

**LEARNING HOW TO GROW: A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL RENEWAL
IN ONE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

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(ABSTRACT)

School Renewal is a broadly defined process used as an alternative route to school improvement and regional accreditation. However there is no direct evidence to support its use. To date, there have been no systematic inquiries to document the regional accreditation process of improving an elementary and middle school through the School Renewal process. This study was an inquiry into the School Renewal accreditation process in an elementary and middle school.

The study focused on the structure of the School Renewal process, the processes in which participants engaged, and the outcomes of the School Renewal process as related to planning, climate, communication, curriculum and instruction, and staff development.

The design included a case study with a rich, descriptive, narrative format for reporting. The participants included the principal, assistant principal, all faculty and staff members, parents and community members of Honaker Elementary and Middle School who were members of one of the School Renewal committees. Data from documents, observations and interviews of participants, and the researcher's journal were analyzed to build a complete case narrative. The findings were organized into three major themes from the School Renewal process: the structure of school renewal; the processes of leadership including communication and involvement of participants in the School Renewal process; and the outcomes of school renewal.

A number of major understandings emanated from the study that help to elaborate existing descriptions of the school renewal process. Planning and structuring the process created the framework and foundation from which to begin the School Renewal process. A democratic supportive principal and a strong teacher leader emerged as key participants at the school level. School-wide communication was a vital component. The roles of participants, representation of stakeholders, and active involvement helped facilitate participant motivation that bound the participants together throughout the renewal process.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
A Scary Beginning

Mrs. Ferguson had decided to retire. As a result of this decision, she wanted no part of the new committee work that would be desperately needed for her school. In order to cement the fact that she would not become a part of the School Renewal process, the guidance counselor made her way to the principal's office and kindly, but emphatically, informed him that she was retiring and would have no part of the committee work, especially as chairperson of the steering committee. Oh, but she had the name of a person whom she thought would make "the perfect chair" of the School Renewal Steering Committee. That name was mine.

The principal never told me I was to be the chair of the brand new accreditation process for my school. At the time, I was not aware of the enormous value placed on the accreditation process (for the school) by both the superintendent and the principal of my school. Indeed, I was unaware of the huge mountain of work I had stumbled upon because of the importance placed on the regional accreditation status of my school, although the accreditation process is an optional venture for a school in my state.

Mr. Barnes, my principal, asked me if I would "help" get the appropriate information together for the biennium school report and work with five other teachers, all of whom were allowed to volunteer, to compile the report. I thought this would be "no big deal" because the information seemed to be rather "routine stuff", and I agreed to chair this very small committee work to get the information compiled, and complete the report. That was the beginning.

Very soon after the biennium report was completed, Mr. Barnes announced that he needed a Steering Committee chair of the School Renewal accreditation process for the school. Since he did not know much about this "new process", he could not be very clear about what was expected of the "chair" of this committee nor what was expected of the school.

Of course, no one volunteered to chair the new Steering Committee for our school. Somehow, probably because of Mrs. Ferguson's visit to the principal's office and

the successful completion of the biennium school report, *I* was assigned the task of chairing the new Steering Committee. This was my first introduction to School Renewal.

After my official appointment by the principal as Planning Committee chair, I landed the job of figuring out how School Renewal could “work” for our school. My first questions were, “Just what is School Renewal anyway?” and “How in the world can I help make it ‘work’ for Honaker Elementary and Middle School?”

These heavy questions haunted me every time I heard someone mention the words “School Renewal” because the burden of moving the School Renewal process at our school from ground zero seemingly, and suddenly, had become mine.

Then the scary tasks began. Mr. Barnes asked me to take a list of all the faculty members and “arrange” them into committees. Me? A teacher? Arrange the faculty members into committees? All by myself? How? Who would I place on which committee? What if the teachers did not like the committee I assigned for them? Would they know I had assigned the committee members to particular committees? Would it make a difference if they did know? Would Mr. Barnes “approve” of the assignments I made?

After some intense personal reflections about the kinds of committees needed for the different areas of the School Renewal process and the personalities of individual faculty members, I began the process of assigning members to individual committees as the principal had asked me to do. Needless to say, this task, indeed, took some time although I had been a member of this faculty for twelve years and knew many of the faculty members personally as well as professionally.

During this assignment process, I had to keep telling myself to remain calm, think in terms of duties and assignments required for each of the School Renewal committees, and assign teachers with personalities that were “compatible” on some of the committees and teachers with outstanding professional capabilities on other committees.

Believe it or not, my “assignment” process worked. Not one individual was moved from the committees by Mr. Barnes, the principal. Much to my amazement, he agreed with my selections and asked for copies of the lists and to be distributed to each teacher on the school staff. Furthermore, none of the teachers objected, at least not

publicly, to serving in the positions they were assigned. (Mr. Barnes and I agreed that teachers must be “appointed” at this point in our School Renewal work because asking the teachers to volunteer for positions definitely would not have been successful.)

I remember standing in front of the entire faculty during that first full faculty meeting of School Renewal for our school. I felt terrified! What had I gotten myself into? Would I be able to make sense to the faculty members and successfully communicate the messages I needed about School Renewal to them? How could I help build the “community” needed for School Renewal to become a success at Honaker Elementary and Middle School? How would School Renewal affect our lives positively?

These questions constantly haunted me for the first year of the School Renewal process at our school. After participating in the process for two years, I began to feel the need to study it more in-depth to come to understand how it works and what it does.

The School Renewal Process

School Renewal is “a process of continuous self-study that requires site-based management, shared decision-making, and shared leadership. The process is based on the research and writing of John Goodlad and emphasizes the belief that the individual school is the unit of change” (Virginia Secondary and Middle School Committee, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p.2). According to the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the School Renewal process “grew out of effective school research that documents that the individual school is the unit of change, and improvement is an outgrowth of involvement of representative stakeholders and the school staff in planning and implementing improvement initiatives” (1996, p. iv).

School Renewal is “an alternative route to school improvement and regional accreditation” (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 1) and essentially becomes “a flexible school improvement process in which schools determine their own process/structure” for SACS accreditation (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996, p. 7).

Unstructured Approach to Accreditation

According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, accreditation is a process for institutional improvement through a systematic program of evaluation and the application of educational standards or criteria. Accreditation means not only that an institution meets prescribed minimum standards, but also that the institution has demonstrated a commitment to providing quality educational programs through a continuous process of school improvement planning. . . . Essentially, schools in the accreditation process recognize that a good school must continually work toward becoming better. (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996, p. 8)

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has listed the School Renewal approach to accreditation as “a very unstructured process that is based on the research of John Goodlad” (Virginia Secondary and Middle Schools Committee, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 26). According to the 1996 SACS guidelines, this unstructured approach to regional accreditation (School Renewal) can be chosen instead of School Improvement (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996). The School Improvement approach is a structured approach to accreditation, but focuses more specifically on site-based management, faculty consensus regarding school mission, desired learner outcomes, and a more structured total school improvement plan (Virginia Secondary and Middle Schools Committee, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995).

Rationale For School Renewal

The purpose of School Renewal is to provide an alternative route to school improvement and regional accreditation. An annual school improvement report sent to SACS in September of each year contains the school’s improvement initiatives as a result of the School Renewal process. The purpose of a five-year School Renewal Review Committee is to provide the school with professional feedback related to selected areas. These areas include:

- (1) the improvement initiatives,

- (2) the process for shared decision-making,
 - (3) suggestions for continuing improvements,
 - (4) recommendations for continuation in the School Renewal Process,
 - (5) status of the school in meeting the SACS accreditation standards.
- (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 2)

The focus of school renewal is school improvement and the basic belief is that “good schools must continue to strive to be better schools” (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 1).

Through the School Renewal process, the Elementary and Middle Schools Commission acknowledges that an individual school possesses the professional capacity to make decisions that will influence the quality of education provided at that school. The school renewal process affords a school the flexibility to determine its improvement needs, to decide how the improvement needs will be approached or addressed, and to provide for evidence of measuring the accomplishments of the school’s improvements. The school renewal process encourages an individual school to make decisions that affect the quality of education at that school (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995).

Content of School Renewal

Five areas for school improvement are listed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as essential in school renewal. These five areas are planning, school climate, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and communication. When all five areas are effectively in place in a school, they provide the foundation for achievement of the school’s school renewal goals, objectives, and long range plans as well as provide the framework for the accreditation process for the school (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995).

Planning

Guidelines are listed in the planning area of school renewal and are basic for school improvements. Shared decision-making is an important ingredient of the school renewal process and especially important in the planning domain. According to the Commission

on Elementary and Middle Schools (1996), shared decision-making, as promoted through school renewal, is the process of actively involving the stakeholders of an individual school in the planning, changing, and improving processes of the school. Included under the planning area are the following criteria:

1. An ongoing task force for planning is operative.
2. The staff is involved in participatory decision-making.
3. Long-range planning includes a three-to-five year projection of priorities for improvement and steps to be taken in the process.
4. Central services and community support of school planning efforts are evident.
5. Time and other resources are effectively utilized with attention to securing more planning time. (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 4)

School Climate

The school climate area is an essential component for effective learning and teaching and should become a nurturing, positive and supportive climate for all stakeholders of the school. Included in school climate are the following criteria:

6. Data regarding satisfaction with the school are gathered regularly from parents, staff, and students.
7. There is evidence of active community support of the school.
8. There is continuing effort to assess and improve the status of working conditions and staff morale.
9. There is evidence of attention to the proper maintenance and improvement of the facilities for all elements of the school program. (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 4)

Staff Development

The responsibilities within the area of staff development are skills to promote the achievement of the school's improvement goals. The following criteria are included:

10. The principal must be capable of and active in providing leadership for the staff in the School Renewal and improvement activities.
11. Staff members must be involved in determining the in-service for their school.
12. A campus-based program of professional growth and renewal activities for all school staff members is in place.
13. A budget for the school has been established for time allocated to support

- the program of staff development.
14. In-service activities to focus on total school improvement are regularly established.
 15. Specific staff development programs are developed to prepare all staff members for the implementation of new programs or activities.
(Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 4)

Curriculum and Instruction

The curriculum and instruction area is the focus of school renewal activities. It is through this area that stakeholders direct attention to improved student performance. The following criteria are included:

16. Both student data and contextual data regarding the school as a whole are used as a basis for planning, both for individuals and for the school program.
17. A follow-up program has been implemented to gather data for use in program revision from graduates and those who withdraw from school.
18. The library/media center serves as a major support element for the teaching/learning process in the school.
19. Programs and activities are available to serve a wide range of student needs.
20. A developmentally appropriate curriculum is provided to meet the full range of educational needs. (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 5)

Communication

The communication area is vital to ensure that all stakeholders understand and support programs, activities, and plans developed to improve the school. The following criteria are included:

21. A program of providing information to the community is in place.
22. There is evidence of effective ongoing communication among all those who inhabit the school.
23. There is evidence of effective ongoing communication between the school and the home.
24. There is evidence of effective ongoing communication between the school and the district office. (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 5)

The “Process” of School Renewal

The school renewal process is based on a five-year cycle of continuous self-study. A participating school addresses five areas: planning, school climate, staff development, communication, and curriculum and instruction. All five areas must be evaluated and plans leading to the confirmation of improvement activities for the school during the five-year cycle must be implemented (Virginia Secondary and Middle Schools Committee, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995). Members of the school determine the areas to be addressed each year. Although all five areas do not need to be addressed every year, all five areas must be addressed within the five-year cycle.

When a school is approved for participation in school renewal by SACS, the school must “focus on continuous self-evaluation and school improvement and should demonstrate measurable progress over the previous year” (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 2). By focusing on continuous improvements, a school participating in school renewal eliminates the five-year intervals of the SACS comprehensive self-study as was required in the traditional accreditation known as the old self-study and evaluation process.

Action Plan

Stakeholders of a school become participants on school renewal committees that are formed from the five areas of planning, school climate, staff development, communication, and curriculum and instruction. Each person in the school usually assumes a position on one of the committees. Other members of the committees are stakeholders from the school community, business partnerships, or parents who are either invited to become members or who request to become members of the committees.

The Action Planning Model, as provided by SACS (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996), includes specific actions that serve as guidelines for the five school renewal committees for improvement planning. These specific action plans include seven stages of development that can occur as rapidly or slowly as each committee chooses. However, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools recommends that these action plans go through (at

least) one complete cycle (from Stage One through Stage Seven) in the course of one school year for each school renewal area addressed at the school. The following steps include stages of this action plan:

- Stage One: Identify, gather, and analyze data
- Stage Two: Review needs identified in the data
- Stage Three: Establish goals and objectives
- Stage Four: Identify strategies for improvement
- Stage Five: Identify indicators of progress
- Stage Six: Implement the action plan and evaluate progress
- Stage Seven: Share the results. (Commission on Elementary and Middle

Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996)

Building a Learning Community

As a result of the renewal process, students, teachers, and community alike become a part of the learning community of a school. According to Thomas Sergiovanni (1994), “Community building must become the heart of any school improvement effort . . .” (p. xi).

Sergiovanni believes the community component is very important in schools because “community is the tie that binds students and teachers together in special ways, to something more significant than themselves: shared values and ideals” (1994, p. xiii). According to Sergiovanni (1994), lasting results of the bonding effect of creating a learning community occurs when the I’s spring into we’s that unite into “web[s] of meaningful relationships” (1994, p. xvi) and strengthen both the collaboration and the renewal process of the school.

Through the renewal of a school, communities are created around individuals who have similar intentions. In a community of learners, children and adults learn together to think critically and analytically and to solve problems that are important to them (Barth, 1990).

When confronted with issues, communities rely on values, purposes, and collegiality and approach problems from the perspective of what can be done to change

and improve the school (Barth, 1990). Community ties, once established, can even replace such formal systems as evaluation and supervision. Thus, community ties foster empowerment of stakeholders in the school with an emphasis on commitment, duties, and obligations shared by members of the school community (Goodlad, 1984; Barth, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1994). When members of the proposed community are interested in building community, they create their own practice of community. “It is as simple, and as hard as that” (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 5).

McCaleb (1994) wrote, “Education takes place within the community context” (p.42). She further added that “communities are dynamic” (p. 42) and must change to survive. The constantly changing context for the survival of a community is present when renewing a school during the accreditation process. Participants working together during the renewal process build a learning community that unites its members through the continuous self-evaluation and improvements of school renewal.

Research Base for School Renewal

The Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools documents that “[t]he [school renewal] process is based on current research of effective schools. . .” (1995, p. 1). According to SACS documents, “the individual school is the unit of change and school improvement is an outgrowth of involvement of the community stakeholders and staff at the local school level in planning and implementing improvement initiatives” (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 1).

In searching for current research on effective schools on which to base this study of school renewal, one major researcher surfaces most often in the SACS literature: John Goodlad. The major research base listed by SACS for school renewal and the school renewal process is credited to Goodlad (1984). An additional resource includes a series of six videotapes, entitled Renewing A Place Called School (Goodlad, 1988). The videotapes feature Goodlad discussing the recommendations he made in A Place Called School with a group of teachers and administrators who were beginning the process of renewal for their schools.

In the video series, Goodlad (1988) discussed domains and processes similar to the five areas and twenty-four selected criteria for the school renewal process from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Goodlad discussed renewing, changing, and improving a school using criteria similar to those in the SACS process and the degree of freedom individual schools should have in order to experience necessary changes, improvements, and renewal.

