground, at the participating schools. If this turnaround program succeeds in drawing competent and committed teachers to a few dysfunctional schools, if *those teachers* really can make a lasting difference in the lives of their students and if policy makers and educators become convinced the model should be supported elsewhere, there is a good chance this Tipping Point strategy could lead to the kind of positive social epidemic that spreads to other districts facing similar challenges.

The potential is nothing short of steady educational improvement in our state – a positive domino effect enabling students in some of the highest-poverty, lowest-performing schools to benefit from a stable, powerful, and rich educational experience up to now denied to so many of them. Misery loves company, or so the saying goes. The bigger truth is that

excellence loves company, and we can make that happen using a turnaround, Tipping Point strategy in California.

APPENDIX A: Highlights from a Study of Teacher Retention in California

A Possible Dream: Retaining California Teachers
So All Students Learn

Principal Investigator: Ken Futernick, Ph.D.
California State University

Overview of the study

The purpose of the study was to better understand the staffing patterns of California's diverse public schools—in particular to identify the reasons why some teachers remain where they are, why some transfer to other schools, and why some leave the profession altogether. More specifically, the study sought answers to these questions:

- What factors motivate teachers to enter the profession?
- Among teachers who recently left the profession, what percentage left for reasons associated with compensation or working conditions?
- Among teachers who have left the profession or transferred away from hard-to-staff schools what, specifically, were the reasons?
- How do the reasons offered by teachers leaving the profession differ between those who worked in low-poverty schools and those who worked in high-poverty schools?
- Under what conditions would teachers who have left the profession be willing to teach again in a high-poverty school?
- Under what conditions would teachers working in low poverty schools be willing to transfer to a high-poverty school?
- If additional compensation based on a measure of teaching performance were to be offered to teachers, how would this affect their plans to remain where they are or, in the case of leavers, to return to the classroom?
- What reasons do teachers offer for staying and how do these reasons vary based on where and who they teach?

Report Status

A final report of the study will be released in March 2007.

Findings

The teacher retention study report contains over 45 tables with statistical data pertaining to:

- reasons for entering the profession
- demographics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, years teaching)
- credentials and certifications
- employment status (e.g., current or former teacher, student SES level of school, grades taught)
- factors that account for teachers' decisions to LEAVE the profession (disaggregated by school level, student SES, general education versus special education)
- factors that account for teachers' decisions to remain in the profession (disaggregated by school level, student SES, general education versus special education)
- conditions under which teachers in low-poverty schools would be willing to transfer to high-poverty schools
- effect that merit pay would have on "LEAVERS'" decisions to return to the profession and on "STAYERS'" decisions to remain in the classroom.

Findings that provide support for the Tipping Point Model

Why "STAYERS" remain in the classroom

- **69%** of the "stayers" said the following factor affected their decision to remain in the classroom (rank: 1 of 35)
  The administration and teaching staff were given appropriate authority over curriculum, instruction strategies, school governance, and budgeting.

- **64%** of the "stayers" said the following factor affected their decision to remain in the classroom (rank: 2 of 35)
  I have close professional relationships with other members of the staff

- **64%** of the "stayers" said the following factor affected their decision to remain in the classroom (rank: 3 of 35)
  The staff as a whole works effectively as a team and relationships generally are strong

- **63%** of the "stayers" said the following factor affected their decision to remain in the classroom (rank: 4 of 35)
  I am able to make an important difference in the lives of my students

- **61%** of the "stayers" said the following factor affected their decision to remain in the classroom (rank: 5 of 35)
  The principal is a supportive and effective educational leader

- **55%** of the "stayers" said the following factor affected their decision to remain in the classroom (rank: 12 of 35)
  I have close personal relationships with other members of the staff

- **55%** of the "stayers" said the following factor affected their decision to remain in the classroom (rank: 13 of 35)
  The school environment is clean, safe, and conducive to learning

- **50%** of the "stayers" said the following factor affected their decision to remain in the classroom (rank: 18 of 35)
  The size of my class is manageable

Why "LEAVERS" leave the profession *

- **42%** of the "leavers" said the following factor affected their decision to leave (rank 5 of 34)
  The principal was not a supportive and effective educational leader

- **41%** of the "leavers" said the following factor affected their decision to leave (7 of 34)
  The administration and teaching staff were not given appropriate authority over curriculum, instruction strategies, school governance, and budgeting.

