The New Middle Management:
Intermediary Organizations in Education Policy Implementation

An Occasional Paper

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Abstract

Intermediary organizations have become increasingly prominent participants in education policy implementation despite limited knowledge about their distinctive functions and the conditions that constrain and enable them in fulfilling their functions. This paper addresses that research-practice gap by drawing on concepts from theories of organizational ecology and findings from a comparative case study of four intermediary organizations that helped with collaborative policy implementation in Oakland, California. I define intermediaries as organizations that literally sit between policymakers and implementers to affect changes in roles and practices for both parties and show that such organizations typically vary along at least five dimensions. Oakland's intermediary organizations provided new implementation resources— knowledge, political/social ties, and an administrative infrastructure. Their constraining and enabling conditions varied systematically and revealed a tradeoff. Fiscal constraints jeopardized intermediary organizations' necessary independence. Using insights from this strategic case study, this paper begins to build theory about intermediary organizations as important participants in contemporary policy implementation.

School district central office administrators, school principals, and other education leaders face contemporary policy demands that exceed their traditional capacity for action and, increasingly, they call on "intermediary organizations" to help with implementation. For example, central offices rely on professional development organizations to coach classroom teachers in meeting ambitious content and performance standards and to assist central office administrators in providing such coaching themselves (Stein & Brown, 1997; Wechsler & Friedrich, 1997). "Design teams" help schools implement comprehensive school reform models and support central offices in developing curriculum and other implementation supports (Bodilly, 1998). Regional reform organizations provide central office administrators, school principals, and school teachers with access to professional networks (McDonald, McLaughlin, & Corcoran, 2000).

Despite their growing number, research and experience teach little about intermediary organizations. These organizations have appeared in the background of implementation studies rather than as the main research focus. Studies and policy documents occasionally refer to individual intermediary organizations without explaining what makes an organization an intermediary. Likewise, various organizations self-identify as intermediary organizations without qualification and often add the designation "intermediary" to a repertoire of other identifiers such as professional development organization, school coach, technical assistance provider, and contractor. These trends make it difficult to discern what intermediary organizations are, what they do, and how they operate. Accordingly, research, policy, and practice provide weak guides for what may be productive and appropriate roles for this increasingly prominent participant in education policy implementation.

This paper aims to address this knowledge gap by answering three research questions:

- What defines intermediary organizations as a distinct organizational population?
- What functions do intermediary organizations serve in education policy implementation?
- What conditions constrain/enable intermediary organizations in carrying out these functions?

I address the first question using a brief review of literature on intermediary organizations and organizational ecology. I define intermediaries as organizations that operate between policymakers and policy implementers to enable change in roles and practices for *both* parties. I highlight that organizations that fit this definition vary by at least five dimensions: the levels of government (or other organizations) between which they mediate, their membership, their geographic location, the scope of their work, and their funding/revenue source. I then present findings from a comparative, qualitative case study of four intermediary organizations in Oakland, California that were established to mediate between district central office administrators (the policymakers) and leaders of school-community partnerships (the implementers). These intermediary organizations formed to help with the implementation of four education policy initiatives in the 1990s. I show that Oakland's intermediary organizations primarily functioned to provide new resources— knowledge, political/social ties, and an administrative infrastructure— necessary for implementation but traditionally not available from school district central offices or school-community partnerships. Oakland's intermediary organizations' faced different constraining and enabling conditions in carrying out these functions that revealed a tradeoff between particular types of knowledge and ties. All the intermediary organizations over time faced fiscal constraints that increased their dependence on policymakers and other funders to levels that jeopardized their intermediary functions. I conclude by drawing on the particulars of the Oakland case to suggest initial parameters for building theory about intermediary organizations in education policy implementation.

Education policy to promote school-community partnerships— called collaborative education policy here— in 1990s Oakland provided an analytically rich case for this inquiry. As elaborated below, collaborative education policies place significant, non-traditional demands on school district central offices and schools. These demands increased my likelihood of observing central office and school leaders turning to third parties for implementation assistance. Unlike some intermediary organizations that add the label, intermediary, on to a broader repertoire of functions, Oakland's intermediary organizations formed anew solely to help with collaborative policy implementation. Without other potentially confounding roles, Oakland's intermediary organizations provided a strategic opportunity to isolate, to understand, and to build descriptive theory about intermediary organizations as a distinctive type of organizational population.