The entire series focused on making the school the unit of change. In order to accomplish this goal, Goodlad (1988) specified renewal strategies that require a school to view the educational world in a different way. To make his point clear, Goodlad used a metaphor throughout the video series. He discussed the school as a garden with the principal as the head gardener, the teachers as the gardeners, and the students as the plants. According to Goodlad, continuous cultivation and tending of the garden (school) leads to a healthy environment (school climate) where all the right nutrients (the curriculum of the school) along with the right methods of pruning (instructional practices) produce a joyful learning place (school climate) for the youngsters and adults alike.

Although Goodlad did not say during his discussions in the video series that his renewal process was a guideline for the school renewal accreditation process for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, one of the major SACS documents references Goodlad's research as the foundation for the school renewal process:

Significant educational improvement of schooling, not mere tinkering, requires that we focus on entire schools, not just teachers or principals or curricula or organization of school-community relations but all of these and more. We might begin with one or several of these, but it is essential to realize that all are interconnected and that changing any one element ultimately affects the others. Consequently, it is advisable to focus on one place where all of the elements come together. This is the individual school. If we are to improve it, we must understand it. If we are to improve schooling, we must improve individual schools. (Goodlad, 1984, p. xvi, cited in Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 2)

According to the SACS Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools (1995),

An effective orientation will include but not be limited to the following: 1) A discussion of the primary findings of the effective school research conducted by Dr. John I. Goodlad and published in his book **A Place Called School**. 2) A review of the tapes developed and produced by **Encyclopedia Britannica**

featuring Dr. John I. Goodlad . . . (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 19)

Thus, SACS recommends reading Goodlad's book and viewing the video series as an effective orientation to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' School Renewal process.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the structure, processes, and outcomes of school renewal in one rural elementary and middle school in Southwestern Virginia.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to one elementary and middle school in rural Southwestern Virginia that followed the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' unstructured approach to regional accreditation through the process of school renewal. This study was limited to examining the first four years of a five-year cycle required by SACS for an individual school's accreditation process. Because this was a case study of one elementary and middle school, it is not possible to generalize to other schools.

Significance of the Study

School Renewal is a broadly defined process that has been identified by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as an alternative route to regional accreditation. To date, there have been no inquiries to document the regional accreditation process of improving an elementary and middle school through School Renewal. The purpose of this study was to provide a systematic inquiry into the school renewal accreditation process in an elementary and middle school that had chosen the School Renewal route to regional accreditation.

Guiding Questions

The guiding questions for this study were:

1. How does the school renewal process happen?

- What is the structure of the school renewal process?
 - What are the processes in which the participants engage during the school renewal process?
2. What are the outcomes of the school renewal process as related to planning, school climate, communication, curriculum and instruction, and staff development?

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into six chapters. Chapter I includes the introduction, purpose, research questions, limitations, significance of the study, and an overview of the School Renewal process. Chapter II contains the procedures for collecting and analyzing the data. The results are presented in three separate chapters based on the three guiding questions: Chapters III, IV, and V. Chapter III has a brief introduction to the findings and the data on the structure of school renewal at the site. Chapter IV is an indepth discussion of the processes of school renewal at the school and Chapter V has the outcomes of the school renewal process. Chapter VI is a discussion of what I have learned from this study, how these findings could be used by educational practitioners, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Overview

Several characteristics of qualitative research described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) help describe this study. These include the following characteristics:

- a descriptive focus
- an emergent design
- purposive sampling
- natural setting
- emphasis on “human-as-instrument”
- qualitative methods of data collection
- early and ongoing inductive data analysis
- case study approach to reporting research outcomes.

Setting of the Study

This study was conducted in Russell County at Honaker Elementary and Middle School in Honaker, Virginia. Honaker Elementary and Middle School is a two-story brick building that was built in 1964 with an addition added in 1983. This school is designated as the largest elementary and middle school in Russell County. The school has a total of forty-three classrooms and a gymnasium, library, cafeteria, speech room, music room, and a room for primary physical education classes. Honaker Elementary and Middle School has three separate sections. The kindergarten and primary grades are located in a one-story section of the building. The sixth and seventh grades are located on the lower level of the two-story section, and the fourth and fifth grades are located on the top level of the two-story section.

At the time of this study, Honaker Elementary and Middle School had one principal, one assistant principal, and one guidance counselor. The school staff included thirty-four classroom and subject-area teachers, seven special education teachers, ten teacher aides, one librarian, six food service personnel, two clerical personnel, and three maintenance personnel.

The student population ranged in grades from pre-kindergarten to seventh and included special education services for students with mental handicaps and learning disabilities. Honaker Elementary and Middle School became a school-wide Title I school at the beginning of the 1997-1998 school year. The school-wide Title I status was obtained because more than fifty-three percent of approximately 650 students at the school were eligible to receive free or reduced school lunches.

The school was organized with self-contained primary classrooms, departmentalized fourth and fifth grade groups, and randomized sixth and seventh grades. The randomized schedules for sixth and seventh grades were similar to the seven period schedules used in the local high school because the students scattered to various classes each period instead of remaining together like self-contained classes.

Participants

The population of this study consisted of the principal, assistant principal, all faculty and staff members, and the parents and community members of Honaker Elementary and Middle School who were members of one of the school renewal committees at the school. At the beginning of the school renewal process (1994-1995), each instructional faculty member was assigned, with the approval of the principal, to one of the seven school renewal committees by the Planning Committee chairperson. At the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year, ten instructional aides, two clerical personnel, six cafeteria staff members, and three custodial staff members were assigned to the committees. This completed the assignment of all faculty and staff members at the school to one of the committees. At least one parent or community volunteer became a member of each of the committees at the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year.

The Researcher

The researcher in this study became a participant observer or as Patton (1980) stated “experienc[ed] the program [study] as an insider” (p. 128). Since the researcher had occupied a teaching position at the school site for twelve years and was currently the chairperson of the Planning School Renewal Committee, the study was a case of

convenience for the researcher. Being present in the natural setting where the phenomenon was taking place established an essential condition of indwelling for the researcher, according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) who identify indwelling as literally “to live within” (p. 25) the inquiry setting.

Indwelling allowed the researcher to be a part of the investigation and to gain a deep understanding of the school renewal process at the school. As participant observer in the setting, the researcher became fully engaged and participated in the experiences, actions, activities, and interactions while simultaneously attempting to understand the phenomenon being studied through personal experiences, actions, observations, and discussions with other participants. The researcher shared the activities and actions of the participants in this study “as intimately as possible” (Patton, 1980, p. 127) and at the same time attempted to report the evidence as fairly and as unbiased as possible.

Phases of the Study

The study was divided into three phases with Phase III overlapping both Phase I and Phase II throughout the study.

Phase I: Analyzing the Content of Past Documents

Involved analyses of “completed” School Renewal notebooks from each of seven committees for three years (1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997) of the school’s involvement with the SACS school renewal accreditation process.

Phase II: Observing the Work of the Committees (1997-1998)

Included interviews, participant observations, and documentary analyses of materials assembled into committee notebooks for 1997-1998. This phase contained action plans and work of the seven committees throughout the 1997-1998 school year.

Phase III: Reflecting on the “Process”

Involved researcher reflections on the school renewal process and research “work” for the duration of the study and became part of the researcher’s journal. This phase overlapped both Phase I and Phase II.

Data were collected during the school year 1997-1998 beginning August 18, 1997, and continuing for the entire length of the school term ending on June 10, 1998. Fourteen

completed school renewal committee notebooks were collected from the seven school renewal committee chairpersons. Photocopies of the contents of each of the fourteen notebooks (one notebook at a time) were made. These “completed” school renewal committee notebooks included data for the four school years (1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998) of school renewal committee work at Honaker Elementary and Middle School.

A case record was developed to construct the case study. A case study data base contained all the materials and information gathered concerning the case. The analysis for the case study included all observational and interview data, research journal reflections, as well as all documentary analyses and related information collected regarding this particular case (Patton, 1990; Yin, 1994). The story was presented in a rich, descriptive, narrative describing the school renewal process in one rural elementary and middle school in Southwestern Virginia.

Table 1 is an outline of the data sources for the three phases of this study.

Describing the School Renewal Process

Phase I: Content Analysis of Past Documents

A major product of the School Renewal process at Honaker Elementary and Middle School was the school renewal notebooks created by each of the seven School Renewal committees. Each committee notebook contained documents that were collected throughout a school year by committee members and placed in a loose-leaf, three-ring notebook by the committee chairperson or a designated committee member. The notebooks contained documents that represented products, actions, and activities the school renewal committee members decided were relevant to the goals and objectives of the committee and necessary to keep in a notebook to document the committee’s work throughout the school year. Committee notebooks differed because individual committees had complete autonomy over the contents of the notebook(s).

Table 1

Data Sources for the Study of the School Renewal Process at Honaker Elementary and Middle School

Data sources					
Phase	Field notes	Observations	Interviews	Research journal	Document analysis
Phase I	X			X	X
Phase II	X	X	X	X	X
Phase III				X	X

A notebook was compiled each year or information was added to an original notebook's contents by members. The notebook usually was stored in the room of the chairperson of the committee, although there was a designated "School Renewal Workroom" at Honaker Elementary and Middle School that contained office file cabinets for such storage. Since Honaker Elementary and Middle School had been involved with the school renewal process for three years prior to the beginning of this study (1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997), there was a total of fourteen completed notebooks for the seven school renewal committees at the school. The distribution of notebooks by committee is in Table 2.

The researcher collected each of the committee notebooks and conducted a content analysis of them to determine (1) the structure of the school renewal process at the school, (2) the processes in which participants engaged during the school renewal process, and (3) the outcomes of the School Renewal process at this school.

Data in the committee notebooks were read and reread by the researcher. Data from individual notebooks that related to the guiding questions (the structure of the school renewal process, the processes in which participants engaged, and outcomes related to the areas of planning, school climate, communication, curriculum and instruction, and communication) were written in the researcher's field notes with references according to committee names and notebook number(s). At least three readings of the data listed in the field notes occurred in order to index the data according to themes, categories, and sub-categories. Reflections were recorded in the researcher's journal regarding emerging categories, sub-categories, and concepts that were used to assist in the analysis of these data.

Table 2

Number of Notebooks Used as Data Sources by Committee

Committee	No. of notebooks
Planning Committee	4
Curriculum and Instruction Committee	4
School Climate—Students’ Committee	2
School Climate—Teachers’ Committee	1
School Climate—Physical Plant Committee	1
Communications Committee	1
Staff Development Committee	1

Phase II: Observing the Work of the Committees

Seven school renewal committees had been established at Honaker Elementary and Middle School. There was a committee for each of the five major areas of school renewal: planning, curriculum and instruction, communication, staff development, and school climate. Two additional committees in the area of school climate called the School Climate—Students' Committee and the School Climate—Teachers' Committee were added at the beginning of the process.

Throughout the year the researcher closely observed the work of each of the seven school renewal committees. The focus was on the structure of the renewal process, the processes in which participants engaged, and the outcomes of the school renewal process at the school (See Table 3 for Schedule of Observations).

The researcher's role during the observations of the committees, except the Planning Committee, was that of an active member and not the chairperson or recorder. The researcher's role during the observation of the Planning Committee was as chairperson and participant observer. Specific times for committee observations were set with committee chairpersons at the August 26, 1997, Planning Committee meeting. The observation sessions were scheduled during a regularly scheduled meeting for each committee.

Observations were recorded in the form of condensed field notes during the initial session and later written into expanded form. The time, place, and members present for each observation were noted. The observation notes were kept with the field notes journal and later added to the researcher's folio that contained the researcher's reflective journal and transcriptions of interviews for this study.

The researcher interviewed each of the school renewal committees once during a group setting (See Table 4 for Schedule of Interviews). One faculty member was interviewed because that faculty member volunteered for an individual interview. Group and individual interviews were guided by prepared questions from an interview guide (See Appendix).

Table 3

Schedule of Observations

Committee	Date of observation
Communications Committee	September 9, 1997
School Climate—Physical Plant Committee	September 10, 1997
Staff Development Committee	September 16, 1997
School Climate—Teachers’ Committee	September 18, 1997
School Climate—Students’ Committee	October 14, 1997
Planning Committee	November 18, 1997
Curriculum & Instruction Committee	December 8, 1997

Table 4

Schedule of Interviews

Individual or committee interview	Date of interview
Individual faculty member	September 5, 1997
Planning Committee	October 7, 1997
Curriculum & Instruction Committee	October 13, 1997
School Climate—Physical Plant Committee	October 15, 1997
Staff Development Committee	October 21, 1997
School Climate—Teachers' Committee	November 10, 1997
Communications Committee	November 11, 1997
School Climate—Students' Committee	December 2, 1997

An interview guide was constructed to make sure that basically the same information was obtained from the members of each committee. The focus of the interview questions was from the guiding research questions including the participants' perceptions of: (1) the structure of school renewal, (2) the processes in which participants engaged, and (3) the outcomes of the school renewal process at this school. The interview guide was tested by having each committee chairperson read and discuss it with members of the Planning Committee during the Planning Committee meeting on August 26, 1997.

Specific times were set for committee interviews at the August 26, 1997, Planning Committee meeting. Each committee interview was scheduled during one of the regularly scheduled meetings for that committee. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher.

Phase III: Reflecting on the "Process"

Attention was directed to reflections throughout the study. A researcher's journal was kept for the duration of the study, both to allow the researcher space to think on paper and to reflect on the process of doing case study work regarding the School Renewal process at this school. The researcher recorded reflections during the beginning process of organizing the study, during the content analysis of school renewal documents, and during each interview and observation session. She also recorded thoughts and reflections on how descriptions of themes, categories, and sub-categories emerged from the data during analysis. Additional reflections were recorded as the researcher compiled the data and wrote the story for the case study. Throughout this study, the researcher also recorded her struggle to remain as honest and unbiased as possible.

Analysis

Data collected for this study were analyzed with a focus on the research questions of the (1) structure of the School Renewal process, (2) the processes in which participants engaged, and (3) the outcomes of the School Renewal process at this school. The researcher read through interview transcripts, observation notes, documentary analysis

data, and journal notes at least three times each. Notes were made in the margins of each regarding information on the structure, processes, and outcomes of school renewal. Key phrases and major events assisted in describing and connecting themes, categories, or relationships in the data with other data sources. In order to organize the data collected, a case dynamics matrix was used (Miles and Huberman, 1994). These data were organized into themes, categories, or sub-categories using a computerized matrix for storing and displaying the data. Field notes maintained by the researcher and school renewal documents maintained by the committee chairpersons were also examined to determine similarities and differences in the categories and themes. Table 5 is an outline of the analysis and procedures for the selected data sources for this study.

Triangulation of the data sources and methods was used in order to corroborate the findings. Themes, categories, or sub-categories were identified if concepts were stated in two or more data sources. For example, if an idea appeared in one of the committee notebooks (documents) or the researcher's field notes and one of the transcripts from a committee interview, it was noted as a theme. Concepts were not identified as themes if they only appeared in one data source.

Trustworthiness of Data

As the research processes were carried out for this study, the researcher constantly made an honest attempt to complete them as fairly as possible. The product represents the experiences and happenings of the School Renewal process and the people involved with this study as closely as possible. Ely, et al (1991) suggested actions a researcher must take in order to make the work believable and establish credibility. In the process of collecting and analyzing data for this study, researcher actions included persistent observations, prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation of data, and peer debriefings with committee chairpersons and Planning Committee members. Multiple methods of data collection and building an audit trail (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) also assisted the researcher with trustworthiness of the data.