- **36%** of the "leavers" said the following factor affected their decision to leave (8 of 34)
  Not enough time was available for planning and collaboration with colleagues

- **35%** of the "leavers" said the following factor affected their decision to leave (rank: 9 or 34)
  The staff as a whole did not work effectively as a team and relationships generally were not strong

- **34%** of the "leavers" said the following factor affected their decision to leave (11 of 34)
  Most parents were not involved in school activities or their child's education

* "Leavers" in this study are defined as those who left the profession or plan to leave soon because of factors pertaining to compensation and/or working conditions.

Sample comments from "stayers" working in high-poverty schools

No one goes into teaching for the money. The rewards have to be other than that. Over time, the pressures from the feds, the state, and the district related to standards-based testing and tying funding to test results have increased, and the freedom to be creative and the respect for professionalism and education of teachers have dwindled. That takes away a lot of the reward…That erodes the joy for students and the satisfaction of parents, which also takes away a lot of the reward. Our sense of "being in the same boat," being able to commiserate together and support each other when it feels like everyone is beating up on teachers and schools is key in keeping me in the job. Otherwise I would just feel like no one supports teachers, we're disrespected and under-supported, we're micromanaged, and the fun of teaching and learning have been completely taken away. Who would want to keep teaching under those circumstances if there was no support from colleagues either? If one felt completely alone in this?

– Elementary teacher in her 15th year of teaching.

I feel that I can make a difference here. I also work with a great staff. The administration is very supportive (and I have worked in another district where this wasn't the case). The other teachers are also very caring and professional. The parents are supportive. I also feel that we have a voice in decisions at our school.

– Elementary school teacher in her sixth year working in a high-poverty school

I enjoy the school where I am working and the professional staff is better and works together better than most other schools. I substituted for several years before getting my credential so I have had the opportunity to see a large number of schools, probably 50-60. Very infrequently did I ever see a staff that was as concerned, as helpful or as interested in the students as I have here.

–Elementary school teacher in her fifth year working in a high-poverty school

Having people that you can talk to; I have a group of teachers and we meet for coffee before school every morning and that sets us up for the day. I see several of the teachers that I work with on vacation; we go out to lunch, I see them as close friends. Those kinds of relationships are hugely important to me. One of the things we work really, really hard at is when we get new teachers, we call them our baby teachers, we make a huge effort to talk to them and include them and to be friends with them and make sure they come and eat lunch in the cafeteria at least a couple days of week so that they will feel comfortable because so many teachers leave in the first few years. And we are friends, we really are friends.

– Middle school teacher who has taught for 26 years at the same high-poverty school

Sample comments from "leavers"

I love teaching! I miss teaching! However, working 60-70 hours per week on unending paperwork with a completely unsupportive backstabbing political climate where everyone holds tenaciously to his or her own little classroom kingdom rather than working as a team for students benefit has me celebrating daily life outside teaching.

– Middle school special education teacher who taught for seven years before leaving the profession

High-level district administration needs to seek input from classroom teachers and pay serious attention when it becomes apparent that morale at particular schools is very low, and take corrective action in removing or transferring site administrators. Sometimes the principal really is awful and sometimes s/he is just not a good "match" with the staff already in place at the school. I have worked for many VERY fine principals, a few so-so, and two who should have enjoyed some other line of work. It is unfortunate that one of the latter was my last principal; but I've gotten over it.

– Former elementary teacher who taught for 34 years before leaving the profession

[T]he administrators decided how funds should be spent and purchased a basal reading program without consulting the teachers. There was little teacher buy in. Administrators like to mandate and use too many programs at once, rather than a few, strategically chosen assessments and curriculum products that we can actually use in the classroom. There was no vertical or horizontal articulation, so teachers had to re-teach concepts at the beginning of each school year. I found significant gaps in student learning throughout the year, as students had inconsistent mastery of academic content standards. [Teachers need to be involved in] curriculum, assessment, governance, school climate…everything. Doesn't mean that teachers should necessarily make final decisions, but giving teachers some input gives them the feeling that their skills and knowledge are valued and that they have some ownership in their jobs.

