

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Across the United States, innovative school-linked health and human services programs are being implemented to provide assistance to children and youth in high-risk contexts (Rigsby, Wang & Reynolds, 1995). Morrill (1992) asserted the United States is focusing anew on the content, quality, and delivery of human services for children. Further, due to concerns regarding the inadequacies of the current education system for at-risk children, there is increased interest in linking health and social services to education to ensure children receive the full accommodations of needs. Many of today's children and families face a world where homelessness, abuse, neglect, poverty, drug abuse, and other factors make everyday life more challenging and complex than the world which most of us knew. Levy and Shepardson (1992) contend that "millions of America's children and families face a combination of circumstances that not only threaten their immediate well being, but put them at risk of long-term disadvantage. Of the children entering school, one in five is living in poverty, many in households with an income far below the official poverty level. Half a million in the incoming class were born to teenage mothers, often at a low birth weight, with attendant risks to physical and intellectual development. A significant number were exposed to drugs in utero or carry HIV infection" (The Future of Children, p.44).

According to Blank and Lambert (1991) the effort to improve human services is more important than ever before. The problems facing children and families have become commonplace headlines. Such social problems that elevate stress in children, families, and communities have emerged during the past twenty years at alarming and unprecedented levels. The resulting demand on systems to provide individual services has prompted the collaboration of agencies to provide coordinated, comprehensive assistance (Governor of Illinois Executive Summary, 1992).

School-Linked Services

In response to the problems faced by children and their families, there is a reform effort to establish school-linked services for children and their families. School districts throughout the country are joining the movement toward school-linked health and social services for children (Jehl & Kirst, 1992). Levy and Shepardson (1992) assert there is no single model for collaborative school-linked services; rather, programs emerge out of the needs of children and families in the community. Jehl & Kirst (1992) contend successful school-linked service efforts require increased parent involvement and parent education at the schools as well as increased efforts by the schools to reach out and support families.

Pollard (1990) indicated that during the 1980's, schools struggled to address a national problem - the disengagement of many children and youth from schooling. Problems emerged wearing various labels: "At-risk," "dropout prevention," "adolescent pregnancy prevention," or "substance abuse." According to Bicker, English and Thomas

(1993) there is a new movement in education to coordinate schools and other community services to meet the needs of students and families. School-linked services are part of a larger movement toward the integration of education, health, and social services to solve problems of service fragmentation, overlap, and lack of access and availability. The idea is that school alone can not meet all the needs of students; therefore, some schools are joining with other community agencies to coordinate services for students. Levy and Shepardson (1992) stated the following:

Policy makers, administrators, and staff throughout the education system, who daily confront the grim reality represented by circumstances that not only threaten the immediate well-being of children and families, but put them at risk of long-term disadvantage, are well aware of the gap between what is needed to address the problems and what the systems, as presently configured, can do to help. As a result, fundamental reform addressing philosophy, policy, and practice is under way in virtually all sectors.

Jehl and Kirst (1992) proclaim that school-linked services are part of a long history of both the expansion of the role of the schools and education reform efforts.

An Illinois School-Linked Service Model

Proposals to link health and social services to schools are increasingly at the forefront of the policy agenda for children. One such effort was piloted in the state of Illinois in 1992. In 1991, at the request of the Governor of Illinois, an Action Group representing education, human services, and community-based organizations, developed recommendations for a new system of service delivery linking the children in schools with the health and social services provided by many local and state agencies (Project Success Executive Summary, 1991). The Lieutenant Governor of Illinois charged the Action Group with the task of developing a system of comprehensive coordination of health and social services for the child and family to ensure that all Illinois children come to school prepared to learn (Project Success Executive Summary, 1991). In 1992, the state of Illinois developed a system that emphasized flexibility, local development of needs and resources, and family-focused services that were designed to ensure success. The school-linked service model was also developed to bring together local schools, parents, and community agencies in a partnership charged to address the needs of families of school-age children and improve access to health and human services (Project Success Executive Summary, 1992).

Project Success focuses on school linked, human services collaboration as a means to improve delivery of health and social services for all children and families. Project Success is a response to the reality that a child brings more than educational needs into the classroom and to the existence of fragmented families and fragmented services. As the Governor of Illinois stated, "Future educational success depends on a supportive family and community environment for our children. We must recognize the interrelatedness of a family and social conditions as critical factors in a child's ability to

learn.” (Project Success Annual Report, 1994-1995).

A critical feature of Project Success efforts is initiatives that directly enhance the academic skills, experiences, and readiness of children. These initiatives take a variety of forms. Currently established in all sites is the statewide reading initiative to assist schools with reading enhancement activities in kindergarten through third grade. On a more site specific level, a variety of additional innovative academic enhancement efforts have been developed as a function of Project Success. Such academic enhancement efforts include: tutorial and mentoring programs, summer reading programs, and programs designed for students who are in need of additional academic enrichment. The school-linked service model in Illinois embraces six core components: (1) preventive and primary health care, (2) proper nutrition and nutrition education, (3) preventative and rehabilitative mental health services, (4) services that will protect and promote the stability of the family, (5) substance abuse prevention, intervention and treatment, and (6) positive family social activities. Project Success challenged agencies to work together to identify the current problems and issues facing school-age children and to develop ways to act on them quickly by pooling current resources or by reprioritizing when appropriate. The project works to create improved access to health and human services for children and their families during the elementary years (Project Success Executive Summary, 1992).

Before implementing the Project Success program throughout the state of Illinois, the state selected six pilot sites geographically spread in two urban settings, one suburban site, two middle-sized communities, and one rural site. To qualify as a pilot, each site was required to illustrate that they served at least twenty percent economically disadvantaged elementary students, possessed a willingness to develop a new process to provide services to children and their families and had a not-for-profit organization to serve as the administrative agent for the Project Success site (Project Success Annual Report, 1992-1993).

Statement of the Problem

Providing fragmented agency services is accomplishing few results for students. How can agencies and educators work together to develop coordinated services to meet children’s needs is an unresolved issue. Melaville and Blank (1991) identified flaws in the current organization of services. First, the health, education, and social services systems are crisis-oriented. Second, the systems divide the problems of children and families into rigid and distinct categories. Third, there is little communication among the systems; their personnel have dissimilar professional orientations and beliefs about the needs of children, and they tend to concentrate only on those services they are able to provide. Finally, because each system provides specialized services, it is unable to craft comprehensive solutions to complex problems.

The human services delivery system contained three components: education, health, and social services. Each component addressed different problems and serves

different subsets of children through a variety of programs. A major shortcoming of this tripartite system is its inability to deal with children with multiple problems in an effective, coordinated way (Morrill, 1991). Providing fragmented agency services is accomplishing few results for students. Soler and Shauffer (1993) noted :

A review of social service systems at work with children and their families clearly demonstrate the need for coordination in the provision of services, both to avoid duplication and to reduce the gaps in availability of services. In response to this situation, professionals in children's services fields have attempted to develop "coordinated" or "integrated" systems of delivery services to children and families.

Project Success which was piloted in 1992, is an effort to coordinate services for children and their families. The project had two main goals. One was to improve child and family well-being by providing services that promote school success, local planning and decision making, parental involvement, and prevention. The other was to improve collaboration, coordination and resource sharing among state and local service providers (Project Success Annual Report, 1994-1995).

Critical Factors

This study addressed the following critical factors that emerged from the literature as common elements, individual differences, organizational structure, collaboration, parent and family involvement, barriers to the formation of integrated services, and support for school-linked services. These factors are reflected in the study's research questions, interview protocol, and data collection as follows:

In the area of **common elements**, data were gathered concerning services being provided, funding for the Project Success initiative, the school's role, the local governing board, and the role of the Project Coordinator (Working Together Towards Success, 1995).

The literature has shown there is no one model for school-linked service programs. Each site has **individual differences**. Evidence was gathered which included: kinds of services being delivered, location of services, efforts to support families, and the method used to better understand the community (Robinson, 1990).

In the area of **organizational structure**, issues relative to a local governance entity were addressed. Other issues addressed included: decision making, roles among service providers, the role of the Project Coordinator, and reexamining whether services were improving outcomes for children and families (Putting the Pieces Together, 1996; Dryfoos, 1992; Melaville, Blank, and Asayesh, 1993).

An essential component of agencies and individuals working together for children is **collaboration** (Bruner, 1991). Collaboration is a developmental process. In the area of collaboration - getting together, trust building, planning, taking action, and implementing service delivery strategies were addressed (Melaville & Blank, 1993).

Essential to a child's educational process is **parental involvement** (Chang, 1993;

Henderson, 1988). Issues relative to home, school, and community supports were addressed (Perroncel, 1993; Gardner, 1992; Weinberg, 1990). The data from the study acknowledged that parents are interested in their child's well-being and wanted to help them with their educational needs (Chavkin and Williams, 1993). Parents love their children, have an emotional bond with them, are interested in their lives, and want to be included in their education (Peterson, 1982).

Some efforts at providing school-linked services have been frustrated by **barriers** during the formation of such initiatives. In this area, deeply rooted barriers (if any) were addressed. The literature has shown that barriers exist to providing integrated services that address the complex interrelated problems confronting our youth (Kirst, 1991; Lowenthal, 1996; Soler and Shauffer, 1993; Thomas, English, and Bickel, 1993).

A number of efforts at providing school-linked services have received **support** during the formation of the initiative. Issues relative to supporting school-linked services were explored (Levy and Shepardson, 1992; Larson, Gomby, Shiono, Lewitt, and Behrman, 1992; Morrill, 1992; Melaville, Blank, and Asayesh, 1993; Stallings, 1995; O'Rourke, 1996).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth explanation of the development of coordinated services during the last four years at a selected number of the Project Success pilot sites, and to identify critical factors that emerged which are associated in the literature with effective school-linked strategies. To qualify as a pilot, each site was required by the state to illustrate that they served at least twenty percent economically disadvantaged students and possessed a willingness to provide services to children and their families.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study include:

1. What common elements developed that crossed all selected sites, and what individual differences emerged among the sites?
2. What organizational structures emerged among the multi-agencies at the selected sites?
3. What collaborative processes emerged across selected sites that facilitated the project?
4. In what ways did parents become involved in the implementation of the project?
5. What barriers or support were encountered in establishing and operating the sites?

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it may serve as a source of information for other school districts or communities developing or restructuring schools to provide school-linked services. The interest in school-linked services has increased in many areas the past few years. School districts committed to promoting coordination and collaboration at the state and local level to improve health and social service delivery to students and their families may find that linking schools and agencies could be viable in their districts.

Changing the way services are delivered as part of school reform is steadily increasing throughout the state of Illinois and in other states. Most of the implementation of school-linked services has occurred mainly because of the need for an improvement of child and family well-being. Hopefully, by merely conducting the study, the importance of providing coordinated services would be highlighted. Further, this study will provide information from four of the six pilot sites in Illinois that may serve as a resource for agencies, parents, schools, and communities preparing to work in or develop coordinated services for children and families. As more and more school-linked service practices are developed and implemented, examples of existing practices would be useful in the dissemination of information and adaptation of coordinated practices.

Definition of Terms

1. School-linked Services: School-linked service integration generally means that
 - (a) services are provided to children and their families through collaboration among schools, health care providers, and social service agencies;
 - (b) Services are provided at or near schools (Bickel, English, & Thomas, 1993, p.1.).

Although this study is relative to school-linked services, in order to clarify the difference between school-linked and school-based services, the researcher would like to add that school-based services are services delivered directly in school buildings (Dryfoos, 1994, p.143).

2. Project Success: A statewide initiative focused on school-linked, human service collaborations as a means to improve delivery of health and social services for all children and families (Project Success Executive Summary, 1994, p.1.).
3. The terms school-linked services and Project Success will be used interchangeably throughout this document.
4. Pilot Site: a location designated to test or provide a trial run for an experimental, initial, or model program.

Limitation of the Study

This study had several limitations. First, the study was limited to one state and specific sites of a statewide initiative. Second, the findings were limited to data collected from Project Coordinators and focus groups at four selected Project Success pilot sites. A

third limitation was impacted by the type of research. By doing a qualitative measure, the findings are not generalizable. However, because this study is restricted to four sites, it provides deep rich description that allows in-depth insights and contributes to the understanding of the issue. Fourth, this study was conducted by a single researcher.

Summary

Chapter one identifies and defines the perimeters of this study. In addition to the introduction, this chapter establishes a framework for school-linked services, An Illinois School-Linked Service Model, statement of the problem, critical factors associated with effective school-linked service strategies, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, definitions of terms, and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The needs of many youth and their families are so broad and complex that they go well beyond what schools can provide. The role of the school is to create an environment in which children can learn and grow to be independent adults. Many youth come to school with a variety of problems that are nonacademic and interfere with learning. Ooms (1991) affirms that distressing statistics illustrate the unacceptable numbers of children and families who face situations that threaten their immediate well-being and put the students at risk of long-term disadvantage.

Stallings (1995) indicates that there are many factors that prevent even the best teachers from teaching. Some of these factors have become clearly visible over the last 10 years (i.e., nearly 13 million children live in poverty, over 2 million more than a decade ago; at least one in six children has no health care at all; only slightly more than half of U.S. preschoolers have been fully immunized; reported child abuse increased 48% from 1986 to 1991; on any given night, at least 100,000 children are homeless; and every year, more than a million young people join the ranks of runaways). These statistics clearly underscore why school districts throughout the country are joining the movement toward school-linked health and social services for children. Educators and the public must understand that, for millions of at-risk students, the goals of education cannot be achieved without schools and other agencies doing a better job of collaboratively and cooperatively addressing students' health and social needs (Jehl & Kirst, 1992).

According to Kirst (1992) childhood in the United States is changing. More children are unhealthy - physically and mentally. More children suffer from substance abuse and child abuse, from inadequate child care, and from family disorganization. More and more students from single parent families and from minority and non-English speaking backgrounds are entering the same public schools whose role in meeting the needs of non-middle class, nonwhite, non-English speaking children has repeatedly been questioned. "Childhood" is changing and schools must change as well.

The review of literature relevant to this study includes a summary of attempts at past educational reform efforts and current school-linked reform efforts. The next section focuses on some of the common elements that impact the daily lives of children and families. This study also discusses those qualities-- individual differences that emerged, organizational structure, collaborative partnerships, and parental involvement--which are associated with effective school-linked strategies. Finally, this study focuses on barriers encountered and/or support experienced in developing a school-linked service effort.

Educational Reform

Educational reform is not a new endeavor for America's schools. In the early republic, families, churches, apprenticeships, and other institutions played an important role in education (Kaestle, 1983). Nystand (1992) asserts our nation has a long history of looking to its schools for help in dealing with the issues it considers most important. Religious instruction was an early theme for the colonists; its importance led to the Massachusetts School Acts of 1642 and 1647. Additionally, free, public education was an important theme in the early 19th century because Jeffersonian ideals stressed the importance of education to ensuring freedom, independence, and equality.

In the 1900's, local schools were bound up with family, neighborhood, and community. People believed that they could and should be able to govern their own educational affairs (Tyack, 1974). Until the first few decades of the 1900's, there was really nothing that could meaningfully be called a public "system" of education in the United States. Schooling was a local affair. Basic issues of organization and control tended to be handled by the people closest to each school: parents, interested citizens, and their elected representatives (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Lazarus and Ellwood (1991) affirm the system formed in the early 1900s served the agrarian times fairly well. Today's system is breaking down because it is neither promoting nor supporting the needs of healthy, strong, and stable families.

According to Jehl and Kirst (1993) the function and shape of schools today is the result of several cycles of reform, initiated in response to numerous domestic developments and the political change they produced (i.e., immigration at the beginning of the century pushed the schools to provide new services to aid in assimilating newcomers into American life. The economic depression of the 1930s led to school lunches. The Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 shocked the country into a new emphasis on math and science. The civil rights movement of the 1960s led to extensive new school programs to equalize the educational opportunities for all children, regardless of race. The increased awareness of international economic competitiveness in the 1980s fueled the "back to basis" emphasis on academic performance).

In the United States, the watershed event was the publication in 1983 of *A Nation at Risk*, the report of a blue-ribbon presidential panel, which argued in grim terms about a "rising tide of mediocrity" in the nation's schools. *A Nation at Risk* acknowledge renewed concern for education in America and called for additional educational reform efforts (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Hodgkinsons (1991) asserts that the publication of *A Nation at Risk* marked the return of the owners after a long absence to find education badly deteriorated. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* signaled the beginning of the education reform movement for the latter part of the 20th century.

According to Nystrand (1992) consensus among policy makers about a national agenda for education reached an unprecedented level in 1989 when President Bush and

the 50 state governors assembled for a summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, and declared support for six national goals. The goals are: (1) that by the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn; (2) that 90 per cent of high school students will graduate; (3) that students will be competent in basic subjects and exhibit responsible citizenship; (4) that U.S. students will lead the world in mathematics and science; (5) that every American adult will be literate; and (6) that schools will be drug-free and safe (America 2000 An Education Strategy, 1990). The Bush administration offered its vision of how to meet the national goals in a document titled *America 2000: An Education Strategy*. According to Clinchy (1991) the proposals contained in America 2000 add up to quite a smorgasbord of ideas and programs. America 2000 is the most significant assertion of a federal responsibility for and role in the conduct of public education since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Bruner, Kunesh, and Knuth (1992) assert that all the educational goals recognize that children bring more than educational needs into the classroom and are most likely to succeed if their family and community support systems are strong. The first educational goal- "by the year 2000 all children in America will start school ready to learn"-requires that a broad family-centered approach be undertaken which recognizes a child's health, family, community, human service, and developmental needs as interrelated and interacting.

School-linked service efforts are being initiated in the context of a broader effort at education reform. Education reform has included a variety of strategies. Some have simply added on to or intensified the existing education system (Jehl & Kirst, 1992). According to Tyack (1992) current reform proposals build either on "A Nation-at Risk" model, with the goal of improved academic performance and international competitiveness, or a "child at risk" model, with the goal of meeting the health and social needs of currently undeserved children.

One of the most significant developments for the well-being of children and families in this country is the current reform effort--occurring at all levels of governance--to link education, health, social services, and other supports that children need (Russell & Stallings, 1995). According to Jehl and Kirst (1992) most restructuring efforts to date have been very narrow in scope, focusing primarily on school-based management, teacher participation, and redesigning curriculum. Very few efforts have included working with other community agencies to serve the broader needs of children and families. Gardner (1989) contends that our country's only native philosophy is pragmatism, and pragmatism dictates that when we see a problem, we form a committee, then we start a program that addresses that problem-and it is solved.

McDonnell (1989) stated that the promise of restructuring lies in the strategies that have emerged from the natural variation among schools, the experience of other countries, the exemplary practices of creative educators, and a growing number of pilot projects. McDonnell (1989) asserts the challenge in fulfilling the promise of restructuring is threefold:

- The first is to determine which of the many reform strategies are most likely to

improve student learning.

- The second is to move beyond the unique circumstances that have inspired various restructuring proposals and to implement those strategies on a widespread basis in schools with varying student needs, goals, and resources.
- The third is to ensure that the promise of restructuring is not diluted by a kind of tokenism that merely adopts the rhetoric of reform.

Some Common Elements

The following section of this chapter examines common elements that impact the daily lives of children and families. According to Dryfoos (1993) all state initiatives reflect the diversity in needs and resources at the community level. A review of current programs suggests these common elements:

- Space is designated in or near a school building for a primary medical clinic with examining rooms, a lab, an area for confidential counseling, and arrangements for record keeping and referrals.
- If medical services are not provided on site, a center is designated for individual and group counseling. It may include offices for case managers, a kitchen, play space, and a clothes/food distribution area.
- Services are provided by health department, mental health and social services agencies, hospital/medical school, youth agencies, and employment agencies.
- Programs are paid for by the state, local foundation funds, and in-kind contributions from community agencies. Direct support is rarely provided from local school funds.
- The school provides space, maintenance, and security. Classrooms, gyms, and computer facilities are open for community use.
- School doors are open before and after school, weekends, and during the summer.
- An advisory board includes parents and community leaders. Parental consent is required for receipt of services.
- A coordinator or program director integrates services with school and community agencies.

Individual Differences

There is no one model for school-linked integrated services programs. Some programs are school-based, with services delivered on-site by school personnel, while other programs provide services at community agencies, human services offices, churches, or in the student's home (Robinson, 1990). With the growing recognition that everyone plays a part in the success (or failure) of children and families, new efforts to change the delivery of educational and human services have emerged. The new efforts must support families and help them reach their potential. The specifics of such new efforts will vary according to the needs of the community (Kunesh & Farley, 1991). Jehl and Kirst (1992)

contend that a needs assessment is essential for the partnership to understand the needs of its community, including its demographics; racial composition; cultural and language diversity; poverty levels; and indicators of risk factors for students.

