

**DISTRICT CENTRAL OFFICE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:
FROM CONTRACTS TO COLLABORATION TO CONTROL**

Meredith I. Honig

University of Maryland, College Park

September 10, 2003

Article forthcoming in *Theory and Research in Educational Administration*
W. Hoy and C. Miskel, Eds., Volume 3, 2004

DISTRICT CENTRAL OFFICE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: FROM CONTRACTS TO COLLABORATION TO CONTROL¹

Meredith I. Honig

Abstract

This paper examines partnerships between district central offices and various “community organizations” such as health and human services and youth development agencies and their forms, functions, and constraining/enabling factors in school improvement. Findings come from an embedded comparative case study of these partnerships in one urban district between 1990 and 2000. Using resource dependence theory and the new institutionalism in sociology as the conceptual framework, this research highlights that central office-community partnerships in this district took three predominant forms—contractual, collaborative, and control relationships—and that functions varied from the provision of new discrete resources to schools to broader capacity building functions for the central office itself. Respondents were likely to report that resource dependencies drove partnership forms and functions. Other findings revealed institutional pressures as primary drivers of the partnerships. Implications relate to how districts and community agencies might work together to create contexts that promote school improvement.

Introduction

District central offices increasingly enter into a variety of formal relationships or partnerships with “community organizations” – neighborhood-based health and human services agencies, advocacy groups, and youth development organizations among others that

typically operate outside formal school systems—to augment their resources for school improvement (Marsh, 2002; 2003). These partnerships—called simply district central office-community partnerships here—stem in part from the premise that educational systems do not have all the resources students need to achieve high academic standards, and that district central offices’ strategic relationships with organizations outside these systems can strengthen students’ opportunities to learn. Recent research on districts reinforces that central offices, particularly in urban areas, lack capacity for basic administrative operations let alone the implementation of ambitious school improvement strategies (Spillane, 1997). Documentation of education policies that promote school-community collaboration sounds perhaps the loudest call for central office-community partnerships on the grounds that they would enhance implementation of school-community partnerships (Cunningham & Mitchell, 1990; David and Lucile Packard Foundation, 1992; Schorr, 1997).

Despite their increasing number in practice and their promise in theory, district central office-community partnerships seldom have been a central feature of research. Educational researchers primarily have examined community partnerships involving schools and states not school district central offices and do not clarify whether lessons from these other partnerships apply to district central offices (e.g., Cibulka & Kritek, 1996; Crowson & Boyd, 1993). In a few studies of school districts, community organizations appear as background, context or impediment to change, rather than as a primary partner in the implementation of educational improvement (David, 1990; Firestone, 1989; Murphy & Hallinger, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1991; Spillane, 1998). The engagement of community residents with district school boards has received some attention, but these citizen-board interactions hardly resemble the high-profile, big-budget, inter-organizational partnerships currently

underway in many districts between district central office bureaucracies and various formal community organizations (Marsh, 2003). Accordingly, central office-community partnerships proceed with limited empirical evidence regarding the conditions under which they might deliver on their promises.

This paper aims to address this practice-research gap and to put district central office-community partnerships on the education research map by examining the following questions:

- What forms do district central office-community partnerships take?
- What functions do these partnerships serve?
- What factors constrain/enable partnership forms and functions over time?
- What are the results and implications for the research and practice of these partnerships, and educational administration more broadly?

I address these questions using findings from a comparative qualitative case study of central office-community partnerships in Oakland, California between 1990 and 2000. Oakland provided a strategic case for this inquiry because conditions there suggested that the central office would demonstrate sustained central office-community partnerships over time with limited interference from conditions that typically frustrate inter-organizational relationships. I drew on concepts from resource dependence theory and the new institutionalism in sociology for the theoretical framework for site selection, data collection, and data analysis because these theories illuminate conditions under which organizations interact and various inter-organizational forms, functions, and constraining/enabling factors over time.

I found that Oakland's district central office-community partnerships varied in terms of their forms and functions over three distinct periods. In the first period, "control by contracts", central office administrators primarily monitored contracts with neighborhood-based community organizations for the provision of health and social services at or near school sites in accordance with central office priorities. In the second period, "collaboration", central office administrators entered into formal collaborative partnerships with a range of community organizations including county health and human services agencies, neighborhood-based non-profit organizations, and a citywide community development organization. In these collaborations, the central office received resources essential to their support of school reform—in this case, partnerships between *schools* and community agencies as a school improvement strategy. In the third period, the district central office limited its contribution of resources to the collaborations and hired its own staff to perform many of the functions previously carried out by community organizations; in response, community organizations curtailed their own participation in partnership activities. I call this period "control by coercion" to emphasize that central office decisions came to dictate the terms of the partnership and that central office administrators operated as though the central office already controlled the resources necessary for implementation of those reform initiatives.

Confirming resource dependence theory the availability of and perceived need for particular resources appeared as a primary influence on partnership forms and functions. The new institutionalism highlights how institutional factors such as organizational and professional norms enabled and constrained these partnerships over time. The paper

concludes with implications and future directions for the research and practice of educational administration.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Scholars frequently have drawn on resource dependence theory² and the new institutionalism in sociology to explain inter-organizational relationships (e.g., Aldrich, 1976; Gray, 1985; Mawhinney & Smrekar, 1996b; Pfeffer, 1981; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Smylie & Crowson, 1996; Smylie, Crowson, Chou, & Levin, 1994; Van de Ven & Walker, 1979; Weiss, 1987). Taken together these theories provide a set of concepts that can guide empirical inquiry into central office-community partnerships by illuminating why inter-organizational partnerships form, the forms these partnerships take, the functions they serve, and the factors that influence partnership forms and functions over time.

Resource dependence theory posits that inter-organizational partnerships are inevitable. No organization is entirely self-sufficient, and therefore organizations frequently enter into exchanges with each other to enhance their resources essential to their basic operations and their performance. Interdependence depends on at least three factors: (1) the importance of a particular resource to an organization's survival; (2) the degree to which that resource is controlled by another organization; and (3) the marketplace—the extent to which the organization can access the needed resources from other sources (Gray, 1985; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Van de Ven & Walker, 1979; Weiss, 1987). A given organization will be highly dependent on another organization if a resource essential to its production or survival is controlled almost exclusively by that other organization. In this view, organizations are active agents, aware of resource needs and deliberately striving to meet those needs (Aldrich

& Pfeffer, 1976). Inter-organizational relationships are primarily contractual and concern the transfer of resources. Organizations themselves are comprised of multiple coalitions or sub-organizations bound together by contracts.

The intensity and frequency of relationships vary in ways that shape the terms of the inter-organizational contracts. For example, an organization may enter into a time-limited contract with another organization for the transfer of a finite set of resources. In such arrangements, that organization typically faces challenges of monitoring or otherwise controlling the contractor's compliance with contract terms. Organizations also may enter into open-ended contracts for the transfer of a variety of unpredictable resources to accomplish future joint tasks—an arrangement sometimes called collaboration or, in extreme cases, merger (Pfeffer, 1972).