– Former elementary teacher who taught for 3 years before leaving the profession

Circumstances under which "leavers" would consider returning to the classroom

- **29%** said they would consider returning if the many working conditions presented to them were corrected, and if they were offered a sufficiently high salary
- **28%** said they would consider returning if the many working conditions presented to them were corrected, even if they were not offered a higher salary
- **22%** said they would not consider returning to the classroom
- **17%** said they would consider returning if they were offered a sufficiently high salary, even if few of the conditions presented to them were not corrected

Circumstances under which "stayers" in low-poverty schools would consider transferring to high-poverty schools

- **61%** said they would not consider transferring to a high-poverty school
- **20%** said they would consider transferring to a high-poverty school if the many working conditions presented to them were corrected, and if they were offered a sufficiently high salary
- **10%** said they would consider transferring to a high-poverty school if they were offered a sufficiently high salary, even if few of the conditions presented to them were not corrected
- **8%** said they would consider transferring to a high-poverty school if the many working conditions presented to them were corrected, even if they were not offered a higher salary

Sample comments about transferring to high-poverty schools:

The only reason I would not *consider teaching at a high poverty school is that, although teachers there are just as good as teachers elsewhere, they receive the brunt of the blame publicly for nonperformance of students and I do not believe this is true or fair. I have many colleagues who love teaching at high poverty schools, but have much more stressful working conditions in everyway compared to mine.*

– Middle school teacher with 19 years of experience

My school is the best example of high morale and professionalism. The environment of competent and excited teachers combined with a caring student-centered principal, have made me not only excited about teaching, but also likely to remain teaching until retirement. Also, having enough instructional assistants to really implement IEPs is an important factor. If those conditions existed in other schools I would move if needed. I have been to over 300 schools in the country and I would tell you I don't see the same professionalism at other schools.

– Middle school special education teacher with 15 years of experience

I would be willing to move if alternative programs were in place, such as a school within a school environment, as well as vocational programs leading to certificates and employment for special education students who cannot meet the more stringent high school graduation requirements. It is important to me to be at a school with fewer students and a sense of community. We have always had this sense of caring and community at [name of city], but it is now difficult to maintain with ,2700 students. This school is twice the size it should be!

– High school special education teacher with 17 years of experience

APPENDIX B: Cost Estimates for Tipping Point Implementation

Assumptions	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Estimated enrollment	600	600	1600
Estimated class size	22	25	25
Teacher Full Time Equivalents (FTE)	28	27	72
Average cost FTE/year	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000
External support team/year	$100,000	$100,000	$150,000
Summer intensives days/year	10	10	10
Summer intensive daily compensation	$330	$330	$330
Costs per year for initial two years			
External support	*$100,000*	*$100,000*	*$150,000*
Teacher compensation for summer intensives	*$92,093*	*$90,000*	*$211,200*
TOTAL	**$192,093**	**$190,000**	**$361,200**
TOTAL (per pupil)	**$320**	**$317**	**$226**
Ongoing annual costs			
Teacher compensation for summer intensives	*$92,093*	*$90,000*	*$211,200*
TOTAL	**$92,093**	**$90,000**	**$211,200**
TOTAL (per pupil)	**$153**	**$150**	**$132**

Appendix C: Teacher Review Process and Baseline Teacher Expectations

TIPPING POINT SCHOOL BASELINE EXPECTATIONS: TEACHER REVIEW PROCESS

Tipping Point Teacher,

The purpose of the baseline teacher review process is to ensure that teachers who elect to work at a Tipping Point school understand what is expected of them and to ensure there is a clear and fair process for evaluating teacher performance at Tipping Point schools. As a Tipping Point Teacher, you will be expected to participate in this review process and to complete the required self-appraisal report each term. An elected teacher review committee will review the contents of your report and determine whether you have met the Baseline Tipping Point Expectations in your work with students, families and co-workers. These Expectations have been agreed to by a majority of teachers at your school.