Table 5

The School Renewal Data Analysis Design

Data sources	Description
Field notes and observations	<p>Settings of all observations were described. Attempts were made to keep observations focused on key categories from the research questions . Group dialogue sessions were monitored and notes recorded as detailed as possible on the spot. Condensed notes were recorded with expanded notes written as soon as possible following all observations. Key phrases and major events assisted in describing or connecting emerging themes or categories in the data. Analysis involved systematic descriptive coding to merge data into manageable themes, ideas, concepts, and categories.</p>
Interviews	<p>Settings of all interviews were described. Semi-structured interviews were used with questions based on guiding research questions. The focus was to access the perspective of the interviewees (Patton, 1980), yet obtain information from an emerging perspective of the interviewees. Permission was granted and sessions were audio-taped and later transcribed. Key phrases and major events assisted the search for themes, categories, or relationships that emerged from data and helped in connecting with other data sources. Condensed notes were jotted down during interviews along with audio-taping and expanded notes were added as soon as possible after the interviews.</p>

(table continues)

Table 5 (continued)

The School Renewal Data Analysis Design

Data sources	Description
Research journal	Writing honest thoughts, feelings, struggles and reflections about the research process, observations, and interviewing sessions became an important part of the journal. Gathering chunks of information from the journal allowed additional thoughts, ideas, concerns, mistakes, and experiences to be expressed. Categories, themes, and concepts were used to assist analysis for the structure of the School Renewal process, the processes of School Renewal, and the outcomes of the School Renewal process and assisted in triangulation of the study.
Documents	Coding and categorizing documentary notes according to the structure of School Renewal, the processes of School Renewal, and the outcomes of School Renewal assisted in beginning data collection and later in triangulation of the data. Documents were coded for categories, themes, and relationships using guiding categories from the research questions in conjunction with other data from the study.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the design of the study, outline the data sources for the study, disclose the setting and time frame for the study, and address the role of participants in the study. A description of data collection instruments and procedures used in the analysis of data were identified and discussed.

This case study was designed to examine the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' School Renewal accreditation process in one elementary and middle school in rural Southwestern Virginia with a focus on the structure of the School Renewal process, the processes in which participants engaged, and the outcomes of School Renewal. The participants consisted of all faculty, staff, and administrators at Honaker Elementary and Middle School as well as parents and community members who participated as members on one of the School Renewal committees at the school. Data were collected through interviews, observations, School Renewal documents, field notes, and the researcher's reflective journal. The study was conducted during the 1997-1998 school year.

CHAPTER III
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: STRUCTURE
OF THE SCHOOL RENEWAL PROCESS

This study was designed to provide a systematic inquiry into the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' School Renewal accreditation process. The structure, processes, and outcomes of the School Renewal process in one rural elementary and middle school in Southwestern Virginia were investigated.

A Review of the Findings

Data in this study emerged from interviews with each of the seven School Renewal committees at the school, observations of each of the seven School Renewal committees as they conducted their work, field notes collected by the participant observer, documents contained in the committee notebooks from the seven School Renewal committees at the school, an interview with one faculty member who asked to be interviewed, and the researcher's reflective journal. These sources of information were used to assist the researcher in answering the guiding questions in this study.

Findings of the study are presented in three major themes from analysis of the data. The themes were an effective vehicle for describing the School Renewal process and its outcomes. These themes were:

1. The organizational **structure** of School Renewal within this school.
2. The **processes** participants used in the School Renewal process at the school.
3. The **outcomes** of the School Renewal process at the school.

There were also major categories within each of the themes in the results of the study (See Table 6).

Table 6

Themes, Categories, and Sub-categories

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories
Structure	SACS Structure	
	Committee Structure	
	Participant Roles	
Processes	Leadership	Principal's Leadership Assigned Oversight Roles Committee Chairpersons Emergent Leaders
	Communication	Coordination, Control, and Integration Motivation Information Sharing Direction of Communication
	Involvement	Active Participation Diverse Representation Opportunities for Active Voice
Outcomes	Common Outcomes	School Beautification Programs and Policies Curriculum and Professional Improvements
	Unique Committee Outcomes	Planning Staff Development Curriculum and Instruction Communications School Climate

Structure

Structure of the School Renewal process was an important theme for this school and included the process of School Renewal as outlined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the structure of the committees within the school, and the roles of the participants in the School Renewal process.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools lists the School Renewal approach to accreditation as “a very unstructured process that is based on the research of John Goodlad” (Virginia Secondary and Middle Schools Committee, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995, p. 26). According to SACS, School Renewal is “a flexible school improvement process in which schools determine their own process/structure” for SACS accreditation (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996, p. 7). Five areas for school improvement are outlined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as essential in the School Renewal process to provide the foundation for achievement of the School Renewal goals, objectives, and long-range plans as well as to provide the framework for the accreditation process for the school. These five areas include Planning, School Climate, Staff Development, Curriculum and Instruction, and Communication (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995).

School Renewal is based on a five-year cycle of continuous self-study with a participating school addressing all five areas within the five year cycle. It is essential that the participating school evaluate the effectiveness of all five areas of School Renewal and implement plans leading to the confirmation of improvement activities for the school during the five-year cycle. Members of the school determine the areas of School Renewal to be addressed each year (Virginia Secondary and Middle Schools Committee, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1995).

Committee Structure Within the School

After Mr. Barnes, the principal, appointed the chairperson of the Planning (Steering) Committee at the beginning of the first year of School Renewal for the school, he instructed her to organize or structure the School Renewal process for the school. In order to do so, the Planning chairperson attended a School Renewal workshop conducted at the district office where a principal, Dr. Black, from a neighboring county elementary school presented information regarding the SACS requirements. He also presented information on how he had organized the School Renewal process at his school (which was about the size and population of Honaker Elementary and Middle School).

The Planning chair also read John Goodlad's 1984 book, A Place Called School, and previewed all six of the 1988 videos of Renewing a Place Called School. In addition, early in September of the first year of School Renewal, the Planning chairperson arranged for each of the committee chairpersons to visit Highpoint Elementary School, the home school of their SACS appointed Facilitator, to examine School Renewal records, record-keeping practices, sources of documentation, as well as gain other general information regarding School Renewal from conversations with the Facilitator, teachers, and staff members at the school.

The Planning chairperson at this school structured the committees around the five School Renewal areas of Planning, Staff Development, Curriculum and Instruction, Communication, and School Climate. However, since there were about forty instructional faculty members at the school at that time, she used the plan Dr. Black had incorporated into the organization of his school. Since there were three large segments of the school climate to be addressed within the School Climate area (the physical plant, the students, and the teachers) for school renewal, the Planning chairperson followed Dr. Black's plan for his school and provided three separate committees under the school climate area to address the criteria for students, teachers, and the physical plant. This structure made seven committee groups at the school instead of the usual five required by SACS. Thus, committees were established and faculty members appointed for the Planning Committee, the Staff Development Committee, the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, the Communications Committee, and three separate School Climate Committees (the School

Climate—Students’ Committee, the School Climate—Teachers’ Committee, and the School Climate—Physical Plant Committee). Committee chairpersons were also appointed at this time by the Planning Committee chair.

In order to gain more information on the organization and structure for individual committees, the Planning Committee chairperson contacted a teaching friend from Dr. Black’s school, Mrs. Smith, and asked her if she could get a copy of some of the goals, objectives and other general information the committees used for organizing the School Renewal process at their school. Mrs. Smith responded with a copy of committee goals, objectives, and yearly plans from the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. Mrs. Smith also sent the Planning chairperson a copy of the school’s just completed Five-year Review Team report that indicated what was expected of a school at the end of the first SACS five-year review cycle. These goals, objectives, yearly plans, and the five-year review for that school assisted the Planning chairperson in structuring and organizing the School Renewal process for Honaker Elementary and Middle School and in preparing guidelines for assisting committee chairs with responsibilities for individual committees.

Schedules of committee meetings during the first three years of the process were relinquished to individual committee chairpersons. During the first three years, individual committees met for an average of two meetings per year (usually one at the beginning of the school year and one near the end) with none of them meeting on a periodic basis. At the end of the third year, members of the Planning Committee decided the committees should meet on a regular basis throughout the year in order to satisfy the on-going status of School Renewal and a Planning Committee goal of individual committees meeting on a regular basis.

Meetings for all committees were established during the fourth year to occur once each six-weeks period, except for the Communications Committee whose chairperson asked the Planning Committee members to allow that committee to meet once each nine weeks of school. Members of the Planning Committee decided this strategy would facilitate periodic committee sessions as well as allow committees to utilize the on-going process of improvement required by SACS. Periodic meetings for the committees had not

been established prior to the fourth year at this school and had previously only occurred on a sporadic basis.

Participant Roles

In addition to the roles of chairpersons, the roles of the participants in the school renewal process provided additional structure at this school. After the initial organization of the committees by the Planning chair, each committee group had extensive autonomy in deciding how the committee functioned as well as the position for members of the committees (except for the chairperson).

One significant change in the committee structure occurred at the end of the third year of school renewal at this school (spring 1997). Committee chairpersons, who were all members of the Planning Committee, suggested that each current chairperson choose an active member of the committee (and get the approval of the principal) to become a co-chair for the next two years. The name “co-chair” was given to this person chosen although the person selected was more like “chairperson in training” and not actually a co-chair for the committee. The purpose for this selection was to allow the “co-chairperson” time and opportunities to learn the process of the committee work with a hands-on approach while the actual chairperson was still in charge of the committee. As a result of this suggestion, each of the committee chairpersons chose a member of their committee to be co-chair, asked for the principal’s approval, and then named that person as “chairperson in training” or the new co-chairperson to assume the duties of chairperson when the next five-year School Renewal cycle began in fall 1999.

Participants expressed the importance of being contributors to the work of the School Renewal committees at the school. According to Teacher 8, participants directly or indirectly had input on other committees. Participants had the option of giving suggestions to other committees through committee members or committee chairs. Participants also contributed their time in assistance to the chairpersons of the committees. These members often served as analysts to help the chairpersons “figure out where we are and where we are going with our committee work” (Teacher 22). Other members

described their participant roles as committee informants for various stakeholders of the school and became couriers for their committees.

Summary

The findings of Chapter III discussed three major themes from the data analysis of the School Renewal process at this rural elementary and middle school. These three themes included the structure of School Renewal, the processes in which participants engaged during School Renewal, and the outcomes of the School Renewal process at the school. A brief description of each of the themes was given with the categories from each.

Chapter III detailed the theme of structure from the School Renewal process at the school as well as related categories. The categories outlined include the structure of School Renewal as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the committee structure within the school, and the roles of participants in the School Renewal process.

The themes of the processes of School Renewal and outcomes of the School Renewal process at this school are discussed in following chapters. The processes of School Renewal are detailed in Chapter IV and the outcomes are discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: THE
PROCESS OF SCHOOL RENEWAL

The process of school renewal was facilitated by three main activities over the period of this study: leadership, communication, and involvement. Leadership included the role of the principal of the school; the oversight roles of the Planning Committee chairperson and the Planning Committee itself; the roles of the other School Renewal committee chairpersons; and the roles of informal, emergent leaders. Communication included the purposes for communicating and the direction of communication. The purposes included the coordination, control, and integration of renewal activities; the motivation of participants; and the distribution of information essential to the School Renewal process. Participant involvement incorporated three major areas: active participation, diverse representation, and opportunities to have an active voice.

Leadership

One of the categories that emerged from the School Renewal data was leadership. According to the principal, “Everyone was placed on a committee and that gave people an opportunity to assume leadership.” The principal defined leaders as, “People . . . who are willing to take the leadership and do it through dedication and willingness to work.”

The Leadership of the Principal

“Principals, as you know, can be powerful forces for improvement or giant obstacles to reform” (Fullan, 1991, p. 207); thus, the principal in a reforming school occupies a vital role in the school renewal process. One major role for the principal in the School Renewal process at this school was the appointment of the Planning Committee chairperson. This appointment resulted from a suggestion by the retiring guidance counselor who had been assigned as the chairperson of the three previous SACS Steering Committees at the school

Principal
“Now some folks would not be comfortable with School Renewal because of the democratic kind of leadership that you have to have; allowing other people to have input and that kind of thing. If you can’t allow that to happen, you are not going to have a successful School Renewal program. I just think it’s been wonderful for our school.”

(See “A Scary Beginning”). The counselor informed the principal that she would be retiring within the year and wanted “nothing to do with the new School Renewal process.” However, she made a suggestion about who he could appoint to chair the new Planning Committee. As a result of her suggestion, the principal appointed that person as the new Planning Committee chairperson and assigned her to oversee the School Renewal process in the school.

The principal’s role was also one of a self-proclaimed democratic leader who supported committee decisions and allowed committee members to act upon and implement decisions made during committee sessions. The principal, except in one instance, supported group decisions and allowed the committee members freedom to carry out their decisions. The one instance, the Job Squad Project, follows:

The two afternoon custodians approached the sixth and seventh grade teachers asking them to permit a total of six students (one per homeroom) to collect paper trash each day from the teachers’ classrooms throughout the building at 2:45 p.m. and transport it to the custodial collection station in the school. The sixth and seventh grade teachers agreed to the request, but asked the custodians to wait until they got the plan approved by the principal or the Planning Committee. Because the Planning chairperson was a sixth grade teacher, she presented the custodians’ request to the principal and the other Planning Committee members during one of the regular Planning committee meetings.

The principal became concerned about the potential risk of liability if students were asked to complete work assigned to the custodians and asked the teachers to take no action on the request until he contacted the Director of Instruction at the Central Office and discussed the matter with her. After his conversation with the Director of Instruction, the principal informed the teachers there “may be some question of liability” and asked the sixth and seventh grade teachers to not allow the students to participate in the Job Squad Project. The custodians were informed of the decision by the principal.

This was the only time the principal did not support previous decisions by a group of teachers and that was because the custodians’ request potentially could have put students at risk.

Through the democratic process, opportunities must be provided for leadership to emerge from participants during school renewal. These opportunities were provided through committee work. At this school, people who were willing to capitalize on their strengths and felt they were competent to become leaders could “take the ball and run with it” (Teacher 38). According to Teacher 38, “School Renewal *is* a democratic process, and we are achieving what we are achieving [in the renewal process] because of the leadership opportunities it has provided us.” Teacher 26 stated that school renewal functions at this school because “we have a leader who makes provisions for decision-making and problem solving by the committees.” Teacher 28 added, “ This school has a very willing administrator who *allows* us to be involved in School Renewal.”

Teacher 28
“If you have an autocratic principal that wants complete control over things, School Renewal is not going to work because one thing you have to give up is control or that ultimate final say so—which we all know he actually still has.”

The principal expressed the view that the School Renewal committees provide opportunities for democratic leadership by the participants. He commented,

The thing I like about School Renewal is the fact that we can go to the committees with issues and concerns in the school. It’s not just dumped on me. I think it gives an opportunity for a school to have a more democratic leadership. Everybody’s got an opportunity to have some input into what’s going on in the school instead of me being an autocratic leader. I think it’s great that everybody has that opportunity at our school. (Principal)

The role of the principal was more supportive than of an active participant in the process. He gave the faculty and staff freedom to engage in decision-making, site-based management, and problem-solving through the School Renewal committees. According to Teacher 28, “A real big part of School Renewal is the principal and his support of the committee work.” The principal supported the committee chairpersons and participants by giving them freedom that allowed participants to capitalize on what they viewed their strengths to be no matter how great or small those strengths turned out to be (Teacher 38).