The Oakland case does not provide a comprehensive picture of all intermediary organizations nationwide. However, Oakland's intermediary organizations do offer an important opportunity to establish a base of knowledge about these increasingly integral but little understood actors in public policy implementation. As elaborated in the concluding section, this examination contributes to knowledge about the conditions under which certain intermediary organizations may help public bureaucracies manage complex contemporary policy demands— finding that may be confirmed and elaborated by studies of other intermediary organizations in different settings. This paper challenges the traditional focus of policy implementation studies on policymakers and implementers and emphasizes the organizations that operate in the spaces in between policymakers and implementers as essential to policy implementation. In the process, it stakes out intermediary organizations as an essential sub-area of implementation research and organizational theory and practice.

Intermediary organizations as a distinct organizational population

Many researchers and practitioners have demonstrated that over at least the past fifteen years district central offices and schools have faced demands that far exceed their traditional capacity for action. Such demands include pressures to create systems of standards and assessments (Smith & O'Day, 1990), to support classroom teachers in ambitious curriculum and pedagogy (Spillane, 1996, 1998), to forge school-community partnerships (Honig & Jehl, 2000), to engage citizens in reform (Marsh, 2000), to broker implementation of whole school reform (Bodilly, 1998; Datnow & Stringfield, 2000), to manage high-stakes testing, to develop pools of highly qualified teachers, to decentralize authority (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990), and to weather state and mayoral takeover (Kirst & Bulkley, 2000). Perhaps not surprisingly, then, district central office administrators and school leaders increasingly have relied on so-called intermediary organizations to help with various aspects of implementation including developing content and performance standards, using standards to improve the quality of teaching (Spillane & Zeuli, 1999; Stein & Brown, 1997), and fostering community involvement in education (Public Education Network, 2001).

Policy and advocacy groups have contributed much of the documentation of organizations that call themselves intermediaries in social policy arenas including education (e.g. Camino, 1998; Kronley & Handley, 2003; Wynn, 2000). However, such documentation typically does not provide a clear definition of intermediary organizations and takes for granted that organizations that self-identify as intermediaries fit this designation. Fueling the confusion about what constitutes an intermediary organization, many of the self-identified organizations add the label, intermediary, on to a broad repertoire of other functions and identities. As a result, “intermediary organization” has come to refer to a motley collection of organizations otherwise

known as technical assistance providers, vendors (Bodilly, 1998), collaboratives (Bodilly, 2001), capacity building organizations (Camino, 1998; Rodriguez & Pereira, 2000), community development coaches (Urban Strategies Council, 1996), universities (Harkavy & Puckett, 1991, resource and referral organizations (Pavetti, Derr, Anderson, Trippe, & Paschal, 2000), professional development organizations (Burch, 2002; Wechsler & Friedrich, 1997), reform support organizations (Kronley & Handley, 2003), design teams (Bodilly, 1998), Public Education Funds (Public Education Network, 2001), and corporate law firms (Suchman, 1995). Organizational categories are not always mutually exclusive, but the assignment of such varied organizations to one group in the absence of an analytical definition blurs what may be distinctly intermediary about intermediary organizations. Particularly in light of their proliferation, an understanding of intermediary organizations may be essential for helping public administrators and other policymakers decide whether and how to involve intermediaries in implementation and to hold them accountable for public funds.

Concepts from theories of organizational ecology help bring some order to this messy terrain by providing criteria for distinguishing among organizational populations. These criteria highlight that a definition should identify intermediary organizations' particular functions and the conditions that may enable or constrain them in performing their functions. To elaborate, theories of organizational ecology posit that organizational populations are collections of organizations that are "alike in some respect" but that do not necessarily interact with one another (Scott, 1992, 127). What it means for organizations to be alike has been the subject of some debate but scholars typically agree on two dimensions of likeness.