Organizational Structure

There is no prescription for the ideal size of a leadership group. In many communities a two-tiered approach to governance helps partners balance the need for broad oversight with practical considerations. A small management group (10-15 members) that can respond quickly to immediate concerns has responsibility for day-to-day management, while a larger group (30-50 members) meets periodically to consider long-term issues and ensure diverse representation

(Putting the pieces together, 1996). According to Melaville, Blank, and Asayesh (1993) the concept of schools and agencies working together calls for a governance structure whereby partners agree to share resources, participate in joint decision making, and use their personal and institutional power to change systems. Dryfoos (1992) asserts that the concept of schools and agencies working together implies a formal process that leads to the establishment of a new kind of governing body, such as a nonprofit coordination agency or a new mayor's office initiative with the authority to oversee the whole comprehensive program.

To provide integrated services, a new local governance entity is needed that can permanently consolidate leadership and decision making, negotiate new roles among service providers, and be able to continually reexamine whether services are improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families. Governance is the mechanism that collaborations use to coordinate communication, information sharing, and planning, together with redirected financing mechanisms and system performance evaluation. The major need for new local governing systems grows out of a complex mixture of services authorized at federal and state levels-which do not give responsibility at the local level to manage integrated services as a system (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1991).

According to Kagan (1991) organizations entering into a collaborative effort benefit from: 1) alleviation of problems caused by scarce resources; 2) broadening of problems addressed (and thus funding and domain issues); 3) service efficiency in actual need fulfillment and system reform; and 4) increased organizational productivity which results from the improved planning, motivation, communication, and innovation that are required for effective collaboration. Melaville and Blank (1991) indicated that:

Interagency partnerships hold great potential for the large-scale delivery of comprehensive services. First, they offer an opportunity to bring together a broad range of professional expertise and agency services on behalf of children and families. Second, these initiatives have the capacity to harness and combine the substantial financial resources permanently available within several institutional budgets. As a result, interagency initiatives can both create the structure and mechanisms necessary to coordinate existing services and, by tapping into current funding sources,

reorganize available resources to create more effective prevention, treatment, and support services. The leadership at the state level can do a great deal to foster comprehensive service delivery at the local level.

According to Melaville and Blank (1991) a “first generation” of state-level initiatives has an uneven effect on local communities. These state efforts routinely occurred at upper administrative levels—close to funding decisions but far removed from the actual provision of services. Top-down efforts that do not take into account local preferences, needs, and circumstances are usually only minimally effective. In contrast to first generation inefficiency, “second generation” state efforts to promote local partnerships are more promising.

Jehl and Kirst (1992) maintain in a truly collaborative effort, partners relate to each other on a non-hierarchical basis, regardless of the organizational structure. In addition, no single agency, organization, or individual should dominate or control the decision making process. Farrow, Watson, and Schorr (1993-1994) state governance bodies vary in terms of scope, structure, and activities; but there are five basic functions that a governance entity usually must carry out, regardless of its specific substantive focus. These five functions include:

- agree on a defined set of outcomes sought by the community for children and families;
- identify needs and developing community-wide strategies in response to priority problems confronting children and families;
- promote innovative community services in order to ensure the earlier, more accessible, and more responsive service delivery that families want and that schools need to accomplish their education mission;
- coordinate fiscal strategies to promote more comprehensive services; and
- assess and monitor outcomes for children and families so that local service systems create and maintain a “climate of accountability.”

According to Melaville et al., (1993) an effective governance structure is necessary to ensure that the collaborative can take a leadership role. Melaville et al., suggest that collaborative partners should reexamine their governance structure in light of the following questions:

- Does the collaborative have the authority to make decisions that cut across education, human service, social service, health, juvenile justice, mental health, child welfare, and other service domains?
- Does the collaborative have a sufficient mandate from the local and state levels to perform its role in planning and implementing service delivery-level and systems-level changes?
- Can the collaborative facilitate new patterns of funding and decision making, new forms of front line practice, and new requirements for sharing client information and program performance data?

Collaboration

The nation's schools must do more to improve the education of all children, but schools cannot do this alone. More will be accomplished if families and communities work with children, with each other, and with schools to promote successful students (Davies & Epstein). Schools that want to serve the needs of all students face a myriad of problems and demands that are often beyond their unassisted capabilities. One strategy that some schools employ to cope with the needs of students is collaboration with a variety of different groups and organizations (Peterson, 1991).

Collaboration is an integral part of individuals and groups working together to strengthen children and families. Collaboration has been defined by Bruner (1991) as a process to reach goals that cannot be achieved acting simply (or, at a minimum, cannot be reached as efficiently). As a process, collaboration is a means to an end, not an end in itself. The desired end is more comprehensive and appropriate services for families that improve outcomes. Collaboration is not an easy task. There are many issues that must be eliminated before individuals can work together for children and families.

Ballesteros (1994) stated that integrating children's services through a collaborative model requires constant networking, vision, support from the community and commitment on the part of the stakeholders in the collaboration. Collaboration is a long term effort which requires time. Adler (1994) considers time a critical factor necessary to allow the development of interpersonal ties. Time is needed for professionals to learn the language and customs of their colleagues from other disciplines. Stone and Wehlage (1992) present a broader and theoretically more powerful conception of collaboration that includes parents and the private sector as well as human services. According to Stone & Wehlage the purpose of such collaboration is intended to focus on the need to rebuild the social fabric of families and communities. Schools should use parents, community organizations, and the private sector to strengthen the educational power of the institution.

Changing a community's current system of services into a profamily system is a long-term undertaking. Systems often seem to have a life of their own and resist change. Partners interested in integrating services must develop a process of change powerful enough to overcome multiple layers of resistance in attitudes, relationships, and policies within and across service provider institutions, among consumers, and throughout the community (Melaville & Blank, 1993). According to Parson (1996) the reasons heard most often as barriers to collaboration include: fear of losing power and control; rules, regulations and policies; institutional bureaucracies; lack of collaborative skills; reward systems that recognize independent rather than collaborative efforts; and lack of the time it takes to make collaboration work. Melaville and Blank (1993) developed a five-stage framework to help partners collaborate and develop their own process of changing complex systems - one that focuses on long-term change while being flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances and conditions. The five stage framework include:

Getting Together, Building Trust, Developing a Strategic Plan, Taking Action, and Going to Scale. Collaboration - working together, rather than alone - interests an increasing number of people in human services, government, and community organizations (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992).

Parent and Family Involvement

Parent involvement has been defined by Perroncel (1993) as a partnership among home, school, and community members in support of a child's educational process. Many communities are coordinating efforts to meet the needs of children and families. Essential to this process are the parents in the communities. Chang (1993) stated that frustrated with the inability of the current system to provide adequate support to families, communities across the nation are engaging in efforts to improve the coordination and integration of services. A crucial component of any program designed to meet the needs of children is parental involvement. According to Gardner (1992) the role of the parent in implementing the program is obvious: without their support at home, the interventions at school and in the agencies will lack indispensable reinforcement. In planning, parents can become members of focus groups, join advisory councils formed before the program opens its doors, help build cultural understandings on the part of new workers, serve as paraprofessionals aides, and even take part in initial training for school-linked service staff. In all these ways and others, parents are critical partners in school-linked service programs.

Most parents are interested in meaningful collaboration regarding the well being of their children. Weinberg (1990) notes that too often it is assumed that parents who do not actively demonstrate an interest in their child's education are unconcerned. According to Chavkin and Williams (1993) a study by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory concluded that 95 percent of 1,188 African-American and Latino parents surveyed said they wanted to be more involved in their children's education. In general, parents are interested in their children's well-being and want to help them with their educational needs. Peterson (1982) affirms that:

- Parents are in love with their children.
- Parents and children are one (an emotional bond).
- Parents want to be in touch with their children's lives.
- Parents want to participate. They have a need to be useful. They are glad when they are guided into ways of serving.
- Parents have much to give.

Davies (1996) contends that:

If we would visit **10** schools randomly in the United States, we would discover in **nine** of them that most teachers and administrators still hold parents at arm length. We would see many of the tried-and-true forms of parent involvement - an open house in the fall, two or three short parent conferences a year, parents attending student performances and sports events, some teachers calling parents

when a child is misbehaving, an annual multi-cultural fair, a parent association that raises money, and a business partner that donates equipment. We would observe few if any parents or community representatives actively involved in the school's efforts to make changes in curriculum, teaching, student rules, homework, policies, or scheduling. In the 10th school we would likely see collaboration between teachers and administrators and the families and communities the school serves.

Today schools, families, and communities often cannot work in isolation of each other. Schools and families need each other--and they need the help of everyone in the community (America Goes Back to School, 1995). Schools and communities can create community-based activities that concentrate on the developmental needs of youth, they can respond to young people's opinions and ideas, and they can involve young people in the planning and implementation of programs that serve their needs (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988).

Parental involvement programs are aimed at empowering parents to take a proactive role in the education of their children. While parental involvement programs like the PTA have existed for years, the new wave of initiatives seek to involve parents more actively in the lives of their children (National Resource Center for Family support Programs, Revised 1993). The first question typically asked about school-based services is "Where do the parents fit in?" Schools report disappointing experiences in trying to involve parents in their children's education. Epstein (1991) asserts that although most schools embrace the concept of partnership and parental involvement, few have translated their beliefs into plans or their plans into action. Despite existing evidence that parents have had negative experiences in trying to deal with schools and teachers, low-income communities can be attracted to schools, but only if the efforts are well designed and sensitive to the social environment in which many disadvantaged families live (Dryfoos, 1994).

According to Henderson (1988, p.48) "Parent involvement in the educational enterprise is neither a quick fix nor a luxury. It is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education." It is essential, then, that schools develop strategies to actively involve the parents of at-risk elementary students in their children's education. Very often parents are unaware of how to address issues concerning their children. Often schools must take a rudimentary approach (Germinario, Cervalli, & Ogden, 1992). One common activity is to provide parenting skills workshops at school. Motivating parents to support the curriculum at home is another critical parental involvement activity (Rigsby, Reynolds, & Wang, 1995).

Sagor (1993) suggests that all parental involvement is not created equal. Many of the things parents are invited to school to assist with may actually draw attention away from the essential mission of schooling. Rigsby, et al (1995) contend that parent involvement is a key component if student success is the success for all programs. It is important that parents realize their roles as educators. "Parental influence is considerably

more profound than that of the school” (Topping, 1986, p.1). Parents are responsible for their children’s well-being and development. Children’s health, attitudes, values, self-image, and understandings are initially shaped by their families. Family life also forms the core of emotional and social development (Preparing Young Children for Success, 1991).

Barton and Coley (1992) proclaim that the basic socializing and nurturing institution in the United States is the family, which can be considered America’s smallest school.

Dolan (1994) proclaims “If parents and community are not significantly involved in restructuring schools they cannot and will not support it, and will, in fact, block any and every real change effort. The more deeply that external group of parents and community is empowered to participate, the greater the power for change it can and will generate. But this is true only if the system views parents with respect, sees them as the reason it exists in the first place, and invites their input, their data, and their collaboration” (pps. 156-157).

Barriers to the Formation of Integrated Services

Controversy is usually caused by misinformation and misunderstandings. Some community members may think that additional programs dilute the primary instructional mission of schools and insist that education funds should not be diverted from academics to support more holistic activities, such as health care and human services (Putting the pieces, 1996). According to Kirst (1991) efforts at collaboration by service delivery systems have been frustrated by “deeply rooted barriers” such as:

- **Delayed Involvement.** Too often the focus is on acute problems, not prevention. Agencies do not get involved until health and mental health problems reach the crisis state.
- **Service Fragmentation.** Attempts to aid children are not integrated. There may be four or five agencies working independently with a child or family, and each is unaware of the others’ involvement.
- **Gaps in the System.** Only 25-30 percent of the nation’s three-and four-year-olds eligible for Head Start are enrolled in the program.
- **Inequitable Services Across Jurisdictions.** Attention is often focused on the differences in individual school or school district funding instead of on the differences in funding between localities for all types of children’s services.
- **Accountability of Services.** Most services that deal with children are largely unaccountable. They focus on how many times they are in contact with a child or family, but never on whether the child improved.

Lowenthal (1996) attests that several barriers to the development of services for children and families have resulted from cultural traditions about the roles of schools in the United States, the attitudes and training of school personnel, the structure of university professional programs, and financial constraints. Collaboration and coordination among educational and human services providers are the cornerstones of successful school-linked integrated services programs. State and federal regulations often impose confidentiality

requirements that block the sharing of information among service providers (The Future of Children, 1992, p. ; Ooms & Owens, 1991). Key stakeholders must learn to coordinate services for children and families. Sober and Shauffer (1993) affirms that a lack of coordination among agencies serving children and families, a narrow focus on the labels that children receive when they enter the systems, and a consequent failure to provide appropriate services are the rule rather than the exception across much of the nation. According to Thomas, English, and Bickel (1993) barriers such as categorical division of services and staffing, lack of communication, rules and regulations of agencies and sponsors, limited access to services and insufficient follow-up all contribute to fragmented service delivery for children and families. In order to enhance the potential of youth to achieve academic and personal success, barriers to providing integrated services that address the complex, interrelated problems confronting our youth must be overcome.

Levy and Shepardson (1992) suggest five questions to ask as a means to good planning, overcoming barriers, and planning a promising school-linked service strategy: 1) What is the primary purpose or objective of the strategy? 2) Who is to be served? 3) What services will be offered? 4) Where will services be located? And 5) Who will be responsible for service delivery?

Support for School-Linked Services

Levy and Shepardson (1992) noted that the philosophical basis of interest in school-linked services is complemented by a number of practical reasons. The most important and obvious is that the school is where children can be found and, in fact, is the only institution with which virtually every child and family has contact. The school also offers a cadre of skilled staff that regularly comes into contact with children and families. Finally, the school building is an easily accessible physical plant—often one of the few reasonably maintained facilities in a hard-pressed community—that can be used as a center of positive community activity.

The school-linked service effort is part of a larger movement for more integration of education, health, and social services for children and families through a collaboration among schools, health care providers, and social service agencies. The interest in school-linked services extends beyond the halls of government. Members of the business community are also urging that schools and other agencies work together to bring children and their families the services they need (Larson, Gomby, Shiono, Lewit, & Behrman, 1992). According to Morrill (1992) the United States is focusing anew on the content, quality, and delivery of human services for children. Led by concerns about the apparent inadequacies of the current education system, particularly for at-risk children, there is increased interest in linking health and social services to education to ensure that children receive the full array of services they need.

Levy and Shepardson (1992) state that millions of America's children and families face a combination of circumstances that not only threatened their immediate well-being, but put them at risk of long-term disadvantage. Of the children entering school, one in

five is living in poverty, many in households with an income far below the official poverty level. Half a million in the incoming class were born to teenage mothers, often at low birth weight, with attendant risks to physical and intellectual development. A significant number were exposed to drugs in the uterus or carry the HIV infection. More than half of these new students are expected at some point during their childhood to live with only one parent, usually the mother, in households that are particularly prone to poverty and stress.

Many educators, decision makers, parents, and policy makers, writes Pollard (1990) are beginning to share a new vision of local schools as integrators of services. Melaville, Blank, and Asayesh (1993, p. 12) contend "If we listen to families and front line workers, the direction to take is clear. America needs to move toward a system that corrects the shortcomings of the current system and provides a new approach to service delivery (p.12)." The new system must be profamily and allow agencies to work together to ensure that families will reach their potential.

According to Stallings (1995) we need multiple approaches from many perspectives to solve the immense social-educational problems. Pollard (1990) points out, the idea is not a new one in American education, but the imperative may be stronger than ever before. Today, the debate is not about whether schools should broaden their scope, but about how far and in what ways. Bickel, English, and Thomas (1994) contend that in any school or community, there are usually several different planning groups with the same goal, but separate programs, curricula and activities. This results in duplication, inefficient use of resources and a system that allows youth to fall through the cracks.

O'Rourke (1996) proclaims that schools are a major institution which can influence the health and well being of our youth. Except for the family, schools have more influence on our youth than any other institution. Because schools are enduring institutions in the communities, they typically have the potential to become the central hub of a coordinated system of services and serve as a link between other agencies and children at risk and their families (Lowenthal, 1996).

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature in the following areas: educational reform, common elements in developing school-linked services, individual differences, organizational structure, parental involvement, barriers encountered in establishing school-linked services, and support experienced in developing school-linked services.

The significant emphasis of school-linked services seems to be that services for children and families need to be coordinated and not fragmented. Proponents of the school-linked service effort maintain that delivering services via schools makes sense because, of all public institutions, schools provide the most sustained and nonstigmatizing contact with children (Koppich & Kirst, 1993).

Many school districts are moving toward school-linked service efforts (Jehl &

Kirst, 1992). As more school-linked service practices are developed and implemented, examples of existing practices would be useful as a resource for agencies, parents, schools, and communities preparing to work in or develop coordinated services. This study is designed to gather information from selected Project Success pilot sites in Illinois that may be useful for other school districts.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth explanation of the development of coordinated services during the last four years at a selected number of the Project Success pilot sites, and to identify critical factors that emerged which are associated in the literature with effective school-linked strategies. Chapter III describes the research design employing a qualitative methodology as most appropriate to the purpose of this study. The design is based on interviews with the Project Coordinators and on focus groups held while visiting the Local Governing Board meetings at the selected sites.

The first part of this chapter includes gaining access and permission from the Assistant to the Governor of Illinois, and the selection process for choosing the sample to be interviewed. The second part of this chapter includes the method of data collection and the procedures used for data analysis. This chapter concludes with a discussion of credibility and ethical considerations. The research questions guiding this study include:

1. What common elements developed that crossed the selected sites, and what individual differences emerged among the sites?
2. What organizational structure emerged among the multi-agencies at the selected sites?
3. What collaborative processes emerged across selected sites that facilitated the project?
4. In what ways did parents become involved in the implementation of the project?
5. What barriers or support were encountered in establishing and operating the sites?

Gaining Access /Permission

The initial step in obtaining permission to conduct research related to Project Success was to contact the Assistant to the Governor of Illinois whose responsibility is to coordinate Project Success in Illinois. Having established contact in August 1996, and after a lengthy discussion regarding Project Success including how it was initiated, the researcher learned that before Project Success was implemented throughout the state of Illinois, six pilot sites were chosen to test the program. The make-up and uniqueness of each site was described from the Assistant's perspective, and the researcher was given access to the names of the Project Coordinators, their addresses, and phone numbers. Permission was granted to contact each site with assurance that each site was likely to agree to participate in the study.

The second step in gaining access to the selected sites was to contact the Project

Coordinators and gain support for this study. After contacting the Project Coordinators and explaining the purpose of the study, the researcher indicated the process would include an interview with the Project Coordinator, focus groups of persons representative of a cross section of each site, and attendance at the Local Governing Board meetings.

Sample Selection

According to Patton (1988) “purposeful sampling is used as a strategy when one wants to learn something and come to understand something about certain select cases without needing to generalize to all such cases” (p.100). Patton (1991) defined this type of sampling as the deliberate selection of subjects from which the researcher can learn the most. The researcher obtained a list of the six pilot sites from the Assistant to the Governor and purposively selected four sites from among the six Project Success pilot sites through the following process. The final selection of sites included: one rural, one mid-size, one urban, and one suburban. The major reasons for selecting these four sites were (1) the subject’s willingness to participate in the study, (2) these areas represent most of the demographics for other locations who may want to pattern their program after a particular selected site, and 3) one site was selected to gather data regarding the rationale for its unsuccessful attempt to develop coordinated efforts for children and families.

Data Collection

The data collection for this study occurred in three parts: individual interviews with the Project Coordinator, focus group interviews with appropriate representatives of the pilot site projects, and notes from meetings of the Local Governing Board. In addition, related brochures and other materials were used to further triangulate the data. Using multiple sources of data is referred to as triangulation (Merriam, 1988).

Interviewing was the principal method used to gather data for this qualitative study. In addition to interviews, which were conducted on each of the four sites, data were collected such as meeting agendas, brochures, newsletters, and goals for the project. These data were used to corroborate information reported by Project Coordinators and focus groups during interviews about the development of coordinated services for students and families during the last four years. In analyzing the data, Project Coordinators and an appointed representative of the focus groups were consulted to seek clarification of any questions that arose over data gathered during the interviews.

The data collection for this study began formally in August of 1996, when the researcher collected a package of information regarding Project Success from the Assistant to the Governor. That package included: documents on Project Success, annual reports, executive summaries, brochures, and *A Guidebook for Planning and Implementing Project Success*. Prior to contacting the Project Coordinators, permission was obtained from the Assistant to the Governor who is in charge of the Project. Each Project Coordinator was first contacted by phone to introduce the researcher and the research project. All Project Coordinators indicated a willingness to grant access to their

sites for the purpose of sharing how they developed coordinated services to meet the needs of students and families during the last four years.