The self-appraisal report requires that you provide brief narrative descriptions together with supporting documents to demonstrate your accomplishments within each of the following areas:

A) Professional Development and Assessment:
- Summer Intensive and Continuous Learning Participation
- Active Participation in the Tipping Point Collaborative Classroom Observation Process

B) Curriculum Development and Instruction:
- Standards-Based Curriculum Implementation
- Student Centered, Research-Based Instructional Strategies

C) School-Wide Collaboration and Leadership:
- School Activity and Committee Participation

D) Home/Family Involvement:
- Attendance at Important Home/Family Activities and Meetings

E) General Workplace Expectations:
- Basic adherence to attendance, confidentiality and student safety requirements

You elected to work at a Tipping Point school and in so doing made a commitment to meeting certain baseline expectations. If, however, your elected teacher review committee determines that your self-appraisal report does not provide ample evidence that you have met the Baseline Teacher Expectations, you will have an opportunity to appeal this decision to an appeals committee. If the appeals committee agrees with the determination of the teacher review committee, the district has the authority to assign you to another school.

The Tipping Point Teacher Review process is not designed to penalize teachers. Rather it is part of a comprehensive re-design reform plan adopted by the school to provide maximum support to a team of teachers who have agreed to explicit baseline expectations for teachers and a core set of reform principles.

TIPPING POINT TEACHER REVIEW:
PROPOSED BASELINE EXPECTATION GUIDELINES

(Teachers at Tipping Point Schools are encouraged to propose modifications)

	Meets and/or Exceeds	Does Not Meet	Demonstration Methods
A. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT			
Participates in Continuous Learning Opportunities	Actively participates in required professional development activities that have been coordinated for the school.	Does not consistently and actively participate in required professional development (any absences are unexcused).	Attendance sheets, instructor notes, etc.
Participates Actively in the 10-Day Tipping Point Summer Intensive	Participates in the full Summer Intensive Session each day.	Has unexcused absences; arrives late on multiple days and/or leaves early with no acceptable explanation.	Attendance log (indicating no unexcused absences)
Participates Actively in the Collaborative Classroom Observation process as an observee (outlined in school's "Observation Protocol")	Participates as observee in a minimum of two observations per year; complies with school's "Observation Protocol"; actively considers and/or integrates recommendations from observers.	Does not participate as an observee at least twice during each three month period; and/or fails to comply with school's "Observation Protocol"; is clearly unwilling to consider the integration of observer recommendations.	Classroom observation forms, notes, etc., and additional observable expectations as outlined by Tipping Point school
Participates Actively in the Collaborative Classroom Observation process as an observer (outlined in school's "Observation Protocol")	Participates as an observer in a minimum of two observations per three month period; complies with school's "Observation Protocol"; actively provides colleagues with feedback and ideas for improvements to benefit students.	Does not participate as an observer at least twice during each three month period; and/or fails to comply with school's "Observation Protocol"; and/or is clearly unwilling to provide colleagues with feedback and/or ideas for improvement.	Classroom observation forms, notes, etc., and additional observable expectations as outlined by Tipping Point school
B. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & INSTRUCTION			
Develops and Implements a Standards-Based Curriculum	Teacher demonstrates at least a basic understanding of the common standards-based curriculum and core content; uses materials aligned with standards-based curriculum; implements core content instruction .	Teacher needs training/remediation regarding his/her knowledge and understanding of how to implement the standards-based curriculum requirements; does not present instruction within the context of clearly stated goals or outcomes.	Classroom observation findings, lesson plans, and student outcomes, learning materials and text books
Incorporates Student-Centered, Research-Based Instructional Strategies	Teacher demonstrates an understanding of how students learn and develop by creating instructional opportunities that reflect students ages, interests, and learning styles; uses research-based strategies to involve students, and corrects student errors or misunderstandings as they occur; generally presents learning goals to introduce new topic areas.	Teacher instructs all students in the same manner with little or no consideration for student needs, interests and learning style differences; does not use research-based strategies to involve students, and often provides confusing and/or inconsistent direction.	Classroom observation, student assignments and work samples
C. SCHOOL-WIDE COLLABORATION & LEADERSHIP			
Participates on Committees with Coworkers	Participates actively on at least one school-wide committee or collaborative project; attends regularly, contributes actively by offering ideas and	Does not participate on at least one school-wide committee or collaborative project, and/or fails to attend regularly or work on tasks assigned to members.	Meeting notes, attendance records, agendas, committee chair input, work