First organizations in a population have a similar "technical core"— a similar set of activities and competencies essential to an organizations' production and survival (Hannan &

Freeman, 1977; McKelvey, 1982). In other words, organizations in the same population perform comparable *functions* essential to their nature and their basic maintenance. Accordingly, some define organizational populations as occupying a distinct environmental niche (Hannan & Freeman, 1989). This definition means that if an organization otherwise known as a professional development organization also claims to operate as an intermediary organization, then observers should be able to distinguish its intermediary functions from its professional development functions. From an economic standpoint, the designation, intermediary organization, indicates an added value beyond what the organization could or would otherwise provide.

Second, the extent to which population members are able to perform their essential functions depends on a distinct set of factors such as structures, capacity, beliefs, meanings, and relationships with others specific to membership in that population (Friedland & Alford, 1991; March & Olsen, 1989). This common dependence means that members rely on similar resources for support (Scott, 1992) and are vulnerable to more or less the same external pressures (some of which can result in organizational death) (Hannan & Freeman, 1989). In policy implementation terms, members of an organizational population face similar constraining and enabling conditions when it comes to their ability to perform their essential functions.

In contrast to the studies and documentation reports cited above, Berger and Neuhaus' research in the 1970s provides an important guide for an initial definition of intermediary organizations that fits the parameters outlined above. Berger and Neuhaus wrote about "mediating structures" which they defined as "those institutions standing between the individual and his private life and the large institutions of public life" (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977, 2). Berger and Neuhaus found that these structures— families, neighborhoods, churches, and voluntary associations— performed distinct functions: they increased the social connectedness of

individuals and service delivery systems within the then growing welfare sector and that these structures helped both individuals and systems to adapt and change. Using Berger and Neuhaus' research and organizational ecology as guides, I define intermediary organizations as distinct from other organizational populations as follows: *Intermediaries are organizations that occupy the space in between at least two other parties. Intermediary organizations' primary function is to mediate or to manage change for both those parties. Intermediary organizations operate independently of these two parties and provide distinct value for those parties beyond what the parties alone would be able to develop or to amass by themselves. At the same time, intermediary organizations depend on those parties to perform their essential functions.*

This definition has enough analytical power to exclude many self-identified organizations from the category, intermediary organizations. For example, an organization that has a contract with a district central office to train schoolteachers but no role related to central office change might more appropriately be called a technical assistance provider, professional development coach, vendor or all of the above. Such an organization does not "inter-mediate" between schools and their central office to affect change for both parties. Organizational types that work across the country such as some New American Schools design teams and Local Education Funds may function as intermediary organizations in some locations but not others. Also, for example, the federal government, has long relied on third-party organizations such as commissions to bring new resources to bear on policy problems and to help depoliticize certain decisions (e.g. Salamon, 1981). These relatively familiar and well-documented organizations would not qualify unilaterally as intermediaries because many have functioned expressly as surrogates for federal agencies in leveraging reform of other organizations rather than as a quasi-governmental change agent for federal government reform as well. This definition does not

suggest that intermediary organizations cannot perform other functions (i.e., that a professional development organization cannot also be an intermediary organization), but rather offers specific criteria to inform the application of the intermediary label.

I used this definition to revisit my review of documentation reports purportedly related to intermediary organizations such as those cited above cited above. I found that organizations that fit this description varying along at least five dimensions that provide an initial typology of this organizational population. First, intermediaries may operate between various levels of government. For example, an organization might work between state and local governments or between school districts and schools. Interestingly, most of the intermediary organizations identified in my review operate between school districts and schools. Second, the composition or membership of intermediary organizations varies. Some intermediary organizations, such as Public Education Funds, typically consist of dedicated staff that do not hold positions in other organizations while many intermediary organizations otherwise called collaboratives or partnerships derive their membership from staff of other organizations. Third, location varies. Some intermediaries such as the Annenberg-funded Bay Area School Reform Collaborative and the New American Schools school reform design teams tend to be housed physically outside the districts within which they work. I call these organizations external intermediaries. Other intermediary organizations such as many community-building organizations and collaboratives are based within the geographic areas in which they work and accordingly I call them internal intermediary organizations. Fourth, related to the third dimension, the scope of intermediaries' work ranges. External intermediary organizations tend to work with large numbers of policymakers and implementers across jurisdictions. Internal intermediary organizations tend to restrict their work to demands within their geographical home. Fifth, intermediary organizations

differ in terms of their funding sources. Some are funded exclusively by public or private sources, which, arguably makes them quasi public or private organizations, while others receive funding from both public and private sources.