Assigned Oversight Roles

There were two oversight roles that emerged at this school. One role was assigned to the chairperson of the Planning Committee who was appointed by the

principal. The other role was assigned to the Planning Committee itself. Based on the chairperson's experience as a member of the school faculty for twelve years, the principal delegated to her the role of assigning each faculty member to one of the seven School Renewal committees at the school. Using a list with names of all faculty members, the planning chairperson assigned faculty members to each of the seven School Renewal committees. Members assigned to the seven committees (the first year) included only teaching faculty and not instructional aides, cooks, secretaries, or custodians. Faculty member appointments to the seven committees were based on the planning chairperson's personal knowledge regarding: (1) individual faculty members' personalities, (2) how well faculty members could adapt to the work load of particular School Renewal committees such as the Curriculum and Instruction Committee or the Planning Committee, and (3) individual faculty members' professional capabilities and qualifications.

The Planning Committee Chairperson

In the video series, Renewing A Place Called School, John Goodlad (1988) discussed findings from his research in terms of relationships between principals and teachers in renewing schools. Goodlad believed schools in the process of renewal needed the leadership of lead teachers, in addition to the principal. According to Goodlad, the principal-teacher relationship makes a substantial difference in a school succeeding or not succeeding in the school renewal process (Goodlad, 1984, 1988).

The trusting relationship built between the principal and a lead teacher at this school, along with the successful completion of the Six-Year School Plan, resulted in the appointment of the chairperson for the School Renewal Planning Committee. The professional relationship between the principal and the teacher who chaired the Six-Year School Plan led the principal to appoint that same teacher to chair the Planning Committee for the school's renewal process. This assigned role of Planning Committee chair emerged as one of the major roles in the renewal process at the school.

Once assigned, the Planning Committee chair became the main individual leadership role in school renewal for the school. The Planning chair appointed, with the approval of the principal, committee members and chairpersons to each of the seven

school renewal committees. The Planning chair planned committee sessions and guided the principal, committee chairpersons, and other members of the school through the renewal process. In order to guide, direct, and inform the participants of School Renewal guidelines and processes, workshops were planned and conducted by the Planning chair for other committee chairs and members of the Planning team. To prepare for the workshops and planning sessions on school renewal, the planning chair read School Renewal data that had been collected at the school, studied renewal information from other schools, and examined school renewal guidelines from SACS.

The Planning Committee

The Planning Committee had two roles: oversight of the school renewal process and resource to other committees at the school. The Planning Committee emerged as the oversight committee for the renewal process at this school. Planning Committee members planned and monitored yearly meeting schedules for the committees; facilitated writing and completing yearly committee goals and objectives; and monitored the overall renewal process for the school through committee data, notebooks, and surveys.

The Planning Committee served as a resource for other renewal committees at the school. Since each committee chairperson was a member of the planning team, the Planning Committee provided a vehicle and committee structure for committee leaders to come together, to discuss their personal and committee ideas regarding issues presented to the Planning Committee, and to pool ideas and thoughts for more cooperative committee decisions school-wide. As a result of these Planning Committee sessions, committee leaders gained assistance in setting priorities for their committees based on surveys, reports, and committee sessions; worked together to establish short-term and long-range goals for their committees; and established strategies to help work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives set by the committees. Since many individual committee problem-solving sessions took place during Planning Committee sessions, committee chairpersons became aware of strategies, goals, and objectives set by the other committees at the school.

The importance of the Planning Committee emerged as a result of chairpersons from other committees gathering at Planning sessions to discuss concerns they felt could not be resolved in individual committees. Examples of concerns committee chairpersons felt the need for the Planning committee to address included: writing a school-wide discipline plan, drafting a school-wide writing plan for grades kindergarten through seven, and drafting a parking plan for parents and other visitors to the school parking area. Chairpersons from each of the committees, who were members of the Planning Committee, worked together and drafted plans to address the school-wide discipline plan, the school-wide writing plan, and when this study ended were drafting plans to address the parking area at the school.

The Leadership of Committee Chairpersons

There were seven committee chairpersons at the school. These included chairpersons of the Planning Committee, the Staff Development Committee, the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, the Communications Committee, and three chairpersons for the School Climate Committees that included the School Climate—Teachers’ Committee, the School Climate—Students’ Committee, and the School Climate—Physical Plant Committee.

“One person has to be in charge of each committee” (Teacher 15).
“...[O]ne person was chosen to make sure that things got done, but everybody on the committee had to take part in it” (Teacher 11).
“Chair people assume the role of leadership for the committees” (Teacher 8).
“Other members of the committees look to the committee chairs as their leaders” (Teacher 26).

Although the principal proclaimed the overall leadership of the school to be one of a democratic process, these chairpersons were appointed by the Planning Committee chair. They were not elected. Once appointed, all chairpersons, except one (who requested to be released because of medical reasons), stayed in position. Although no written rules exist for the tenure of committee chairpersons, a five-year term, the duration of one School Renewal cycle, became the understood length for terms of committee chairpersons at the school.

Some of the participants described leadership roles of chair people in the School Renewal process at the school. The chairperson of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee described her leadership role as a listener who attempts to hear the concerns of others in the school. She says by listening carefully to concerns she can take action on

those concerns and work toward obtaining results for the students and teachers at the school. A member of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee described the leadership role of their chairperson as one who keeps the members “on line” (Teacher 28) by giving them up-to-date school information, guiding them through necessary changes in the curriculum of the school, and keeping members informed of instructional practices that may be helpful in their classes.

The chairperson of the School Climate—Teachers’ Committee described her leadership role as providing a better working environment for the teachers and staff at the school by focusing on needed improvements identified by members of her committee. The School Climate—Students’ Committee chairperson described her leadership role as working for the students in the areas of curriculum and instruction by focusing on the Standards of Learning requirements and the school climate by focusing on a safer environment in the school. She said, “After all, we’re working for the students so they can do a better job of learning at our school.” (Teacher 29)

The chairperson of the Communications Committee described her leadership role as the leader of the committee, but one who must delegate jobs and chores to other members of the committee. She said she did most of the work herself the first year and she “almost killed [her] self with work” (Teacher 37). She then found out there were committee members who were “very willing to do the work” and it made the committee work so much easier for everyone. By delegating committee jobs and chores this chairperson said, “It makes the renewal work manageable for each of us.”

The Leadership of Emergent Leaders

Informal leaders emerged as a result of the school renewal process. These informal, emergent leaders included change agents who either represented special interest groups or were catalysts for professional change. Special interest groups were individual stakeholders of the school who expressed an interest in improving physical sites in and around the school plant. These special interest groups included parents and teachers, who were not leaders of renewal committees, but were working together to make changes to the physical plant. Catalysts for professional change were language arts, science, and

social studies teachers at the school who were interested in making changes in instructional practices. The language arts teachers were working to improve student composition skills. These teachers formed a writing committee and helped draft a school-wide writing plan that was implemented in grades kindergarten through seven. The science and social studies teachers worked together on scheduling strategies in an attempt to focus on instructional strengths of teachers and the required number of instructional hours for science and social studies Standards of Learning. The master schedules for students in grades four through seven were changed to provide specific periods of time for science and social studies instruction. Teachers were assigned to their instructional areas of choice.

Special Interest Leaders

Special interest leaders emerged in a number of improvement activities to beautify the physical plant and grounds. These activities included planting shrubs or additional flowers in selected locations, enlisting parent volunteers to paint the front entrance posts with crayon motifs, developing a plan for a Butterfly Garden on the school lawn, and landscaping another portion of the front lawn of the school grounds. Additional special interest leaders emerged from efforts to make the school a safer learning and working environment by implementing suggestions from the parent surveys. These changes included a revised parking pattern for parents and visitors with an approved dismissal policy for students who ride home with their parents in individual automobiles instead of on school buses.

Teacher 29
“Even people
who have never
done *anything*
are doing
something!”

Leaders as Catalysts for Professional Change

Catalysts for professional change were language arts, science, and social studies teachers who were interested in making changes in instructional practices at the school. Language arts, science, and social studies teachers, who were not leaders of renewal committees, met and designed strategies to improve their instructional practices and school schedules. Concerns addressed by these leaders included finding strategies to improve teaching performance while utilizing new scheduling practices at the school and

focusing on the Standards of Learning within specific content areas (language arts, science, and social studies) across the grade levels. Teacher 1 described the efforts of the professional catalysts:

I think we were not seeing everything in the school as a whole. A lot of times we have a tendency to see from our own perspective or just look from our own classroom and what affects us and our grade level. You really aren't aware of what's going on throughout the building. School Renewal has made us look at the school as a whole—not just the child the year we have them, but progressively throughout the time the child is in the school. Now we are looking more as a whole at ourselves and how what we are doing affects the child while he is at our school.

Communication

Communication was the second major category of activities that facilitated school renewal at this school. There were several purposes for communication and communication flowed freely in all directions. Communication was used in the coordination, control, and integration of renewal activities; the motivation of participants and stakeholders in the process; and the dissemination of information fundamental to the operation of School Renewal. Communication flowed in horizontal and vertical directions within the school and district as well as to and from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Teacher 8
“School Renewal gives an opportunity for communication to be opened up between the different grade levels and for people to become more aware of what the requirements are for each of the grade levels throughout the school.”

The Purposes of Communication

Coordination, Control, and Integration

Effective communication with all stakeholders of a school creates a new set of values and increases the effectiveness of the renewal process at the school (Goodlad, 1984, 1988; Boyer, 1995). Communication at this school served to coordinate, control or direct, and integrate school renewal activities.

Coordination of renewal activities emerged through communication efforts throughout the school. Grade-level meetings and transitional grade-level meetings were established to coordinate and integrate renewal activities and goals. As a result of grade-level meetings, teachers coordinated school-wide literacy writing instruction and

disciplinary plans for the students. Teachers formed a literacy writing committee with representatives from all grade levels to formulate a plan for literacy writing and to draft a school-wide literacy writing plan that was implemented in grades kindergarten through seven. Transitional grade-level meetings were established to assist in planning, coordinating, and integrating school-wide plans and practices across three or more consecutive grade levels. The transitional grade-level meetings gave teachers another way to coordinate efforts for the writing plan and the school wide discipline plan.

Participants expressed the need to communicate with each other in order to make School Renewal function at the school. Communication helped control or direct renewal activities and functions within the school. The physical size of the school was the major reason for the need to direct communication within this school. Through committee meetings, grade-level and transitional grade-level meetings, school renewal newsletters, and committee memos, participants directed information to those that needed it, planned and implemented strategies such as the school-wide discipline policy and school-wide literacy writing plan, and facilitated renewal activities and functions within the school. According to Teacher 28,

One thing that has forced us to communicate is probably the size of this school. We are so spread out that School Renewal is one of the few ways that we can communicate with each other. We have to meet. We have to get together to do School Renewal, and we have to come together to get anything to work.

Integration of instruction and academic efforts by the teachers throughout the school also emerged as an important component of communication. Teachers developed a school-wide writing plan for students in grades one through seven as a result of efforts from grade-level and transitional grade-level meetings. One participant commented that she was finally seeing people from the primary hall that “for seventeen years I barely knew were down there” (Teacher 18). She also stated as a result of integration efforts in the

Teacher 16
“Before School Renewal, each person was just in his or her own room. We were self-involved—our classes were. And now we work together. I’m no longer just on the primary wing. We are not three different schools [sections]. I know more of what goes on in the sixth and seventh grade hall just because of the School Renewal meetings. I also think you all know more about what goes on with the primary wing because of School Renewal. It just breaks down barriers. We communicate more.”

area of curriculum and instruction teachers were beginning to see each other's point of view a little bit better and come together to accomplish the school renewal goals.

According to Teacher 28, teachers were “just now looking at this school as a whole as opposed to three separate parts—the primary, upstairs, and downstairs. It’s just because we are so big that we’ve never really stopped to fix it.” Teacher 19 stated that integration of instruction and academic efforts were uniting the teachers through the efforts of communication. She responded that school renewal had been positive for the school because teachers realized their work starts with kindergarten students and “everybody is responsible until our students get out of this school in seventh grade” (Teacher 19). She said teachers now realized, “We’re all responsible, not just one certain grade or two.” Teacher 29 stated the integration efforts of school renewal helped teachers become “focused in the same direction for our students by striving for the same goals throughout the grade levels .”

Motivation

Participants were motivated to become active in committee work and interact with other members at the school during the renewal process. According to Teacher 29, as a result of committee work and activities, participants were getting work out of people who would not have otherwise participated because they just would not volunteer. Parent 4 stated, “I think all these school renewal committees are good because everyone communicates with each other. They motivate everybody to participate in the activities, so everybody knows what everybody else is doing.”

According to the participants, survey results were an important part of the communication process at the school that resulted in active participation in the renewal process. For example, participants stated that beginning survey results indicated that teachers had little input in the development of school policies which affect their work, especially in the selection of inservice programs at the school. Teachers worked with members of the Staff Development Committee and planned inservice programs and sessions (such as the technology computer workshops) that were specifically requested by teachers at the school. According to results on one of the surveys after these inservice

programs, teachers indicated they felt that school-wide communication should continue to be an important part of the renewal process because of opportunities to participate in the selection of the inservice programs at the school.

Information Sharing

Information sharing emerged as an important purpose of communication in the school renewal process at this school. Participants shared information in both written and oral forms. Written forms of information sharing were parent and faculty newsletters, committee memos, agendas for committee meetings, minutes of committee meetings, school and committee school renewal reports, committee goals and objectives, calendars of events with dates of committee meetings, substitute teacher folders, and surveys.

Oral forms of information shared by participants at the school were more formal. Oral forms of communication included discussions during committee meetings, voicing concerns among participants during and outside of committee meetings, announcements of times and dates of committee sessions over the school's public address system, sharing individual or committee input among committee members during committee sessions, and participating in discussion sessions during the grade-level and transitional grade-level meetings throughout the school.

Although oral communication occurred in formal settings at this school, participants expressed the need to continue this kind of communication. For example, during Planning Committee meetings participants discussed the need to share information from one committee to another or from one teacher to another throughout the building. Teachers said this kind of communication was especially important when grade-level representatives were planning and implementing the writing plan for the language arts program and the school-wide discipline plan because teachers contacted colleagues for input and final approval of the plans before the implementation stages.

Participants expressed the need for oral communication when they felt the need to approach the Planning Committee chair or the chair of other individual committees with anonymous concerns regarding the renewal process. Through oral communication,

participants could express concerns they felt needed to be heard or concerns that could be brought anonymously before committees.

Sharing information with participants was an important part of the school renewal process at this school because through this process of information sharing the participants said they "...were a lot more informed and aware of what [was] going on in and around the school" (Teacher 2).

The Direction of Communication

The processes of communication within an organization can be distinguished with respect to the direction or the flow of information. Such flows of information can be classified as downward communication if information flows follow an authority pattern of hierarchical positions such as from a superior to a subordinate. Horizontal or sideways communication flows follow patterns that move among peers at the same level in an organization. Upward communication takes the form of an ascending hierarchical level from subordinates to one in a superior position (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

There were flows of communication including upward communication, downward communication, and sideways or horizontal flows of communication at the school. Upward communication was evident when committee members contacted committee chairpersons for information regarding guidelines for writing committee goals and objectives or when Committee chairpersons contacted the Planning Committee chair to arrange committee sessions throughout the year. Further upward communication patterns were evident when the Planning chairperson or principal communicated with the Planning Committee members during the Planning sessions in order to gain consensus on agenda items to be included in the school newsletter or arranging inservice sessions for technology workshops. Also upward communication was evident when the principal contacted the Director of Instruction at the district office in the case of the Job Squad incident.