The Interview Process

Eisner (1981) considered qualitative research using the interview process as an art form where the researcher reflects the study with a binocular vision that has depth of field. A semi-structured interview approach was used in this study to gather data from the site's Project Coordinator and to conduct focus group interviews at each selected Project Success site. According to Merriam (1988), "In the semi-structured interview, certain information is desired from all the respondents. These interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but, neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situations at hand, to the emerging world view of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (p.74). The researcher developed and followed an interview guide (Appendix A) for the Project Coordinators based on critical factors that emerged from the literature. The focus group interview protocol will be discussed below.

Stouthamer-Lober & Bok van Kammen (1995) contend that one of the principal steps in the preparation of a study is conducting a pretest interview because it is important to know beforehand whether the study one contemplates will be able to deliver the information one is seeking. A pretest interview also allows the researcher to test the interview schedule and data collection methods. Additionally, the pretest interview enables the researcher to gain experience before the actual interview is conducted with participants. The researcher conducted a pretest interview with the Project Coordinator in Bloomington, Illinois. The pretest interview lasted approximately one hour, and was conducted in the Conference Room at the Health Care Center. The interview protocol used in this study was modified based on a recommendation made by the Coordinator who participated in the pretest, such as adding the words "in your community" to interview question number two (Appendix A).

Individual Project Coordinator Interviews

The initial set of interviews were conducted with individual Project Coordinators. The researcher arranged to meet with the Project Coordinators at the selected sites in an area designated by the Project Coordinators, providing a few minutes for idle chatter to create an atmosphere that was conducive to open and honest discourse. The subjects were informed that the purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth explanation of the development of coordinated services during the last four years at a selected number of Project Success pilot sites, and to identify critical factors that emerged which are associated in the literature with effective school-linked strategies. Next, the subjects were given an Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects form and a Subject's Permission form (Appendix B).

The subjects were asked to read, sign, and date the Subject's Permission form

indicating their willingness to participate in the study. At that point, the interview began with the researcher addressing the questions to the subjects from the interview protocol (Appendix A) which had been previously developed based on a review of the literature. During the interview, the researcher recorded interviewees responses using a cassette recorder. The tapes were used for transcription and analysis. The researcher kept field notes for the purpose of recording what was observed and said during the interview and reviewed those field notes after the interview. In addition to the semi-structured interview questions, the researcher found a need to probe. Probes helped to expand meaning and clarify issues (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The length of time per interview with the Project Coordinators was 45 to 60 minutes, consistent with the pretest interview.

Focus Group Interviews

In addition to the interviews with the Project Coordinators, a second source of data came from conducting focus group interviews at each selected Project Success site. “Focus group interviews are a form of evaluation in which groups are assembled to discuss potential changes or shared impressions” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.27). Stewart & Shamdasani (1990) provide a number of advantages for conducting focus groups:

- Focus groups provide data from a group of people much more quickly and at less cost than would be the case if each individual were interviewed separately.
- Focus groups allow the researcher to interact directly with respondents. This provides opportunity for the clarification of responses, for follow-up questions, and for the probing of responses.
- The open response format of a focus group provides an opportunity to obtain large and rich amounts of data in the respondents’ own words.
- Focus groups allow respondents to react to and build upon the responses of other group members.
- Focus groups are very flexible. They can be used to examine a wide range of topics with a variety of individuals and in a variety of settings.
- The results of a focus group are easy to understand. Researchers and decision makers can readily understand the verbal responses of most respondents.

The focus group is a special type of group in terms of size, purpose, composition, and procedure. Focus Groups are typically composed of six to ten people, but the size can range from as few as four to as many as 12. The size is controlled by two factors: it must be small enough for everyone to have opportunity to share insight, and yet large enough to provide diversity of perception (Krueger, 1994). The focus group interviews for this study consisted of four participants at each selected site. Although four is the smallest number chosen as appropriate according to Krueger (1994), it was found to be a reasonable number for this study since it represented well the parties involved in each Project Success pilot. The four participants included a parent liaison, a school official, and two agency representatives.

To test the viability of the focus group interview at each selected Project Success site, a pilot focus group was set up that was not an official part of this study, in April of 1997. Members of that pilot represented agencies, parents, schools, and the Local Governing Board for Project Success. The pilot interview with the focus group was conducted in the conference room at the Health Care Center. The interview was taped and lasted one hour and forty minutes. The researcher found a need to probe with the pilot focus group, however, the pilot focus group did not recommend any changes for the interview protocol.

The focus group interviews for this study were conducted at areas designated by the Project Coordinators. The researcher followed the same set of semi-structured questions (Appendix A) used with the Project Coordinators. The subjects were informed that the purpose of the study was to provide an in-depth explanation of the development of coordinated services during the last four years at a selected number of pilot sites, and to identify critical factors that emerged which are associated in the literature with effective school-linked strategies. Next, the subjects were given an Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects form and a Subject's Permission form (Appendix B). The subjects were asked to read, sign, and date the Subject's Permission form indicating their willingness to participate in this study. At this point, the researcher conducted the interview. Interviews with the focus groups were taped and transcribed. Additionally, the researcher kept field notes for the purpose of recording what was observed during the focus group interviews. The researcher was given permission to use an audiotape at each interview session. Although there is no risk to the participants, the researcher assured confidentiality by using fictitious names for each site (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). In addition to using fictitious names, the researcher was cautious with all field notes, tapes, and transcriptions to assure confidentiality. The length of time for the focus group interview was 60 to 100 minutes, consistent with the pilot interview.

Visits to Local Governing Board Meetings

The Local Governing Board is a cross-section of parents, service providers, state agency representatives, teachers and other school staff, businesses, and other community members. This group serves to guide the planning process and provides input into the direction that the project should take (Working Together Toward Success, 1995).

Local Governing Board meetings at each selected site were visited; they ranged from 60 to 120 minutes. Field notes were recorded during the meetings with particular attention to the critical factors being studied. According to Patton (1988) "one of the best uses of program records and documents is to get a behind-the-scenes look at program processes and how those came into being" (p.153). The researcher collected data such as meeting agendas, brochures, newsletters, and goals for the projects.

An Example of the Data Collection Process: The Dextur Site

The Dextur community is located approximately 75 miles from the researcher's home. While driving to Dextur, the researcher used the time to reflect on the notion of Project Success and the issues that Dextur children and families face such as poverty, having no place to live, not having food to eat, etc. Upon arrival in the Dextur community, the researcher spent time driving in various sections of the area in order to get a better sense of the community, especially the living conditions, noting for example, several sections of the community that included homes that were badly deteriorated and in need of repair or rebuilding. Many of the commercial buildings in the area were a facsimile of the houses. People stood on the street talking, small children played in some yards, and elderly people sat on porches talking or just sitting. After touring the area for about 40 minutes, the researcher reported to the building that houses the Project Coordinator's office.

The researcher was greeted by the Project Coordinator, introduced to staff members in the office area, and taken to a small conference room where the interview was conducted. The room was bright, quiet, and more than adequate for the interview. This area housed a conference table, chairs, and a variety of educational reading materials. The researcher and the Project Coordinator shared small talk about Project Success, family members, and the researcher's trip to Dextur.

The researcher explained the purpose of the study and presented two copies of the human subject's and permission to participate forms to the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator read the information, signed the permission form and gave one copy to the researcher. The second copy remained with the Project Coordinator. The researcher requested permission to record the interview. The interview was conducted using the interview protocol for Project Coordinators (Appendix A). The questions addressed the critical factors being studied. The interview was taped and later transcribed. During the interview, descriptive field notes were taken that allowed the researcher to return to the site (Patton, 1980).

To conclude the interview, the researcher asked the Project Coordinator for any final comments, then thanked her for participating in the study. After the interview, the Project Coordinator shared information about an expansion grant in which the Dextur project has submitted a Request for Proposal to the state. If funded, the Dextur project will include more schools in Project Success this fall. After talking to the Project Coordinator approximately an hour after the recorded interview, the researcher drove back to Bloomington, Illinois.

The researcher closely followed the same data collection procedure with the focus group in Dextur as well as with all participants at the selected sites.

Method of Analysis

According to Marshall & Rossman (1989) data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. The unit of analysis for this

study was each selected Project Success pilot site.

Data were analyzed according to methods described by Rubin and Rubin (1995), Strauss and Corbin (1990), and Miles and Huberman (1994). Rubin and Rubin (1995) state that coding is the process of grouping interviewees' responses into categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts, or themes you have discovered. The categories for this study represented the critical factors studied: (1) common elements/individual differences, (2) organizational structure, (3) collaborative process, (4) parental involvement, and (5) barriers/support. The purpose of coding interview data was described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as a means to categorize data into topics and subtopics.

According to Miles & Huberman (1994) "codes are used to retrieve and organize chunks of information. The organizing part will entail some system for categorizing the various chunks, so that the researcher can quickly find, pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct, or theme. Clustering and display of condensed chunks, then sets the stage for drawing conclusions" (p.57). The tapes were transcribed and analyzed after the interviews were completed. The researcher used the following methods to code the data: first, the researcher read the transcribed interviews and hand coded the consistencies and emerging themes on a large chart. Second, the researcher used the Ethnograph Computer Software Program to organize and code the data. The use of the Ethnograph was an additional means used to validate the hand coded consistencies and emerging themes. Strauss and Corbin (1990) define open coding as "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (p.61). From this data, the researcher identified themes, common patterns, and important stories shared by the participants regarding their experiences with developing coordinated services to meet the needs of children and families during the last four years. Conclusions were drawn regarding the rationale for developing coordinated services to meet the needs of children and families during the last four years.

Credibility

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) "most indicators of validity and reliability do not fit qualitative research" (p.85). Rubin and Rubin (1995) offer the following alternatives to validity and reliability: "transparency, consistency-coherence, and communicability" (p.85), which will be considered in this study.

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) interviewers maintain careful records of what they did, saw, and felt to make their research transparent to others and to themselves. To assure this concept, the focus group and Project Coordinator interviews were audio taped and transcribed. After the summaries were written for each selected site, an appointed representative from the Project Success sites reviewed the narrative for accuracy. A reflective journal was kept for the purpose of recording information relative to all interviews and Local Governing Board meetings.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) proclaim consistency means the researcher "checked out

ideas and responses that appeared to be inconsistent” (p.87). In qualitative research, “the goal is not to eliminate inconsistencies, but to make sure you understand why they occur” (p.87). The researcher cannot rule out inconsistencies, they must be dealt with and the researcher must explain why one version rather than another is accepted. Coherence indicates the researcher “can offer explanations for why apparent contradictions in the themes occurred and what the contradictions mean” (p.87).

Communicability as referenced by Rubin and Rubin (1995) refers to vividness of the researcher’s report to other readers. The researcher accomplished this task by providing detailed and well documented evidence that was clearly presented.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers need to strike a delicate balance between the scientific requirements of methodology and the human rights and values potentially threatened by the research (Kimmel, 1988). “Participants have a right to expect that when they give you permission to observe and interview, you will protect their confidences and preserve their anonymity” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.117). Kimmel (1988) proclaims a wide range of ethical problems are inherent in the collection, analysis, and reporting of social research data. Although it is assumed that the data collected by social researchers will have intellectual integrity or trustworthiness, data can be manipulated in various ways to undermine the accumulation of knowledge in a scientific discipline.

According to Kimmel (1988) ethical problems in social research reflect concerns about proper conduct related to the processes and consequences of research and procedure. Merriam (1988) stated that in a qualitative study, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge at two points: during the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings. Glesne & Peshkin (1992) contend that to protect the interviewee’s anonymity, researchers use fictitious names and sometimes change descriptive characteristics. Before the interview, the participants at the Project Success sites were given letters that assured confidentiality. For the Project Success sites that participated in this study, pseudonyms were used.

Summary

Four of the six Project Success pilot sites were selected as participants in this study. All Project Coordinators indicated a willingness to grant access to their sites for the purpose of sharing how they coordinated services with other agencies to meet the needs of children and families during the last four years. The selected sites included: one urban, one rural, one suburban, and one mid-size site.

Data were collected through interviews with site Project Coordinators, focus groups, and by collecting information such as meeting agendas, brochures, newsletters, and goals for the project while attending Local Governing Board meeting. A reflective journal was kept for the purpose of recording information relative to interviews and Local Governing Board meetings. Analysis of data was done through a multi-step process

which included: establishing a coding technique that represented the factors studied, reading through the interview transcripts to categorize data into topics and subtopics, and summarizing the data gathered to produce the findings for each site. The findings are presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Across the country communities are grappling with ways to reclaim their children and families. They are asking how often interrelated problems that place youth at risk-poverty, premature parenthood, substance abuse, violence, unemployment, and homelessness-can be addressed so that children can learn. The challenges are critical ones for communities (Working Together Toward Success: A Guidebook for Planning and Implementing Project Success in Your Community, 1995).

Introduction

This research study was undertaken to provide an in-depth explanation of the development of coordinated services during the last four years at a selected number of Project Success pilot sites, and to identify critical factors that emerged which are associated in the literature with effective school-linked strategies. In-depth interviewing (Appendix A) with the Project Coordinators and focus groups, held while visiting the Local Governing Board meetings, were used to explain the development of coordinated services for children and families during the last four years. The study focused on four selected pilot sites for Project Success in Illinois which included: Dextrur, Jackson, Port Gibson, and Walker. Data were organized in a manner which addressed the critical factors studied: (1) common elements that crossed the selected sites, and individual differences that emerged, (2) the organizational structures that emerged among the multi-agencies, (3) the collaborative processes that emerged across the selected sites that facilitated the project, (4) ways parents became involved in the implementation of Project Success, and (5) barriers/support encountered in establishing and operating the sites. The findings are reported through narrative summaries of the data presented from the major themes that emerged. A matrix of themes that emerged from the data as critical factors is found in Appendix E. Pseudonyms were used to identify the participants and the Project Success pilot sites in this study to ensure confidentiality.

Site 1: Dextrur Project Success Model

Dextrur is a medium-sized city located in northern Illinois. It is home to many large and small businesses, a private university, and a thriving community college. Many factors in the Dextrur community place the students at-risk of school failure such as low income, high crime rates, drug abuse, mobility rates, and poor nutrition. The Dextrur Project Success site includes two elementary schools which serve a total of 750 students from 650

families. About 85% of the students at Copp Elementary School and 81% of the students at Dunt Elementary School are considered economically disadvantaged (Project Success Annual Report, 1992-1993).

Before reporting to the interview site, the researcher spent time touring the Dextur community near the Project Success Schools. A compilation of certain sections of the community showed visible signs of unfavorable living conditions, for example, some of the homes were badly deteriorated and in need of repair, or rebuilding. Many of the buildings in the same area were a facsimile of the houses. After a 40 minutes tour, the researcher reported to the building that housed the Project Coordinator's office. The researcher was greeted by the receptionist and Project Coordinator, introduced to the staff, then escorted to a conference room where the interviews would take place. The conference room was nicely decorated, quiet, and more than adequate for the interviews. This area housed a conference table, chairs, and a variety of educational reading materials, as well as many brochures about Project Success. After tending to preliminary clerical and essential introductory research requirements, the researcher explained the purpose of the study for each interview, asked the participants to read the Human Subjects information and sign the permission to participate form, then started the interview using the protocol in Appendix A. The following is an integrated account of interviews with both the Project Coordinator and a focus group at the Dextur site.

Interview Question #1: What are you trying to accomplish with the Project Success initiative?

Interview data showed that the Dextur site staff's major goals dealt with issues that supported the well being of children and families, consistent with Illinois guidelines for the formation of Project Success mandating each selected pilot site serve at least twenty-percent economically disadvantaged students and possess a willingness to develop a new process to provide services for children and their families. When asked to articulate her thoughts regarding what the Dextur site was trying to accomplish with the Project Success initiative, the Project Coordinator stated:

I would say our focus is three-fold: we're trying to promote family stability which enhances service linkages with agencies and organizations, and create various opportunities for families and children; parent involvement in the educational process, so that the parents will be supportive of education, and involved in what the kids are doing. I think that provides a good base of support for the students, and the social activities that bring the families into the schools, giving them positive interaction with the school to try to build a rapport so that it's a team approach. I think we also try to work the six core components of Project Success into the various programming types of things so that we're following along with the state, not mandated, but suggested routes.

The Project Success model mentioned by the Project Coordinator identified six core components communities can use in developing a plan to support families which include: (1) preventive and primary health care, (2) proper nutrition, (3) preventive and rehabilitative mental health services, (4) services that protect and promote health and stability of the family, (5) substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment, and (6) social activities to enhance family interaction.

Members of the focus group both reflected and went beyond the views of the Coordinator. Not only does the school representative want the children to be prepared when they come to school, she is also concerned about the extent to which the community and parents are involved in education. She feels the project is working to have more family involvement in their child's education. With regard to similar concerns the parent liaison stated, "We're trying to show how the child, community, and family are all involved together and to try and ensure that the children will become active members of the community." An agency representative from mental health agreed with both the parent liaison and the school representative that the Dextur site is trying to make sure that children come to school ready to learn. He replied:

I agree with all of those [statements], not only do we want them to come to school ready to learn, but we want them to end up graduating and becoming productive citizens. We want to encourage parents to become involved with their children. We also want to improve the well-being of children and families.

Interview Question #2: Describe the services provided by the Project Success initiative in your community.

An analysis of the data showed the Dextur project to be committed to improving the needs of families and children as evidenced by the variety of services which the project provides. The Dextur Project Coordinator described the project's mission as working to improve the lives of children and families and to provide necessary resources to assist families with health related issues, counseling, mental health services, and basic needs such as food, clothing, and school supplies. She contends:

Of course we do service delivery, and try to hook families up with any needed services. Be it health care, counseling, mental health services, we even put people in touch with utility help. If families get their heat turned off in the middle of winter, obviously a child with no heat in the home isn't going to do well in school. Clothing, food, you name it. We've got a pretty good directory of numbers we can access and we seem to cut through the red tape somewhat [by assisting parents in accessing agencies]. The families get a little frustrated sometimes [having to go from agency to agency to find help for their families]. Providing support for families is essential to the project in Dextur. The parent

liaison and the Project Coordinator is responsible in large part for coordinating many of these efforts. The parent liaison emphasized:

We work directly with the parents to provide parenting programs, not only in the area of how to deal with things at home like discipline, behavior, family issues, but also educational issues, like homework help, and tutoring. We also have a component where all of our schools have a parent liaison who works not only with the teachers, but the parents and administrators in the building to make sure that all services are running smoothly. Each building offers different services based on their population and the parent liaison. For example, one school might offer parent classes about head lice, but this might not be an issue the parent liaison needs to address at another school.

The Dextur project also provides services that promote family interactions such as family literacy, reading nights, and family computer classes. The emphasis of the computer classes is to provide quality time for families. Additional means used to promote social interaction for families include activities such as Bingo, or family sports night. Project Success in Dextur does more than promote family interactions; the project also provides classes only for parents such as computer and GED classes. This claim was supported by the Project Coordinator when she explained:

We've got GED classes in one of the Project Success schools open to anybody in the district that wants to come, but we really promote it within the Project Success schools. If we build a rapport, maybe some of these parents will feel comfortable coming to GED classes in one of their schools rather than having to go outside to some other area. We have also had some parent only classes, where we did word processing and simple computer skills. Some of the parents have even gone back to school as a result of that [parent classes]. It was a non-threatening way of getting them in, to make them feel happy about being in school, and it is another way of making them feel good about it all.

During a visit to the Dextur site, the researcher obtained a brochure (Project Success Programs and Activities) that indicated the project provides services specifically for children such as after school programs to assist with educational needs, 4-H clubs, dental and health care, a school attendance initiative, bookmobiles, extended day/after school activities, breakfast and lunch programs, summer recreation programs, a caught being good program, incentives for behavior and academic achievement, summer reading activities, providing school supplies at the beginning of school, and conflict resolution training. In addition to these services, the school representative explained:

We have a lot of linkages with agencies by being a Project

Success school. We can call the Health Department, Mental Health, Public Aid, DCFS [Department of Children and Family Services], and talk with people there to get help for the families such as immunization for the students and counseling for students and families. A lot of times the help is expedited because we are a Project Success school. We can get a child into counseling and other services such as linkages with Big Brother and Big Sister programs. We have access to more services because Lynn has worked so well with getting linkages created.

The staff works with Public Aid and the Associate Superintendent at the Regional Office of Education to ensure that students are attending school on a regular basis. The state statutes allow students to miss approximately ten percent of the school calendar days, before the student is considered truant. The Dextur staff was concerned about the number of days allotted by the state statutes and wanted to intervene much earlier than ten percent of the school calendar days. This is evidenced by the following statement made by the Project Coordinator:

We worked with the Project Success principals, and piloted it [the attendance initiative] in the Project Success schools and since have opened it up to additional schools in the district. The criteria that we established were three days in the calendar month of unexcused absences or a combination of five tardies that would result in a kid being counted absent for a half day, because they have to be in school so many minutes an hour.