While the definition of intermediary organization provides a general set of criteria for identifying intermediaries and has helped inform an initial typology of such organizations, the following questions remain: What functions do intermediary organizations serve in contemporary education policy implementation? What conditions constrain and enable intermediary organizations in carrying out their functions?

Methods

To address these questions, I relied on a qualitative case study design because it provides opportunities to describe, define, and analyze little understood phenomena such as intermediary organizations over time (Merton, 1987; Yin, 1989). I used the theory-based definition presented above to develop a purposive sample of four intermediary organizations in a single school district. Per the typology of intermediary organizations, these intermediary organizations operated between the district central office and school-community partnership sites—formal collaborations between schools and other youth-serving organizations in their neighborhoods. They were internal organizations whose membership derived from other organizations, the scope of their work focused on the implementation of four education policy initiatives within a single school district, and they received public and private funding for their operations. Focusing intensively on four intermediary organizations within a single context allowed me to compare intermediary organizations while holding various contextual factors constant. Although not generalizable to all intermediary organizations in all contexts, findings from such a design may

generate insights and hypotheses to guide theory development (Hartley, 1994; Merton, 1987). Such cases also may reveal patterns with such little deviation on a small scale that they could reasonably represent populations (Phillips & Burbules, 2000).

Oakland's intermediary organizations as a strategic case

Four intermediary organizations in Oakland Unified School District in the San Francisco Bay Area provided a strategic case for building theory about intermediary organizations for several reasons. First, early investigations into Oakland suggested these organizations fit my theoretical definition of an intermediary organization. Intermediary members reported that each organization operated in between policy makers and implementers— specifically, the district central office and school-community partnerships— expressly to facilitate changes in roles and practices for both parties. Thus, each intermediary organization depended on these two parties at least to define their essential functions. At the same time, all the intermediary organizations had other members such as representatives from non-profit organizations and city and county public agencies, which suggested that each intermediary organization might operate with some degree of independence from these two public sector parties.

Second, because these intermediary organizations formed anew specifically to help with the implementation of four particular policy initiatives, they offered an important opportunity to identify distinctly intermediary functions as compared with organizations that performed multiple other functions. Third, all four intermediary organizations were internal— geographically based within the district in which they operated. This focus on internal intermediary organizations did not allow me to capture the range of intermediary organizations identified above. However, geographic proximity increased the likelihood that I would observe

these organizations in relatively frequent interactions with the central office and implementing sites compared with external intermediary organizations whose documentation suggested came into contact with these parties significantly less often—an opportunity to develop a rich descriptive data set important to early stages of theory development.

Fourth, these intermediary organizations seemed to vary in their membership which offered opportunities for contrast. Among their differences, two of the organizations consisted almost entirely of school-community partnership directors and central office administrators— the two parties among which the intermediary organizations mediated. One organization primarily included several representatives from these parties— namely the central office superintendent and school-community partnership directors. Citizen representatives appointed by the Mayors Office and the city council comprised the fourth organization. Table 1 outlines Oakland's intermediary organizations' membership and their characteristics.

[INSERT TABLE 1]

Importantly, Oakland's intermediary organizations participated in the implementation of four education policies initiatives that present well-documented challenges for schools, community agencies, and school district central offices that exceed their traditional roles and practices.[1] Accordingly, these initiatives heightened the likelihood that policymakers and implementers would look for implementation assistance and that the Oakland case would throw into relief intermediary organizations' distinctive functions and constraining and enabling conditions in complex policy environments. Table 2 summarizes Healthy Start, the Oakland Child Health and Safety Initiative, the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, and the Village Center Initiative.