The value of a particular resource depends not on an inherent property of the resource but on the extent to which it is in demand relative to its supply. High demand/low supply resources are more valuable than low demand/high supply resources. An organization's power depends on the extent to which an organization controls a valuable resource. Organizations that control market share wield more power than those that do not (Pfeffer, 1981).

Inter-organizational relations inherently are riddled with conflict because organizations typically strive to operate independently but often cannot maintain their independence given such factors as their inability to marshal all the resources necessary for organizational production and the lack of profitability in controlling all the means of production. In this view, conflict is not a barrier to inter-organizational relations to be

eliminated but an unavoidable challenge to be managed (Pfeffer, 1981; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

The new institutionalism in sociology provides concepts that help elaborate other dynamics relevant to inter-organizational relationships not attended to by resource dependence theory. First, the new institutionalism allows for a broader range of inter-organizational relationships than only contractual relationships rooted in concerns for organizational production and efficiency. In particular, this line of theory posits that organizations may also establish ties based on values, routines, and taken-for-granted ideas about legitimate organizational activities (DiMaggio, 1991; Friedland & Alford, 1991; March, 1994; Zucker, 1983). These concepts focus attention on these normative bases for inter-organizational partnerships and the explicit and implicit rewards that reinforce certain behaviors. These concepts also suggest that the forms and functions of these partnerships may vary over time and should be treated as an area for empirical investigation rather than as a starting assumption.

Second, the new institutionalism highlights that organizations consist of individuals and groups of professionals who operate within normative systems that shape their day-to-day interactions with each other and individuals from other organizations. Within these systems of norms and standards, scripts or taken-for-granted assumptions about professional practice under-gird individual and group interactions (Barley, 1996; DiMaggio, 1991). Scholars who have used these concepts to understand inter-organizational partnerships involving schools highlight that standard educational leadership scripts favor inter-organizational relationships in which educational leaders seek to control community

administrators reported that they had many years of experience working with various organizations both within the central office and in their previous positions as school principals and community organizers. These conditions suggested that community agency directors and central office administrators would have access to professional scripts that reinforced inter-organizational partnerships regardless of resource demands. This track record also suggested that the community and central office partners likely had the wherewithal to weather a variety of conflicts over time.

Data Sources and Collection

I triangulated three types of data: interviews, observations, and documents. I interviewed 9 central office administrators and 10 community organization representatives who participated in various partnerships between 1990 and 2000. Community organization representatives were directors/staff of neighborhood-based and county health and human services organizations, non-profit youth development agencies, and a citywide non-profit research and advocacy organization. Interview questions focused on individuals' day-to-day work, as well as their perceptions of the forms, functions, and factors affecting central office-community partnerships over time. In addition, I drew on other data from interviews with city council members, school board members, and city and county public agency staff that promised to inform my research questions. Each interview lasted between 60 and 150 minutes and I audio-taped and transcribed most interviews. In all, I analyzed 42 transcripts from interviews with 33 respondents. I also spent countless hours in informal conversations with these respondents about Oakland schools and district central office-community partnerships (Patton, 1990).

Between 1998 and 2000 I directly observed 72.5 hours of meetings between central office administrators and community organization representatives convened to help with implementation of publicly and privately funded initiatives to promote school-community collaboration (reported in the sections on collaboration and control by coercion below). During meeting observations I wrote almost verbatim transcriptions of conversations to capture partnership functions and constraining/enabling factors. I accounted for meetings that predated the start of my data collection through an analysis of meeting minutes from the prior period. These documents covered 39 additional hours of meetings.

I reviewed other documents including newspaper articles and policy reports. I used these documents to better understand education in Oakland especially during the period that predated the start of my data collection.

Data Analysis

I used NUD*IST software to code the interview and observation transcripts and record data. I coded data in several phases. First, I coded all data using simple categories suggested by my research questions and theoretical frameworks that required little interpretation: central office activities; community organization activities; joint central office-community activities; central office resources; community organization resources; and constraining/enabling factors related to those activities. In the second stage of coding, I examined data within the activities and resources categories and developed a new set of codes inductively and through constant comparison that indicated the types of specific resources provided through the partnerships: services to schools and fiscal, knowledge-based, and social capital (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I noticed that the provision of these resources

varied over time. In my third phase of coding I examined all data with codes corresponding with approximate dates of these variations in resource provisions. I cross referenced these periods with the constraining/enabling conditions to develop a profile of each period in terms of partnership form, functions, and conditions. I tried to fit these patterns to concepts in the literature—“control”, “contracts”, “collaboration”, and “isomorphism”—but found little evidence of isomorphism and forms of control that did not involve contracts. In my final analysis I used the following terms for each partnership period: control by contracts, collaboration, and control by coercion.

FINDINGS

I found that central office-community partnerships took three distinct forms over the 1990s and that functions varied across each of these forms. Resource dependence theory predicted the rationale for these forms as reported by respondents themselves: resource needs and efficiency concerns. However, the new institutionalism offered complementary and sometimes more complete explanations related to taken-for-granted models of central office-community relationships, community organizations’ participation in education, and central office administrators’ professional practice. I present these findings below in three sections corresponding with these three distinct forms and their attendant functions and constraining/enabling factors.

The first form, control by contracts, featured the district central office entering into formal contracts with neighborhood-based health and human services organizations for the provision of services to school-age children and their families at or near school sites. In these relationships, district central office administrators set and monitored contract terms and

the community organizations provided services to schools. Central office administrators met somewhat regularly with heads of county health and human services agencies during this period but these meetings primarily focused on the service contracts. The second form, collaboration, was evident in the mid-1990s. During this period, district central office administrators joined three formal membership organizations that included community organization directors and staff as primary members to support the implementation of school-community partnerships. During implementation, these membership organizations or collaboratives increased the availability of particular resources vital to implementation but unavailable to central office administrators operating alone. At the end of the 1990s, a third form, control by coercion, began to emerge. In this period, the central office did not reinstate contracts but controlled the terms of their relationships with community organizations by withdrawing their own participation in the collaborations of the previous period, by encouraging community organizations to pursue certain avenues, and by taking on many of the functions previously performed by the community organizations.

Control by contracts

From approximately 1990 through 1992, the district central office primarily had contractual relationships with six neighborhood-based services organizations for the provision of health and human services at fourteen school sites. During this period, these agencies served 572 students and 314 parents—a total that central office administrators regarded as significant particularly given the labor-intensiveness of the service delivery involved.

Also during this period, the Oakland Resources Group³, a citywide policy research and advocacy organization, convened the superintendent and directors of public county health and human services agencies. One representative from the group of six contractors also participated. Conversations mainly focused on analyzing the number of school-age children utilizing county services and the deployment of service providers to school sites and improving the contracting process. A central office administrator who oversaw this initiative for the central office emphasized that the thrust of the central office-community partnerships was contracted social work case management services and that the central office was the primary driver of this effort:

So ... we had social work case managers in all those schools ... I found 14 schools in the district with the biggest need. And that's where we focused our attention. And the social work case management was the first thrust, first program that we funded.