Downward communication included information being passed from superiors to subordinates within the various levels of stakeholders at the school. For example, the

Principal
"School Renewal has given an opportunity for all teachers throughout the building to get acquainted more, to know each other, and to know what problems each other is facing. I have seen more interaction with people since we started this in the last two or three years than we ever had before."

Planning chair asked the committee chairpersons to write goals and objectives for the committees during the individual committee sessions. The Planning chairperson also asked committee chairs to deliver information regarding current guidelines for suspension of special education students and information detailing workshops and conferences sponsored by SACS that teachers may wish to attend.

Sideways or horizontal communication occurred within the levels mentioned in upward and downward communication. This included communication from planning chair to Planning Committee, school renewal committee to school renewal committee, individual member to other members in the school, or committee chairperson to committee chairperson.

Teacher 21 gave an example of how sideways communication and upward communication can replace an existing downward communication pattern as a part of the school renewal process. Horizontal communication occurred among teachers in the building and teachers felt their voice was being heard by the administration. Teachers were given opportunities to voice concerns, communicate with each other, and give feedback during faculty meetings as a result of the renewal process at the school. Teacher 21 said,

We never communicated with the other two schools [sections] here because it was like three schools and we just never really got together. Our teachers' meetings were simply just teachers' meeting. Period. This way we all have our input regarding School Renewal activities during teachers' meetings. I don't know what we would have done without School Renewal to focus us this year. We would have been in a mess because of the Standards of Learning. This is working. We are all focused on the same things now.

Involvement

Goodlad (1988) and Sergiovanni (1994) recommended that a school get the entire community involved in looking at the school to see what can be done to improve it. Participant involvement in the school renewal process at this school was remarkably high and included either individual or group involvement of all faculty and staff members, the principal, assistant principal, and parents or community participants who were members of one of the school renewal committees. There were three major categories of participant

involvement that emerged at the school: active participation, diverse representation, and opportunities to have an active voice in the school renewal process at the school.

Active Participation

According to Goodlad (1988), continuous cultivation and tending of the garden (school) will lead to a healthy environment (school climate) where all the right nutrients (curriculum) along with the right methods of pruning (instructional practices) can produce a joyful learning place. According to the participants at this school, involvement in the school renewal process involved the teachers at the school, the administrators, the support staff (which included cooks, custodians, instructional aides, and secretaries), along with parent and community volunteers of the school. Teacher 37 stated as a result of school renewal activities at this school, more people were “allowed to have an interactive part in the everyday functions of the school.” For example, teachers, staff members, parent and community volunteers were given opportunities during committee sessions to help make decisions regarding inservice sessions at the school, draft a school-wide discipline plan, launch a school volunteer program, and make changes for the school beautification program. Teacher 44 said, “There has been much more active participation from everybody at the school as a result of the school renewal activities.”

Teacher 28
“I have probably talked with more people in the last two years about different issues and concerns at this school than in the entire eighteen years I have been here.”

Participants became involved in the decision-making process at the school through the school renewal committees. According to Teacher 4, participants became active with decisions being made because of school renewal especially with the school beautification program. The chairperson of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee stated that members on her committee became “very willing participants” in making decisions for the school-wide literacy writing plan (Teacher 37). Teacher 44 stated that she would tell people who came to work at this school that they would be expected to become an active participant in the renewal process and help make decisions for the whole school.

Parent 5
“A survey was sent home that helped me be aware of things going on in the school. At least I felt like I was a part and I knew I was communicating with somebody about what I was thinking.”

Community ties foster empowerment of stakeholders in a school with an emphasis on commitment, duties, and obligations shared by members of the school community (Sergiovanni, 1994; Barth, 1990; Goodlad, 1984). Community input increased at this school because of school renewal. One participant responded that, “School Renewal gets

Teacher 13
“They [parents] are completing survey forms, making copies of papers for the teachers, and helping teachers gather materials for classroom projects or art projects to help with incorporating SOLs for social studies, science, or a language arts book the class is reading.”

the community in the school” (Teacher 28). She also stated that she thinks the community now understands a little bit better what is going on in the school because they have a better understanding of how the school functions. According to one instructional aide at the school, having the community and parents involved on the committees is an advantage for this school because community input has increased, parents feel more welcome in the school, and

volunteers are more diversified with different socio-economic backgrounds, kinds of education, interests, hobbies, and perspectives” (Instructional Aide 9). As a result of this community involvement, parents help teachers work with the students in their classrooms and with activities at the school. One teacher stated that community involvement has probably increased at the school because “we are now going out and trying to get more of them involved in our school” (Teacher 40).

The teachers were involved in changing and improving the school as a result of school renewal. Teacher involvement has increased as a result of school renewal and included opportunities for teachers to engage in “better teamwork and organization within the work place” (Teacher 35). According to Teacher 37, everybody has a part from administrators to the support staff and everybody plays an important role in the school renewal process. Grade-level teachers, with the support of the administration, departmentalized the fourth and fifth grade student schedules at the school. The teachers agreed on the areas to teach in a joint session and schedules were prepared. In addition, the sixth and seventh-grade student schedules were randomized much like schedules at the local high school in order to cut

Instructional Aide 5
“I feel like I am a part of the school. I am a part of this committee and I can make a complaint or I can have my input. I appreciate that about School Renewal because I have a part.”

behavior problems to a minimum and to maximize instructional strengths of teachers in those grade levels.

School Renewal involved cooperative participation that was labeled as shared responsibility by the participants:

Everything that's taking place with School Renewal at our school is a shared responsibility. Not one person can go down for any particular item without the whole crew going down. You know, that takes on a sense of pride. It's a shared responsibility; therefore, we're going to take more ownership, and that brings about pride within the school. (Teacher 35)

Teacher 1 said participants were "always very cooperative" because participants laughed and talked during the renewal work. She also said, "We're productive, and at the end of the meetings we produce something. There are outcomes from what we do." (Teacher 1)

Participation also led to more sharing of resources among teachers at the school. Teacher 37 stated that teachers had always shared resources within grade levels, but they had not been given the opportunity to share with other grade levels at the school. Sharing of instructional ideas, materials, and resources have been "across the board among all grade levels at the school" (Teacher 27) as a part of school renewal. The teachers also shared resources with the high school teachers during fund raisings and teacher inservice days for football and basketball games.

The music teacher at the school became a resource teacher for other teachers. She responded that, "I've noticed I have a lot of teachers who come to me as a resource person for music. I never had that until we began the School Renewal process at this school."

Teacher 21
"I think everybody is a part of the school now, when before School Renewal started only certain people just did everything. Now, everybody is involved even if you don't want to be. I see a lot of good that's going on and a lot of hard work because everybody *is* involved."

According to the teachers, participation and cooperation led to positive results for the participants in an enjoyable atmosphere. Teacher 36 said, "I see a growth of relationships and I see teamwork going on because the work is done by a team effort" (Teacher 36). Teacher 8 stated,

You can see our results. That's something! Some of our committees have worked so very hard, but you can't see what they've done. It's not always there in black and white, but you can see it in student performance. It's there in student behavior. It's there in teacher

performance, in teacher attitudes and values, and it's there! It's not something you can always see right there in front of you and it's probably harder for parents and community people to measure it because it's not there on the wall, hanging. It's in an attitude, a performance, or in values. It's hard to measure, but it's there!

Diverse Representation

When the School Renewal committees were reorganized the second year of the renewal process, each person in the school was assigned to a committee, including support staff (instructional aides, cooks, custodians, and secretaries) who had not been previously assigned to a committee. In order to have a variety of representatives on each committee, the school renewal committees had representation from all grade levels and other department areas such as music, physical education, media services, special education, Title I services, and guidance. Having this level of representation on the committees resulted in approximately ten members on each of the seven committees.

Teacher 36
"We are including everybody in our School Renewal process. I think we really have three schools here. Since I'm upstairs, lots of times I never see the primary people or the sixth and seventh grade people. With School Renewal, we work together a lot more than we used to and we do see each other a lot more often."

Each of the seven committees also had a parent or community representative assigned as an active member of the committee. According to Teacher 26, "There are interested parents who serve on the committees and one dedicated community member who serves on the Teachers Committee." The principal stated that parents say they feel welcome in the school; they feel like it is their school; and they are taking part in the School Renewal process at the school. The community is much more involved in the school than ever before. "Parents are actively involved with School Renewal and have become active participants on the School Renewal committees" (Teacher 33).

Instructional Aide 10
"I appreciate the opportunity to be involved. That's important. I've been a parent at this school for thirteen years. I've been a staff member for four years. I've been involved and able to voice an opinion and to help get things going during the last two years. I know I can help. I like being involved."

One parent who is also a teacher at the school responded from a parent's point of view school changes and improvements are very different. She said teachers sometimes get "bogged down" looking at the school from a teacher's point of view because they are there all day long every day. However, "Looking at the school from the child's point of

view *and* a parent’s point of view looks entirely different. The school is much better now with lots of improvements in our curriculum and scheduling classes for the children.”
(Teacher 23)

Opportunities for an Active Voice

The importance of having a voice in the renewal activities at the school emerged as a major category of involvement at this school. “These School Renewal committees at our school have given teachers a place to voice themselves” (Teacher 26). According to Teacher 8, teachers do have a voice through the committees and there is much less negativity. Teachers feel like there are some positive aspects of the School Renewal process because someone is listening to them and cares about their opinions. Teacher 44 explained how the participants at the school can have a voice in policies written by one committee yet everyone is given an opportunity to voice an opinion for a policy’s approval. She stated that, “Everybody has a voice in what’s going on in the school even though it might not come from the committee you are on.” (Teacher 44) She gave the discipline policy as an example. The School Climate-Students Committee devised it, but members from every committee looked at it and expressed an opinion before it was approved. “Everybody had a little say-so in what the policy would be like and how it would be implemented in its final form.” (Teacher 44)

Teacher 21
“I think these committees provide the opportunities for people to speak up and say what they are thinking. They will voice their complaints in a committee because they feel comfortable where they would not go to the office and do it. When the committee as a whole is speaking out against or for something, teachers are more comfortable in doing it. That’s one reason we’re getting things accomplished.”

In addition, the principal expressed his approval of allowing teachers to have a voice through the School Renewal committees. His responses were:

I think the big thing is School Renewal has given people an opportunity to have input in the issues of the school. Instead of me having to make all the decisions and trying to come up with ideas or strategies and appoint people, it just goes to a committee. Just like the discipline policy you all worked with. You [teachers] came up with those suggestions. Those are strategies the teachers themselves came up with. It wasn’t something forced down their throats. Peers did it, and that’s the way it ought to be.

The teachers also selected representatives on each committee to voice their opinions or concerns. Teacher 37 said one person per grade level on each committee was assigned to be a contact person with the other people from that grade level. If grade-level or department area people have concerns, they address that one person and the concerns are brought to the committee meetings and discussed among the members in order to arrive at a solution. The participants expressed the need to select these grade level or department area representatives to have a voice when curriculum and instruction or staff development concerns were addressed during committee sessions. Therefore, participants had input in the decisions of their committee and directly or indirectly had input in decisions on other committees.

Teacher 6
“This is an everyday thing at our school. The teachers are deciding what gets done and not somebody else. It’s what is particular to our school and our school needs that we focus on.”

Teachers expressed having voice in committee work as both a positive and a negative aspect of the School Renewal process. According to Teacher 7, opportunities to have an active voice was positive because teachers were able to express their opinions and concerns during committee work. However, she said sometimes teachers misinterpreted what was said and got their feelings hurt. Teacher 28 also expressed these concerns as a positive aspect of school renewal. She responded,

Sometimes I think there’s a positive spin on this because some of these people probably were never involved in anything in the first place—not because they never wanted to, but because they were never asked. So, if they are involved to the point that they are getting their feelings hurt at least they are involved in something! They are coming out and they *are* connecting with other people over things.

Teacher 16 responded that School Renewal activities have given teachers more freedom to express themselves by having a voice during faculty meetings. She responded, that now teachers feel more free to talk with each other about concerns and issues that affect them. According to Teacher 38,

Before School Renewal, we really had no avenue to have a voice. Now, we can write to committee people or talk to them about our concerns because that is our avenue, and I find it very positive. If something is brought up three times in a committee, then it definitely merits consideration. There was never anything like that before School Renewal, and this is my twenty-fifth year here at this school.

Teacher 29 concluded, “At least with School Renewal we have a voice. We may not get all the things we want. We may not leap tall buildings, but at least we have a voice.”

Summary

This chapter highlighted three major processes in which participants engaged during the school renewal process. The processes of leadership, communication, and involvement were described. Leadership at this school included the principal’s role, the assigned oversight roles of the Planning Committee chairperson and the Planning Committee itself, the leadership of committee chairpersons, and the leadership of emergent leaders. Communication included the purposes of communication. These purposes involved coordination, control, and integration of school renewal activities; motivation of participants; and information sharing essential to the operation of school renewal at the school. Directional flows of communication including upward, downward, and sideways communication emerged as an important component of communication at the school. Involvement in the process of school renewal was discussed in terms of active participation in school renewal activities, diverse representation of stakeholders, and opportunities to have an active voice in the school renewal activities at the school. Participant involvement in the renewal process at this school was remarkably high and included all faculty and staff members, administrators, and parent or community participants who were members of one of the school renewal committees.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: OUTCOMES

School Renewal outcomes at this school were categorized into two major areas. These were common outcomes for the school that were affected by committee work from two or more of the School Renewal committees and unique committee outcomes that resulted from an individual committee's efforts as a part of the School Renewal process at the school. Common school renewal outcomes were characterized as such because these outcomes affected participants throughout the school and not just participants from one single school renewal committee. Unique school renewal outcomes were those outcomes that affected the participants from one single committee and not shared by all participants throughout the school.

Common School Renewal Outcomes

Common School Renewal outcomes comprised three broad categories of school improvements. These categories included improvements in the areas of school beautification, school programs and policies, and curriculum and professional development. Curriculum and professional development outcomes were clumped into the same category because teachers decided outcomes that affected their professional development should also affect the areas of the curriculum they were teaching.

School Beautification

The School Beautification Program began as a science project by the School Climate Committees at the school. The science classes from the sixth and seventh grades and students from the Student Government Council began the beautification work by planting flowers in empty flower beds around the school grounds. Near the beginning of the second year of School Renewal, teachers throughout the building asked the principal if they could paint flowers or school motifs on the inside walls of the building "to brighten the inside of the school" as well. The principal agreed to allow the teachers to paint the

Teacher 23
"A lot of us have worked on painting our rooms and decorating them to make our rooms more attractive, as well as making the halls more attractive, and fixing timely bulletin boards."

walls of the building with murals. As a result of this request, the principal began what came to be recognized as the School Beautification Program throughout the school.

Several school beautification projects are visible outside the building that resulted from school renewal efforts. These projects have resulted from suggestions by students, teachers, instructional aides, parents, and community members and became known as one group of the common school renewal outcomes for the school. These common outcomes came to fruition through the interaction and collaboration of the school renewal committees and other volunteers.

In addition to the flowers, interested participants have planted shrubbery and small trees on the school grounds. A large school marquee was purchased and erected on the front lawn to display upcoming events at the school. According to the principal, “We have had more compliments on that school sign and the murals than just about anything we’ve done.” In addition, a dozen faculty, staff, and visitor parking signs were purchased by the principal and the custodians assisted the county maintenance crew in placing them in the appropriate locations. New United States and Virginia flags were donated to the sixth-grade students by a member of the Woodsmen of the World/Omaha Woodsmen Life Insurance Society (1997) as a result of combined efforts from the Students’ Committee, the Physical Plant Committee, and the sixth grade language arts classes.