[INSERT TABLE 2]

These initiatives vary along several dimensions elaborated in two separate publications (Honig, 2001b, 2003). What is important for this inquiry about intermediary organizations as noted in Table 2 is that these initiatives as designed all promoted school-community partnerships as a primary strategy for improving youth development and learning. All four called for both school-level and central office changes to realize these implementation goals and left the nature of these changes up to school and central office discretion. Three of the four initiatives provided grants for these purposes to school-community partnerships directly. The fourth initiative specifically funded changes in the district central office, city, and county. Two received initial funding from national private foundations and the other two were launched with public funds but all operated under the assumption that the initial funding would leverage ongoing public and private investments in implementation.

Data collection

Given the early stage of research on intermediary organizations, I did not seek to evaluate the success or failure of Oakland's intermediary organizations but to better define the nature and scope of their work with the hope that such initial research would lead to stronger and well defined evaluations in the future. Accordingly, I focused my data collection on intermediary processes—what functions intermediary organizations served and the conditions that constrained or enabled those functions. I took these processes as my primary outcome measures.

I drew primarily on direct, sustained observations and record data from intermediary meetings, and in-depth interviews with intermediary participants (Barley, 1990). Intermediary meetings provided a primary source of data. Between November 1998 and March 2000 I spent

over 100 hours observing formal intermediary meetings. I also collected all available official minutes from meetings that predated the start of my data collection or that I was otherwise unable to attend. These data sources together accounted for almost 200 hours of intermediary meeting time. See Table A1 in the Appendix for a record of intermediary meeting observations. During observations I typed almost verbatim transcripts of conversations with the goal of capturing the scope of intermediaries' functions and constraining and enabling conditions.

I supplemented the observations with semi-structured interviews with individuals affiliated with the intermediary organizations including past and present members, staff, and, in the case of the Citizens Group, those elected officials whom members represented. Questions focused on individual intermediary members' day-to-day work, both in meetings and beyond meetings, as well as their sense of their capacity to participate in collaborative education policy implementation. I selected those members who were most involved in intermediary operations based in part on the percentage of intermediary meetings they attended. I interviewed 24 individual members at least once. To better understand the context in which intermediary organizations operated, I also interviewed 9 individuals who did not have a formal affiliation with an intermediary organization but who participated in collaborative education policy implementation. This group included school district central office administrators, county agency staff, and city agency staff. I used a snowball sampling technique to develop this sample, based on intermediary organization members' reports of individuals who had an impact on intermediary operations. In all, I conducted 42 interviews. Each interview lasted between 60 and 150 minutes and most were audio taped and transcribed. See Appendix Table A2 for additional information about the distribution of interviews.

I augmented the observations and interviews with document reviews and informal conversations. Records included written reports from intermediary organizations and other documents relevant to intermediary organizations' purposes and operations and Oakland education. The latter included a review of area newspaper archives (1980-2000). I used these documents to better understand intermediary organizations' functions and circumstances over time, intermediary activities in between meetings, and the use of documentation in intermediary operations. I spent countless hours in informal conversations with intermediary members in between meetings about Oakland schools and intermediary organizations.

Coding and data analysis

I used NUD*IST software to code the interview and observation transcripts and record data. Data coding was largely inductive and iterative since theory provided guides for identifying intermediary organizations (i.e., sampling) but not intermediary functions or constraining/enabling conditions (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). I coded data in three phases. First, as part of a broader analysis of collaborative policy implementation, I used concepts from organizational learning theory to define policy demands on district central offices and school-community partnerships. As part of this first phase, I separated data related specifically to the role of intermediary organizations in implementation. (For a detailed description of this first phase of data analysis, please see Honig, 2003.) Second, I coded the data regarding intermediary organizations using broad codes that required little interpretation including reported and observed intermediary functions, intermediary enabling conditions, and intermediary constraining conditions. Within data coded as "intermediary functions" I excluded those functions that did not appear over the course of at least three of the four intermediary

organizations' operations and coded the remaining data inductively using iterative and constant comparative methods to distill patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In the third phase, I returned to the data originally coded as constraining and enabling conditions and identified inductively and through constant comparison a set of broad factors that seemed to affect the operation of intermediary organizations in general (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I then cross referenced the constraining and enabling conditions with the data coded under functions to confirm that the data regarding conditions related specifically to those functions (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The design of this case study did not allow me to conclude how implementation would have proceeded in Oakland without intermediary organizations. To sharpen my view of intermediary organizations' distinctive contributions, I compared data from 1990 through 1995, when only one of the four intermediary organizations operated, with data from 1996 through 2000, when Oakland boasted four active intermediary organizations with significant budgets and political support. In addition, I asked respondents in interviews to describe implementation opportunities and obstacles for school-community partnerships and the district central office, to identify all their possible implementation resources, and to discuss when and why they chose to call on intermediary organizations for assistance. These resource maps helped me pinpoint how respondents viewed intermediary organizations' added value.