Every child not meeting the criteria set by the project was referred through Project Success and Public Aid. Children receiving public aid were then referred to the Associate Superintendent for further action. Failure on the parents part to follow truant procedures could ultimately result in their Public Aid checks being sent to the Regional Office of Education. Letters were sent to parents stating the importance of school attendance for success in school. Parents were given a month or a two months grace period to improve which would result in no further action by the Regional Office of Education. The Project Coordinator offered this final comment regarding the attendance initiative:

We were trying not to make it a punitive thing, it was more of a support kind of thing. And it really resulted in such things as referrals for other services. Maybe some of the kids didn't have adequate medical care, or whatever. Last year out of a grand total of close to 800 students, only 28 families didn't show enough significant improvement that they were sent into Protective AE status. And, of those 28 families, everyone made enough of an improvement so there were no sanctions placed on their checks.

To ensure that all children start the year with school supplies, Project Success works with the schools to provide the supplies. The Project Coordinator stated “parents have many strains on their income and must pay for school physicals and take care of other needs such as clothing, medical needs and school lunches.” This effort to provide school supplies has continued in Dextur year after year. The Project Coordinator frames her perception of school supplies in these terms:

Well, one of the things we’ve done ever since the beginning is provide all of the school supplies for each child in the Project Success schools. The reasoning behind that was if the bottom line for Project Success is that we want kids to come to school with all their basic needs met, ready to learn and succeed, we felt that so many of these kids with populations of 80 to 85 percent of the families being on reduced lunches in some of these schools, they didn’t have money for school supplies. And, we thought we could provide all the school supplies so everybody started the year on the same foot with the same supplies. The teachers selected what supplies their students needed on the first day and we provided them. We’ve continued to do that each year.

Interview Question #3: Describe the organizational structure of the Project Success initiative.

Gardner (1991) stated “one of the most important issues that emerges when planning a school-linked service program is “Who should run it?” The organizational structure in Dextur consists of a Local Governing Board that is represented by a cross sector of agencies and community members. The Local Governing Board guides the direction the project takes in the community. The Coordinator stated some of the current Board members helped plan the original proposal while others are volunteers that are interested in helping to coordinate services.

In addition to the Local Governing Board, the Dextur site has a Project Coordinator whose responsibility is to coordinate the day-to-day operation of the project. The Coordinator has a part-time program assistant who helps to organize the project. There is a parent liaison in each Project Success school who also helps the Project Coordinator and serves as a bridge between the homes and the schools. Although the Coordinator stated she views the process in Dextur as a team effort, she strongly contends, “I’m kind of the glue, but I’m probably not indispensable. We work together. I guess you could say I’m the head worker.” The project also has a fiscal agent which is the Community Service Center.

When asked if there is any person considered the “boss” of the project, members of the focus group reported they all shoulder the responsibility of the project, but there are no bosses; instead they view the efforts as a collaborative process. The social service

representative explained:

Lynn is the coordinator, and to tell you the truth, nobody is in charge of anything. We all work together and it is a very collaborative effort. Our whole purpose is to make sure the kids are ready for school, are learning, and are going to be successful. It's just a collaborative effort and everybody works together, but there is no one boss.

In regards to who is the "boss" of the project, the school representative explained: Although there are no bosses, the Local Governing Board is responsible for developing the plans for Dextur and coordinating the efforts for implementation. It is also the Local Governing Board that the Project Coordinator must report to. The Project Coordinator works with the Local Governing Board to develop a plan for the community.

According to the Project Coordinator, the size of the Local Governing Board has increased to approximately 40 participants that represent a cross section of the community. The Board consists of representatives from various agencies in the community such as Public Health, Public Arts, Department of Rehabilitation Services, Mental Health, DCFS, the Recreation Director from the Park District, the school coordinator, the health services coordinator, the local executive director from the Community Health Improvement Center, school representatives from each school, and the principals from Project Success schools. The Project Coordinator explained it is mandatory that principals from Project Success schools attend the Local Governing meetings. She commented:

It's up to the schools who they would like their reps to be, but it's mandatory that the principals come. I do the agendas and keep track of the minutes, and do meeting notices with input from the schools including what they feel need to be on it [the agenda]. The principals take turns [conducting the meeting] on a rotating basis so everybody has a hand in it, but we all work together.

Interview Question #4: Describe how individual groups worked together to promote the Project Success initiative.

Fundamental to the understanding and successful implementation of most efforts is the concept of collaboration. The mental health representative described the collaborative process as a community effort with an interest in a stronger environment that included healthier children and families. He also credits the school district as being one of the collaborative partners. The mental health representative stated:

Well, the school district was one of them [collaborative]. Several of us were working on other initiatives where we were trying to do things to make our community a stronger community. We were trying to work with different prevention and intervention

initiatives to make the children healthier and stronger and their families more cohesive.

The parent liaison explained that many of the people at the Local Governing Board meeting were key players in the collaborative process in Dextrur. She stated:

I really think that from the beginning the people you saw around the table when you were there [at the Local Governing Board meeting] were involved right up front. Doctor Wall, who is Associate Superintendent of Schools, actually facilitated the elected grant process. He helped get it started. We were all involved.

A vital collaborative process that emerged in the Dextrur community occurred at the initial phases of the program. According to the Project Coordinator, the original interest in the project came from representatives of various agencies such as the Health Department, Mental Health, the Drug Free School's Coordinator, and someone from the Regional Office of Education who shared similar concerns about the well-being of children and families. A brochure published by the Dextrur project indicated local representatives from six state agencies, Dextrur Public School personnel, and many local organizations worked cooperatively with the fiscal agent to formulate Dextrur's Project Success Model.

The Project Coordinator explained they have gained rapid support from many entities in the Dextrur community. Since the implementation of Project Success; many agencies as well as community people are interested in working with children and families. The Project Coordinator stated, "We have a connection with a church here in town that has supported us financially, not with a huge amount of money, but about \$2500 a year, which is a nice contribution for the last several years."

In addition to the financial assistance from the church, the project has a connection with a bookstore who has provided book fairs for the project and loaned library books to students, or the school librarian. Project Success in Dextrur is linked to other agencies in the community as well. The Project Coordinator stated:

We work closely with other entities in our community.

Programs through the school district like SPARK, which is Super Parents Relating to Kids. We do some incentives to try to get some parents to come to that [SPARK], because they do a lot of make and takes [activities for children and parents].

The project is networked closely with the Park District which provides recreation activities for children. The Project Coordinator emphasized that services for families and children are provided with the assistance of other agencies such as Social Services, Dexter Mental Health, Public Aid, Dextrur Recreation Department, Drug Free Schools and Coordinator, and the Health Department. In fact, this is one of the goals of the Dextrur project. Additional partners that assist in developing coordinated services include the Kiwanis Club, Bart and Ellis Bookstore, Regional Office of Education, Safe and Drug Free Schools, School Health Services, Churches, a Community College, and the Illinois Cooperative Extension. When asked about a specific example of how an agency

might provide assistance, the Project Coordinator explained:

We have got good connections with our health care provider, the Community Health Improvement Center here in town, and they serve a lot of low income families. They have even gone as far as to set aside appointment times for school physicals in the fall. I think they have set aside one day each month so that if kids are new to the district, and have not had physicals before they come to school, we can get them in really quickly and not have them excluded from school. Also, the health department works closely with us.

Interview Question #5: Describe the role of the parents in the Project Success initiative.

An additional goal of Dextur is to increase parental involvement in all facets of their children's education. Families are involved in opportunities such as social interaction, skills training, and service delivery that serve to strengthen parental involvement. To ensure families have a link between the home and school, a parent liaison is in each of the Project Success schools. The parent liaison seems vital to parental involvement in the Dextur community and is viewed by the Project Coordinator as critical to the Project Success program. She also notes the importance of having a parent liaison on-site in each school. The Project Coordinator commented that the parent liaison is responsible for a lot of the school's referral collections and have become a link between the school and the family. She said:

A teacher is with the kids six hours a day, and can notice things that might be affecting the child's ability to learn. If it's something external, other than academics, the teacher can tell a parent liaison and within ten minutes we can have what the child needs. Maybe a child has a chronically runny nose, or a health problem that has been unchecked. The parent liaison can call parents and say, "Is there anything we can do to help?" The teacher can't leave the classroom to do that [call the parents]. The parent liaison has built a real important role to be able to work with the parent and the service providers in the community.

Parents seem to play a role in the day to day operation of the site and attend many functions provided by the project. Also, they are involved as much as they can be in decision making and providing information that enables the project to be successful such as the parent surveys that are conducted to afford parents the opportunity to provide input into the project. The parent liaison was described as a vital link between the home and school. A parent liaison described the role as follows, "We have a component where all of our schools have parent liaisons who work not only with the teachers, but the parents and administrators in the building to make sure all services are running smoothly."

The school representative believes the role of parents is paramount to the success of children. She described the role in this manner:

They [the parents] are the ones we want to reach because if we reach them their children might be successful. We can have our own ideas of what we think the parents would like, or the families would like, but by having the parents there we can gain information from them and their perceptions of what they need.

The Project Coordinator reported parents are involved in a variety of activities at school such as helping in classrooms and setting up and staffing certain activities. The Dextur project has worked to provide a place for parents at school by setting up lounges for them in each building. Lack of space has become a recent issue which has sometimes resulted in losing parent lounges. According to the Project Coordinator, schools without a space for parent lounges still provide a space for at least a coffee pot.

When asked how parents are involved in the decision making process, the Project Coordinator responded:

Well, as much as they come, it's always a hassle to get massive numbers of parents to come to the Local Governing Board meeting. They [parents] will come to the Local Governing Board meeting, and then they will not come for a while. It is not they do not want to come, but there are demands on their time. Parents that do come to the Local Governing Board meetings make suggestions. Their ideas are valued as much as anybody else's.

Interview Question #6: Describe any support you received during the formation of Project Success.

Data collected at the Local Governing Board meeting showed the original funding sources for Project Success were the state and local entities in the community. Also, many entities within the community were involved in implementing the project. In fact, minutes obtained during a visit revealed at least 40 or more agencies are associated with the Local Governing Board.

The Project Coordinator assured that support has not been an issue for the Dextur project because to the extent that everyone can, resources are being shared. She credits the sharing of resources to the state since during the implementation of the project, the state wanted agencies to share resources. The Coordinator explained the initial players involved in writing the grant are still supporters of Project Success in Dextur. She contends:

I think everybody was so involved in this [the project] from the very beginning. We had three or four planning meetings before the final grant ever went to the state. We were trying to decide what we had in our local community that we could do at low-cost or no-cost to bring into the schools. I think they

[the initial players] felt they had a part in it because they helped give birth to it.

Interview Question #7: What were the challenges you encountered during the formation of Project Success? If any, do they still exist? What was done to deal with the challenges that were presented?

The school representative reported the link between agencies and the Project Coordinator is a positive exchange. In addition, the parent liaison contends:

We didn't encounter as many challenges as a lot of the Project Success sites did because Lynn laid the groundwork very, very well. First of all, she started small, and worked very hard at those two sites to make sure they were very successful. Once she did that, people wanted to be part of the program. And, I think that at all times Lynn and the agencies worked together hand in hand. It has always been a very positive relationship.

Funding is viewed as a process that impedes progress in the Dextur community. One of the major concerns expressed by the school representative is the fact they lose parent liaisons because a reliable funding source has not been established to maintain the same person. She illustrated this point by stating:

The biggest thing we have seen as a major problem is money.

Every year we scramble around, Lynn scrambles around for funding for parts of the initiative. And that's too bad because that takes time away from other things we could be doing to move on. In a couple of schools, we have had to find money several times in a row for a parent liaison, so they [the schools] haven't been able to keep the same person, and that is a problem.

The parent liaison agrees funding is a challenge and often slows the progress of many efforts. Money seemed to be a concern for the group because they are interested in being able to provide continued services. The parent liaison contends:

A lot of times with grants, they're only one year grants.

Once you've gotten the grant, you can't do the same grant again, or fund the same position again. It's like constant scrambling. So, I would say if any issue is an issue, it's money.

The school representative reported funding is an issue that the Dextur site continues to confront year after year. In expressing what the site plans to do about money, the school representative stated, "Lynn continues to write grants and is trying to find a local source that will provide funding for the project in order for us to provide continued services."

Site 2: Jackson Project Success Model

The population served by the rural Project Success site in Jackson is the student body at Moss Elementary School. Moss Elementary School is located approximately two

miles outside the Jackson area in an open, country setting, and enrolls children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Data from the 1992 Census of Population for Jackson confirm the need for the system change offered through Project Success. The median family income in Jackson is \$10,500. The percent of persons of all ages living below the poverty level is 60 percent. The unemployment rate in Jackson is almost 30 percent. The rate of female headed households is close to 85 percent (Project Success Annual Report, 1992-1993).

The researcher drove 325 miles to the Jackson community. After arriving ahead of schedule, the researcher spent time touring the community. Certain sections of the community showed visible signs of poverty, for example, homes that were almost demolished. After touring the community about 30 minutes, the researcher drove approximately three and a half miles to the school. The small elementary school was surrounded on three sides by a huge cornfield. The researcher spent time talking with the Project Coordinator and the focus group about the trip to Jackson. The researcher explained the purpose of the study for each interview, asked the participants to read the Human Subjects information and sign the permission to participate form, then started the interview. This next section is a detailed account of the interviews in Jackson.

Interview Question # 1: What are you trying to accomplish with the Project Success initiative?

The goal in Jackson is to prepare children to come to school ready to learn as well as to ensure they are in attendance once they start school. Members of the focus group reported that in order to accomplish this task, it was essential that the community, the school, and industry continue to collaborate and support each other. A great emphasis is placed on basic needs due to the percent of people living below the poverty level which is 60%. The social service representative explained there are basic needs which require the assistance of other agencies working with the school. She proclaimed, "I think Project Success has helped Jackson. I'm not trying to sound negative, but I would like to see it do more. Sometimes the kids could do enrichment programs, but we haven't gotten to that point. We've had so many basic needs."

The Project Coordinator said in order to help ensure that the children come to school ready to learn, the Jackson project is trying to work with various groups to support the effort. He explained:

Well there are several things we are trying to accomplish. Jackson is addressing a lot of problems that small schools face. It's an area with a high percentage of its students living in poverty. It's a small school, therefore it doesn't have a lot of resources to provide a lot of things kids living in poverty need in order to be in school ready to learn. Some of those things are counseling services, and health services, those two in particular. We've done a lot with our project, so we wanted to reach out to the community and see if we

could bring in agencies, businesses, and local community members to make them aware of some of the needs and also feel some ownership and responsibility to help the school deliver the services that are needed for children. The other thing we're trying to do is increase the contact parents have with the school and develop positive relationships with as many parents as we can come in contact with, so we work with local parent groups.

According to the school representative the Jackson project is trying to better the quality of life for the children and their families.

When I say better quality of life, I mean providing more experience for the children. We have one industry that sponsors the Science Fair. The industry pays for these children to go to the Science Fair in Missouri and provide the buses for them. A lot of kids, not all of them, would never get to go to something like that.

Interview Question #2: Describe the services provided by the Project Success initiative in your community.

The Project Coordinator explained that recreation has been identified as a need in the Jackson community. To remedy the recreational concerns, the Jackson project coordinated efforts with the City Park to provide activities such as picnics, bike safety, bike contests, and basketball tournaments.

Lack of opportunities for children in Jackson has also been identified as a concern by all involved. The parent coordinator and community members want children to have activities during the summer once school is out. The parent coordinator works with other community members to provide summer activities for students. A reading program is provided for children that serves as a means for socializing as well as continuing to develop the children's reading skills. The parent coordinator commented, "I think we have lots of reading programs during the summer, the art program, and I think these kids come together with something constructive to do."

Due to housing conditions in Jackson, there are some prevalent health issues. As explained by the school representative, health conditions require assistance from other agencies. The assistance is for students as well as families. The school representative indicated head lice is a major health issue for the Jackson project. Because of the numerous cases the community encounters, head lice takes a toll on school attendance. To combat the problem, the Jackson project worked with other agencies to provide services and educational programs for families. The school representative recalled one case she considered successful:

In one particular case we cleaned the house, and volunteers helped the family launder and treat the home. We found some money and put the family in a hotel at night while we fumigated the house.

In that case, there were three kids involved. After those kids got back in school, they had perfect attendance from like the first of April on. We are still monitoring them this summer. We were able to do that by working with other agencies we bring to school.

An additional issue that faced many parents in Jackson was transportation. Due to the distance of the school from town, the mental health representative stated it is difficult for parents to attend school or medical appointments. To alleviate the transportation issue, the Jackson project purchased a van. She stated:

We own a van we purchased to assist transporting parents out to the school because the school is located about three or more miles from town. We use it [the van] for specific kinds of things, for the nurses that come to the building, or for uses the counselors might identify. We can help families go to the doctor more because they don't have another way to get there.

In visiting the Local Governing Board meeting, the researcher obtained minutes from the meetings which indicated the project had provided services to parents as a result of a major health issue in Jackson which was head lice. The minutes also included a report regarding tutoring, reading activities, a chili supper for families, and a fund raiser to generate funds for the project.

Interview Question #3: Describe the organizational structure of the Project Success initiative.

The data indicated the organizational structure in Jackson includes a Local Governing Board which is represented by agencies, community members, and school personnel. The site also has a Project Coordinator whose role is to report to the Local Governing Board regarding the day to day activities carried out for the project. The parent coordinator feels the Jackson community has done a lot of good in terms of organizing the board. She explained that the board is made up of a cross representation of the community:

We have our Local Governing Board. And it's got agency reps, industry reps, and parents. There are members from the school that include the superintendent, the principal, and there are several teachers that come to the meetings. We all come together as best we can. We try to get together, and move forward on whatever we feel at that time.

The minutes collected at the Local Governing Board meeting confirmed there are representatives from various agencies attending meetings on a monthly basis. The representative from social services views the organizational structure as a group effort with no particular person being "in charge." She does credit the Project Coordinator as coordinating the efforts in Jackson:

You know, when you say “in charge”, I think the Project Coordinator really tried to coordinate it. But I don’t think anyone is really in charge of it. It’s a group effort. And maybe we’ll have this one say, “Okay, I can do this part.” It’s all of us working together instead of anyone saying, “Okay, I’m in charge, and you do this, and you do that.” That is not how it works.

While discussing the organizational structure, the mental health representative mentioned the fiscal agent for the project is the elementary school. The representative explained funds generated or donated by agencies were channeled through the school this year. The mental health representative disagrees with having the school as the fiscal agent. She explained, “We try to discourage it. For several years it was the local mental health agency who was the fiscal agent. The school gets those monies and the treasurer gives a report each month on what the activities are.”

Interview Question #4: Describe how individual groups worked together to promote the Project Success initiative.

During the implementation of Project Success, the Project Coordinator mentioned various types of support, specifically from the state level. According to the Coordinator, the governor’s office supported Project Success and encouraged other agencies and community people to support the project. The Project Coordinator affirmed:

The governor came down and helped to do a kick off meeting.

As a result of that, and the push that was coming from the governor’s office to support Project Success, our meeting initially included not just local agencies, but all the regional social directors and so on. This helped us in recruiting some of those business partners.

A great deal of discussion took place regarding agencies working together to combat health issues in Jackson. The data showed other efforts to work together such as the Summer Science Workshop, tutoring program, the Science Fair, Family Reading Night, and a mental health counselor who comes in once a week to support families. Funding for the effort in Jackson comes from industry. The parent coordinator commented:

Our support comes from industries now. When it [Project Success] was formed, we did get state money at that time. But now, the industries give money on a regular basis. Usually, we fix a budget, and they pay for the parent coordinator, and the science fair, things like that. We try to give back to them what we have accomplished with the money they have given. It’s kind of a two-way thing. They give, but we have to give back and say, “OK, for your money this is what we have done. This is what we have accomplished.”

In discussing how individuals worked together, the parent coordinator said, “We try to work together, like on our school picnic, and committees, to get the work out. You know that Project Success is there, and working for you, and it’s a joint venture.”

Interview Question #5: Describe the role of the parents in the Project Success initiative.

In chapter III, Perroncel (1993) defined parental involvement as a partnership between the home, school and members of the community supporting the educational process for children. The Project Coordinator communicated that parental involvement in education is vital. He stated that parents who attend the Local Governing Board meetings appear comfortable in stating their opinions and have an equal voice in decision making. He explained:

Many of the activities provided for families have been a result of ideas from parents, for example, the computer classes sponsored by the project. The parents have a voice. There are a couple of parents that have been with us since the beginning and are still participating. The parents are just like anyone else sitting there. They feel comfortable bringing up whatever, or complaining about an issue.

The data analysis showed parents played a major role in the implementation process in Jackson and are still involved in running the project. Perhaps not in a decision making role at all times, yet they have a role. As part of the process in Jackson, parents were surveyed to gather information such as: ideas for workshops, field trips, activities, skills, talents, and their time and availability to volunteer within the school. According to the school representative, there are parents who sit on the Local Governing Board. She contends:

We have parents on the board, and I think sometimes we work in conjunction with the PTO too, so it’s not they’re over there, and we’re over here. It’s another joint venture. It’s just not, no one is standing by themselves. We are all in this together.