Other school beautification projects were located inside the school building. Murals now decorate the school cafeteria, every hallway, and almost every classroom entrance throughout the building. The murals were painted by teachers from the school, parent volunteers, friends of teachers, and a parent who is a recognized artist in the area.

Another beautification project, located inside the front lobby area, is a huge birthday tree that was painted by the parent artist. The birthday tree reaches from the floor to the ceiling of the lobby and has huge arms reaching along an entire wall. The guidance counselor keeps leaves on the tree by placing names and birth dates of students, teachers, and staff members on seasonally colored paper and clips them to the branches (wall) with clothespins that have been glued to the wall.

Two large, wood and plexiglas display cases were crafted by one of the custodians at the school and placed in the front lobby for displaying student honor roll lists and

perfect attendance awards for the students. A fifth-grade teacher volunteered to decorate the showcases each month. Seasonal decorations were recommended by the Teacher Committee and purchased by the principal to make the teacher’s work easier.

Communication boards were recommended by members of the Planning Committee and purchased by the school office personnel to be placed in the school office and cafeteria. The office communication board allowed space for listing monthly School Renewal committee meetings and the cafeteria board was used to list daily menus. The chair of the Communications Committee kept the dates changed on the office communication board while another member of the Communications Committee kept the cafeteria board updated with the daily lunch and breakfast menus. Volunteers from the Volunteer Program at the school, parents, and instructional aides also work alongside grade-level teachers to change periodically bulletin boards inside the classrooms as well as in the hallways and cafeteria of the building.

School Programs and Policies

There were outcomes in the form of programs and policies for the school that were considered common renewal outcomes by members of the School Renewal committees which include the Planning Committee, Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Communications Committee, Staff Development Committee, and the School Climate Committees (Students’ Committee, Teachers’ Committee, and Physical Plant Committee).

The participants considered the school-wide discipline policy one of the most important common outcomes in this category.

According to Teacher 22 the school-wide discipline policy was “a product that we can be proud of that actually came out of all our hard work.”

Instructional Aide 10 expressed that every grade level in the school was cooperating with the discipline policy guidelines by checking with each other regarding what was expected for various groups of children. Teacher 44 believes that the discipline policy is now part of an automatic process at the school because it was

Teacher 35
“The discipline policy is now followed through by teachers in each grade level and department in the school. That helps the students to know that the rules are consistent and from year to year what the consequences will be for not adhering to the guidelines.”

developed by the teachers as a part of the renewal process and they follow the guidelines they helped develop.

A volunteer program was established for the school as a result of suggestions from the School Climate Committees (Teachers', Students', and Physical Plant Committees) and the Communications Committee. Members from each of the committees met and drafted a "sign up" list for interested volunteers. Forty-two volunteers signed the list and were trained in a volunteer training workshop (conducted by the principal and the volunteer coordinator who was one of the volunteers that agreed to coordinate the program for the school) regarding appropriate practices and procedures for working with children in a public school setting. All the volunteers who were trained spent time helping the committee chairpersons with necessary chores, assisting classroom teachers with finding or preparing materials for classroom instruction, helping the cafeteria staff with food preparation or general clean up, or assisting the office staff with running errands or getting supplies. Current volunteers for the school's Volunteer Program are parents, grandparents, or other family members (aunts or uncles) of students who attend the school.

Grade-level meetings were established as a result of School Renewal goals and objectives by the School Climate—Teachers' Committee. There were grade level meetings for all grades kindergarten through seventh at this school. Each grade level had at least three teachers who represented a particular grade level. These grade-level meetings occurred at least once every six-weeks grading period. In order to document progress for the grade-level meetings at the school, the chairperson of the School Climate—Teachers' Committee requested a written report of minutes and the agenda from the meetings be sent to her.

Transitional grade-level meetings were also requested by members of the School Climate—Teachers' Committee as a result of their committee goals. Transitional grade-level meetings were defined by the School Climate—Teachers' Committee chairperson as three or more consecutive grade level teachers (all the teachers in three consecutive grades) meeting and discussing relevant instructional issues or concerns for their students or grade

Teacher 19
"Teachers interact more with each other. Every body is interacting and cooperating more now because our focus is more on student test scores, student needs, and instructional practices."

levels. There were no established rules regarding which grade levels were to meet. However, at this school there were three transitional grade-level groups that met most often for transitional grade-level meetings. These included kindergarten, first, and second grade-level teachers; second, third, and fourth grade-level teachers; and fifth, sixth, and seventh grade-level teachers. These grade-level groups met a total of three times each during the fourth year of school renewal at this school. The first meeting was in September 1997, the second meeting was in January 1998, and the third meeting was in May 1998.

There were other programs and policies that emerged as common school renewal outcomes at the school because they resulted from efforts from the school renewal committees and grade-level or transitional grade-level teachers' meetings. Some of these included instructional improvements in the form of a school-wide writing program, monthly teacher calendars with important school dates listed, substitute teacher workshops, substitute teacher folders that contained necessary information for any substitute who enters a teacher's classroom, make-up work policy for classwork and homework missed by students at all levels, and a handwriting policy for the primary grades (kindergarten through grade three) to encourage legible penmanship and guided practice.

Other common outcomes in the programs and policies category included functional outcomes for the school. These programs or policies included a revision of the daily school intercom announcements, sending monthly cafeteria menus to parents, establishing an emergency telephone tree to notify all faculty and staff in case of a death or other emergency, creating a snow call phone tree to notify those faculty and staff members who wished to receive an early morning call on days of school dismissal for snow, establishing a school volunteer program with volunteer training workshops, and sponsoring faculty and staff picnics and get-togethers throughout the year.

Curriculum and Professional Development Improvements

Common school outcomes in the category of curriculum and professional development improvements included changes that affected the curriculum of the school and the professional development activities of the participants. Participants decided these two areas should be clumped together because what affected their professional development at this school during the renewal process should also affect the curriculum for their grade levels. For example all faculty and instructional aides at the school were provided intensive training in technology skills. The training sessions included Internet surfing and exploring of selected educational sites, Herzog keyboarding sessions (Herzog Keyboarding, 1997) with a focus on training young students to do keyboarding exercises, and professional training on how to use the Advanced Learning System (The American Education Corporation, 1997) computer network that had been recently installed at the school to be used with all students during their technology lab instruction time.

Teacher 19
“I think School Renewal makes you look at yourself and *how you* are teaching. You question yourself. Just what am I teaching? Am I going to have these children ready for the next grade? That’s one thing we really stress with each other. I mean, we really look at these things *hard*.”

These professional development improvements related to classroom instruction for reinforcement of the Standards of Learning in the areas of technology, English, science, and social studies. Teacher 36 stated that he thought, “Everybody is more focused on purposeful teaching and instruction and teachers are looking at their own instruction more closely than ever before.” According to Teacher 19, teachers are more “in touch” with student needs as a result of the grade-level and committee meetings at the school. She said, “We focus on what the concerns are, what’s working, and what isn’t working.” She believes that teachers are now holding themselves more accountable in the area of instruction because they know that is expected of them and their students by the school administration.

Although changing student schedules became an organizational outcome, participants expressed the need to implement departmentalization for fourth and fifth grades and randomized scheduling for sixth and seventh grades at this school. During their grade-level meetings, transitional grade-level meetings, and school renewal committee work, participants worked on changing these schedules. Participants stated

they would have more instructional time for individual subjects in fourth through seventh grades, especially in lieu of fulfilling required instructional time for the new Standards of Learning and for an emphasis on science and social studies instruction. (This school had not given ‘formal’ science and social studies instruction until fourth grade prior to the year of this study.)

The participants gained the approval of the principal and the grade-level teachers to randomize student schedules for the sixth and seventh grades (have students change classes on individual schedules much like the local high school student schedules where students scatter for every class after leaving morning homeroom). In addition, they gained the principal’s and grade-level teachers’ approval to departmentalize the fourth and fifth grade schedules at the school. The departmentalization of the fourth and fifth grades meant that all students in the fourth and fifth grades remained together all day as a class, but moved to different fourth and fifth grade teachers for individual subject content instruction throughout the day. The principal and teachers at the school approved these schedule changes for these grades.

Another common outcome of the School Renewal process for curriculum improvement at the school was obtaining the school-wide technology lab for the school. A school-wide technology lab was implemented at this school in order to reinforce basic skills from the core areas of the Standards of Learning: technology, English, science, social studies, and mathematics. Individual teachers worked with the technology lab coordinator to plan and program individual lessons needed by students in each grade. Teachers planned lab lessons to reinforce classroom instruction, build skills for students who were not working on grade level, and provide technology skills and practice for the technology Standards of Learning.

There were some common school outcomes that could be categorized as professional development improvements for the school although participants felt they very closely related to the curriculum and instructional practices within the school. These improvements were often channeled through the Staff Development Committee and the Planning Committee at the school, but included inservice activities for the teachers that were appropriate to services needed by students at this particular school. Professional

activities increased as a result of school renewal and were usually in the form of inservices and workshops related to the area of curriculum and instruction at the school. Some examples included literacy writing and reading workshops, Internet workshops, Herzog keyboarding (Herzog Keyboarding, 1997) inservice sessions, Advanced Learning System (The American Education Corporation, 1997) technology workshops, and a school-wide literacy writing plan for the school.

Unique Committee Outcomes

Unique school renewal outcomes were outcomes that emerged from one single committee and were not shared by all participants throughout the school.

Planning Committee

Establishing and organizing the network of School Renewal committees and structuring the overall process for School Renewal was a unique outcome of the Planning Committee at this school. School renewal committees were established and members were appointed to them to address each of the areas listed under the SACS guidelines for this alternative route to accreditation. The committees included Planning, Curriculum and Instruction, Communications, Staff Development, and three committees under the area of School Climate that included the School Climate—Students' Committee, the School Climate—Teachers' Committee, and the School Climate—Physical Plant Committee.

The organizational structure of the committees was also established by the Planning Committee. This structure incorporated the SACS guidelines and twenty-four criteria into committee guidelines; outlined responsibilities for: empowering members, being self-directive, helping committee members with decision-making strategies, and providing evidence for addressing the criteria for the committees; outlined duties for committee chairpersons that included writing goals and objectives for the committee, empowering members to work together to accomplish goals, keeping meetings brief by staying with the agenda, completing notebooks of important information for the committee; and establishing duties of the recorder and team members for each group.

Establishing the routine of writing annual committee goals, school goals, and objectives were also outcomes of this process for the Planning Committee.

Assigning school oversight leadership roles for the Planning Committee chairperson and the Planning Committee were other unique outcomes established early in the process by this committee. The Planning Committee chairperson was appointed by the principal. The other role was assigned to the Planning Committee itself. Once assigned, the Planning Committee chair assumed the main individual leadership role in school renewal for the school. The Planning Committee emerged as the oversight committee for the renewal process. Planning Committee members planned and monitored yearly committee meeting schedules, facilitated writing and completing yearly committee goals and objectives, worked with other committees to help solve problems, and monitored the overall renewal process for the school using committee data, notebooks, and surveys.

A final outcome for the Planning Committee was establishing the Planning Committee as a resource for the other School Renewal committees at the school. Since each committee chairperson was a member of the planning team, the Planning Committee emerged as a vehicle for committee leaders to come together, discuss ideas regarding concerns from their committees, and pool ideas and thoughts for more cooperative decisions. As a result of establishing the Planning Committee as a resource for all the other committees at the school, committee leaders could (1) gain assistance in setting priorities, (2) work together to establish short-term and long-range goals, and (3) help develop strategies for accomplishing goals and objectives for other committees.

Staff Development Committee

There were some unique outcomes from the Staff Development Committee at this school. Opportunities for earning principal inservice days by working at the high school football and basketball games were unique outcomes for the Staff Development Committee. Opportunities for chairpersons and co-chairs to attend annual conferences sponsored by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools were also outcomes specific to the Staff Development Committee. Professional leave was provided and

expenses were paid by the school system for the chairpersons and co-chairs who attended conferences on school renewal.

Curriculum and Instruction Committee

Although the Curriculum and Instruction Committee shared many of the common school outcomes with other committees at the school, the Curriculum and Instruction Committee only had one unique outcome. The unique outcome for this committee was a scrapbook of photographs, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia from the committee's work throughout the renewal process.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee had some unique committee outcomes. These outcomes included writing monthly parent newsletters and sending them to parents; posting cafeteria and bus duty rules in the cafeteria; writing current menus on the cafeteria communications board; sending monthly cafeteria menus to parents; changing the information on the marquee on the front lawn every month; changing the format of the school's public address information for morning and afternoon announcements; and printing honor roll lists, perfect attendance lists, and other student accomplishments for the local newspaper.

School Climate—Students' Committee

The School Climate-Students' Committee had one unique committee outcome that emerged. The School Climate-Students' Committee members revised the student handbook and included details for the new discipline policy, handwriting policy, and make-up work policy that had been developed during School Renewal.

School Climate—Teachers' Committee

The teachers from the School Climate-Teachers' Committee had several unique outcomes from their School Renewal work. These outcomes included making presentations to parents and visitors regarding the Standards of Learning at the fall 1997

open house program; revising the teacher and staff handbooks; preparing a checklist for items included in student cumulative folders; sponsoring and facilitating the substitute teacher workshops during the last two years; and assigning designated teachers on each hallway as informants for substitutes.

School Climate—Physical Plant Committee

Since the School Climate-Physical Plant Committee facilitated almost all of the common school outcomes in the school beautification program, no unique outcomes emerged for this committee.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the outcomes of the school renewal process. There were common school renewal outcomes and unique committee outcomes of the school renewal process at this school. Common outcomes included outcomes that affected the work of two or more of the seven school renewal committees at the school and were outcomes shared throughout the school. Unique committee outcomes resulted from a single committee's efforts as a part of the renewal process at the school and were outcomes shared by individual committee members.

Three broad areas of common school outcomes were discussed. These outcomes included school improvements in the areas of school beautification, school programs and policies, and curriculum and professional development.

All seven individual School Renewal committees had at least one unique school renewal outcome, except the School Climate—Physical Plant Committee. Since the School Climate—Physical Plant Committee facilitated almost all of the common school beautification outcomes for the school, this committee had no unique committee outcomes.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter is a summary of this study of the School Renewal accreditation process of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Attention has been given to the structure of the process, the processes in which the participants engaged, and the outcomes of the process in the areas of planning, school climate, curriculum and instruction, communication, and staff development. Participants included all the faculty and staff members, the principal, assistant principal, parents and community participants who were members of the seven School Renewal committees at one elementary and middle school in rural Southwestern Virginia. Interviews and observations of School Renewal committees, a reflective journal and field notes by the researcher, and School Renewal documents provided evidence to support how the School Renewal process happened in this school. This chapter includes a summary of the results, the conclusions drawn from the study, and recommendations for practice and for future research.

Summary

This section includes brief statements about each part of the summary. Structure involved guidelines from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the committees within the school. The processes of school renewal included leadership, communication, and involvement of participants. Leadership roles consisted of the principal's role, assigned oversight roles, committee leader roles, and informal emergent leadership roles. Communication included coordination, control, and integration of renewal activities at the school; motivation of participants; information sharing; and the directions of communication. Involvement included active participation, diverse representation, and participant voice in the renewal process. Outcomes of the renewal process included common renewal outcomes and unique committee outcomes. Common outcomes consisted of school beautification, school programs and policies, and curriculum and professional improvements.