Terminology in data reporting

Oakland's experience with intermediary organizations generated a dizzying array of organizational names, professional classifications, and intermediary memberships. To simplify

my presentation of data and to reinforce salient aspects of my findings, I use the following terms to refer to particular intermediary members:

- Central office administrators. Staff of the district central office. I observed two distinct types of administrators: (1) Frontline central office administrators: Staff of the district central office with primary responsibility for supporting school-community partnerships and limited if any authority to supervise the day-to-day work of other central office administrators. These administrators had such titles as "Director of Village Centers". (2) Senior central office administrators: Directors of the district central office with primarily responsibility for the overall policy of the central office and the authority to supervise the day-to-day work of other central office administrators. These administrators had such titles as "Assistant Superintendent" and "Superintendent".
- Site directors: School principals, non-profit agency directors, and others formally responsible for developing and implementing individual school-community partnerships.
- Intermediary conveners: Employees of non-profit organizations that managed the intermediary organizations. One citywide non-profit organization convened the Staff Groups as part of its broader operations. Another citywide non-profit organization staffed the Directors and Citizens Group as its sole function.

Membership by central office administrators proved to be a particularly important contributor to intermediary organizations' constraining and enabling conditions over time—more important than differences among the policy initiatives and other dimensions by which intermediary organizations vary. Accordingly, I refer to the intermediary organizations by the following names, also indicated in Table 1:

- Staff Groups: These were two intermediary organizations whose central office membership came primarily from the central office frontlines.
- Directors Group: Central office membership on this group consisted primarily of senior central office administrators.
- Citizens Group: This group was comprised of citizen representative of Oakland neighborhoods who were appointed by city council members and the mayor. Connections to the central office came through the full-time staff who worked between meetings with the district central office (both senior and frontline administrators) and other public agencies.

Intermediary organizations' functions

Data that addressed events in the early to mid 1990s indicated that Oakland's four intermediary organizations had been established to provide collective accountability for implementation funds and to increase local support for particular reform agendas. For example, the California Department of Education required that each school district participating in Healthy Start create an intermediary organization— what the state called a district-level collaborative— to disburse public funds for Healthy Start implementation. To meet these requirements, Oakland formed an organization that I call a Staff Group by drawing members from the district central office and sites as well as the County Office of Education, the Alameda County Departments of Public Health and Social Services, and a county-level collaboration for children. This group met monthly for most of the 1990s and, by late 1999, had distributed approximately half a million dollars to support implementation of school-community partnerships.

The other Staff Group formed out of an agreement between Oakland leaders and a national foundation to award grants to school-community partnerships through the Village

Center Initiative (often called Beacon Schools in other districts). Frontline central office administrators and site directors attended this intermediary organization's weekly meetings regularly between September 1998 and early 2000 and during this period this Staff Group distributed approximately $1 million in grant funds for site implementation. The Directors Group provided what many senior central office administrators called a "first opportunity" or "catalyst" for county, city, and school agency leaders and elected officials to strengthen their commitments to cross-sector planning for youth development and learning. Documents and conversations with the national funder indicated that such boards were meant to symbolize and to realize high-level political support for "systems change". In Oakland, this meant marshalling county, city, and school district central office resources for Village Center implementation, which the Directors Group had made a centerpiece of its reform efforts. The Citizen's Group came together in 1998 under an amendment to the Oakland City Charter mandating that Oakland create a new organization to disburse an annual 2.5 percent set-aside of the city general fund. The Citizens Group conducted its semi-monthly public meetings with guidance from the City Attorney's Office to help ensure direct, broad-based accountability for the new public funds.