When asked why district central office-community partnerships took this form and function, respondents typically offered two explanations consistent with concepts from resource dependence theory: the superintendent's beliefs that services provided by community organizations could help improve students' school performance and the availability of data that supported the efficiency and effectiveness of closer working relationships between the district and neighborhood-based services organizations in particular. First, Oakland hired a new superintendent in 1990 whose priorities included a so-called "life circumstances" agenda that emphasized addressing non-academic barriers to students' school success. One central office administrator charged with helping to define and implement this agenda explained that social work case management services emerged as a focal point of this agenda:

I was brought in by the ... superintendent... to construct a program that dealt with the life circumstances of students and families ... that prevent students from learning. And he was, I think, very forward looking in that regard. He wasn't quite sure what it all meant, but he just knew that he wanted to. One of the points of his five-year plan was to put together a program that would help students, students and families in need. Whatever their problem was. For the school district to play a central role in addressing the needs and so I... did a lot of surveys and research and to make a long story short, my office... launched several initiatives including social work case management programs on school sites. The first time they've ever been in Oakland. Where social work case management was actually ON school sites and services provided by non-profit community-based organizations.

Second, many respondents also highlighted a growing awareness that closer working relationships between schools and other youth services organizations could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of each. Two central office administrators from the early 1990s recalled that a statewide budget crisis prompted a search for strategies to meet their goals. According to one of these respondents:

The impetus at that early stage was budgetary cutbacks, and some of us began to talk about-we just knew that we were servicing a lot of the same kids and families and yet we haven't worked together. So that was the impetus.

Several respondents highlighted Oakland Resources Group's (ORG's) key role in developing evidence about the efficiency and effectiveness of new relationships between the district (both the central office and schools) and community organizations. ORG formed in the late 1980s, according to its mission statement, to serve as a "policy and advocacy

organization” to improve the quality of life of Oakland’s low-income children and families. In one of its first citywide campaigns, ORG convened a commission that conducted interviews and focus groups with hundreds of community residents. Primary recommendations from this report included greater community involvement in identifying barriers to student achievement and developing solutions to those challenges. Also during this period, ORG received a grant from a private foundation to work with public county and city agencies and the school district central office to examine the delivery of health and human services to school-age children. Their high profile report revealed that almost two-thirds of all students in focal low-income schools used public services and that one-third of all students in those schools received services from at least two different services programs. Most respondents who recalled this period reported that this survey helped convince many educational leaders to rethink roles between the central office and publicly/privately funded community-based services organizations and that the ORG director at that time was a particularly compelling partnership advocate. One central office administrator recalled:

And they also did all the data, the research and analysis and then [the ORG director] walked in and sat down with school district officials. She told them more about their schools than they knew. She had all the statistics. She had all the charts.

The superintendent’s priorities and a wave of empirical evidence about the potential value of new inter-organizational partnerships suggested a rationale for central office-community partnerships, highlighted by respondents, which reflected concepts from resource dependence theory. Specifically, community organizations had resources that promised to help the central office improve its performance. Resource dependence theory posits that in such cases, power to control contract terms typically rests in the hands of the contractor when

resources are in short supply or exclusively controlled by a limited number of organizations. However, in this case, the central office determined the scope of the contracts which suggests an alternative power dynamic—one in which the community organizations were dependent on contracts with the central office to provide their services and otherwise realize their own production goals.

Respondents' comments also suggest strong influences by institutional factors that led central office administrators and other respondents to take for granted that central office-community relationships would be controlled by the central office and that contracts would underlie them. For example, one central office administrator indicated that at that time, advocates for stronger ties between educational and other youth serving organizations such as two prominent private foundation program officers typically promoted social work case management in particular. Social work case management services linked to schools were, according to one central office administrator, “the logical ‘in’ thing at that time”—a taken-for-granted form of community partnerships—and contracts were the central office’s primarily mechanism for entering into such agreements with non-school organizations. In the words of another central office administrator, “These were non profit-employees. How we handled programs like that was we put out an RFP [Request for Proposals] to non-profit agencies and they provided the services.” RFPs, typically indicated terms by which services should be provided which from the outset established the central office as the author of contract terms.

Another central office administrator reflected that the idea that community organizations would participate in educational improvement strategies on any terms was “radical enough” at the time and that he and his colleagues spent the majority of their time

selling the idea of community organizations' participation rather than debating how the central office and community organizations might work together. As he put it, "I got swatted around pretty quick in the first year [and remember thinking] just really, 'Wow this is going to be a lot harder than I thought!'" In this context, partnerships with community organizations that took forms other than contracts for specific services determined by the central office in this respondent's words, were "not on the table", "a long way down the road", and otherwise considered inappropriate or not possible.

These contracts also reflected traditional notions regarding who decides about educational improvement. Many respondents recalled that the group convened by ORG was dominated by public services agencies in ways that left little room for input from other kinds of community organizations and that within that group the superintendent set the agenda. As one central office administrator reflected:

We had all the big boys and girls at the table, the ones who could [snaps fingers] make a decision. ... We literally had the [public agency] power brokers at the table who said, I can do that. And you knew they could. ... [The meetings were formally governed by consensus, but] when superintendent Mesa was at the table—he was initially—and because so much of the effort was—for good or bad—school-centered, people tended to lean more to his word ... listen more to him and what he thought....

Collaboration

In the mid-1990s the primary form of central office-community relationships changed from contracts to collaboration. As with the previous period, both resource dependence theory and the new institutionalism offer important explanations for this development.

Consistent with resource dependence theory, respondents highlighted the need for fiscal resources as a primary prompt for this shift. Other evidence supported concepts from the new institutionalism that emphasized such factors as new staff in the central office that brought with them professional scripts that supported collaborative not contractual relationships.

To elaborate, in the mid 1990s the central office, ORG, neighborhood-based services organizations and others established three formal organizations with central office administrators and community organization directors as primary members: the Interagency Services Team, the Youth Development Taskforce, and the Leadership Council.⁴

- Interagency Services Team. This organization formed out of the largely public interagency partnership described above. In the first year, high ranking central office administrators— an assistant superintendent and division director— represented the central office on the Team. Subsequently, these central office administrators were replaced by their hierarchical subordinates— three program directors from a central office division that handled student services such as safety and drug program, school nurses, and school-linked services. By 1993, community organizations represented on the Interagency Service Team included an ORG staff person who also served as facilitator and representatives from multiple community organizations including directors of new school-linked family resource centers and staff people from county health, dental, and social services. This group met monthly for the better part of the 1990s.
- Youth Development Taskforce. This organization formed in 1997 and from the outset resembled the second iteration of the Interagency Services Team in terms of its

membership: one program director from the central office's student services division, two directors from ORG (who also served as Taskforce staff), six directors/staff of youth development agencies in the process of launching partnerships at Oakland middle schools, various staff from county health and social services agencies, and a representatives from a county-level interagency partnership. This group met at least weekly for two hours until the end of the 1990s.