Structure

The School Renewal process was structured to incorporate the School Renewal accreditation guidelines from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, including the five areas of planning, curriculum and instruction, communication, climate, and staff development. Since the principal had appointed the Planning chairperson to that position, the Planning Committee chairperson established seven committees to address the five School Renewal areas. The renewal committees included the Planning Committee, Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Communications Committee, Staff Development Committee and three committees to address the School Climate area: the Students' Committee, the Teachers' Committee, and Physical Plant Committee. Faculty and staff members (custodians, cooks, secretaries, and instructional aides) were appointed to each of the committees by the Planning chair. The Planning Committee structured the renewal process to include yearly goals, plans, and objectives per committee with committee sessions to occur once every six-weeks throughout the school year except for the Communications Committee which meets every nine weeks.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Although it is an unstructured approach to regional accreditation (Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools provides guidelines for the School Renewal accreditation process. Resources by John Goodlad provided recommendations and suggestions for the school personnel during the school's organizational and functional processes of School Renewal. The Planning Committee members followed the recommendation by SACS for a school choosing the School Renewal approach to accreditation and become familiar with John Goodlad's research in A Place Called School (1984) and Renewing A Place Called School (1988). Resource guides provided by SACS supplied the Planning chair and school personnel with additional information regarding the renewal process for this school. These resources included: The School Renewal Process: An Alternative Route to School Improvement and Regional Accreditation (1995, July),

School Renewal—An Alternative Route to Regional Accreditation (1992), and the School Renewal Facilitator Training Guide (1996, September).

Committees Within the School

According to SACS, a school has complete autonomy in organizing and structuring the School Renewal improvement process within that school as long as the school follows the basic SACS guidelines. The committee network created at this school by the Planning chairperson and members of the Planning Committee was organized to support the SACS renewal process and to provide a framework for the overall functions of School Renewal at the school.

The Planning chairperson structured the committees at this school around the five School Renewal areas of Planning, Staff Development, Curriculum and Instruction, Communications, and School Climate with three committees addressing the area of School Climate: Students' Committee, Teachers' Committee, and Physical Plant Committee. After the seven renewal committees were established, faculty and staff members were appointed to each of the committees by the Planning chair. Committee chairpersons were also appointed by the Planning chair. At the end of the third year of the five year process, each committee selected a co-chair. The co-chair for each committee will assume the duties of chairperson for the committee when the next five-year School Renewal cycle begins in fall 1999.

After the initial assignment of members to committees, participant roles and committee functions were relinquished to individual committee chairpersons. Although there were guidelines developed by the Planning Committee for yearly committee goals, objectives, and plans, renewal committees had complete autonomy in deciding how the committees functioned as well as positions for members of the committees (except for the chairperson's position).

Active participation at this school included all teachers, support staff (cooks, custodians, secretaries, and instructional aides), the principal, assistant principal, and parent and community volunteers of the school. Participants were given opportunities through the school renewal activities to actively participate in decision-making sessions for

their committees; to become involved in school projects and activities (such as the beautification projects); to participant in drafting new school programs or policies (such as the school-wide discipline policy); to assist classroom teachers; or to attend get-to-gathers sponsored by the renewal committees (such as the end-of-year picnic). School Renewal involved cooperative participation that was labeled as shared responsibility by the participants, therefore there was extensive participation in school renewal activities and functions at this school.

Processes of School Renewal

The processes or actions in which participants engaged during the School Renewal process emerged as one of the major themes of School Renewal at the school. The processes of leadership, communication, and involvement highlighted the actions of the participants in this study.

Leadership

There were several leadership roles that emerged in the renewal process at this school. These roles included the leadership of the principal who promoted shared decision-making and site-based problem solving; dual roles of assigned oversight leaders in the school which include the Planning Committee chairperson and the Planning Committee itself; leadership roles of the other school renewal committee chairpersons who were responsible for organizing, managing, and facilitating individual committees; and informal emergent leadership roles that included individuals who became change agents for the school or catalysts for professional change looking for ways to improve teaching practices and student performance.

Principal's role. Various levels of leadership were evident in the process. The principal's role was one of a self-proclaimed democratic leader who provided opportunities for leadership to the participants in a supportive atmosphere. Although the principal was not always actively engaged in the school renewal activities, he provided opportunities for members of the faculty and staff to freely engage in decision-making, site-based management, and problem-solving sessions on school-related activities through the School Renewal committees.

Assigned oversight leadership roles. There were two assigned oversight leadership roles at this school. These leadership roles included the chairperson of the Planning Committee and the Planning Committee itself. The Planning Committee chairperson was appointed by the principal, and once assigned became the main leadership role for conducting the renewal process in the school. The Planning Committee chairperson guided the principal, the school renewal committee chairpersons, and other members of the school through the school renewal process for four years (1994-1998). The Planning chair planned and conducted workshops and training sessions on the renewal process for committee chairs and other members of the Planning team.

The functions of the Planning Committee provided the overall framework for the structure of school renewal and served the role of resource committee for the other school renewal committees. Planning Committee members planned and monitored yearly meeting schedules for the committees; facilitated writing and completing yearly committee goals and objectives; and monitored the overall renewal process for the school through committee data, notebooks, and surveys. The Planning Committee provided a vehicle and committee structure for committee leaders to come together, to discuss ideas regarding issues or concerns presented to their committees, and to pool ideas and thoughts for more cooperative planning and committee decisions school-wide.

Committee chairpersons. The committee chairpersons, except for the chair of the Planning Committee, were appointed by the Planning Committee chairperson and assumed leadership roles for their assigned committees. Chairpersons of the committees became leaders who organized, managed, and facilitated activities for their committees. Although there were no written rules for the duration of these chairperson's appointments, it was understood by the committee chairpersons that their terms would last for one entire five-year cycle of the School Renewal process at the school.

At the end of the third year of the five-year cycle, committee chairpersons at this school selected an active member of their committee to become a co-chair for the committee. Although the name of "co-chair" was given to these individuals, they were actually "chairpersons-in-training" because they were to observe the work of the

chairperson and the committee for two years and then assume the position of chairperson for that committee when the next five-year accreditation cycle begins in the fall of 1999.

Informal emergent leadership roles. Informal, emergent leadership came from special interest groups within the school or individuals who were catalysts for professional change. These leaders sought school beautification improvements or strategies to improve teaching performance and student achievement at the school. Most of these leaders were teachers who did not occupy chair positions on the committees; however, there were also three parents who became leaders of the school beautification special interest groups.

The special interest leaders facilitated improvement activities to beautify the physical plant and grounds. These activities included planting shrubs or additional flowers in selected locations, enlisting parent volunteers to paint the front entrance posts with crayon motifs, developing a plan for a Butterfly Garden on the school lawn, and landscaping another portion of the front lawn. Additional special interest leaders were working to revise the parking pattern for parents and visitors to the school. This parking plan had not been finalized when this study ended.

Catalysts for professional change were language arts, science, and social studies teachers interested in making changes in the curriculum and instructional practices at the school. These teachers facilitated changes in order to improve instructional practices by focusing on the new Standards of Learning and instruction within the specific content areas of language arts, science, and social studies across grade levels (grades four through seven). They took advantage of new scheduling practices and implemented their plan for grades four through seven. The master schedules for students in grades four through seven were changed at the beginning of the fourth year of the renewal process to provide specific periods of time for science and social studies instruction. Departmentalized schedules were implemented in grades four and five. Randomized schedules were implemented in grades six and seven. Students in grades six and seven changed classes similar to the local high school seven period schedules because students scattered to various classes after leaving morning homerooms instead of staying together as self-contained classes. Teachers were permitted to teach in their areas of instructional choice as a result of the new schedules.

Communication

Communication was a vital component of the school renewal process. Purposes of communication included coordination, control, and integration of the various activities of the school renewal process; motivation of the participants; and information sharing essential to the operation of School Renewal at the school. Providing for various directional flows of communication was also important in the school renewal accreditation process at this school. Upward, downward, and sideways communication flows of information assisted in the facilitation of activities, functions, and actions of the participants.

Coordination, control, and integration. Communication at this school served to coordinate, control or direct, and integrate school renewal activities. Communication helped motivate participants to keep in touch with each other, provided reasons for participant cooperation, and assisted with coordination for active participation in renewal activities. Participants stated that coordination efforts helped build camaraderie by allowing them to be aware of what was going on throughout the school and to keep in touch with other participants. Grade-level meetings and transitional grade-level meetings were established to coordinate and integrate renewal activities and goals such as the literacy writing plan and the school-wide discipline plan.

Communication helped to control or direct renewal activities and functions at the school. The physical size of the school was a major reason for control of communication within this school. Participants directed information to those who needed it, planned and implemented strategies such as the discipline policy and school-wide literacy writing plan, and facilitated renewal activities through committee meetings, grade-level meetings, transitional grade-level meetings, school renewal newsletters, and committee memos.

Communication assisted the participants with integration of instruction and academic efforts at this school. Teachers worked together and integrated student requirements from each grade level into a plan for school-wide literacy writing for grades kindergarten through seven. Teachers also planned and integrated their expectations for student behavior for students in grades kindergarten through seven and compiled a school-

wide discipline policy. As a result of the coordination and integration efforts at this school, participants successfully drafted and implemented the school-wide literacy writing plan and the school-wide discipline policy during the renewal process at this school.

Motivation. Participants were motivated to become active in committee work and to interact with other members during the renewal activities at the school. Participants were moved to action in response to survey results on inservice programs and workshops at the school. Participants worked with members of the Staff Development Committee and planned computer technology inservice programs and sessions that were specifically requested by teachers at the school. In order to stay informed of renewal activities throughout the school, participants attended committee sessions and participated in renewal activities for their committees.

Information sharing. Information sharing was another important component of the School Renewal process at this elementary and middle school. Participants shared information in both written and oral forms of communication. Much written communication included functional information of the School Renewal committees and included agendas, memos, minutes of meetings, school and committee reports, and committee goals or objectives. Other written communication included parent and faculty newsletters, calendars with important school events noted, substitute teacher folders, and parent, teacher, and student surveys.

Oral forms of communication included committee dialogues, participants' voicing concerns or having input during committee sessions or outside of committee sessions, daily school announcements over the PA system, and grade-level or transitional grade-level discussions. The various forms of formal communication kept participants informed of activities during the school renewal process.

Directional communication. Processes of communication among the participants in this school can be distinguished with respect to the direction or flow of communication. The direction or flows of communication included both upward and downward communication as well as sideways communication. Upward communication occurred when committee members contacted committee chairpersons for information regarding guidelines of writing committee goals and objectives. Also, upward communication

occurred when committee chairs contacted the Planning Committee chair to arrange committee sessions throughout the year or plan for renewal activities or functions sponsored by their committees.

Downward communication flowed in the opposite direction from upward communication at this school. Downward communication occurred when the Planning chair asked the committee chairs to write goals and objectives for the committees during the individual committee sessions. Also, downward communication occurred when the Planning chair asked other committee chairs to deliver information to committee members regarding renewal activities at the school.

Sideways communication occurred within the levels mentioned in upward and downward communication. Sideways communication occurred with information sharing from Planning chair to Planning Committee, committee chairperson to committee chairperson, or from committee member to committee member. The variety of directions for information flows at the school facilitated more effective communication among all levels of stakeholders and participants of the school renewal process.

Involvement in School Renewal

Teachers, staff members, parents, and students in the renewal process became involved in looking at the school to see what could be done to improve the school as a result of school renewal. Individuals and groups alike joined in the improvement process. Involvement of participants at the school was remarkably high and included active participation in school renewal activities and functions, diverse representation from stakeholders throughout the school community, and opportunities to have an active voice in the school renewal process.

Participation

Active participation allowed more people to have an interactive part in the everyday functions of the school. Participants become active in projects and policies being implemented at the school and assumed active positions in the decision-making process

during committee sessions. Faculty, staff, community, and parental input increased at this school as a result of the School Renewal improvement efforts.

Teachers became involved in changing and improving the school as a result of opportunities provided to them for teamwork and reorganization of their work place. These opportunities resulted in scheduling changes for students. As a result of the scheduling changes, teachers became more focused on instruction targeted on the subject areas of English, science, and social studies for the Standards of Learning for students in grades four through seven.

Teacher participation resulted in teamwork and organized schedules for the middle school students at the school. These improvement efforts became labeled as shared responsibility by the participants and led to school-wide sharing of resources. According to the participants, shared responsibility through committee work and teacher participation in renewal activities resulted in more ownership of the school renewal efforts and fostered increased school pride for various stakeholders at the school.

Representation

In order to have a variety of representatives on each of the seven school renewal committees at the school, membership of each committee included representatives from each grade-level or department at the school. These representatives included grade-level or hallway representatives and department representatives including music, physical education, media services, special education, Title I, and guidance. This level of representation resulted in approximately ten members on each of the seven School Renewal committees at the school. In addition, each of the seven committees had a parent who served as an active member of the committee.

Opportunities for an Active Voice

The voice of participants in school renewal activities became a major component of involvement at this school. Participants were provided opportunities to have an active voice through the school renewal committees. As a result of the opportunities to speak during committee sessions, participants stated there was much less negativity toward

school renewal and found some positive aspects of the process. Participants stated having a voice during committee work was positive because they felt like someone was listening to them and cared about what their opinions were regarding issues and concerns in the school. They also stated that having a voice in the renewal process is sometimes negative because people can get their feelings hurt, yet school renewal was the vehicle to talk freely about the concerns and issues that affected them.

The principal expressed his approval of allowing participants to have a voice through the school renewal committees. He gave the participants opportunities to make decisions for themselves and have input or suggestions in the improvement process instead of him having to make all the decisions for them.

Outcomes of School Renewal

There were two broad categories of outcomes from the School Renewal process. These categories were common school improvements that resulted from the efforts of two or more of the school renewal committees and were shared by all the participants in the school. A second category included unique committee outcomes resulting from an individual committee's efforts and shared by participants from one renewal committee.

Common Renewal Outcomes

The common renewal outcomes were in three broad areas of improvement: school beautification, school programs and policies, and curriculum and professional improvements for this school.

School beautification. School beautification projects became a common bond for the participants and included projects both inside and outside of the physical plant. These projects were planned and implemented by faculty and staff, students, parents, committee members, and the community.

School beautification projects began in the middle school science classes and spread to include both the inside and outside of the physical plant during the improvement process at the school. Beautification projects completed outside the physical plant included: planting flowers and shrubbery in flower beds and selected locations around the

school; purchasing and erecting a large school marquee on the front lawn; arranging for faculty, staff and visitor parking signs around the parking areas; and hanging new Virginia and United States flags. Beautification projects located inside the physical plant included painting wall murals throughout the building; painting a large birthday tree in the front lobby for birthday “leaves” to be attached; crafting two large, plexiglas display cases for the front lobby to hold student honor roll and perfect attendance lists; and hanging communication boards in the office and cafeteria of the school.

School programs and policies. School programs and policies evolved from the school renewal committee work. Such accomplishments included the school-wide discipline policy, the school-wide writing program, the volunteer program, grade-level meetings, and transitional grade-level meetings. These accomplishments were cited by the teachers as worth-while ventures that actually assisted them in their everyday work at the school. Revision of the daily school announcements; sending monthly newsletters to parents, faculty, and staff members; establishing phone trees for emergencies and snow calls; and sponsoring faculty and staff get-togethers were other outcomes that, according to participants, positively affected the lives of participants at this school.