	Meets and/or Exceeds	Does Not Meet	Demonstration Methods
	recommendations and/or completing committee tasks.		products
Participates in Important School Activities (as determined by school)	Regularly attends school activities designated as important; more specific expectations may be outlined by individual schools in their Tipping Point Proposal.	Does not regularly attend school activities designated as important.	Attendance records, additional observable expectations outlined by school
D. HOME/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT			
Communicates Regularly with Parents/Guardians	Makes contact (in person or via phone) with every parent or guardian at least twice during each year to discuss student progress.	Routinely fails to communicate with parents or guardians about student progress or intervention needs.	Phone log, copies of letters, emails, etc.
Attends Important Family Activities and Meetings as determined by Tipping Point school (e.g. back-to-school night, science fairs, open houses, etc.)	Regularly participates in important family activities (as determined by the school).	Periodically fails to participate in important family activities (as determined by the school), and/or fails to attend full sessions with no reasonable explanation.	Attendance records, meeting notes, additional observable expectations as outlined by Tipping Point schools
E. GENERAL WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS			
Attendance	No unapproved absences (as defined in district policy); timely notification prior to non-emergency absences; punctual and dependable in the classroom and in meetings.	Multiple unplanned and/or last minute non-emergency absences from work, and/or a pattern of frequent absences not excused for medical purposes; consistent failure to arrive for work and/or attend meetings in a punctual manner.	Attendance records and management notes.
Confidentiality	Is attentive to confidentiality concerns involving students, families, and co-workers; refrains from discussing or otherwise sharing confidential information in inappropriate settings; does not need to be reminded to maintain confidentiality.	Discusses or otherwise shares confidential information in inappropriate settings; has been seriously reprimanded and/or repeatedly reminded to maintain confidentiality.	Management notes and results from complaint investigations
Student Safety	Takes reasonable steps to ensure student safety; complies with school safety policies and procedures.	Disregards workplace safety issues; repeatedly fails to comply with school safety policies and procedures.	Reports from campus security, records related to school safety compliance (e.g. permission slips, chaperone lists, accident reports, etc.).

APPENDIX D: Responses to Common Objections

Objections 1: Any school, no matter how dysfunctional, could be turned around if it had the kind of money that will be required for Tipping Point schools.

> Response: Sums of money far greater than what is required for a Tipping Point implementation have been spent on reforms targeted at dysfunctional schools. Most have failed to make a lasting difference. While some have shown promising results, the fact that so many schools in California continue to rely on alarmingly high numbers of under-qualified teachers attests to the fact that we have not yet discovered an effective solution.

Objection 2: Unions will not support a program that allows management to force teachers to schools they do not want to teach in. This is just another attempt at reconstitution—a failed reform strategy that has served only to alienate teachers and staff.

> Response: Unions have historically opposed the practice of forced personnel transfers as a solution to the maldistribution of teachers. And for good reason. Nothing is gained when teachers are forced to work in schools they do not choose themselves. When there is a shortage of teachers many will simply transfer to other districts where they can teach in a setting that better suits them. Or worse, some will quit altogether.
>
> Unions are right to be wary of reconstitution and the wholesale replacement of staff, no matter how severely dysfunctional a school might be. As discussed in the sections on reconstitution, the Tipping Point plan avoids the pitfalls of reconstitution and is consistent with a union supported reform strategy called "redesign." Within this Tipping Point model, teachers either agree to a set of baseline teacher expectations or they elect to transfer to another school.

Objection 3: This is just a zero-sum game. Since there is a shortage of qualified teachers, when qualified teachers leave their present jobs to join Tipping Point teams, they will be replaced by underqualified ones. This plan simply shuffles teachers around and will not produce a net gain.