Notes taken during a conversation with the parent coordinator confirms the comments made by the school representative. The parent coordinator feels parents are not isolated from the effort in Jackson. In fact, she believes the community is relieved because they have someone working to “bridge the gap” between parents and the school. She commented: “I’m sure that’s a major reason the industry continues to fund my position.” The social service representative summarized her thoughts about the issue of agencies, school, and parents working together:

I think we work together quite well. The parent coordinator is the pivotal point. She’ll say, “OK, I’ve got these parents who are interested in whatever, so that really helps. That is really a key position. The industries pay for her [parent coordinator’s]

salary, and different things. Mainly her salary. They [the industries] really felt like that was something they could measure. When there's money going out, they want to see something for that money. I really think they have it with the parent coordinator.

The focus group agreed that the parent coordinator in Jackson is wonderful. She is viewed by the group as being capable of getting parents to volunteer in schools, provide services such as fixing bulletin boards, reading to children, assisting with art activities, and performing other duties assigned by teachers and administration at the school. The school representative stated, "Some of them [parents] might not sit on the Project Success Board, but she's [the parent coordinator] out there getting them to do things for the school. I think that's the role of the parents, and I think the parent coordinator has done an excellent job with that."

The issue of parent involvement is important to the Jackson community. The Project Coordinator explained that ways to involve parents is an ongoing issue. Some parents serve as volunteers and help in classrooms with whatever teachers assign to be done. The Project Coordinator, schools, agencies, and local parent groups work to develop positive relationships with as many parents as they can. The Project Coordinator believes parents will be comfortable if they have a particular person they can contact to discuss issues. He commented, "The parent coordinator spends her time making parent contacts, and coming up with volunteer projects. The parent coordinator provides the Local Governing Board with monthly reports of the kinds of activities and the number of volunteer hours the parents put in."

Interview Question #6: Describe any support you received during the formation of Project Success.

The parent coordinator explained that although the original support for the project came from the state, their means of support now comes from the local level. She contends:

Our support comes from industries now. When it was formed, we did get state money at that time. But now, the industries give money on a regular basis. Usually, we fix a budget and they pay for things like the science fair and the parent coordinator.

The Project Coordinator added that "support in Jackson comes from businesses, mental health, agencies, and the school."

Interview Question #7: What were the challenges you encountered during the formation of Project Success? If any, do they still exist? What was done to deal with the challenges that were presented?

Due to the geographic isolation of the Jackson project, transportation and manpower were identified as major challenges. However, a semi-solution occurred

relative to transportation in that funds from Project Success were used to purchase a van to transport parents and children. Through in-kind support, the school district is financially responsible for the insurance, and the upkeep of the van. However, there are still concerns about the lack of manpower in the community. The parent coordinator said, "I think some challenges still exist. Because I think we need a full-time coordinator. There's going to have to be that main person to coordinate it [the project], and make it go."

Regarding the original challenges experienced by the project, the mental health representative said:

There was a problem getting information out to various groups, especially about upcoming meeting or events. Having only a part-time Coordinator, it's not easy to get people together because there is no one to send out notices for meetings. The parent coordinator's role is to make the connection between home and school which makes it difficult for her to coordinate meetings. It's real hard, because the parent liaison has her hands full with the parents."

Site 3: Port Gibson Project Success Model

The Port Gibson site, a largely agricultural area, has devoted much effort to attracting and maintaining business and industry which ultimately creates employment opportunities for the community.

Wash Elementary School is the Project Success target school. The school houses kindergarten through fifth grade classes with a total enrollment of 400 students. Many of the students live in single parent homes. Nearly 60 percent of the students are from low income families. Almost 30 percent of the students are minorities. The entire population of the school participates in Project Success. However, some families of students who are at-risk of failure in school receive more targeted, tailored, and extensive services. Martin Jones Community Services serves as the fiscal agent for this site. The Project Coordinator is full-time and is located within the school (Project Success Annual Report, 1992-1993).

The researcher traveled 180 miles to the Port Gibson community to interview the Project Coordinator and the focus group. The trip to Port Gibson was a pleasant experience. Upon entering the community of Port Gibson, the researcher spent time touring the community. The researcher noticed some living conditions in certain areas of the community that appeared less than favorable. After touring certain sections of the community for about 60 minutes, the researcher reported to the Martin Jones Community Service Center to meet the director of the facility. The researcher was driven to the interview site by the director of the Community Service Center. At the interview site, the researcher was greeted by the Project Coordinator and escorted to an office area that was bright with many art pictures made by children. The atmosphere was friendly which

matched the personality of the Project Coordinator. After explaining the purpose of the study and tending to preliminary clerical and essential introductory research requirements, the interviews were conducted.

Interview Question #1: What are you trying to accomplish with the Project Success initiative?

The Coordinator views Project Success as a project that needed to do things differently than had been done in the past to help children and families such as isolated services. The minutes from the Local Governing Board meeting showed some agencies work with the Project Success program to offer services for children and families. According to the parent liaison, Project Success allows the whole family to experience success. This is not a project to benefit only children, but the family as well. Therefore, the parent liaison is concerned that families not send children to activities alone, but should also attend. She takes this position:

The programs we have been doing is to get everybody involved, not just the children who go to school here, but the children who have brothers and sisters in different school systems and the grandparents, their aunts, their uncles, everybody is here and it gets them involved.

The Coordinator said the emphasis is to help families prepare the children beyond their educational needs. She explained, “We want to help the whole child, not just educationally, but physically, mentally, and also health wise. Not only the child, but the whole family. We want to help them in all aspects of life today.”

Interview Question #2: Describe the services provided by the Project Success initiative in your community.

The Port Gibson site provides services such as parent activity night, classes for parents, summer programs for children and individual parental support programs which are coordinated by the parent liaison. As part of the service delivery, the nurse from an agency spends time traveling to different schools in order to tend to the needs of students. She is pleased the project has a dedicated coordinator who is willing to assist in various ways. She stated:

Many of the parents don't have telephones who we're trying to reach, and there are no phones in the homes. I don't have the time to make these home visits, although I do try to do some, so Carol does my running to the homes with a note from me saying, “Your child needs this,” or whatever they would need to keep them in school. So that's certainly a tremendous help.

The Project Coordinator believes there was a missing component in delivering services to children and families before Project Success, also to guardians who care for children. Therefore, she commented, “the system was compelled to change in order to improve services for families.” During the visit to the Local Governing Board meeting,

the researcher was given a copy of a booklet that was published for parents titled “Growing Into School”. The purpose of the booklet was to inform the community of the extent to which Project Success along with community support, is preparing children for success in school. This booklet serves as an effort to support families in the community.

When addressing the needs of a particular child in a family who may need assistance, the Project Coordinator explained that services go beyond a particular case in a family. The Coordinator does a follow-up with families in the event there is a sibling involved, or the family may need additional assistance. She reflected:

When I receive a referral it could be from support staff, it could be a main teacher, it could be the principal. When I receive a referral it could be from a parent. I go and talk to that family and see what they have had help on. If I can increase it, or give any information from some other agencies, or other individuals to help them it constantly goes on [assistance], so it doesn't stop there. When this child does go into the transition period from kindergarten to first grade, I will continue on for a certain amount of time because they may have a sibling in the system for the next year.

The Project Coordinator believes in personal contact with the families and providing activities that allow parents to interact in a social environment. The Project Coordinator smiled as she talked about the contact she makes with parents:

I have personal contact with the schools and the parents. I do a lot of home visits. I do a lot of personal calls. You have a more personable contact then. Also doing special invitations, for a parent activity night. Not just for the parents, for families. We have once a month, or once every two months, family interaction activity night. We also have individual parental support programs, or workshops, that will, starting next year, have an evening and morning time because of parents working, and guardians working.

The project also has a component that offers classes or activities just for parents. The parent liaison said, “a schedule is made up for the whole year so parents know the dates. We include a stress management and depression workshop.”

The Project Coordinator believes students should be provided with extended reinforcement during the summer when school is not in session. Another focus of the project is to provide much needed services to students. She had these comments relative to the summer program, “we run a continuum of schooling throughout the summer for maintenance of skills so that once they [the children] start first grade they will still be there [at the same skill level].”

Interview Question #3: Describe the organizational structure of the Project Success initiative.

The organizational structure for the Port Gibson project consists of a cross representation of the community. The Project Coordinator explained the structure in terms of what is required by the original grant proposal. She commented:

The Local Governing Board members consist of parents, the principals, and a preschool representative. We have representatives because it is a requirement by the grant that you have to have parents, you have to have administrators from the school district, you should have staff on board, and you should have most of the local agencies.

When asked about the organizational structure in Port Gibson, the focus group laughed in unison and said, “Carol” [Project Coordinator]. The school representative stated the organizational structure consists of a Local Governing Board which include parents, a Project Coordinator, agency representatives, and a fiscal agent which is Martin Jones Community Services. The role of the Project Coordinator was viewed by the entire focus group as essential to the success of the project in Port Gibson. The nurse affirmed that the Project Coordinator is the extra hands and legs she needs when serving children at the Project Success school. She also offered support for the Project Coordinator. According to the school representative, the community doesn’t refer to Project Success by its official name, instead she stated:

The way the community talks is they don’t call it Project Success, they call it “we need a Carol.” This is at public meetings that are on Cable vision. They say, “well, we need a Carol in all our schools.” Nurses say they need a Carol to work with them. Teachers need a Carol, and that’s how they know her, as “a Carol.”

Interview Question #4: Describe how individual groups worked together to promote the Project Success initiative.

The parent liaison attested that the intent in Port Gibson is to work together. That was the original intent of the pilot projects. The effort in Port Gibson goes beyond the traditional means of service delivery and works together for children and families. Although the project doesn’t share some community resources, they have advanced in terms of sharing services. The Project Coordinator indicated:

I think our purpose is to collaborate and pull together all of the resources we have in our community. We are a smaller community, we are not urban, so we know the players and we are trying to create a seamless delivery system within all the different systems that we have, such as early childhood, social agencies, and family literacy. We would like one system where all of the players are working together to provide the services for the people, the community families, and the school system.

The coordinator credits the school with being part of the collaborative in Port Gibson. She proclaimed the school does an excellent job of making referrals for needed services for children and families. The Coordinator acknowledges that without the school staff, she wouldn't have access to many referrals. She takes this position in regards to the school:

Their [the school] role is providing referrals. Without the staff, I cannot have referrals. Without the principal's involvement, the things I would like to do in the building cannot be done. So without her permission and insight and being a part of Project Success, a lot of these things cannot be done in the building.

The parent liaison discussed how agencies are working together in the Port Gibson community. The Growing Into School report card is an evaluation tool that agencies and Project Success use to determine how well they are meeting the needs of children and families. The Coordinator contends:

Here is some examples of the project [the coordinator passed the researcher a Growing Into School Report Card booklet].

This is all the childhood agencies working together. I'm looking at the state of our children in our community. This is the community report card that just got published.

We just had a public forum and presented all these issues [example: early prenatal care, adequate prenatal care, full-term delivery, healthy birth weight, etc.] last Tuesday night. Tomorrow night in our community, we have a follow-up to address individual questions. But, probably the biggest factor, due to being an initial pilot site of Project Success, and bringing such a model to our community, a well-designed model that is exportable, it has become contagious in our community.

Another collaborative measure is being involved with the State Board of Education which still is a source of funding for the Port Gibson project. Additionally, through contact with social services, the project has access to any training provided by the agency. The parent liaison mentioned some other collaborative efforts to support the needs of children and families. She commented:

Also, the other systems we have is the Even Start system and Title 1. The Port Gibson school district has given a lot of "in-kind" services such as office space, telephones, computers, and then Martin Jones Community Service Center is another agency, it is a partnership that has given a lot of "in-kind" services.

One that is highly ignored, but vital, is the public relations experts they [Martin Jones community Service Center] have on staff. They have done a lot of our fliers to catch a parent's eye. The

local newspaper has been very generous. They allow Project Success to put in reminders about immunizations and physicals.

According to the agency representative, the project has a couple of private donors who contribute materials and taxi tokens. She expressed:

We're so far from the main part of town. We had parents or guardians come out here and they [private donors] donate so much money for taxi tokens so we can get parents out here. And that's one of the big things is to get parents and parental involvement in the building.

The initial support for all the pilot sites came from the state. This is evidenced by information read in an Executive Summary procured at the Local Governing Board meeting. The agency representative reflected that initially, there were agencies who did not get involved with the project in Port Gibson. Because the project has been successful, agencies now see the importance of participating in a program that is connected to families.

Interview Question #5: Describe the role of the parents in the Project Success initiative.

The Project Coordinator affirmed that parents serve as a resource to each other and to the success of the project. The coordinator's office is at the front of the school which allows her to be available to greet parents, communicate with them, and make them aware of important information. She commented:

I probably have done around 200 tours this year of the facility. We always stop here [in her office] and talk about Project Success. As one parent comes in, and talks to me and shares a concern, all of a sudden you'll see two or three more who are neighbors or related, or someone who saw me at parent-child interaction night and I'll give them leads. And now, I see it [Project Success] becoming contagious.

Although many parents do not attend the Local Governing Board meetings, the project uses a parent survey to ensure that families provide input in regard to activities, programs, and topics of interest. At the Local Governing Board meeting, the Project Coordinator shares the ideas generated from parents via the survey. Regarding the role of the parents, the Project Coordinator expressed the following, "The parent survey is one way the parents are involved. Also, we send out a needs assessment on what types of programs they [the parents] feel would be beneficial." The parent liaison said that some parents do not attend Local Governing Board meetings, yet they have a voice in Project Success through the surveys. She pointed out that "the surveys are compiled and used at the Local Governing Board meetings to ensure parents are not only heard, but provided with the services they identify as vital."

The school representative explained the two initial Project Success schools now

have family liaisons in the building who broaden the services provided by Project Success. She stated, “They [family liaisons] are supervised by the Project Coordinator. Through the use of the principals they have a way of focusing on the families. They are even broader at their schools.”

Research Question #6: Describe the support you received during the formation of Project Success.

As indicated by information acquired at the Local Governing Board meeting, the initial support for Project Success came from the state. The pilot projects were given seed funding to pilot the effort before implementing the school-linked service initiative throughout the state.

As stated by the participants in the study, there wasn’t a tremendous amount of local support for the initiative during its formation. However, as stated by the Project Coordinator, “Project Success continues to gain more and more support at the local level because the community knows it is supporting the needs of children and families.”

Research Question #7: What were the challenges you encountered during the formation of Project Success? If any, do they still exist? What was done to deal with the challenges that were presented?

When Project Success was initiated, there were limited funds available to complete the mission. The Coordinator sees selling the project to agencies, finding out where the agencies were (including who she should contact for advice or assistance), and receiving training from different agencies as her biggest challenges. There was concern and delayed involvement relative to the school and community during the formation of Project Success. The Project Coordinator had to sell the project to school personnel and the community. She confirmed:

Another barrier was introducing Project Success to the staff of the school district. It was kind of hard to explain. It was new and it took over, maybe a year or a year and a half, to inform the community on what this new thing was, and why we were working on the mission was even harder to explain. Explaining from my point of view, my vision, even though it was a mission from the state, was hard.

The parent liaison proclaim several factors were challenges to the formation of Project Success; and although some agencies claimed to be part of Project Success and received state funds, they did not support the efforts of the project. To an extent, this process is still prevalent in Port Gibson. She reflected:

These were people getting money from state funds. We needed their help. It still was territorial right, duplication of services, and writing grants alone. We’re still in the process with a lot of people, because they don’t understand

the giving part. So that's something that is still in process for a lot of agencies. The big ones [agencies], I can say the big agencies that happen to have a lot of clients are working with the school. We never had a problem with DCFS or Public Aid, a lot of our issues were dealing with the health center and the mental health center.

The agency representative elaborated on the territorial rights. She explained: Working with territorial rights is interesting. I think that most of the things boiled down to funds were cut and everybody started being closer. It opened their eyes. They were saying "we don't have the money to do this, we need to work with someone."

Site 4: The Walker Project Success Model

Walker lies 60 miles south of Chicago's loop on the beautiful shore of a lake. With a population of approximately 80,000 residents, Walker is the county seat and the largest city in Larson County. With access to the Seaway via the Port of Walker, the city serves as the mercantile and industrial center for the South Shore.

While most of Larson County is experiencing an unprecedented growth trend, families on the "north side" of Walker are suffering from a different economic fate. The average per capita income for families is \$9,000, with a conservative estimate of unemployment at 60 percent. Most of the families are single parent.

Carzella School serves 600 students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The school population is 84 percent African-American, 13 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Caucasian. Over 95 percent of the children are classified as economically disadvantaged. The Larson Community Action Project is the fiscal agent for the site. The Project Coordinator used to be full-time and was located at the school. (Project Success Annual Report, 1992-1993).

The trip to the Walker community was 180 miles from the researcher's home. Upon arriving in the Walker community, the researcher spent time touring the area. Certain sections of the community visibly correlated with the statistics regarding the percentage of economically disadvantaged families. During the researcher's visit, school was out for the summer which accounted for the number of children playing on street corners and in yards. After approximately 30 minutes, the researcher reported to the school where the interview would be conducted. The researcher had been informed prior to the trip the last Project Coordinator was deceased. Also, former Project Coordinators had since moved from the area and their whereabouts were unknown. The interview at the Walker site was only with the focus group. The focus group consisted of a parent liaison, two agency representatives from social services and mental health, and a school official all of which were involved in the original project. The interview was conducted in a room that was not well lighted and contained the school representative's desk, a small table, and chairs. It is important to note the Walker site is of significant interest because

their initial attempt at developing services for children and families was unsuccessful. Because the site folded, the participants in this study responded to the questions in the past tense. After taking some time to talk with the group about informal issues such as vacations and family, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and tended to essential preliminary and introductory requirements, the researcher conducted the interview using the protocol in Appendix A.

Interview Question #1: What are you trying to accomplish with the Project Success initiative?

In discussing what the Walker site was trying to accomplish with Project Success the parent liaison said:

I would think that at the time we were trying to accomplish the roles of Project Success as to the families and child's well being. The other goal was to improve collaboration and coordination between the state and local agencies in leading the parents and students.

The school representative mentioned because low income standards permeate the Walker community, there is a dire need to have Project Success in the Walker community. The hope in Walker was the community would work with the schools to provide services for the families.

We pretty much have a very low socioeconomic standard in the schools and a lot of the kids were coming to school not being able to concentrate, like Gail said. We were hoping that community agencies, if we offered them a client base and working space, would want to come to work with the schools to do some counseling, to do some medical care, to do some family planning, and those type of issues, that's what we were hoping to accomplish. A community-school base link to connect them [school and community].

Interview Question #2: Describe the services provided by the Project Success initiative in your community.

Services were provided by multi-agencies in the Walker community, for example, social service, mental health, and the county health department. The parent liaison explained they were trying to provide services for children and families because when problems exist, it makes it difficult for children to focus and learn. The liaison stated:

With Project Success, we were able to meet with the social service agencies and compare the problems the families might have, we were able then to access those services. So when the students came to school, it helped them to meet some of those problems and they came to school ready to learn.

The agency representative articulated that years ago parents would have gone to different sources other than the schools for support. She was concerned that parents were coming to school personnel for services schools are not equipped to handle. The issues the agency representatives refer to go beyond educational needs such as abuse and shelter.

According to the social service representative, families are looking for survival needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and even monetary support. She takes the position that many of the issues families bring to school were issues once discussed with a church member or other family members, but not with school personnel. She contends:

JoAnn, as you know, parents have come to schools for a lot more materialistic kinds of things in the last 20 years. In the last 15 to 20 years, people have been coming in saying, "Do you know a place where I can live?" And "How do I get hooked up with Public Aid?" Women would come in who have been battered and ask, "What do I do?" Parents were coming to us for the things that schools are not prepared to give them. I mean, I can't tell you how many times someone has asked me about a place to live. These are the things that when any of us were going to school we didn't discuss.

I mean you might discuss that with family or church people, but not necessarily with strangers.

By eliminating issues children face, the project was hopeful children would be capable of concentrating on school related matters. The project worked with agencies to provide needed services to students such as counseling, immunizations, after school care, summer school, and a variety of activities. The services provided are best described by the mental health representative:

We did some counseling and referred some to counseling outside the schools. We also did immunizations with the county health department. We had after school programs and provided students with a safe place to go after school for working parents. They [students] were involved in computer work, and arts and crafts activities. We worked with some of the people from the senior citizen home. They came over and did some tutoring for students. In addition to that, we had in-school girl scouting and with another grant they [the state] sent to us, we applied for funds and did a summer school. We also provided an exercise program. In addition to the services mentioned, we had a dental program also that provided students with cleaning and sealant programs with the county health department. We had nutrition types of programs. We did an in-service with teachers, parents, and of course the students on nutrition. We did blood pressure checks and lice screening.