- Leadership Council. This organization formed shortly after the Youth Development Taskforce and included what many respondents referred to as a first-ever forum for executives of Oakland's major youth-serving agencies. The district superintendent and two school board members represented the school district. Community organization members included the heads of county health and human services agencies, supervisors from the county board, city council members, and directors of several prominent neighborhood-based services organizations. This group met monthly. The Leadership Council was managed by its own full-time staff that operated as a distinct citywide non-profit organization.

Respondents referred to these new organizations as collaboratives. As one central office administrator commented:

So what has happened is that the school district is still a key player but there are many other players now and many other funding streams. ... And where we are now is that ... 'school' is in there but its not very prominent. Its collaboration... So we've really progressed a long way, there's a lot more players, key players in this.

This use of the term "collaboration" is consistent with broader literature that distinguishes a collaboration from other forms of partnerships in that it involves shared goals and joint work

across multiple parties (Crowson & Boyd, 1993; Marsh, 2002). Formal statements regarding the purposes of these collaborations (from interviews and documents) confirmed that the joint work during this period involved support for the implementation of school-community partnerships. Multiple data sources suggested that in practice over time these collaboratives to varying degrees served the more specific functions of providing fiscal, knowledge-based, and social capital important to the central offices' support of school-community partnerships but typically unavailable to the district central office.

Fiscal Capital

When asked to explain the functions of the collaboratives and the rationale for their formation, respondents invariably highlighted that both collaboratives made Oakland eligible for funding to seed and support collaborations between schools and community organizations—typically called school-community partnership sites in Oakland—that the central office and community organizations would not have been able to access on their own. Specifically, in the mid 1990s, the federal Health Care Finance Administration in partnership with the State of California launched a program to reimburse school districts for costs associated with certain school-based interventions. The State of California required that participating districts form an interagency collaborative to oversee the disbursement of revenue generated by the program and strongly encouraged the collaborative to use the funding to support school-community partnership sites.⁵ The district superintendent designated the individuals already convened by the Oakland Resources Group to serve this purpose. Participants in this group, thereafter named the Interagency Services Team, reported in interviews and at meetings that they subsequently expanded their membership to

include directors of new school-community partnership sites—typically staff of neighborhood-based organizations such as school-linked family resource centers.

The central office administrator who tracked the budget for the Interagency Services team reported when interviewed that this collaborative's annual budget ranged between \$100,000 and \$150,000. Meeting observations revealed that during at least one year the collaborative oversaw a budget of approximately \$300,000. Over the course of the 1990s, the Interagency Services Team used this funding for a variety of purposes related to implementation of school-community partnerships including direct grants to sites for general support, hiring an evaluator to document implementation processes and impacts at Oakland's flagship site, and supporting a consultant to coach site implementation and document lessons learned about site implementation.

Directors of ORG convened the Youth Development Taskforce as part of the application process for a national foundation grant to support the implementation of school-community sites. As the initial and founding community organization in this partnership, ORG directors and staff wrote the grant application and negotiated with the national foundation. In the mid- 1990s, the national foundation awarded a planning grant to ORG on behalf of Oakland and subsequently committed approximately \$1 million for initial efforts to implement school-community sites at Oakland's 15 middle schools over 3 to 5 years. Importantly, the total dollar amount that this grant promised to generate far exceeded the sum total of the foundation's contribution because as part of the grant agreement, public agencies such as the school district central office committed to redirect other funds to support implementation over the long term. Between 1997 and 2000, central office administrators

reported that the central office contributed over \$1 million for site implementation from revenue generated from a local parcel tax.

In their first year, the Youth Development Taskforce funded three school-community sites through a competitive grant process. Site directors reported that these discretionary funds were essential to all aspects of their early implementation including helping them to meet their payroll, to support site coordinators, to purchase services otherwise unavailable in their neighborhoods, to develop a management information system, to acquire and renovate facilities, and to provide stipends to parents to participate in site advisory meetings.

In 1997, the Leadership Council formed in response to another national foundation initiative that aimed to produce demonstrable improvements in the health and safety of school-age children by transforming central district, city, and county bureaucracies. The national foundation required that an inter-organizational executive-level board in each of the five participating cities develop a plan to meet the initiative's goals. Under the strong direction of its staff director—who previously had served as director of ORG and as a primary architect of Oakland's plans for the Youth Development Taskforce—the Leadership Council developed a longitudinal plan to reorient the participating public bureaucracies to support the school-community sites seeded by the Youth Development Taskforce. The national foundation conditionally accepted this plan and provided initial funding to the Leadership Council. Unlike the other collaboratives, the Leadership Council did not make grants directly to school-community sites but used their initial funding primarily for staff activities which included working directly with emerging school-community sites on implementation issues and researching which specific bureaucratic reforms might enable their implementation.

Knowledge-based Capital

Through all three collaboratives, central office administrators accessed new knowledge fundamental to their support of site implementation. While respondents were not likely to report the central office's need for knowledge-based capital as an impetus for founding the collaboratives, their indirect comments and other data sources suggested this resource gap as a primary driver.

Specifically, the design of Oakland's efforts to promote school-community collaboration called for schools and community organizations to work together to make their own decisions about which goals and strategies they would pursue and for central office administrators to help sites to make and implement those decisions. Accordingly, implementation placed demands on central office administrators to develop site knowledge—familiarity with sites' goals, strategies, and experiences. However, central office administrators typically reported limited time for the level of regular engagement with sites they saw as necessary to continually build their site knowledge.

The meetings of the two collaboratives convened by ORG helped central office administrators to build their site knowledge by providing regular opportunities for central office administrators to consult with directors and staff of community organizations who participated directly in the implementation of school-community sites— often a community partner at that level or a site coach. Some central office administrators commented and observations confirmed the importance of these meetings to their site knowledge. “I'll find out about [sites' budgets] on Thursday [at the Youth Development Team meeting] one central office administrator explained when asked how she kept abreast of sites' progress with fund raising.

Interviews and meeting minutes revealed that through collaborative meetings central office administrators had opportunities to learn about such site implementation challenges as fund raising, establishing strong relationships between school and community agency staff, access to facilities, improving the quality of students' opportunities to learn before and after school, and the impacts of neighborhood poverty on site implementation. For example, reports from site representatives about their goals, strategies, and experiences appeared as part of 20 out of 23 documented Youth Development Team meetings in 1999 alone.

During meetings, Leadership Council staff played important knowledge-building roles. Two senior staff members of the Leadership Council participated on the Youth Development Team where they heard frequent reports concerning site implementation. One staff member reported that he spent approximately 25 percent of his time each week at sites “troubleshooting, brainstorming, learning sort of what they need, what various partners can do.” Direct observations and reviews of meeting minutes revealed that these two senior staff members presented information about site implementation issues at almost every Leadership Council meeting through 2000. By 2000, one staff member worked directly with the central office director of student services to survey all Oakland middle schools about their community partnerships to help inform Leadership Council planning.