> Response: This objection would have some validity if the premise on which it is based were true. There is, in fact, a shortage of teachers, but only for certain schools—poor, urban ones, typically. Many other schools have no difficulty attracting teachers. If some leave, they will have little difficulty finding qualified ones to take their place.

Objection 4: We cannot afford to spend time teaching a rich, broadly conceived curriculum if students lack essential academic skills. How can they learn about social studies or science if they cannot read? Nor should we spend time on subjects like art and music if students have yet to acquire "the basics"?

> Response:
> In the absence of a rich, broadly conceived curriculum, one that stimulates interest through purposeful classroom experiences, many students will disengage from the learning process, from their teachers, and in some cases, from school itself. As a consequence, the challenge of teaching "the basics" becomes more difficult despite the extra time that is allotted to it. The evidence from outlier schools suggests that offering a well-rounded curriculum is not incidental to their success in achieving basic academic skills.
>
> Furthermore, many highly skilled teachers refuse to work in schools that force them to teach a narrow, lackluster curriculum to disengaged students. The loss of qualified teachers further exacerbates the conditions that others thought would improve by a narrowing of the curriculum.

APPENDIX E: Tipping Point Advisory Team

- Ken Futernick, Senior Program Manager, WestEd
- Fred Tempes, Director, Comprehensive School Assistance Program, WestEd
- Linda Darling-Hammond, Professor of Education, Stanford University
- Dave Gordon, Superintendent, Sacramento County Office of Education
- Gary Hart, Founder, CSU Institute for Education Reform
- Darrell Steinberg, California State Senator
- Jeannie Oakes, Professor and Director of UCLA's Institute for Democracy Education & Access (IDEA)
- John Rogers, Associate Director of UCLA's Institute for Democracy Education & Access (IDEA)
- Pia Wong, Professor of Education, CSU Sacramento
- Julien Phillips, Founder, Partners in School Innovation
- Margaret Gaston, Director, Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning
- Karen Hunter-Quartz, Research Associate, UCLA
- Jody Priselac, Director, Center X, UCLA

ENDNOTES

[1] The Tipping Point retreat for Oakland Unified School District was held on January 24th at Mills College in Oakland. A copy of the proceedings document can be obtained at www.edfordemocracy.org/tpoint.
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[3] For more information about Stanford's School Redesign Network, see www.schoolredesign.net.
[4] Kozol, Jonathan (1991) *Savage Inequalities*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.
[5] In settling Williams v State of California, the State acknowledged responsibility for the sub-standard classroom conditions experienced by many of the state's poorest students.
For more information, see: http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/ce/wc/yr04ltr1220.asp
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the Future of Teaching and Learning.
[7] Carroll, Stephen J. and Krop, Cathy & Arkes, Jeremy & Morrison, Peter A &. Flanagan, Ann, "California's K-12 Schools. How Are They Doing?" The RAND Corporation, 2005.
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[9] Just, Anne E. & Wong, Teri, "Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP): How California's Schools Have Faced the Challenge of Improving Student Achievement in Three Years," 2003, California Department of Education, Policy and Evaluation Division.
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[12] Hill, Paul T. (2001) "The Conspiracy of Silence," *The Weekly Standard*, February 12.
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[14] Fullan, Michael (2000). *Change Forces: The Sequel*. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
[15] *Ibid*, pp. 14.
[16] Gladwell, (2002) op.cit.
[17] "The Status of the Teaching Profession," 2000, The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.
[18] Liu, Edward, et al. (2004), "New Teachers and the Massachusetts Signing Bonus: The Limits of Inducements," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, v26, p. 218.
[19] *Ibid*, p. 229.
[20] Futernick, Ken (2007). *A Possible Dream: Retaining California Teachers So All Students Learn*, Center for Teacher Quality, CSU Chancellor's Office. (in press, expected publication date: March 2007)
[21] Senge, Peter (1993). *The Fifth Discipline*. New York: Doubleday, pp. 234-5.
[22] See, for instance, Flinders, D. (Fall 1998) "Teacher Isolation and the New Reform," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 4(1), 17-29 and Lortie, D. (1975), *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
[23] *Ibid*, pp. 195.
[24] Fullan, Michael (1993) *Change Forces*. New York: The Palmer Press.
[25] Futernick, op. cit. 34.5% of the "leavers" in this study indicated that the following factor play a role in their decision to leave: "The staff as a whole did not work effectively as a team and relationships generally were not strong."
[26] Darling-Hammond, Linda (1997). *The Right to Learn*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. See also Stevenson, H. and Stigler, J. (1992) *The Learning Gap*. New York: Summit Books.
[27] "Hope for Urban Education: A Study of Nine High-Performing, High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools," The Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin, 1999. Report available at www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/eval/elem.html.
[28] *Ibid*., p. 51.
[29] Senge, (1993) op.cit.
[30] Michaels, Ed and Handfield-Jones, Helen and Axelrod, Beth (2001). *The War for Talent*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, pp. 60-61.
[31] Cohen, Don and Prusak, Laurence (2001). *In Good Company*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, p. 94.
[32] Team members will find a valuable discussion of this topic in Linda Darling-Hammond's book, *The Right to Learn*.
[33] Senge, Peter (2000). *Schools That Learn*. New York: Doubleday.
[34] Cohen and Prusak, (2001) op. cit., p. 97.
[35] *Ibid*., p. 142.
[36] Gladwell (2000) op. cit.
[37] Williams et al. v. State of California et al. (Superior Court, San Francisco). For more information on the settlement, see http://www.aclu-sc.org/News/Releases/100740/