While the intermediary organizations did serve these intended purposes, their primary functions over the 1990s went well beyond those described above. Specifically, Oakland's intermediary organizations provided resources— knowledge of sites and policy systems, social/political ties to sites and policy systems, and an administrative infrastructure— necessary for the implementation of the four collaborative education policy initiatives but traditionally unavailable in either the district central office or school/school-community sites. In other words, the absence of these resources among the central office and sites helped define the primary functions of Oakland's intermediary organizations. Accordingly, in each the following sub-

sections I make three points: first, I explain briefly that the four focal policy initiative placed demands on the district central office and sites to have access to particular resources[2]; second, I highlight that these resources are typically in short supply in central offices and sites and that particular barriers impeded their development by the central office and sites operating alone; third, I demonstrate that all four of Oakland's intermediary organizations to some degree filled provided these resources.

Knowledge of sites and policy systems

Collaborative education policies, not unlike site-based management policies, call for sites to develop their own goals and strategies and for central office administrators to enable sites to make and implement their own decisions (Malen et al., 1990). Per collaborative education policy design, sites' goals, strategies, and actual experiences are to guide central office resource allocation, rules, and procedures as opposed to more traditional policy designs in which central office decisions guide site implementation (Honig, 2003). Accordingly, implementation of such non-traditional policy approaches places demands on site directors and central office administrators to develop site knowledge— familiarity with sites' goals, strategies, and experiences— and systems knowledge— an understanding of central office resource allocation processes and other procedures that might be aligned to sites' decisions. Regarding the importance of site knowledge, one central office administrator explained that without such knowledge, implementation would proceed with the central office and others imposing their goals and strategies on sites and otherwise frustrating implementation:

> Unless there is some ownership and unless someone is [sites are] telling us what they need, then its bureaucrats— and I include non-profit providers in that— sustaining their

> employment. It's [central office administrators and other policymakers saying] what they think for whatever reason— some maybe good reasons some maybe not— that people need.

Regarding systems knowledge, one central office administrator emphasized that his ability to help sites implement their goals and strategies depended on his knowledge of how central office resources and procedures might be directed to support sites' decisions:

> Quite frankly, you need to know all that stuff…. What are the… administrative bulletins that are in place? You need to know that… What is our policy around sharing information?… Contracting, things with vendors, consultants, the nature of things. You need to know that it is out there and kind of know where to go… Who you need to talk to.

Another central office administrator confirmed:

> That individual [participant in implementation]… really needs to be hooked into someone whether it is a mentor or key supervisor but someone… that has a firm understanding of how our district [central office] operates and knows where to go [to marshal central office resources in support of implementation].

Interviews and observations of meetings highlighted specific barriers that central office administrators and site directors faced in generating such site and systems knowledge. First, central office administrators typically reported limited time for the level of regular engagement with sites they saw as necessary to continually collect information about sites' goals, strategies, and experiences. As one long time central office administrator reflected on central office participation in implementation in the early 1990s:

> All we had to do was a little basic arithmetic to find out…how many workers can they outstation if this thing grows to 10 schools. Is the county willing to outstation 10 workers? Not unless we could really prove, economically, that it was to their benefit to outstation. I

> don't think that kind of basic work [documentation of sites' goals and outcomes] was ever really accomplished to prove the case.

Several early participants in implementation indicated that sites themselves posed barriers to increasing site knowledge. For example, several central office administrators acknowledged that the first sites to launch collaborations had received implementation funds based on their students' needs for additional services not sites' readiness to begin implementation including having clearly articulated goals and strategies. As a consequence, site knowledge for informing central office decisions was largely unavailable (Oakland School Linked Services Work Group, 1999).

In part to address site knowledge gaps, senior central office administrators reported that they hired new staff into frontline central office positions specifically to serve as liaisons with sites. The frontline central office administrators themselves indicated that they believed they had been hired largely on the basis of their site knowledge, and that in their frontline positions they had more frequent access to sites than if they were "higher up" in the central office hierarchy. According to one frontline central office administrator:

> The thinking was you can't just have a district [central office] person… because they general generally won't have that other experience. That is not the culture. [When they hired me], they wanted someone that came, that had experience in working with [sites] in general, had an understanding about…collaborations and working with diverse groups. They felt it better to go on the outside [of the central office].