The Walker project offered additional services such as parenting classes, bilingual counseling, and family nights. Part of the family activities was to involve parents in school activities which hopefully would encourage them to volunteer and become active in their children's education.

Interview Question #3: Describe the organizational structure of the Project Success initiative.

The Walker site had a local governance entity which consisted of a Local Governing Board, Project Coordinator, and a fiscal agent. In discussing the organizational structure, the social service representative replied:

Well, what we had was a Local Governing Board. And, the Local Governing Board was the group that was supposed to run Project Success and then we had a coordinator, who would implement the activities, and coordinate everything that needed to be done with Project Success. Then in our own school we had a steering committee because you needed someone to work with the Project Coordinator and with the Local Governing Board and usually that steering committee was sent from schools that was made up of people from the schools and maybe a social service agency rep and of course a Project Coordinator.

When the researcher requested via phone a means for contacting the Project Coordinator for the Jackson site, the mental health agency representative stated, "Steve is the gentlemen that died that I spoke to you about on the phone." According to the mental health agency representative, "Steve was not only the most effective Coordinator, but the last Project Coordinator for the Jackson project." The mental health representative explained that many former Project Coordinators had all moved away from the Jackson community and the remaining group did not know their whereabouts. She also stated, "Currently, there is not a Project Coordinator or a Local Governing Board because there isn't a Project Success operating in Jackson."

Interview Question #4: Describe how individual groups worked together to promote the Project Success initiative.

During the time that the focus group conversed regarding how groups worked together, the interview took an emotional twist. The focus group made eye contact and began directing their statements to each other. The parent liaison proclaimed:

I think we had a pretty good group, prior [at the initial phase of implementing Project Success]. Of course we had Tim from the County Health Department, an Alderman, and the nurse from the Health Department. So we did have a pretty cohesive group. As the social service representative looked from person to person she expressed: Yeah, it was a little bit surprising to me that it [Project Success]

slipped away the next year. I guess it left that May when the funding ran out, and we said we hadn't met together at least for a year. We had good ideas, and we were faithful to each other. There didn't seem to be any reason in my mind why we wouldn't get back together, but we never did.

The conversation between the group continued when the school representative provided the following input, "Well, if someone would have taken the time, maybe I should have taken the time to call you guys, call everyone sitting at that table, we probably would have gotten back together, we just never made that call." The conversation continued as the parent liaison stated:

We wanted to improve collaboration and coordination between the state and local agencies in leading those students and parents, but we had too many turnovers. We had Project Coordinators coming and going, our most effective Project Coordinator passed away. A lot of key players left. I think that also had something to do with it [being unsuccessful] also.

The researcher learned from interviewing the focus group that initially, the Jackson Project Success had key people interested in the initiative such as representatives from the Health Department, school personnel, and the parent liaison, but after the first year the program folded. The Jackson project folded due to too many turnovers of Project Coordinators and a lack of interest in coordinating the effort on the part of the key players interviewed as well as the community. As described by the parent liaison, "the role of the Project Coordinator was crucial to the success of the project. That person should have worked to connect the community, but we didn't have a Project Coordinator long enough to coordinate our project." The social service representative explained:

The effort towards Project Success stopped because the community, including us [the members of the focus group], we just didn't get together anymore after the first year. We just didn't take the time to work together. We really needed a Project Coordinator or someone to pull it [the project] together."

Interview Question #5: Describe the role of the parents in the Project Success initiative.

Regarding the role of the parents in the Project Success initiative, the agency representative stated the following:

Well certainly they are part of the planning team. And as far as writing the grant, they had to participate in that, and the decision making. Also, a percentage of the Local Governing Board has to be made up of parents.

The parent liaisons discussed the roles parents played by completing a survey in 1992-93, which afforded the parents an opportunity to provide input regarding their perceptions of needed services:

This is the survey that was done in 1992-93, [sample of survey was passed to the researcher] and it has what parents viewed as needed services for a priority. You can take a look at that. And as you can see, parents thought we needed a summer school program. That was one of the services we provided, and we had summer school at least twice during Project Success when it first started. But as you can see, they're [services] ranked.

The school representative mentioned a parent coordinator that was well respected by the community and a true support system for parents, especially in helping parents to become involved in school. Because the parent coordinator had lived in the community for many years, parents felt comfortable discussing issues with her. The school representative explained:

One of the things that the school had was a woman on staff that parents would come to because she had been in the community a long time. And they'd [the parents] would put little bugs in her ears, and she'd put little bugs in their ears. That was Nancy. Nancy was wonderful. They wouldn't necessarily want to go to the school people per se, they'd talk Nancy. Nancy would tell them what to do, "You come to that meeting Thursday night." Nancy had been at our school for 25 years. She had maybe 4 or 5 [children] to go through the school.

Of course, she was a parent, and she became our parent coordinator, and became very involved in Project Success.

Interview Question #6: Describe any support you received during the formation of Project Success.

The focus group mentioned the original support for the project came from the state, however, they did not elaborate. Through probing, the researcher learned that the state provided seed funding for each pilot site. According to the school representative, "although the state provided seed funding, the community didn't put forth the effort to make Project Success work. There were just too many turnovers [people leaving]."

Interview Question #7: What were the challenges you encountered during the formation of Project Success? If any, so they still exist? What was done to deal with the challenges that were presented?

The school representative reported there was a lack of commitment on the part of the local community agencies. Although he believes the local community agencies wanted to participate in Project Success, they lacked the commitment to do so.

I didn't necessarily see a commitment. The players at the governing board meetings would change monthly. Sometimes we would have someone from the county health department, sometimes we'd have someone from DCFS. Sometimes we'd have somebody, but it was

never a commitment from an agency to say, “Okay, this is my liaison to the Local Governing Board.” And the players could change, but there were times when we’d have questions we would have asked of a certain that agency didn’t have a rep there. I think one of our best meetings I had gone to was when a DCFS regional gentlemen met with us one morning, and it was really great for him to hear what we had to say as well. I think some of our agencies in town, JoAnn, are pretty stressed at their own levels.

The agencies were viewed as having manpower concerns and big mandates to follow as well as dealing with issues relative to families. The social service representative elaborated on the lack of manpower. She felt it wasn’t they didn’t have good ideas, but a lack of manpower to operate the project. She explained being a social worker and having district responsibilities impacted the amount of time she could dedicate to Project Success. Some of the greatest plans made by the group required making phone calls and mailing letters. The agency representative strongly contends:

The difficulties I think we experienced was we had very good ideas but what we lacked was manpower to put those ideas into play. Being a school social worker, I had certain responsibilities that I needed to complete.

Unfortunately, some of our greatest ideas and plans needed a lot of phoning and back-up calling. We probably could have provided more services had we had the manpower whose total responsibility was to do those types of things. For example, physicals and immunizations is always an issue because kids get excluded from school if they don’t have those types of things. We attempted to do a clinic at school on a half-day of school when school first began. We only had a handful of people, JoAnn. I think if we would have had more PR [public relations] and more push, once again a person from our site who had that total responsibility to make sure things were hung up in local supermarkets. But again, it takes organization and coordination, and sometimes you could fit it into your job responsibilities, and sometimes you couldn’t. And you know, the agencies were willing to work with us. But again, they had to commit manpower too and you know sometimes that was a difficult promise to keep as well.

The parent liaison felt the project was unsuccessful due to the structure and upper level administration who did not understand why such a project was needed. She affirmed:

As we investigated it, the problem with Project Success was we didn’t have a process, we just told them [agencies] we had a governing board, we had a coordinator, and there you go. Unfortunately, you can’t develop the process with a voluntary

board that meets once in a while, and have a continuous turnover of coordinators. We really didn't develop a process. It was hard to get upper level administration to think this was something valuable that needed to be considered and adopted to provide services for children and families.

The agency representative viewed funding as a barrier to the success of the project. She recalled the state wanted the local project to eventually combine their resources and funds to provide services. The idea was to get the Local Governing Board up and functioning, and looking for resources in order to maintain a Project Success Coordinator, or someone else to take on those responsibilities. The parent liaison offered an additional rationale for the unsuccessful attempt of the Walker project to succeed. She explained the Project Coordinators were here today and gone tomorrow due to financial constraints. She stated:

Tina wasn't the first coordinator, but she was one of the coordinators. They all left for different reasons. You see, with this particular position, it's funded for two years. The first year with a \$25,000 grant, and of course salary is taken out of it, and travel, materials, and all and of the other wonderful things. The second year is only \$10,000. So, it's left up to the Local Governing Board to look for other resources, and other grants if they want to maintain a Project Success Coordinator, or someone within that school or an agency representative could take over and assume that responsibility.

The Walker site is in the process of restructuring to coordinate efforts for children and families. The researcher asked the group to provide input regarding plans to deal with challenges they may encounter, or will encounter, because usually there are always challenges. To provide some insight into the issue of restructuring and challenges, the school representative commented:

That's a good question because that is usually one of the questions they [the state] ask when you're writing a Project Success Proposal. What are the barriers, and what do you plan to do as far as working that out? I think as far as the Local Governing Board and trying to keep that particular part of it, you need someone to coordinate that effort. Contacting those people and coming with a purpose in mind. Their goal can be synonymous with our goal. So when you get people on the board that have a purpose, that's one way to keep the Local Governing Board going. As far as wanting to have a Project Coordinator, we need to look at the avenues of resources that we can use to have someone like that on board. Because that particular person's role is very key. With being a principal or assistant principal, you already have your job cut out for you, so it is very difficult for you to take on that particular role too. That's not saying that you can't,

you could take on some of those responsibilities. But if you don't have a Project Success Coordinator, then someone within the school will have to take on those responsibilities. So one way you could look at it is if that is a barrier keeping Project Success from functioning properly then you could have someone from that school take on those responsibilities.

The parent liaison provided these comments regarding parental involvement when restructuring the project, "As far as getting parents more involved, you need a very aggressive outreach to promote it. You need to let parents know that Project Success does exist and can help you. Building trust will be very important."

As a follow-up to the preceding conversation, the agency representative stated: And on that note, I think that's a big challenge, once we involve parents to make them feel comfortable to all of this.

Sometimes I think we do a lot of lip service as to "we want your opinion". If they're [parents] sitting there with 25 other people they are not comfortable, they may have some good ideas, but are not comfortable in expressing themselves. So encouraging them all to participate, but making them feel comfortable that they are going to be listened to, and that they have as much say on a committee or a board as well as anybody else sitting next to them. We also need support, and we do have support, as far as the state letting local agency people know that they should be a part of the Local Governing Board. And that's important too, but I do feel we have that support from the state. It's just making sure the local agencies get their representatives out there.

The school representatives summarized his thoughts regarding restructuring. He concluded:

Though I stated previously, and this is my opinion, I think that principals and administrators that are actively involved with families on a daily basis, they're the ones who are very supportive of this program. I think sometimes in our school system it's higher up administrators who don't have contact with families who sometimes don't know why we need the health department to come in here? You just go to the next town and get their shots. Why do we need counseling when you can just go down the street here and make an appointment? And it's kind of just to let them know that the mind set is not like that. If we're going to be a service to everybody, we have to make this a viable program. We need to work with the community to offer these services to our students. It would be beneficial for someone to take the initiative and try to coordinate all the efforts. In this community alone, we have many

different efforts. We need to work together. That's collaboration!

Summary

The data collection that resulted from interviews of selected pilot sites were guided by the interview protocol in Appendix A. Themes (Appendix D) relative to critical factors which are associated in the literature with effective school-linked strategies emerged, as the Project Coordinators and focus groups explained the development of coordinated services during the last four years at a selected number of Project Success pilot sites. The following critical factors were studied: (1) common elements that crossed the selected sites, and individual differences that emerged, (2) the organizational structure that emerged among the multi-agencies, (3) the collaborative processes that emerged across the selected sites that facilitated the project, (4) ways parents became involved in the implementation of Project Success, and (5) barriers encountered in establishing and operating the sites. The discussions, conclusions, and recommendations for further research are addressed in chapter five.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth explanation of the development of coordinated services during the last four years at a selected number of Project Success pilot sites, and to identify critical factors that emerged which are associated in the literature with effective school-linked strategies. In chapter four, the findings of this study were reported individually by each Project Success site that was investigated. In this chapter, results across the selected sites are reported and conclusions are drawn as the findings relate to the literature on school linkages. The chapter also contains the researcher's reflections, recommendations for practice and recommendations for further research.

Results

Results across the selected sites are reported here through the study research questions: **Research Question #1: What common elements developed that crossed all selected sites, and what individual differences emerged among the sites?**

The participants in this study reported that at the onset of Project Success, the selected pilot sites were faced with a lack of parental involvement in their child's education, lack of social activities for families, fragmented services, and a lack of collaboration among agencies. Each reported site confirmed that various agencies, businesses, and local community members associated with the individual site networked with Project Success to develop and provide services for children, parents, and families. One Project Success participant explained:

We selected schools that had the highest incidence of low income families and perceived level of needs among the students and families. Also, we wanted to make sure that any school that came on board was wanting to come on board, and felt it was something that would help their kids and their families.

As supported by Dryfoos (1993), the data obtained during the interviews with the Project Coordinators and focus groups suggest that the common elements that developed across the selected sites included: services being provided in conjunction with other agencies, programs paid for by the state, local funding or in-kind contributions, parents involvement, establishment of agency networks, school involvement, summer programs for children, and services for children, families, and parents.

Although funding was initially provided by the state, most of the sites either wrote grants or received funds from businesses at the local level to support the project. At least one site was trying to find a source at the local level in order to maintain a stable parent liaison. After the original funding was used, one of the sites was unsuccessful in

continuing its efforts. That site was in the process of restructuring the project. Regarding what the unsuccessful site plans to do to achieve future success, a Walker focus group participant gave some indication when she said,

I think in terms of the Local Governing Board and trying to keep that particular part of it; you need someone to coordinate that effort. As for wanting to have a Project Coordinator, we need to look at the avenues of resources that we can use to have someone like that on board. Because that particular person's role is very key.

Services to the sites were provided by entities such as the health department, social service department, mental health department, retired teachers, public aid, and parks and recreation. This interview statement provided by a participant adds credence to the fact that Project Success worked with other entities to provide needed services for children and families:

Well there are several things we are trying to accomplish. Jackson is addressing a lot of problems that small schools face. It's an area with a high percentage of its students living in poverty. It's a small school, therefore, it doesn't have a lot of resources to provide a lot of things kids living in poverty need in order to be in school ready to learn. Some of those things are counseling services, and health services, those two in particular. We've done a lot with our project, so we wanted to reach out to the community and see if we could bring in agencies, businesses, and local community members to make them aware of some of the needs and also feel some ownership and responsibility to help the school deliver the services that are needed for children. The other thing we're trying to do is increase the contact parents have with the school and develop positive relationships with as many parents as we can come in contact with, so we work with local parent groups.

The data collected across sites confirm that Project Success provided services for parents and students and worked with the states, various agencies, and groups to accomplish this goal. The following statement by a parent liaison serves as a summary:

I would think that we were trying to accomplish the roles of Project Success as to the families and child's well being. The other goal was to improve collaboration and coordination between the state and local agencies in leading the parents and students.

Individual differences occurred at all sites. The study sites offered the same kinds of services, but they were designed specifically to meet the needs of the community involved (Dryfoos, 1993). For example, one site reported health issues such as head lice, and another site experienced issues such as the need to provide school supplies, food, and clothing for families.

Research Question #2: What organizational structures emerged among the multi-agencies at the selected sites?

An analysis of the data indicated that the members of the Local Governing Board consisted of agencies, school staff, businesses, parents, a Project Coordinator, and community members whose role was to work together to plan and determine the needs of children and families. The data also indicated that the Local Governing Boards met on a regular basis in order to brainstorm about issues in the community such as needed services. The size of the governance groups varied according to the specific site; for example, one site had more than forty on the Local Governing Board. Each Board employed a Project Coordinator whose charge was to survey parents to hear what they wanted in terms of services, determine the resources available to address the needs of children and families, and oversee the day to day operation of services.

There was some contradiction among the sites in terms of how many parents were members of the Local Governing Board and the extent to which they make decisions. Although all the sites mentioned that parents attend governance meetings, and help make decisions, one site provided more detailed information, saying “parents attend the Local Governing Board meetings, are involved in decision making, and voice concerns or complaints as everyone else in attendance does.”

One site reported that schools can determine who will represent them at the Local Governing Board meeting, but it is mandatory that the school principals attend. This was best explained by the Project Coordinator during the interview:

It’s up to the schools who they would like their reps to be, but it’s mandatory that the principals come. The principals take turns [conducting the meetings] on a rotating basis so everybody has a hand in it.

According to Gardner (1991) the most important issue is “Who should run the school-linked service program?” At least two of the sites reported there are “no bosses” or any particular person considered “in charge”; rather, it is everyone working together. This concept was best explained by a participant who commented:

Lynn is the coordinator, and to tell you the truth, nobody is in charge of anything. We all work together and it is a very collaborative effort. Our whole purpose is to make sure the kids are ready for school, are learning, and are going to be successful.

It’s just a collaborative effort and everybody works together, but there is no one boss.

The Project Coordinators and focus groups reported the role of the Project Coordinator is vital to the success of Project Success. The Project Coordinator is viewed as the person who coordinates linkages within the community. The data also indicated the Project Coordinators are knowledgeable about the community, have a good rapport with the school principals, are abreast of resources and services within the community, and have a commitment to children and parents. Each site has a fiscal/administrative agent who oversees the financial aspects of the project. Most agencies do not share

monetary funds with Project Success; however, resources, decision making, and services are shared. Melaville, Blank, and Asayesh (1993) affirmed if schools and agencies are going to work together, there needs to be a governance structure whereby partners agree to share resources, participate in joint decision making, and use their personal and institutional power to change systems.

Research Question #3: What collaborative process emerged across selected sites that facilitated the project?

Collaboration was defined by Bruner (1991) as a process to reach goals that cannot be achieved by acting alone (or, at a minimum, cannot be reached as efficiently). The data analysis indicated that collaboration is viewed in the selected sites as a community effort with agencies and community members who have a common mission networking together.

The collaborative process that emerged across the selected sites was somewhat consistent with the framework developed by Melaville and Blank (1993) which included: getting together, building trust, planning, implementing the project, and taking action. . All sites reported their collaborative consisted of a compilation of community members such as parents, school staff, agencies, the Project Coordinator, and business partners. Many of these same individuals made up the Local Governing Board at the sites. An important component of collaboration is effective communication. Not only did the group communicate at the governance meetings, communication was also provided through minutes from meetings. The Project Coordinator assisted with communication by setting the agendas for meetings which included input from all involved, scheduling services with agencies for parents and children, and keeping the Local Governing Board abreast of the day to day operation of the project. The Project Coordinator was designated as the person responsible for most of the trust building and initial work among the participants in the project. This was attested to by one participant:

She [the Project Coordinator] lays a lot of the ground work so when we call and say we're a Project Success school, the agencies already know about us. If you identify a need, she will do some of the preliminary type work.

Project planning was done by many of the same individuals within the communities who shared similar concerns about the needs of children and families. As stated by one participant in this study, "I really think that from the beginning the people you saw around the table when you were there [at the Local Governing Board meeting] were involved right up front." After identifying the population who were to receive the services, planning preceded along that line. The group targeted to receive services in the study sites included children and families who were exposed to factors that place them at-risk such as low socioeconomic levels, high crime rates, drug abuse, mobility rates, and poor nutrition.

Although one of the sites moved through the collaborative framework and actually

implemented the project for a year, the site did not build a foundation that lasted beyond the first year. This was explained by one of the participants who explained:

It was a little surprising it slipped away the next year. I guess in May when the funding ran out, and we said we hadn't met together at least for a year. We had good ideas, and we were faithful to each other. There didn't seem to be any reason in my mind why we wouldn't get back together, but we never did.

Research Question #4: In what ways did parents become involved in the implementation of the project?

Gardner (1992) indicated the role of parents in implementing a program is clear: unless you have the support at home, interventions at school and in agencies will lack indispensable reinforcement. While the Project Coordinators and focus groups reported some parents were involved in implementing the project, more parents were involved in the day to day operation of it. Parents were not involved to the same degree at all sites, and although some parents were involved with the Local Governing Board, it appeared their involvement was minimum. At least one site reported that parents had a voice and were comfortable in attending Local Governing Board meetings and making decisions. The following is an excerpt taken from an interview:

Many of the activities provided for families have been a result of ideas from parents. The parents have a voice. There are a couple of parents that have been with us since the beginning and are still participating. The parents are just like everyone else sitting there. They feel comfortable bringing up whatever, or complaining about an issue.