[38] Futernick, op. cit. This elementary teacher working in a high-poverty school participated in the teacher retention study and indicated that class size was an important factor in her decision to remain in the classroom.
[39] Egelson, Paula, et. al. (2002). "How Class Size Makes a Difference," The Regional Educational Laboratory at SERVE.
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[41] Bohrnstedt, George and Stecher, Brian (2002), "What We Have Learned about Class Size Reduction in California," California Department of Education.
[42] Jepson and Rivkin (2002) op. cit., pp. 53 – 61.
[43] Evans (1996). op. cit., p. 172.
[44] Darling-Hammond (1997). op. cit. p. 171.
[45] Futernick (2005), op. cit. 40.6% of the "leavers" in this study indicated that the following factor played a role in their decision to leave teaching: "The administration and teaching staff were not given appropriate authority over curriculum, instruction strategies, school governance, and budgeting." 68.8% of "stayers" indicated that having this authority affected their decision to remain in their present setting. This factor was cited more frequently than any of the other 34 factors presented to the "stayers" participating in this study.
[46] Evans (1996) op. cit., p. 235-6.
[47] See, for instance, Kessler, Robert (1992) "Shared Decision Making Works!" *Educational Leadership*, v50, No. 1.
[48] Gladwell (2000) op. cit., p. 132.
[49] Senge (1993) op. cit., p. 340.
[50] Fullan (1993), op. cit., p. 70.
[51] Tom Peters (1987), *Thriving on Chaos*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
[52] Robbins, Harvey and Finley, Michael, (2000), *The New Why Teams Don't Work*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler Publishers, p. 207.
[53] Darling-Hammond (1997) op. cit., p. 54.
[54] This claim is substantiated repeatedly in research cited by Darling-Hammond in *The Right to Learn*.
[55] Carter, Samuel Casey, (2000), "No Excuses: Lessons from 21 High-Performing, High Poverty Schools," The Heritage Foundation, p. 18.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[58] Fullan (1993), op. cit., p. 87.
[59] Organizations providing support to many low-performing schools include: Partners in School Innovation (www.parternsinschools.org), WestEd (www.wested.org), BAYCES (www.bayces.org), and Springboard Schools (www.springboardschools.org).
[60] "Hope for Urban Education: A Study of Nine High-Performing, High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools," The Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin, 1999, pp. 81-82.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[63] Education Commission of the States (1996), *Listen, Discuss, and Act*, pp. 15-17.
[64] Fullan (2000), op. cit., p. 65.
[65] Hendrie, Caroline (1998), "A Mixed Record for Reconstitution Flashes a Yellow Light for Districts," *Education Week*, July 8.
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[68] Hendrie (1997) op. cit.
[69] Ruenzel (1997) op.cit.