The collaboratives, especially the community organization representatives who served as staff also increased site knowledge available to central office administrators by serving as primary documenters and disseminators of information about site implementation. For example the Interagency Services Team hired a retired central office administrator to research and document lessons learned about site implementation. This collaborative also

kept and disseminated meeting minutes which often included summaries of site implementation accomplishments and barriers.

Social Capital

As with knowledge-based capital, respondents typically did not report central office gaps in social capital—relationships and trust between central offices and sites—as primary drivers of collaboration. However, other data suggested that two of the collaboratives—the Interagency Services Team and the Youth Development Taskforce—served this essential function.⁶ To elaborate, respondents frequently pointed to weak social capital between the central office and schools/school-community sites as significant curbs on central office administrators increasing their knowledge of sites’ goals, strategies, and experiences essential to the central office’s support for implementation as noted above. Sources of weak social capital highlighted by respondents included mistrust that had developed after years of well-publicized incidents of mismanagement and broken promises (both alleged and substantiated) as well as budget crises, changed superintendents (four between 1990 and 2000), and threats of state take over of the district central office that increased the perceived instability and inefficiency of the central office (Coburn & Riley, 2000; Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, 2000; Gewertz, 2000). Several respondents particularly those participating in the Interagency Services Team emphasized that frequent central office transfers of school principals and competing demands on central office administrators’ time challenged the continuity of central office-site relationships. As one central office administrator admitted, “Central office is going to have to find out and develop a strategy that is going to connect

with [school-community sites]... but that takes the threat of it [that the central office will impeded site implementation] away and that is hard.”

Interviews and observations suggested that the Interagency Services Team and Youth Development Taskforce helped strengthen the central office’s social capital vis-à-vis school-community partnership sites. For example, when asked about their willingness to share their experiences at collaborative meetings versus directly with central office administrators, site directors reported strong interest in sharing information at collaborative meetings compared to contacting the central office. Many elaborated that because others were present at the collaborative meetings, the collaboratives created, in their words, a sort of “shared accountability” or “watchdog effect” that increased their sense of trust and that the central office administrators would follow through. According to one site director:

When the school district [central office] is obligated to provide services, who makes sure that happens? The broader policy issue is how do we take heat off sites so you don’t have to spend relationship capital to get things resolved that should not require negotiations.... It’s [been a role for] the [Youth Development Task Force].

One ORG director corroborated this essential role for the Interagency Services Team and Youth Development Taskforce which he and his staff convened when he commented, “We need to be the conscience of the process and the constant face in the face of change.”

The Interagency Services Team and Youth Development Taskforce also seemed to strengthen central office-site relationships by coordinating the provision of implementation supports from sources other than the central office. Specifically, each collaborative used its funding to hire or dedicate staff that increased the sheer amount of resources available to sites and otherwise took pressure off the central office to meet all site demands.

An explanation for the shift from contracts to collaboration consistent with resource dependence theory would highlight that changing demands on the central office to access non-traditional resources to meet particular educational objectives upped the ante on the central office to enter into agreements with other organizations that could enhance those resources. Likewise the power of community organizations would have increased thanks to the new resources that they helped the central office access. However, resource dependence theory also suggests that when faced with new resource demands, the central office would have expanded or elaborated its contracts with community organizations to meet these demands—a prediction not substantiated by the Oakland case in which voluntary membership in collaboratives rather than contracts came to undergird district central office-community partnerships. The central office actually curtailed its program of direct contracting for school-based social work case management services and left it up to individual schools to determine whether and how to access these services.

The new institutionalism calls attention to two institutional shifts that seemed to drive the transition from contracts to collaboration: community organizations' increasing legitimacy as participants in educational improvement and new central office staff with professional scripts that supported collaboration. First, data suggested that the legitimacy of community organizations as participants in educational improvement strategies had gained steam and increasingly districts were rewarded for encouraging participation by community organizations. As one central office administrator reflected:

The partnerships that we have... allowed the district to say, yeah, look at this. This is what we are doing. These are the people we are bringing to the table. We kind of leveraged that. We worked on it, though. If you go back to, for me, go back to 1990-91,

we can go down and show what is happening.... Both [another central office administrator] and I took advantage of that. I wouldn't say exploited it but we took advantage of that there were other partners out there that we could partner with to have outcomes that were win/win. Both for the district and for them. We were good at that. That's what I'm getting at.

One of these rewards was the opportunity to participate in various educational improvement programs that increasingly required collaborative oversight (Honig & Jehl, 2000). As one central office administrator reflected:

Initially [in the previous period] just... I think one of the main thrusts initially was to get the county agencies somehow to site-base staff. We were kind of spending a lot of time, trying to figure out how to tackle this same client issue. ... MOUs [Memoranda of Understanding, a form of public agency contract]. ... And so it was a very slow process [of broadening our activities and members]. After about a year we were moving and lo and behold heard about this thing [a state program to support school-community partnerships] ... and when we read the first RFP, we were shocked; it was like we wrote it. It was exactly what we were doing; right what we were talking about doing. I actually made some initial strides so all of a sudden all of our attention [whistles, gestures] switched to [community collaboration].

The legitimacy of community organizations as participants in educational improvement also stemmed from mounting concerns that school systems as institutions did not have all the resources they needed to help students meet emerging national and state academic standards and that key roles for community organizations could not necessarily be fashioned in advance in contracts with administrators outside particular neighborhoods. For

example, three members of the Interagency Services Team reflected in interviews and a ten-year history of the Interagency Services Team reported that previous community organization participation in education was largely “district-driven” and “school-centered”. By this they meant that the school district central office convened community organizations to address the school district’s priorities and that community organizations worked *for* the central office not *with* the central office or schools. Meeting minutes especially from early collaborative meetings suggested that members had grown concerned that a stronger voice for community organizations would improve the design and implementation of standards-based school improvement strategies.

Second and perhaps most significantly in the case of the Interagency Services Team and Youth Development Taskforce, new staff members in new central office positions came to represent the district central office in negotiations with community organizations and brought with them institutional scripts that favored collaborative not contractual relationships with community organizations to achieve educational improvement goals. For example, the two main central office representatives to the Interagency Services Team described themselves as “community organizers” with long-term experience with cross-sector collaboration. One previously had worked for a national non-profit family service provider while the other had organized grass-roots political campaigns. The central office representative to the Youth Development Taskforce reported that her primary formative professional experience included almost a decade of work developing a school in an inner city neighborhood on the east coast with strong ties to community organizations. The person hired as director of student services in the late 1990s too had been a long-standing community organizer. These central office administrators described themselves as central

office “outsiders” and “movers and shakers” and clarified that they worked “outside the box”. They reported that they had been hired specifically to bring non-traditional experience with community collaboration to the district central office. Interviews with assistant superintendents and program directors confirmed that they looked for these qualities in new staff assuming these roles, in institutional theory terms, to bring new professional scripts to bear on central office operations. Even the primary central office representative to the Leadership Council—the interim superintendent—had non-traditional central office experience. He had become interim superintendent after serving as an assistant city manager in Oakland and indicated that his formative professional experiences came when he served as an assistant city manager in an east coast county where he oversaw both education and health and human services (separate jurisdictions in California) and otherwise saw first hand the benefits of closer working relationships between educational and non-educational agencies. He recounted as among his past accomplishments his former county’s participation in the national foundation initiative that funded the Leadership Council which he referred to as an important strategy for strengthening cross-sector supports for school-age children.