Curriculum and professional improvements. Participants grouped the curriculum improvements and professional improvements together because they wanted their professional development to be linked with curriculum improvements during the renewal process. Teachers wanted these improvements to directly affect their students or their classroom instruction. Outcomes in the curriculum involved the language arts, science, and social studies areas of the curriculum. Teachers increased their computer technology skills and focused on reinforcement of basic Standards of Learning skills for their students through the use of technology programs in the computer lab. Teachers became more accountable in the area of curriculum because they became more aware of what was expected of them by school and district administrators.

Teachers became involved in changing student schedules at the school. They planned departmentalized schedules for fourth and fifth grades at the school. Teachers decided which areas of the curriculum they would be most comfortable teaching. They randomized student schedules (had students scatter to different classes after leaving

homerooms like students at the local high school) in the sixth and seventh grades in an attempt to eliminate student discipline problems.

Professional development activities and workshops were planned and implemented by the teachers as a part of the School Renewal process. The teachers decided to implement inservice activities and sessions that directly correlated with the curriculum areas of the Standards of Learning and inservice sessions that were based on specific skills or knowledge needed by the students and teachers at the school. Some examples of professional development activities are the school-wide literacy writing workshops, Internet sessions, and Herzog keyboarding workshops that specifically related to the networking of the computer technology lab at the school.

Unique Committee Outcomes

Unique committee outcomes were those outcomes that emerged from a single committee's work and were shared by the members of an individual committee. Each of the seven school renewal committees had at least one unique outcome, except for the School Climate—Physical Plant Committee. The School Climate—Physical Plant Committee had no unique committee outcomes because members of this committee assisted members of other committees with school beautification activities.

Unique committee outcomes covered a wide range of areas and needs at this school. The Planning Committee members were responsible for establishing the network of committees and writing yearly school and committee goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes. Members of the Planning Committee were responsible for assisting committee members with decision-making strategies and outlining tasks for committee leaders. The Planning Committee became a resource for the other committees in the renewal process. The Staff Development Committee facilitated communication between this school and the local high school during fund-raising activities and inservice sessions. The Staff Development members provided opportunities to chairpersons and co-chairs to attend annual conferences sponsored by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Professional leave was provided and expenses were paid by the school system.

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee members created a committee scrapbook to hold the collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia of the committee's work during the renewal process. The Communications Committee members published parent, faculty, and staff newsletters; created cafeteria and bus duty rules; posted honor roll and perfect attendance lists and up-to-date information on communication boards in the school. The School Climate—Students' Committee revised the student handbook.

The School Climate—Teachers' Committee had unique committee outcomes as a result of the renewal process. Members made presentations to parents and community members about the Standards of Learning at the fall 1997 open house activities. They revised the teacher handbook, sponsored and facilitated substitute teacher workshops, and assigned designated teachers on each hallway as informants for teacher substitutes.

Conclusions

Evidence on the School Renewal process in one rural elementary and middle school in Southwestern Virginia was found in the data.

Planning

Planning was an essential factor in the school renewal accreditation process. The extensive planning process was a key element in providing teachers with the opportunities to assume leadership roles. Planning initiatives and goals were focused on an improvement plan that was organized with shared decision-making and improvement planning from participants at the school. Organizing the structure and process of school renewal within the school was completed by members of the Planning Committee. Planning members identified and designed initiatives for improvement in the school renewal areas of planning, climate, communication, curriculum and instruction, and staff development. Another vital part of school renewal at this school was planning the oversight roles for the Planning Committee chairperson and the Planning Committee itself.

Structure

The school renewal process was structured to create a framework and foundation from which to build and conduct the renewal process at this school. Guidelines from the school renewal accreditation process from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools were useful tools for formulating the structure of the renewal process. The framework for renewal was structured and organized by the Planning Committee chairperson and the Planning Committee members who were participants in the process.

Committees were established according to the five areas required by the SACS school renewal accreditation process. Members were appointed to each of the committees by the Planning chairperson and approved by the principal. The chairpersons were appointed by the Planning chair at the beginning of the renewal process. Although no written rules exist for the tenure of chairpersons, a five-year term, the duration of one school renewal cycle, became the understood length for terms of committee chairpersons at the school. Chairpersons were given autonomy in choosing how the committee would function although guidelines for yearly goals, plans, and objectives were established for each of the committees by members of the Planning Committee.

Teacher Leader

Teacher leadership was the primary force in implementing the process. A teacher leader was appointed by the principal to oversee the renewal process at the school. This teacher was assigned to chair the Planning Committee and became the key individual leadership role for the renewal process at the school. The principal delegated the Planning chair freedom to perform renewal tasks and make necessary decisions for the school, therefore other participants willingly followed her leadership. The Planning chair was given the freedom to assign faculty and staff members to committees, to guide committee chairpersons in writing goals and completing SACS reports, and to help participants with site-based decision-making strategies. The teacher leader planned renewal sessions and guided the principal, committee chairpersons, and other participants through the renewal process for four years (1994-1998) at the school. When delegated authority by the administration and accepted by the faculty, a teacher can effectively lead the school

renewal process. This strong faculty leadership manifested itself in other participants as well as the process matured.

Supportive Principal

A democratic, supportive principal emerged as a key player in the renewal process. The principal at this school was supportive of the faculty and staff although he was not always actively involved in the process or related activities. This principal provided opportunities for a democratic process through the school renewal committees at the school. He supported the participants in their decisions and stressed the importance of school renewal during committee sessions and faculty meetings at the school.

Communication

Communication emerged as an important component of the renewal process. Communication was used to coordinate, control or direct, and integrate renewal activities; to motivate the participants and stakeholders in the process; and to disseminate information fundamental to the operation of School Renewal. There were flows of communication including upward communication, downward communication, and sideways communication at the school. These directional flows of communication established a way for participants to share information in both oral and written forms. The directional flows of communication provided a framework for freedom of input across committees and within individual committees. Communication permitted participants to know what was going on throughout the school by keeping them informed of school renewal activities and functions. Establishing grade-level sessions and transitional grade-level meetings assisted teachers in drafting a school-wide literacy writing plan and a school-wide discipline policy for kindergarten through seventh grades. Communication became an important component in the renewal process to motivate participants to action by keeping in touch with each other and building camaraderie throughout the school.

Participant Roles

The leadership roles of chairpersons were vital to the achievement of goals and objectives set by the committees. Chairpersons, once appointed by the Planning Committee chair, assumed leadership roles for their committees. Chairpersons stayed in position although no written rules exist for the tenure of committee chairpersons at the school. Committee chairpersons' roles were described as: one who listens to hear the concerns of others in the school; one who keeps the members on-line by giving them up-to-date information, guiding members through the necessary renewal changes, and keeping members informed of instructional practices; one who provides a better working environment for the teachers, staff, and students at the school; and one who must delegate jobs and chores to other members of the committee.

Participant roles included leaders from specific areas of interest in the renewal process. Informal, emergent leaders included change agents who either represented special interest groups or were catalysts for professional change. Special interest groups expressed an interest in improving physical sites in and around the school and included parents and teachers who were not leaders of renewal committees. These special interest groups implemented improvement activities to beautify the physical plant and grounds of the school and worked to make the school a safer learning and working environment. Catalysts for professional change were language arts, science, and social studies teachers at the school who were not leaders of renewal committees. These leaders designed strategies to improve school schedules for students and instructional practices for teachers.

Outcomes

The school renewal process produced a variety of outcomes that affected the school in multiple ways across many areas. Members of the school community exhibited a sense of pride and satisfaction with the outcomes of their work. They recognized that the work did make a difference in the life of the school.

There were common school outcomes that were shared by all participants in the school and resulted from the efforts of two or more renewal committees. There were

three categories of common school outcomes in the renewal process at this school. These included: school beautification projects, programs and policies developed by participants at the school, and curriculum and professional improvements—grouped together because participants wanted professional inservice programs to focus on needs from the curriculum within the school.

There were individual committee outcomes that were shared by participants of an individual committee and resulted from the efforts of a single school renewal committee. Each of these unique outcomes were specific to the work of individual committees at the school.

Involvement

Involvement resulted in the motivation or glue that bound the participants to the renewal process and facilitated results. Participants' active involvement motivated them to continue the renewal process and moved them to take part in activities or functions at the school. No one had to order participants to perform the school renewal tasks. For example, the school-wide Literacy Writing Committee resulted from group discussions in the Staff Development Committee on how to obtain better test scores for the students on the Literacy Passport Tests. The school-wide discipline policy was drafted and adopted by participants after several committee discussions on how to cope with student behavior problems throughout the school. Participant motivation to obtain solutions to problems provided reasons for participants to cooperate and come together to complete school renewal activities and tasks.

Representation

Representation of all stakeholders at the school was an important component of the renewal process. Stakeholders throughout the school were represented on each of the seven school renewal committees from teachers, administrators, and staff members. All department areas, grade levels, and hallway sections in the school were represented on the committees. Parents or community representatives also served as active members on each of the committees.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provided a snapshot of the fourth year of the School Renewal process, it would be useful to conduct a longitudinal study of a school as it participates in an entire five year cycle of the School Renewal accreditation process. A longitudinal study would provide a more complete picture of a school's School Renewal regional accreditation process. For example, this study focused on the fourth year of the process and the three previous years' struggles and growth of relationships, and participant involvement regarding the renewal process were not highlighted. One example of the growth of participant involvement over the four years was evident in this study because committee members made arrangements for each committee to meet every six or nine weeks of school during the fourth year instead of the two meetings per year they had previously met during the first three years of the renewal process. A longitudinal study could provide a more in-depth picture of tensions, struggles, relationships, and participant involvement of the school's renewal process.

Another area which should be studied is the role of leadership in the School Renewal process. Research on leadership of the School Renewal process should focus on the impact of the principal's role, the Planning Committee chairperson's role, the role of the Planning Committee, the committee chairpersons' roles, and the role of emergent leaders in the School Renewal process. Other areas for investigation might include the effects of communication and involvement during the School Renewal process and the effects of common school outcomes or unique committee outcomes should warrant further investigation.

Since this study focused on one rural elementary and middle school, other studies might focus on the School Renewal process in a high school, in an elementary school, in a middle school, or in an urban setting with a focus on the structure of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' School Renewal process, the processes in which participants engage during School Renewal, and the outcomes of the School Renewal process.

Recommendations for Practice

When members of a school choose the School Renewal alternative approach to regional accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, there are three major recommendations that may help educational practitioners guide the process. First, consideration should be given for the renewal process to be structured by a teacher leader from within the school using the guidelines and criteria outlined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Second, participants who choose the school renewal process for their school should make provision for the processes of leadership, communication, and involvement. Third, consideration should be made to address outcomes or results from the renewal efforts at the school.

Structured Process

Following the School Renewal guidelines and criteria from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, consideration should be given for the renewal process to be structured by a leader from within the school who has been delegated authority by the administration and accepted by the faculty. Participants at the school should become familiar with SACS documents on School Renewal as an orientation to the renewal process. These SACS documents include: The School Renewal Process: An Alternative Route to School Improvement and Regional Accreditation (1995, July), School Renewal—An Alternative Route to Regional Accreditation (1992), and the School Renewal Facilitator Training Guide (1996, September). Participants should become familiar with the book, A Place Called School (1984), and video series, Renewing A Place Called School (1988), by Goodlad because the School Renewal process was based on Goodlad's (1984, 1988) research of effective schools. These sources outline basic guidelines and criteria for the school renewal process. Renewal committees should be established to correlate with the five renewal areas from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and participant roles should become an important component in structuring the entire renewal process.

Processes of School Renewal

Provisions should be made to address the processes of leadership, communication, and involvement of participants during the renewal process. If the principal is not actively involved with structuring and maintaining these processes during the renewal of the school, the principal should delegate authority to the lead teacher who will be responsible for doing so. Leadership roles of various participants should be addressed. Leadership of the principal, assigned oversight leader, lead committee, committee chairpersons, and informal, emergent leaders should be addressed as a part of the renewal process. It is essential that leadership become a shared process.

Communication should become an important component for consideration during the renewal process. Participants should address the purposes for communication and the directions of communication during the renewal process. Communication is a key ingredient for keeping participants informed of school renewal activities and functions throughout the school renewal process. On going communication increases the probability for involvement of participants. Involvement of participants in the renewal functions and activities at the school is essential to ensure a successful effort. Attention should be given to promoting active participation, including diverse representation of stakeholders, and providing opportunities for participants to have an active voice in the renewal process.

Outcomes of School Renewal

Participants should focus on results or outcomes from the renewal process as a vital part of the school renewal process. Outcomes represent the fruits of the participants' labor and the enhancements to the school and community. Thus, they serve as feedback for participants that they are making a difference and also act as motivators for continued participation.

Concluding Remarks

This study demonstrates that the School Renewal framework, as outlined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, has the potential to help a school community make significant changes in many areas. To conduct a successful effort, a

school community must organize itself in new ways. The process is dependent on the sharing of authority by the principal and the leadership of teachers. High involvement from all members of the school community is essential. Communication and collaborative teamwork that are characteristics of the school renewal structure help promote this high level of involvement. Finally, the recognition of the outcomes that enhance the quality of life and effectiveness of the school community serves as a motivating factor that also promotes high levels of involvement from participants.

Through the renewal process, a community is created among individuals who have shared values and intentions. As a result, participants learn how to frame and solve problems together that are important to them. This process of collaborative problem solving in turn empowers stakeholders in the school to build a learning community that unites its members in the continuous self-evaluation and improvement of their school. Thus, School Renewal's most significant outcome is the creation of a capacity for self-generation. It is this capacity for renewal that becomes both a value and a way of life for the school.

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APPENDIX
INTERVIEW GUIDE
The School Renewal Process
Honaker Elementary and Middle School

The following questions are a list of interview questions drafted by the researcher and focused on the research questions of this study. This interview guide was constructed in order to get the same kinds of information from the members of each school renewal committee.

- How does school renewal happen at this school?
- What roles do participants play in the school renewal process?
- What are the actions or activities in which participants engage during the school renewal process?
- What activities occur because of school renewal at this school?
- What are the context variables of the school renewal process?
- What are the outcomes of the school renewal process in planning?
- What are the outcomes of the school renewal process in school climate?
- What are the outcomes of the school renewal process in communication?
- What are the outcomes of the school renewal process in curriculum and instruction?
- What are the outcomes of the school renewal process in staff development?
- How do you feel about school renewal at this school?
- What is your opinion of the school renewal process at this school?
- What is your role in school renewal at this school?
- What is your role in the school renewal process on your committee?
- Suppose I was a new person who just came to this school and I asked you what I should do to learn about school renewal at this school. What would you tell me?

- Suppose I was a new person who came to this school and I asked you what I should do to understand the role of school renewal in this school. What would you tell me?
- Suppose I was a new teacher in this school and did not know anything about what goes on in school renewal. What would you tell me about rules to follow?
- What would you tell me about the school renewal process in this school?
- Suppose I did not know what activities occur as a result of school renewal in this school. What would you tell me?
- Some probing questions to elicit more detailed responses from previous questions include:
 - When did that happen?
 - How did that come about?
 - Who else was involved?
 - What was your involvement in that situation?
 - Where were you during that time?
 - Where did that happen?
 - Would you elaborate on that?
 - That's helpful. I'd appreciate it if you would give me more details.
 - Could you say more about that?

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Primary Grades: N-K - 3
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