Most of the participants in this study reported parents are actively involved as far as volunteering in classrooms, assisting with activities, and providing input via surveys conducted by the Project Coordinators to determine what parents viewed as needed services.

The critical link between home and school that crossed all sites was the parent liaison/coordinator. Essentially, the role of the parent liaison was to bridge the connection between home and school. The parent liaison is trained by the Project Coordinator to ensure they are aware of their roles in assisting parents, administrators, and teachers. All participants reported that the parents trust the liaisons and feel comfortable relating to them.

Research Question #5: What barriers or support were encountered in establishing and operating the sites?

The Project Coordinators and focus groups identified funding as the major barrier encountered in establishing and operating the sites. Although the state provided seed funding for the selected pilot sites, at least two of the sites was constantly trying to find ways to fund the initiative.

A lot of times with grants, they're only one year grants. Once you've gotten the grant, you can't do the same grant again, or fund the same position again. It's like constant scrambling. So, I would say if any issue is an issue, it's money.

A major issue that still exists for most sites is generating funds to continue the project, although at least one site can depend on local businesses to fund the initiative.

The remaining barriers reported by the sites included lack of staff, staff turnover, and delayed involvement. At least two of the sites reported lack of staff as a barrier that impeded the progress of the project; for example, one site experienced "a problem getting information out to various groups, especially about upcoming meetings and events." At least one site identified staff turnover as a barrier due to staff members that were "here today and gone tomorrow."

All sites reported the following sources of support: state, community, agencies, businesses, and the schools. Consistent with Dryfoos (1993), the extent and amount of support depends on the community involved.

Conclusions

An analysis of data from this study supported previous research and assumptions. Out of the study's findings, the following conclusions evolved:

Conclusion 1: Project Success networked with various agencies to develop services for children and families during the last four years in three of the study sites. A wide variety of services were provided for children, parents, and families such as summer programs, computer classes, GED classes, family picnics, tutoring classes, and family nights. The initiative was originally funded by the state, thereafter, the local projects received funds from businesses or applied for grants to continue providing services for children and families. The literature review indicated that the elements found at the study sites are common in school-linked service efforts (Dryfoos, 1993). The fourth study site had good intentions, but was unsuccessful in providing continued services for children and families mainly because no one took the initiative to continue the project after the first year of funding ended.

Conclusion 2: Each study site designed a range of services according to the needs of children and families in the community. For example, recreation was identified as a need in one site. According to Kunesh and Farley (1991) the specifics of services will vary according to the needs of the community.

Conclusion 3: The organizational structure across sites consisted of a Local Governing Board, a Project Coordinator, and a fiscal/administrative agent. Each tier of the structure planned and worked together to develop appropriate services for children and families. The size of the Local Governing Board varied across sites (Putting the Pieces Together, 1996). The compilation of people involved in the governance structure is a cross representation of the community working together which has allowed the community to develop services that best fit the needs of the children and families.

Conclusion 4: Project Success worked with a variety of groups to develop services for children and families (Ballesteros, 1994). The groups that worked together shared resources and made decisions together; however, in most instances, funds were not shared. The groups worked as a team, no individual or group were viewed as having more power or input than any other member of the team.

Conclusion 5: Most parents do not attend the Local Governing Board meetings, but they are represented by parent liaisons who serve to bridge the gap between the home and school. This is consistent with Sagor's (1993) findings that parents at the selected sites are less involved in the governance structure and more involved in the educational process in terms of volunteering in school or classrooms, planning activities, or making bulletin boards

Conclusion 6: Financial constraints (Lowenthal, 1996) remain a barrier for at least two study sites. In describing the challenges encountered during the formation of the project, one Project Coordinator stated, "I think one of the ongoing challenges is funding, not knowing if you're going to have the money to do what you really want to do." Although funding is a challenge, three Project Success sites have developed ways to generate funds to continue developing and providing services for children and families.

Conclusion 7: Delayed involvement (Kirst, 1991) was identified as a challenge to three study sites. Two additional challenges included lack of staff and staff turnover (Thomas, English, & Bickel, 1993). The study sites decided to develop services with the assistance of agencies, businesses, and community members willing to help until additional community members "bought into" the initiative. The site that was unsuccessful after the first year reported all preceding factors as challenges to their project.

Conclusion 8: Funding was important for initiating the project (Lowenthal, 1996). Once the seed funds were gone, the sites seek other means for financial support. Continued state level funding would serve to alleviate this concern for the project.

Researcher's Reflections

Project Success in Illinois focused on school-linked, human services collaboration as a means to improve delivery of health and social services for all children and families. It was an acknowledgment that a child brings more than educational needs into the classroom. For children whose families are not able to provide the support they need, the pivotal institution is the school. The elementary school serves as the essential means of intervention in Project Success. The project challenges the community to coordinate services among the school, families and service providers. The sites are unique because each project is designed to meet the specific needs that have been identified by the parents and the community

In most of the sites, the Local Governing Board met once a month to discuss the progress of the project, identify current needs and develop strategies to meet the ongoing needs of children and families. The role of the Project Coordinator who was hired by the

Board was to oversee the day to day operation of the project. Although each site in this study had a Local Governing Board and a Project Coordinator, the researcher observed that the Project Coordinator played a very dominant role as a leader in the eyes of most participants. Comments provided during an interview clearly emphasized the Project Coordinator as pivotal to the project. As stated by one of the participants in the focus group interview:

The way the community talks is they don't call it Project Success. they call it "we need a Carol." This is at public meetings that are on Cable Vision. They say, "well, we need a Carol in all our schools." Nurses say they need a Carol to work with them. Teachers need a Carol, and that's how they know her, as "a Carol."

The researcher learned from the site that was unsuccessful the importance of having a process by which to operate. Although this particular site had a Local Governing Board and a Project Coordinator, it failed to have a process. For school districts or communities interested in providing school-linked services, the researcher would suggest that pivotal to the success of the project is a Coordinator who has good rapport with the key stakeholders and is capable of building a strong link between the school, agencies, and the community. Also essential to the success of the project would be schools that are willing to buy into the concept of school-linked services.

A vital lesson can be learned from the three sites that continue to provide services for students and parents. Although one site would like to provide more than it currently does for students and families, it has a process in place to operate. The three sites have a Local Governing Board and a Project Coordinator. These entities work with the school(s), parents, and the community to identify and provide the established needs for students and families.

Recommendations for Practice

Because of the number of children and families impacted by at-risk factors such as low income, high crime rates, drug abuse, mobility rates, and poor nutrition, the efforts to provide school-linked services need to be more widespread. State government, various agencies, educators, and the community must assist in this endeavor in order to change the way services are delivered for children and families. Effective strategies must be developed to promote coordination and collaboration in order to improve service delivery. The following recommendations are offered with respect to examples of existing practices and critical factors indicated by the data in this study.

1. Locations interested in providing school-linked services should start with a small group of individuals who have a common mission in mind such as improving the well-being of children and families. If possible, try to canvass a cross representation of community members such as parents, agency representative, school officials, and business representatives. This same group could serve as the Local Governing Board.
2. The collaborative process needs to be strengthened by providing ongoing

training and technical assistance that allows the group to better understand how to communicate, build trust within the group structure, and address resolution to deal with “turf issues.”

3. A needs assessment should be done to determine which population the initiative will serve, then arrange the program according to the needs of the community. Each program should be designed according to the “specific” needs of the community it is going to serve.

4. Parents should have a voice possibly through a survey regarding what they view as needed services. Also, parents who are comfortable working within a group setting, can be invited to become part of the decision making process.

5. How funds will be generated to continue the project if and when seed funds are depleted should be determined. A source of funding needs to be established in order to maintain stability of personnel and to ensure the project will persevere. Work with the state government to ensure continued state level support.

6. Deep rooted barriers that will frustrate the individuals trying to assist families should be recognized. Work to avoid service fragmentation by becoming aware of what each agency is providing for children and families.

7. A pivotal role in the entire process is someone to coordinate the efforts. Choose a coordinator who is personable, capable of planning, has or can establish a good rapport with school officials, parents, and other members of the initiative. Also, seek a coordinator who has effective communication skills.

Recommendations For Further Research

Based on issues raised as a result of the literature and the research findings, the following recommendations are suggested for further study:

1. Replicate this study in another state to broaden the strategies that can be used by other school districts wanting to develop and implement services for children and families.

2. Conduct a case study of the unsuccessful site to determine if the restructuring presently occurring will produce different results for children and families.

3. Conduct a study of a Full-Service School (First, Curcio, & Young, 1993; Dryfoos, 1994), versus School-Linked Services to determine which has the greatest success rate for children and families.

4. Conduct a study with parents to generate perceptions of how they view their involvement in the school-linked service effort and whether they view their role as necessary or unnecessary.

5. Conduct an in-depth study of the role schools can play in the school-linked effort to provide services for children and families.

6. Conduct a study to determine if Project Success had any impact in terms of school success for students.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol
for
Project Coordinators & Focus Groups

1. What are you trying to accomplish with the Project Success initiative?
2. Describe the services provided by the Project Success initiative in your community.
3. Describe the organizational structure of the Project Success initiative.
4. Describe how individual groups worked together to promote the Project Success initiative.
5. Describe the role of the parents in the Project Success initiative.
6. Describe any support you received during the formation of Project Success.
7. What were the challenges you encountered during the formation of Project Success? If any, do they still exist? What was done to deal with the challenges that were presented?

Appendix B

**Informed Consent for Participants of
Investigative Projects & Subject's Permission Form**

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

I. The Purpose of this Research/Project

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth explanation of the development of coordinated services during the last four years at a selected number of the Project Success pilot sites, and to identify critical factors that emerged which are associated in the literature with effective school-linked strategies. This study is important because it may serve as a source of information for other school districts or communities developing or restructuring schools to provide school-linked services.

Hopefully, my merely conducting the study, the importance of providing coordinated services would be highlighted. Further, this study will provide information from the pilot sites in Illinois that may serve as a resource for agencies, parents, schools, and communities preparing to work in or develop coordinated services for children and families.

As more and more school-linked service practices are developed and implemented, examples of existing practices would be useful in the dissemination of information and adaptation of coordinated practices.

II. Procedures

The procedure for collecting data will be to tape record the interviews with the Project Coordinators and the Focus Groups, and by using the researcher's written notes. All data collected during this study will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for the participants in this study. The name of each Project Success site and location will be changed. The data collected will not connect to any individual's name or Project Success site name. All data collected during this study will be destroyed after the data is compiled and written for the study.

After a draft is written of the collected data, an appointed representative for the Project Success sites will have an opportunity to review and approve the written document for accuracy. If you feel I have reported information that you object to, you will need to inform me of such. I will remove the information that you object to, to your satisfaction.

Before conducting the interview, I will need each of you to read, sign, and date the attached Subject's Permission form.

Subject's Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent of this study. I understand the conditions of anonymity that will be carried out for this study. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this study.

Signature

Date

Investigator

Date

Appendix C

Coded Version of Dextur

Coded Version of: DEXT

IR:What are you trying to accomplish with the Project Success initiative?	1 2
C:I would say our focus is three-fold: #-ESF	5
we're trying to promote family stability...so that brings in the service linkages with agencies and organizations, opportunities for	6 7 8 9
\$-PIV	
families and kids...(2) parent	10
#-SFF	
involvement in the educational process, so that the parents will be supportive of education, and involved in what the kids are doing... I think that provides a good base of support	11 12 13 14 15
\$-SFF	
for the students ... and...(3) the I-\$	16
social activities that bring the families into the schools, giving them positive interaction with the schools to try and build a rapport so that it's a team approach. I think we also try to work the six core components of Project Success into the various programming types of things so that we're following along with the state ... not mandated...but suggested routes.	17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
R:Describe the services provided by the Project Success initiative in your community.	29 30 31
#-SFC	
C:Well one of the things we've done ever since the beginning is provide all of the school supplies for each child in the Project Success schools.	33 34 35 36

The reasoning behind that was that	37
if the bottom line for Project	38
Success is that we want kids to come	39
to school with all their basic needs	40
met, ready to learn and succeed, we	41
#-SFF	
felt that so many of these kids with	42
populations of 80 to 85 percent of	43
the families being on reduced lunches	44
in some of these schools, they didn't	45
have money for school supplies. We	46
thought if we provided all the school	47
supplies everybody would start the	
year on the same foot, with the same	49
supplies. I know when my own kids	50
went to school that was a big deal to	51
have all the school supplies, and to	52
start with everything brand new,	53
brand new pencils, and brand new	54
crayons, and not have to go second	55
#-SIV	
best on that kind of stuff. So we	56
used some of our grant money in the	57
initial years to do that. To provide	58
all the school supplies so everybody	59
started the year on the same foot	60
\$-SIV	
with the same stuff. The teachers	61
select what things their students	62
needed on the first day and we	63
provided them. And we've continued	64
to do that each year. Kind of	65
created a monster	66
now... (laughter)..but anyway ... that's	67
beside the point.	68
We have had very, very good responses	70
from the parents. Back to school time	71
they've got so many things to spend	72
money on... just to get the kids out if	73
they have to have school physicals	74
and dentals they have to pay for	75

that, and there's just so many	76
strains on their income just that	77
this has been a real boost, and a	78
real support builder too, between the	79
families and the schools.	80
#-SFF	
Of course we do service delivery, and	82
\$-AGN	
try to hook families up with any	83
needed services. Be it health care,	84
counseling, mental health services,	85
we put people in touch with utility	86
help. If families get their, power	87
turned off in the middle of the	88
winter, obviously a child with no	89
heat in the home isn't going to do	90
well in school. We provide clothing,	91
\$-AGN	
food, you name it. We've got a pretty	92
good directory of numbers we can	93
access and we seem to cut thru the	94
red tape somewhat. The families get	95
a little frustrated sometimes.	96
#-AGN	
We have got good connections with our	98
health care provider. CHIC is the	99
Community Health Improvement Center	100
\$-AGN	
here in town. They serve a lot of	101
#-SFC	
low income families. They've,even	102
gone so far as to set aside	103
appointment times for us for school	104
physicals in the fall. I think they	105
have set aside one day each month so	106
if kids are new to the district, and	107
have not had physicals before they	108
come to school, we can get them in	109
really quickly and not have them	110
\$-AGN	
excluded from school. Also, the	111

health department works closely with	112
!-SFC	
US. We've taken part in the dental	113
#-SIV	
sealant program. Each of the schools	114
has taken part in that ... and at	115
certain grade levels at certain times	116
of the year. We let the school nurses	117
know when to coordinate that. But we	118
#-SFC	
help to promote it. We've provided	119
peer mediation and conflict	120
resolution training skills for the	121
kids. Had some peer mediation	122
programs in the schools. We really	123
push the conflict resolution and	124
character education, and getting	125
along with others ... and do a lot of	126
behavior incentives for good	127
behavior ... trinkets and rewards.	128
#-SFC	
We've got a "Caught Being Good"	129
program where,anybody in the school	130
hands out coupons to kids that are	131
caught, and this isn't just the	132
typical behavior that is expected,	133
this is going above and beyond. They	134
get to turn these little coupons in	135
for a treat or whatever...even the	136
janitors hand them out... sothat's	137
kind of neat.	138
#-AGN	
We've finished our second year now of	140
working with Public Aide on the	141
attendance initiative. We were one	
#-SIV	
of the first ones that tried that. We	143
were real lucky that we had our	144
Associate Superintendent at the	145
regional office who was willing to	146

come on board with this initiative.	147
He is our county truancy officer. So	148
when we were looking, at this I	149
thought that would be the perfect	150
partner to have involved with this.	151
#-siv	
And that, of course, is where the	152
local school district who can	153
designate their own criteria for	154
chronic truancy. The State Statutes	155
say something like 10 percent of the	156
calendar, which would be 18 days	157
before the child would be technically	158
considered truant. All this allows	159
for is for kids to be flagged a lot	160
#-SIV	
quicker than that. We worked with	161
the Project Success principals, and	162
piloted it in the Project Success	163
schools and since have opened it up	164
to additional schools in the	165
district. It's elementary kids in	166
grade one thru six. The criteria	167
that we established were three days	168
in calendar month, of unexcused	169
absences or a combination of five	170
tardies that would result in a kid	171
being counted absent for a half day,	172
because they have to be in school so	173
many minutes an hour. What it	174
actually boiled down to is if they	175
#-AGN	
are referred, and we had every child	176
referred not just to Public Aid	177
clients, but every child that met	178
those criteria were referred thru	179
Project Success and we would check to	180
see if they were on AFDC or Aid for	181
Dependent Children, which was' the	182
\$-SIV	
Public Aide. If they were on Public	183

Aide then they were referred further	184
to the associate superintendent of	185
#-PIV	
the regional office, and then he	186
worked with the families, the parent	187
liaisons worked with the families,	188
and what it boiled down to was that	189
the moms, or a parent, had to come	190
to the regional office. The also	191
had to contact the school, and there	192
was a conscious effort made to	193
establish a plan or find out why the	194
child was being home without an	195
\$-SIV	
excuse. If there wasn't	196
improvement, there were provisions in	197
this, and this is by state law now,	198
with the Welfare Reform, that their	199
Public Aid checks would ultimately go	200
the regional office of education and	201
would go into what they consider	202
"Protective AE status" which meant	203
that they had to go to the regional	204
office to get their check. And	205
there's a time line...so it wasn't	206
like the minute they're referred the	207
had to go to the regional	208
office ... that didn't happen. We sent	209
them letters saying how important	210
school attendance was, that we wanted	211
their children to be successful and	212
they had a much better chance of	213
being successful if they were in	214
#-SIV	
school. Bottom line, if they didn't	215
cooperate, and attendance didn't	216
improve, their checks came to the	217
regional office. They had a further	218
month or two grace period that they	219
still could improve and then nothing	220
further would happen, but if they	221

didn't show additional improvement,	222
then by state law their checks could	223
be diminished, and sanctioned and	224
whatever else ... and the adult portion	225
of their grants would be eliminated.	226
We were trying not to make it a	227
punitive thing, it was more of a	228
#-AGN	
support kind of thing. And it really	229
resulted in such things as referrals	230
for other services. Maybe some of	231
the kids didn't have adequate medical	232
care, or whatever. We've bought	233
alarm clocks, I mean simple little	234
things many times. Last year, out	235
of a grand total of close to 800	236
students, only 28 families didn't	237
show enough significant improvement	238
that they went into protective AE	239
status. And, of those 28 families,	240
everyone made enough of an	241
improvement so there were no	242
sanctions plated on their checks. So	243
you know that made a big difference	244
to us.	245
After the first year we did this,	247
I've been talking to the middle	248
schools, and they said "why can't we	249
do that? Let's do that for the	250
middle school" because their seventh	251
and eight graders have such a	252
difficult time, and so we asked for	253
special permission from the state	254
department of Public Aid to pilot it	255
in our Project Success middle	256
school. We did that last year, and	257
now it is my understanding that as a	258
result of our trying to do that, it	259
was successful and is being written	260
in. So now it will be in grades one	261
thru eight statewide. So that was	262

kind of neat, but anyway, enough of that.	263
	264
#-CMS	
Illinois Reads, is another one.	266
that's Retirees Educating and	267
Assisting in the Development of	268
Students. What it means is senior	269
volunteers working with kids on-site	270
\$-CMS	
in the schools. We recruit, train,	271
place, and give TLC to the senior	272
volunteers who come and help us.	273
This year we had 45 seniors that we	274
recruited and placed in the schools	275
to help the kids. They gave academic	276
enrichment in reading and math, and	277
in general lent a helping hand.	278
It's just a nice inter-generational	279
program.	280
#-SFF	
We try to do monthly activities for	282
the families in each of the schools,	283
and this would be a non-threatening,	284
positive interaction between the	285
school staff and the families, just	286
to get them to come in a positive	287
happy way. Not threatening, not	288
conference situation, or there's	289
nothing bad that has happened and so	290
that's not why they're coming.	291
#-SFF	
They're coming to play Bingo, they're	292
coming for a family sports night,	293
they're coming in for family	294
computers, they're coming for	295
something that is happy and positive.	296
That's been really well received..	297
#-SFP	
We have tried to set up parent	299
lounges in each of the buildings, but	300
space gets harder and harder to come	301

by in the schools, so our parent	302
lounges kept disappearing, and that's	303
#-SFP	
unfortunate. We are still trying to	304
keep at least a corner in each	305
building where the parents can call	306
their own, if they come for a booster	307
club meeting, or the come for a	308
committee meeting or whatever, that	309
they've got their own corner that	310
they can go to, and that they feel	311
comfortable in. You know, if they	312
come early to pick up their kids,	313
#-SFP	
they can hang out in the parent	314
lounge. It's a good way to interact	315
socially.	316
#-SPG	
Summer activities, I've given you	318
this sheet and there's a whole bunch	319
#-SFC, SIV	
of stuff there. We try to have	320
something in each of the schools so	321
the kids will have something	322
constructive to do. And it's not,	323
like all, summer long. I think the	324
longest program was six weeks, and	325
it's not every single day. Some of	326
them meet every day for three weeks,	327
some of them meet every day for two	328
#-SIV	
weeks. They're staffed by the	329
teachers, so most of the teachers	330
know the kids, but we do also open up	331
to the neighborhood kids. It there	332
is a child that is bussed to a	333
different school, and there is a	334
Project Success school in their	335
neighborhood, they are welcome to	336
come to any of these summer things.	337
\$.-SFC	