The creation of new central office positions to specialize in community relationships also marked a turning point in central office-community partnerships. One central office representative recalled that the new central office staff enabled collaboration in part because they served in new, non-traditional centrally office positions dedicated specifically to interactions with community organizations:

The agency heads [on the precursor to the Interagency Services Team] were replaced in about a year and a half, two with kind of the program managers [assigned specifically to manage collaboration]. I remember we were a little dismayed and we were, seemingly,

the interest was on the wane from the top and maybe that might be true, everything's cyclical, you know, you have a, somebody who's got as much on their plate as an agency head it's [snap] What can I do now? And if it isn't then let's move onto another issue or catastrophe or whatever, funding issue, but it was very necessary actually to have the program managers at the table because at that time when you're collaborating, implementing, they're the ones to have there. And it really worked well.

Another central office administrator agreed about this turning point:

Everybody was enthusiastic [about the initial meetings] but after about a year and a half, pretty soon the big wigs weren't showing up but they sent the middle managers which, quite frankly, now things moved faster when the middle managers came to the table than the bigwigs.

Control by Coercion

By 1999, Oakland entered a third period of central office-community partnerships. The start of this period⁷ was marked by the following developments: the Interagency Services Team and Youth Development Taskforce discontinued their meetings and the Leadership Council shifted its focus from school-community partnerships to interventions related to juvenile justice involving primarily public agencies; the district central office hired five new central office employees to provide coaching to school-community sites rather than relying on contractual or collaborative agreements with community organizations for this purpose; and ORG shifted its focus from central office partnerships to direct support for site implementation. I refer to this period as “control by coercion” to capture a predominant dynamic between the district central office and community organizations: central office

decisions dictated the terms of the partnerships and strongly influenced decisions by individual community organizations about their particip

During this period the interim superintendent himself attended several Taskforce meetings at which he indicated that the central office remained committed to the work in which the Taskforce had been engaged—the implementation of school-community sites. For example, he said, “If I have [school] feeder systems that don't have a [school-community partnership site] then I am doing a disservice to those communities. So the question for me is how to get all systems that need it a [site].” However, he went on to highlight two major barriers to his efforts: limited school capacity for implementing community partnerships and equity concerns. Regarding the latter, the interim superintendent indicated that other community organizations not represented on the Youth Development Taskforce also demanded his support and that investing too much time and resource in the Youth Development Taskforce would be irresponsible. As he explained:

[School] is a strong collaborative but right now there isn't a square inch of ground to do anything in. In [another school] we have made conscious strategies to make space available ... but what about other schools in the feeder system? Do we have a strategy? Is there a movement? How do all the other component parts fit in the movement? I'd like to take it back and chew on it [how the central office will support the Taskforce].... My intent is to put my resources in [school-community partnerships] by hook or by crook. So I think there will be more resources in the pot. ... I don't have enough information to make a decision right now.

At this meeting the interim superintendent went on to recommend that the collaborative not commit to fund additional sites until members developed a strategy for funding sites district-wide; he indicated that the central office would contribute funding pending the production of an agreeable plan:

So for all of these reasons I find zero support within the district for [site] expansion on philosophical or financial terms until we deal with some of the financial and organizational issues. As part of the discussion we are having here we haven't nailed down the whole issue of goals of the district and goals of [the collaborative] and where there is commonality in those and how they will complement one another. Until that process is complete, the district's position is to delay further [site] implementation until we have answers in all the above areas.

The interim superintendent specified that in his opinion, ORG as the fiscal agent for the foundation grant had the right and the responsibility to decide how to proceed with supporting site implementation:

I thought we decided at the last meeting that [ORG] would make the decision about this. We [the central office] are here to provide information. I brought information about space [available on school campuses for launching sites]. That I can't take money away from existing sites to give new sites. And that there are long-term issues. All I came to do is present that information. It's your [ORG's] decision. I never thought I had a role in that decision. Last time I said I didn't even know why we are meeting but you all said you have to meet to get more information.

Subsequently, ORG directors reported to their national funder that they would not support plans to add the additional school-community sites that they had promised the funder in their original implementation plan. At a meeting of the new Youth Development Policy Team, ORG's director indicated that even though his decision jeopardized Oakland's funding from the national foundation, he had committed to make decisions based on the consensus of the collaborative and that consensus suggested freezing site expansion. The citywide non-

profit directors charged with staffing the fiscal workgroup never convened its members and the policy team met for several months before ceasing its meetings. ORG entered into renegotiations with the national foundation about the scope of its work.

The Leadership Council continued to negotiate its focus on school-community partnership sites with its national funder. A review of meeting minutes, direct observations, and conversations with staff suggested that such negotiations consumed the better part of a year, after which time the Council voted to stay in tact but to suspend its commitment to school-community sites in favor of a discrete intervention related to juvenile justice. The interim superintendent, the main central office representative on this group, did not receive school board support for his appointment to the superintendency and returned to his post as assistant city manager. The new superintendent attended the partnership meetings though focused most of his initial year as superintendent to instituting a new reading curriculum and launching a cohort of new small autonomous schools.

In sum, the collaborative partnerships of the previous period gave way to central office-community organization dynamics in which the central office controlled the terms of the partnerships and strongly influenced decisions of community organizations, not by dictating contract terms but by example and persuasion—pressures I call, simply, coercion. In particular, members of the Interagency Services Team operated as though they had little choice but to surrender 80 percent of their funding. Events related to the Youth Development Taskforce suggested that the viability of its plans to support school-community sites depended on the central office's decisions regarding its own participation; central office decisions in this context became decisions of the collaborative.

Several respondents offered political explanations for the shift from collaboration to coercive control. For example, one long-time central office administrator commented:

What happens is that they [central office administrators] get pulled, get siphoned off, when they do other projects and the only thing that's fair to say is that apparently the [school-community partnership] movement is not that important in the overall scheme of things.

Resource dependence theory offers one alternative explanation: central office administrators came to perceive that the central office itself possessed all the resources necessary for site support and that contractual, collaborative or other relationships with community organizations were no longer necessary. In support of this interpretation, central office administrators and other respondents tended to highlight resource needs as primary drivers of the previous period's collaborations—especially funding. Their discontinued participation in the collaboratives corresponded with the central office's acquisition of the Interagency Service Team's funding and limitations on funding from the Youth Development Taskforce. Also supporting this interpretation, the central office hired community leaders as staff; accordingly central office administrators may have perceived that they no longer needed resources from community organizations because those resources were now on staff.

Other data suggest that this shift in central office-community partnerships may be explained by institutional pressures that reinforced traditional models of central office control over the terms of their partnerships. Central office administrators themselves reported significant external pressures at the end of the 1990s to demonstrate accountability for educational improvement and that predominant accountability models favored single-sector

chains of command not collaboration. The following exchange between the chair and member of a special mayor's education commission captures this tension:

CHAIR: (Considering different educational agendas the commission might recommend that the mayor pursue): See reading is real clear.

COMMISSIONER: [School-community partnerships] is also a possible, clear strategy.

CHAIR: No, voters can't understand them.

Even Mayor Jerry Brown, nationally renowned for his advocacy of community involvement in government, lobbied for traditional accountability measures that did not necessarily accommodate community collaboration. As Brown explained to the *Oakland Tribune* in 2000:

I don't accept the word comprehensive [as an organizing idea for educational improvement]. That means you have planners, they write all this stuff up, and nothing happens. [General] Patton didn't have a comprehensive plan. ... He had a strategy and it was highly focused. Comprehensive can just be the rationale for never achieving.... You've got to make stuff happen.

School board members who had previously championed partnerships with community agencies reported that such partnerships were not, in the words of one board member, "responsible government". This board member elaborated: "As long as Oakland is below the national average, we as a board are going to put teachers and textbooks first."

Somewhat ironically, the new central office administrators who in the short term enabled central office-community collaboration, overtime, seemed to impede it by themselves supporting traditional control models between the district central office and others. These new central office employees reported and demonstrated that they brought

non-traditional professional scripts to their central office roles, as noted above, but as new central office employees, they also had tenuous job security in civil service systems based on seniority. Comments from these central office administrators suggested that rather than challenging institutional pressures, they acquiesced to them. One former community leader turned county agency representative best captured this shift in perspective of community leaders turned central office staff when he said:

Its [collaboration is] very difficult when we [in public agencies] have to balance our budget and we have to make all the widgets fall into place, the reporting that's required from the categorical funding. We have to demonstrate all these things to get the money. And those things are based on traditional sort of funding ... sort of cycles.

One central office administrator who tried to buck these trends and sustain her own participation in the collaboratives reported that she could take such risks because she did not fear losing her job. She said, "I don't care what he [the interim superintendent] says. I don't need this job. I can go always go back [to my school]." Other comments indicated that these central office administrators aimed to fit collaboration into traditional central office accountability systems but that they often did not have the data such accountability systems required. As one central office administrator recalled:

All we had to do was a little basic arithmetic. ... Is the county willing [to provide additional site resources]? Not unless we could really prove... that it was to their benefit. ... I don't think that kind of basic work [documentation of site experiences, needs and accomplishments] was ever really accomplished to prove the case.

These data suggest that the very conditions that enabled collaboration in the previous period, over time, may have constrained it.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This article aimed to introduce district central office-community partnerships as a topic for educational research by examining their forms, functions, and enabling/constraining factors in one urban district where conditions boded well for their longevity. Findings demonstrate that community organizations provided resources important to implementing educational improvement strategies, particularly those involving school-community partnerships, and that district central offices can sustain relationships with community agencies over time— at least ten years in the Oakland case. Findings reveal that “central office-community partnerships” can take multiple forms and perform various functions in the same location over time. The Oakland experience suggested that partnerships may fluctuate between relationships in which central office administrators direct or otherwise constrain community organizations’ participation (control by contracts and control by coercion) and relationships in which central office administrators and community organization directors and staff work together to set and implement shared goals and strategies (collaboration).

These findings challenge concepts from resource dependence theory, which posit that contracts typically underlie inter-organizational relationships, and point to the importance of both resource dependence theory and the new institutionalism in sociology as important guides for understanding partnership forms, functions, and enabling/constraining factors. In particular, resource dependence theory predicted the rationales respondents were likely to provide for their pursuit of relationships with community organizations but not why the partnerships took particular forms in practice. The new institutionalism in sociology highlighted the taken-for-granted assumptions and professional scripts that seemed to drive how the central office actually related to community organizations.

This analysis has several implications for the research and practice of educational administration. First, this study throws into relief that organizational context matters to educational administrators' participation in inter-organizational partnerships. The partnership patterns revealed here have not been uncovered in studies of partnerships involving educational administrators at state or school levels or among organizations in non-educational sectors. These findings raise a caution about the generalizability of findings about inter-organizational partnerships across contexts.

Second, these findings highlight the importance of professional scripts to central office decisions about how to engage community organizations and that changing central office-community relationships may depend on script shifts. Hiring non-traditional staff may provide one strategy for such shifts at least in the short term. However, in employment systems that offer weak job security for non-traditional employees, the viability of this strategy may be short-lived.

Third, this analysis suggested the importance of using both resource dependence theory and the new institutionalism in sociology as conceptual frameworks for analyzing inter-organizational partnerships. These two theories generally fall within the domains of separate disciplines— with economists and political scientists weighing in on resource dependence theory and sociologists elaborating the branch of the new institutionalism presented here. More cross-disciplinary approaches to partnership studies may help advance the practice of such partnerships and further inform the development of theoretical concepts in each area.

Fourth, this combined theoretical framework highlighted how different data sources lead to divergent conclusions about the factors that influence inter-organizational

partnerships. As noted above, respondents' reports tended to align with resource dependence theory's claims that efficiency concerns drive inter-organizational relationships while the new institutionalism in sociology explained other partnership dimensions. Accordingly, these findings reinforce the importance of using multiple data sources in studies of inter-organizational relationships.

This research also raises several questions for future research and practice. First, do other central office-community partnerships follow a similar cyclical trajectory or are other patterns apparent? Many studies of inter-organizational partnerships such as those cited above consider partnerships at fixed points in time and do not reveal how such partnerships develop, accumulate experience, evolve, and change. Accordingly, this research tends not to reveal broader institutional patterns that may influence partnerships as they wax and wane and may prematurely conclude that a partnership has ended when it is in the process of taking on a new form. More longitudinal studies of inter-organizational collaboration at various governmental levels may help advance knowledge in this regard.

Second, what forms do central office-community partnerships take when practitioners use research-based guides to inform partnership forms and functions? As noted above, various institutional pressures seemed to lead central office administrators and their community partners to take-for-granted that partnerships would take particular forms. Bringing such patterns to the foreground for practitioners may create new conditions for implementation and reveal new patterns that can deepen knowledge about how inter-organizational partnerships play out in practice.

Under what conditions do district central office-community partnerships result in isomorphism— one organization taking on the form and function of another? The new

institutionalism in sociology predicted that less legitimate organizations would come to resemble more legitimate organizations in the central office-community partnerships over time. Data from this study did not support this prediction perhaps because the data captured only ten years not the multiple decades typically considered in studies of isomorphism. In addition, the focus of this inquiry was on partnership forms and functions and decisions of the central office and community organizations related to the partnerships not attendant changes in the partner organizations. Nonetheless, the central office's hiring of community members as staff suggested that perhaps over a longer period of time I would have discovered that interactions between central offices and community organizations influenced the practices of each in ways consistent with isomorphic change. Longitudinal studies in other districts might reveal this trend.