It's not just exclusively for kids	338
that go to that school. Some of those	339
things are things like reading	340
programs, language arts things,	341
computers instruction, we've had some	342
health and fitness, arts and	343
crafts ... One of the schools did a	344
"Camp South East" where they had the	345
same theme for four weeks and some	346
field trips, and just fun,	347
constructive kinds of things that	348
keep the wheels turning but it's not	349
totally academic. It's not like	350
going to summer school. We've got 4-H	351
Clubs in... I think five or six of the	352
Project Success schools...and plans	353
to open them in the other ones this	354
fall.	355
#-SFP	
We do parenting skills training with	357
the parents ... trying to make that	358
non-threatening, and not in the	359
situation where they are bad parents	360
and they need to come to school to	361
learn how to do it. It's just the	362
#-SFF	
support role. We try to promote	363
family literacy. We have family	364
reading nights where sometimes we	365
will have celebrity readers come in	366
and read stories, poems, books,	367
\$-PIV, SFC	
etc..and have parents come into the	368
classrooms and read. The evening	369
activities try to make available a	370
book for each child to take home and	371
keep, as part of their little home	372
library. Most of these kids don't	373
have a lot of books at home.	374
\$-PIV,SFF	

We have decided that parent liaisons	376
in each of these schools are	377
absolutely critical to our program.	378
And that the parent liaison is on-site	379
in each of the schools. They do a	380
lot of their referral collections.	381
#-PLA	
They've become a link between the	382
school and the family. A teacher is	383
with the kids six hours a day, or	384
whatever, and can notice things that	385
might be affecting the child's	386
ability to learn. If it's something	387
external, other than academic, the	388
teacher can tell a parent liaison	389
and within ten minutes we can have	390
what the child needs. Maybe a child	391
has a chronically runny nose, or a	392
health problem that has been	393
!-PLA	
unchecked, the parent liaison can	394!
call the parent and say "is there	395
anything we can do to help?" "We can	396
get them into the doctor or	397
whatever." The teacher can't leave	398
#-SFF	
the classroom to do that, so the	399
parent liaison has built a real	400
important role to be able to do that	401
work with the parents and the service	402
providers in the community. And then	403
when we do all these Project Success	404
!-PLA	
activities, the parent liaison act as	405
our kind of on-site helper to help	406
coordinate things there too. So	407
that's been really critical.	408
I have written grants written grants	410
#-AGN	
to local entities. We've gotten some	411
monies thru Drug Free School grants.	412

The Department of Rehabilitation	413
Services has provided a full-time	414
person at one of our schools. We.	415
thought this could be a family	416
advocate to help special ed kids and	417
families feel more included. So you	418
have a little different twist on each	419
of those positions based on who your	420
funders are, but it still works.	421
!-SIV	
Title I funds have been tapped, and	422
the thing that I think is real	423
interesting is-that many of these	424
schools, after the schools have a	425
parent liaison for a period of	426
time ... and they might j@st have a	427
part-time one or whatever we can fill	428
#-siv	
in to begin with, they see how	429
valuable it is, and they're more	430
ready to try and help give money to	431
support the position, and maybe even	432
allocate some of their own building	433
funds thru their Title I	434
money... so ... that's been good.	435
#-AGS	
We've gotten some partial support	437
thru LAN, or the ... network for the	438
parent liaisons, DASA provided one	439
for us (parent liaison) for like three	440
years that one of their prevention	441
specialists that they wrote in and	442
said that this is really a prevention	443
job.	444
R:And whols DASA?	446
C:DASA is the Department of Alcoholism	448
and Substance Abuse. That school is	449
now closed, so that is not longer.	450
But, wherever we can get money to	451
help support this, we've done it.	452
Because we feel like that is really	453

important. And the expansion grant	454
thru Project Success has helped to	455
provide us with that too.	456
R:The school that closed, was that	458
part of the original Project Success?	459
C:Yes ... and it was a very old	461
building, in very definite need of a	462
lot of repairs, and not handicap	463
accessible because it was three	464
floors. The district decided they	465
needed to begin closing some of the	466
old buildings, and that was one that	467
was targeted. One of the least	468
appealing physical properties, I	469
guess.	470
R:So the students at Dunt were	472
relocated to other schools?	473
C:And what's ironic is that most of	475
the Dunt kids,'well in fact I think	476
about 90 percent of them will be	477
going to Burke, which is a Project	478
Success school, and Bradley which a	479
Project Success school in	480
Washington,...so we'll still have	481
them. But it will be in different	482
buildings.	483
#-CMS, AGS	
We work closely with a lot of other	485
\$-LCS	
entities in our community. Programs	486
thru the school district like Spark,	487
which is Super Parents and Relating	488
to Kids. We do a lot of just	489
promotional kinds of things, do some	490
incentives to try to get some parents	491
to come to that, because they do -a lot	492
#-PIV	
of make and takes. They have the	493
parents come in and go to the	494
classroom, so it's to our advantage	495

if we can help them get the parent	496
come to their programs, then it's	497
going to help in the things we're	498
doing also. So we try to network	499
with as many people like that as we	500
can. I've already mentioned	501
#-LCS	
4-H,...we've networked closely with	502
our Park District, they do a lot of	503
recreation kinds of activities for us	504
\$-SFC	
in our schools. We had open rec at	505
the middle school last year, like	506
three nights a week... I	507
think ... during winter months to give	508
the kids something to do, you know,	509
supervised things, and so forth.	510
Since the second year, I think, that	512
Project Success has been in	513
existence, we have helped the park	514
leader at Baker College, which was	515
informally a park site years and	516
years ago. Then the pavilion fell	517
down and interest decreased because	518
of one thing or another. And so they	519
closed it as a site. So when we came	520
on board as Project Success, we're	521
asking parents "What can we do to	522
help?" Well, they told us, "we'd like	523
to have our park back." So we had a	524
connection with the Park District and	525
we started working. I wrote a	526
grant, and it wasn't a phenomenal	527
amount of money, just enough to have	528
college student out there in the	529
summer. And so we've been able to do	530
that. And now each year since then,	531
as a result of the Park District,	532
when they wrote a grant, they put	533
some additional money in for	534
playground equipment, so that's at	535

the school now, you know... it's	536
right there adjacent to the	537
playground.	538
#-SFF	
We do family computer classes every	540
semester, sometimes twice a semester,	541
and that's been very well received.	542
We have teachers come in and do these	543
classes with the families, parents and	544
kids. Sometimes it's just something	545
as simple as the kids showing the	546
parents all they do on the computers	547
!-SFF	
in school. It's a good parent-child	548
#-SFP	
interaction. We've also had some	549
parents only classes, where we did	550
some word processing and simple	551
computer skills. Some of the parents	552
have even gone back to school as a	553
#-PIV	
result of that. It was a	554
non-threatening way of getting them	555
in, to make them feel happy about	556
being in school, and it's another way	557
of making them feel good about it	558
all.	559
#-CMS	
We have a Learn and Serve grant, or	561
have had one for two years, where all	562
the kids in the Project Success	563
schools are eligible to do this kind	564
of community service. And we've	565
divided that into two things. There's	566
school beautification, and peer	567
tutoring/peer helping, so that older	568
kids can work with younger kids and	569
kind of role model, and little extra	570
activities ... extra academic	571
enrichment kinds of things.	572
#-SIV	

The school beautification is	574
teacher-led also, and the kids have to	575
plan, develop, and implement the plan	576
for beautifying something in or	577
#-CMS	
around the school. You know, we've	578
had landscaping that's been done,	579
signs that have been done to	580
advertise the school. The kids this	581
year, they've done this for several	582
years now with Project Success, so	583
they thought they had enough flowers,	584
they wanted to do something inside.	585
They took a walking tour of the	586
building. The teacher came in and she	587
was laughing ... this was about a 100	588
year old school. the kids decided	589
the baseboards were disgusting, and	590
they wanted to strip them all, restain	591
or repaint,...and (laughter). '..she	592
said "I think you need to do	593
something a little more manageable	594
than that. I'and so ... they thought the	595
shades in the auditorium were	596
disgusting and they got up on ladders	597
and we actually put new shades in and	598
they got to hang them. It shows a	599
little community pride, and school	600
pride, and hopefully goes off into	601
the neighborhood. The litter patrols	602
that erupted as a result of these	603
beautification plans ... you know	604
there's a lot of peer pressure if a	605
child has been picking up garbage on	606
the playground and sees somebody else	607
throw their backpack paper all over	608
the playground, then they put a	609
little pressure on them, so that's	610
been good	611
I talked a little bit about the	613
#-SFC	

student incentives. We not only do	614
incentives for behavior, but also for	615
academics, and attendance, and not	616
only just for success in those areas,	617
but for improvement. Some kids would	618
never get a reward, or an award for	619
success, but if they improve that's	620
going in the right direction and we	621
#-SFC	
recognize them for that. And this	622
year we implemented tutoring, after	623
school tutoring, in, I think six of	624
\$-SIV	
the eight buildings, where Project	625
Success paid certified teachers to	626
stay after school and help struggling	627
students in academic areas. And that	628
was well received by parents and	629
teachers alike. With the idea that	630
the had people that they knew, and	631
the teachers knew what kinds of	632
things they needed to know, they could	633
help them ... and hopefully we'll be	634
able to support that again.	635
R:That a lot. Describe the	638
organizational structure of the	639
Project Success initiative.	640
#-PCN	
C:There's a Coordinator... that's	642
me... I have a program assistant who	643
is part-time person that helps me	644
keep track of all this stuff. We	645
have parent liaisons in each of the	646
#-LGB	
buildings. Our local governing board	647
\$-AGN	
has grown to about 40 people. We	648
have representatives like the	649
administrators from each of those	650
key agencies, and we've got Public	651
Health, Public Arts, Department of	652

Rehabilitation Services. We have a	653
person from the Dexter Mental Health	654
Center, who kind of wears the mental	655
health hat, We have the DCFS	656
#-CMS	
administrator, we have the Recreation	657
§-SIV	
Director from the Park District, the	658
school coordinator from District 61,	659
the health services coordinator for	660
#-AGN	
District 61, the local executive	661
director from CHIC, which is the	662
community Health Improvement	663
§-SIV	
Center ... School reps from each	664
school. Each principal must sit on	665
the LGB,.welve got some assorted	666
counselors, social workers, from	667
various schools...	668
#-siv	
It's up to the schools who they would	670
like their reps to be, but it's	671
mandatory that the principal come. I	672
do the agendas and keep track of the	673
minutes, and do meeting notices with	674
input from the schools including what	675
#-siv	
they feel need to be on it. The	676
principals take turns on a rotating	677
basis so everybody has a hand in it.	678
O-PLA, PIV	
Quite a few of the parent liaisons	679
are on the Project Success board.	680
That's it? The In Touch office comes	681
#-PIV	
to many of our meetings. She's kind	682
of a ... prevention person.	683
#-CMS	
We have partnerships-locally, they	685
don't sit on the board, but like I	686

said, we work real closely with	687
cooperative extension. They do a lot	688
of our parenting skills training,	689
\$-SIV	
also the 4-H. The regional office	690
thru our public Aide attendance	691
initiative, we work real closely with	692
#-CMS	
them. The IL Department of Aging,	693
works closely with us with our	694
Illinois Reads program ... that	695
inter-generational program I was	696
#-SFP	
telling you about. We've got a deal	697
where we've got GED classes in one of	698
the Project Success schools open to	699
anybody in the district that wants to	700
come, but we really promote it within	701
the Project Success school. If we	702
build a rapport, maybe some of these	703
parents will feel comfortable coming	704
to GED in one of their schools rather	705
than having to go outside to some	706
other area. Of course Dexter Public	707
#-CMS	
Schools, we've got a connection with	708
a church here in town that has	709
supported us financially, not a huge	710
amounts of money, but about \$2500 a	711
year, which is a nice contribution	712
for the last several years ... a	713
#-BNS	
connection with a bookstore in	714
Springfield, who has done some book	715
fairs for us and loaned some library	716
books for the students., or for the	717
school libraries. That's about it.	718
R:Is there a particular person who	720
holds the iinitiative in tact?	721
#-PCN	
C:I'm kind of the glue, But I'm	723

probably not indispensable. We all	724
work together. I guess you could say	725
that I'm the "Head Worker" maybe, but	726
!-GTT	
we all work together.	727!
R:Describe any support you receive	729
during the formation of Project	730
Success.	731
#-GTT	
C:I would say the people brought	733
around the table ... the initial	734
players. I mean, when I was	735
actually, physically writing the	736
original grant, I was at a National	737
Prevention Center for Research and	738
Development, or something like that,	739
but anyway ... there was going to be a	740
#-GTT	
big grant here in town and I was	741
asked to go on that team. And so	742
Jack Anderson from the Health	743
Department and people who	744
administered there, someone from the	745
mental health center was there, Sher	746
Raymond who was the Drug Free	747
School's Coordinator and has been	748
real active on our LGB, somebody from	749
the regional office of education, and	750
somebody from the city council. Six	751
of us were in Dayton, Ohio, and	752
that's when I did a lot of the	753
#-PLN	
writing. After we did the meetings	754
during the day, then at night we'd	755
all sit around and talk and we were	756
writing this grant. And with all	757
their input.	758
#-PLN	
I think that everybody was so involved	760
in this from.the very beginning. We	761
had three or four planning meetings	762

before this final grant ever went to	763
\$-TAS	
the state. We were trying to decide	764
what we had in our local community	765
that we could do at low-cost or	766
no-cost to bring into the schools.	767
I think they felt they had a part in	768
#-GTT	
it. Everybody had their thinking	769
caps on right from the very	770
beginning, and I think that helped.	771
And I think they all felt like they	772
had a part in it because they helped	773
give birth to it.	774
R:Describe the role of the parents in	777
the Project Success initiative.	778
#-PIV	
C:Parents, of course, are always	780
encouraged and welcome at the LGB	781
meetings. We try to work mostly with	782
Booster Clubs, PTA'S, whatever is	783
established in the schools. Many of	784
the parents, as we start out are	785
little or none-existent in the	786
school. So we try to work with	787
whatever core of parents are actively	788
participating at the time, and build	789
on that. They're involved in all the	790
activities at the school, helping to	791
coordinate, and set them up, and	792
staff them, and that type of thing.	793
And we try to walk a very fine line,	794
so we're not seen as pushy. I mean	795
we're there to support and help and	796
enrich what is already there, and	797
make it better. Rather than, "Here's	798
this wonderful new program that is	799
going to take over." That's not what	800
#-PIV	
we want to do. So, I think from that	801
standpoint we try to work with all	802

the parents that are there, and help	803
them to get more parents to come in	804
and build the base of support within	805
each school.	806
R:How are they involved in the	808
decision making process at Dextur?	809
C:Well, as much as they come... it's	811
always a hassle to get massive	812
numbers of parents to come to the LGB.	813
meeting, and then they will riot come	814
for awhile. It's not t ' hat they don't	815
want to come, but there are other	816
#-AGM	
demands on their time. Parent that	817
do come to the LGB meetings make	818
suggestions. Their ideas are valued	819
as much as anybody elsel. As far	820
as decision making, do you mean like	821
in expansion, and that type of	822
thing?	823
R:Well actually, do you have parents	825
who are standard members of the LGB?	826
C:Yes.	828
R:OK	830
#-PIV	
C:Oh yes ... yes we do. Ideally we hope	832
to have two or three from each	833
school, but as we get bigger and	834
bigger, that's probably not going to	835
happen. So we'll probably try to	836
have at least one from each school	837
then they will take whatever	838
information back to the parent	839
nucleus, whatever it may be, the PTA	840
\$-PIV	
or the Booster Club. My assistant	841
and I many times will attend the	842
parent involvement or the Booster	843
Club meetings in some of these	844
schools, as invited of course, to	845
show that we're there to work with,	846

rather than adversely, or whatever.	847
R:And you also mentioned that you have	849
a parent liaison...	850
#-PLA, PIV	
C:The Parent liaison is another link	852
to the families. And they see that	853
as a Project Success linkage too.	854
R:Describe any challenges you	856
encountered during the formation of	857
Project Success, if any, and do they	858
still exist? What was done to deal	859
with the challenges that were	860
presented?	861
#-FUN	
C:I think one of the ongoing'	863
challenges is always the	864
funding ... knowing if you're going to	865
have the money to do what you really	866
want to do. With the numerous,	867
numerous grants that I've applied for	868
and some of them being successful and	869
some of them not ... we're always	870
looking for money because you know,	871
as you get bigger and bigger, it	872
takes more and more money to run what	'873
you had before. We've been lucky in	874
getting grant dollars. Right now	875
we're looking for local support, so	876
that we can have some long-term	877
#-FUN	
commitments. Every year if you h ' ave	878
to start at ground zero again, it's	879
scary, at best, and disgusting at	880
worst ... but I think funding would be	881
a big challenge.	882
We've really not met with any	884
problems as far as support is	885
concerned from people sharing	886
resources as they are able to.	I 887
think when Project Success first	888
started they were hoping at the	889

level that there would be a lot 890
 resource sharing, maybe even 891
 monetary ... that's very difficult 892
 way the budget structures were, 893
 because they didn't have 894
 discretionary funds that they could 895
 say, OK,..." and any number of the 896
 administrators would say, "You know 897
 we'd love to just give you \$25000 to 898
 put a parent liaison in the building, 899
 but we can't do that," because they 900
 didn't have any place in their 901
 budgets that they could do that ... So 902
 that part of the initial hope, I 903
 think, maybe, was not able to be 904
 realized as much as we had hoped. 905
 #-AGN
 However, the agencies are as 906
 receptive to providing any services, 907
 cutting thru red tape as they can. If 908
 we have a DCFS referral, for example, 909
 we call the administrator and (snap) 910
 it happens like that. And I think, 911
 you know, parents might have problems 912
 getting thru, and there's a lot of 913
 frustration, and then they finally 914
 #-AGN
 give up. But we're able to have the 915
 expertise now, and the connections 916
 that we can make these connections 917
 for the families. 918
 #-AGS
 Also, a lot of these places are 920
 sharing their resources now. Not 921
 cash money, but in-kind kinds of 922
 things. Like I said before, the 923
 Department of Rehabilitation Services 924
 has a full-time person now at one of 925
 the schools. We have people from 926
 DASA that are kind of "on loan.vt It 927
 wasn't dollars that came in, but it 928

provided us with the manpower tha ' t we	929
needed. Th same way like with the	930
Park District. We needed recreation	931
servcies. Some of those we've split	932
"halves" with them and we'll pay part	933
of it and they'll pay part of it.	934
But, you know, if we had to pay it	935
all ourselves, we couldn't do it. So,	936
you know, that cooperation has been	937
and continues to be there, and I	938
think that's important.	939
R:Any challenges in terms of turf	941
issues?	942
#-GTT	
C:We really haven't. I think that	944
goes back to the fact that everybody	945
has been supportive. We haven't.	946
And I think Dextur has long been	947
known as a community that can work	948
together. I think that is really to	949
our advantage ... so ... we try to	950
capitalize on that. I mean we always	951
try to say "You can do so much more	952
working together, than everybody	953
going separately," and I think	954
everybody really believes that.	955
There haven't been any barriers where	956
people are concerned, at least not	957
that I've been involved in.	958

Appendix D

Code Names and Abbreviations of Critical Factors

Appendix D

CODE NAMES AND ABBREVIATIONS OF CRITICAL FACTORS

1. Common Elements

SFC	Services for Children
SFF	Services for Families
SFP	Services for Parents
PIV	Parents Involved
AGN	Agency Network
SIV	School Involved
STF	State Funds
LCF	Local Funds
IKC	In-kind Contributions
SPG	Summer Programs
ESF	Efforts to Support Families

2. Organizational Structure

LGB	Local Governing Board
PCN	Project Coordinator
FSA	Fiscal Agent

3. Collaboratives

GTT	Getting Together
PLN	Planning
IMP	Implementing Project
TAS	Take Action

4. Parental Involvement

PVI	Provide Input
PLA	Parent Liaison
PVT	Parent Volunteers
AGM	Attend Governing Meetings

Appendix D

CODE NAMES AND ABBREVIATIONS OF CRITICAL FACTORS CONTINUED

5. Barrier/Support

FUN	Funding
DIM	Delayed Involvement
STO	Staff Turnover
DOS	Duplication of Services
LOS	Lack of Staff
TTR	Territorial Rights
CMS	Community Support
SSP	State Support
AGS	Agency Support
BNS	Business Support
LCS	Local School Support

VITA

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