In sum, this research may serve as a theoretical and empirical departure for future research and practice of inter-organizational relationships involving district central offices. In the process, it aims to help both researchers and practitioners identify and make sense of the range of factors that constrain or enable such partnerships and otherwise realize the promise of central office-community partnerships to strengthen students' opportunities to learn.

Notes

- ¹ The author thanks Julie A. Marsh for the encouragement to write this paper and Morva A. McDonald for helpful comments. A version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Association, Chicago, IL, 2003.
- ² Theories that promote the concepts I identify here go by various names other than resource dependence theory including power-dependency model, political economy model, and exchange theory and have many similarities with transaction cost economics (Scott, 2003).
- ³ This is a pseudonym.
- ⁴ These are pseudonyms.
- ⁵ The Medi-Cal Billing Option allowed school districts to recoup their share of the direct and administrative cost of medical services provided by certain school district personnel. Prior to the Billing Option, the state and district split these costs. These services included those mandated by law including school nurses, audiologists, and other specialists.
- ⁶ Data from the Leadership Council did not support this finding.
- ⁷ My data collection ended before a discernable end to this period in practice. Therefore, I refer to data in this section as pertaining to the early part of this period (Cznariawska, 1997).

References

- Aldrich, H. (1976). Resource dependence and interorganizational relations: Local employment services offices and social services sector organizations. *Administration and Society*, 7, 419-454.
- Aldrich, H. E., & Pfeffer, J. (1976). Environments of organizations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2, 79-105.
- Barley, S. R. (1996). Technicians in the workplace: Ethnographic evidence for bringing work into organization studies. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41(3), 404-441.
- Cibulka, J. G., & Kritek, W. J. (Eds.). (1996). *Coordination among Schools, Families, and Communities*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Coburn, K. G., & Riley, P. A. (2000). *Failing grade: Crisis and reform in the Oakland Unified School District*. San Francisco, CA: Pacific Research Institute.
- Crowson, R. L., & Boyd, W. L. (1993). Coordinated services for children: Designing arks for storms and seas unknown. *American Journal of Education*, 101(2), 140-179.
- Cunningham, L. L., & Mitchell, B. (Eds.). (1990). *Educational leadership and changing contexts in families, communities, and schools*. *Eighty-ninth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. Chicago, IL: The National Society for the Study of Education.
- Cznariawska, B. (1997). *Narrating the organization*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Ed.). (1992). *The Future of Children: School-linked services* (Vol. 2).

- David, J. (1990). Restructuring in progress: Lessons from pioneering districts. In R. F. Elmore & Associates (Eds.), *Restructuring schools: The next generation of education reform* (pp. 209-250). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- DiMaggio, P. J. (1991). Constructing an organizational field as a professional project: U.S. art museums, 1920-1940. In P. J. DiMaggio (Ed.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (pp. 267-292). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(April), 147-160.
- Firestone, W. A. (1989). Using reform: Conceptualizing district initiative. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(2), 151-164.
- Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team. (2000). *Oakland Unified School District Assessment and Recovery Plans*. Sacramento, CA: Author.
- Friedland, R., & Alford, R. R. (1991). Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices, and institutional contradictions. In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (pp. 232-263). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gewertz, C. (2000, February 9). Calif. audit cites litany of troubles in Oakland schools. *Education Week*, pp. 11.
- Gray, B. (1985). Conditions facilitating interorganizational collaboration. *Human Relations*, 38(10), 911-936.

- Hartley, J. F. (1994). Case studies in organizational research. In C. Cassell & G. Simons (Eds.), *Qualitative methods in organizational research: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Honig, M. I. (2001). *Managing ambiguity: The implementation of complex education policy*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.
- Honig, M. I. (2003). Building policy from practice: District central office administrators' roles and capacity for implementing collaborative education policy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 292-338.
- Honig, M. I., & Jehl, J. D. (2000). Enhancing federal support for connecting educational improvement strategies and collaborative services. In M. C. Wang & W. L. Boyd (Eds.), *Improving results for children and families: Linking collaborative services with school reform efforts* (pp. 175-198). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- March, J. G. (1994). *A primer on decision making*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Marsh, J. A. (2002). *Democratic dilemmas: Joint work, education politics, and community*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.
- Marsh, J. A. (2003, April). *Understanding joint work: District-community partnerships for educational improvement*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Mawhinney, H. B., & Smrekar, C. (1996a). Institutional constraints to advocacy in collaborative services. *Educational Policy*, 10(4), 480-501.
- Mawhinney, H. B., & Smrekar, C. (1996b). Institutional Constraints to Advocacy in Collaborative Services. *Educational Policy*, 10(4), 480-501.

- McCorry, J. J. (1978). *Marcus Foster and the Oakland Public Schools: Leadership in an urban bureaucracy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Merton, R. K. (1987). Three fragments from a sociologist's notebooks: Establishing the phenomenon, specified ignorance, and strategic research materials. *Annual Review of Sociology, 13*, 1-28.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology, 83*(2), 340-363.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Murphy, J., & Hallinger, P. (1988). Characteristics of instructionally effective school districts. *Journal of Educational Research, 81*(3), 175-181.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Pfeffer, J. (1972). Merger as a response to organizational interdependence. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 17*, 382-392.
- Pfeffer, J. (1981). *Power in organizations*. Marshfield, MA: Pitman.
- Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978). *The external control of organizations*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Phillips, D. C., & Burbules, N. C. (2000). *Post positivism and educational research*. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Rosenholtz, S. J. (1991). *Teacher's workplace: The social organization of schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Schorr, L. B. (1997). *Common purpose: Strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

- Scott, W. R. (2003). *Organizations* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Smylie, M. A., & Crowson, R. L. (1996). Working Within the Scripts: Building Institutional Infrastructure for Children's Service Coordination in Schools. *Educational Policy*, *10*(1), 3-21.
- Smylie, M. A., Crowson, R. L., Chou, V., & Levin, R. A. (1994). The Principal and Community-School Connections in Chicago's Radical Reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *30*(3), 342-364.
- Spillane, J. P. (1997). Reconstructing conceptions of local capacity: The local educational agency's capacity for ambitious instructional reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *19*(2), 185-203.
- Spillane, J. P. (1998). State policy and the non-monolithic nature of the local school district: Organizational and professional considerations. *American Educational Research Journal*, *35*(33-63).
- Van de Ven, A. H., & Walker, G. (1979). Coordination patterns within an interorganizational network. *Human Relations*, *32*(1), 19-36.
- Weiss, J. A. (1987). Pathways to cooperation among public agencies. *Journal of Public Policy Analysis and Management*, *7*(1), 94-117.
- Yin, R. K. (1989). *Case study research: Design and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zucker, L. G. (1983). Organizations as institutions. In S. B. Bacharach (Ed.), *Research in the sociology of organizations*. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
-