However, as first-time central office administrators these staff had little familiarity with either central office resource allocation processes and other procedures in general or with

specific changes that might help or hinder implementation (Honig, 2003). One intermediary convener captured the downsides of hiring central office staff with limited systems knowledge:

> If you build a house you get an electrician to do electrical work. You don't expect the electrician to know how to do the plumbing. You know, in the same way, you don't expect the service provider [frontline central office administrator or site director] to be able to articulate the stuff in policy terms.

Adding to these challenges, most central office administrators, site directors, and intermediary conveners interviewed described collaborative policy implementation as "complicated", "difficult", "ambiguous" or all of the above and maintained that more information about sites and policy systems did not necessarily mean that frontline central office administrators or site directors understood the implications of the information or what to do in response. One long-standing site director suggested that site directors themselves lacked experience communicating their plans and experiences to central office administrators productively" and that such miscommunication occasionally contributed to the challenge.

Oakland's intermediary organizations strengthened site directors' and central office administrators' site and systems knowledge by convening regular meetings, documenting and disseminating information, simplifying information about site experience, and establishing knowledge building as an important, ongoing process.

Regular meetings. Each intermediary organization regularly convened central office administrators and site representatives in meetings that built their site and systems knowledge. Site directors and central office administrators both participated directly on the Staff Groups where site implementation reports consumed the lion's share of Staff Group meeting agendas. Members of the Directors and Citizens Groups learned about sites through their full-time staff

who had direct contact with sites between meetings and through their own membership on the Staff Groups. Discussions about how to allocate resources to sites appeared as the second most frequently discussed topic at Citizens Group meetings, according to observations and official meeting minutes.[3] Some central office administrators commented and observations confirmed the importance of intermediary organizations' meetings to their site knowledge. "I'll find out about [sites' budgets] on Thursday [at a Staff Group meeting]", one central office administrator explained when asked how she kept abreast of sites' progress with fund raising. Similar responses to questions about where central office administrators gained site knowledge suggested that meetings of intermediary organizations were by far their primary source. As one central office administrator commented:

> I used to be able to go to sites on a regular basis. I was there all the time. Now the [Staff Group] has become important for that. My time has changed. It helps me to know that on the weeks I can't get there [to sites] that I will still connect.

Intermediary organizations' meetings also helped site directors and central office administrators to access systems knowledge. For example, leaders of one Staff Group convened meetings of central office business managers early in implementation to inform sites and the assigned frontline central office administrators about the central office's intricate procedures regarding the use of school facilities— and to help business managers to understand possible conflicts between sites' implementation plans and central office policy. As one non-profit agency director on this Staff Group explained with regard to the rationale for these meetings:

> Probably because [we] have both been in the school reform work for some time and we were both anticipating that there needed to be a way for people to trouble shoot the issues and not get stalled down in the bureaucracy. So we started having conversations…. We were

> anticipating issues related to access to facilities. We brainstormed everything from having a religious group that wants to meet on a regular basis in a classroom at a school…. What would it mean to have a utility pay station set up in the school? We were just trying to think of everything that would pose the kinds of issues that schools get hung up on.

Site directors, central office administrators, and other intermediary members who knew about these meetings, unanimously attributed early implementation successes to the resources provided and the rules changed via the "Business Managers Meetings". Several site directors reported that before they had opportunities to join intermediary meetings, they could ask questions about central office rules and procedures either by making phone calls to particular central office administrators or by attending school board meetings. However, phone calls were not always returned. At school board meetings, site directors had three minutes to pose questions during periods of public comment to which board members had the option of responding.

Intermediary organizations' meetings were well attended, even when central office administrators and site directors reported competing demands on their time. One of the Staff Groups met for at least two hours each week and observations and official meeting minutes confirmed that rarely were sites or the central office not represented. The Citizens Group met semi-monthly for at least two hours. The other Staff Group and the Directors Group met for at least two hours each month. Such high attendance rates appear striking given that intermediary organizations met relatively frequently and that frontline central office administrators in particular faced significant competing demands on their time. Intermediary members' discussions during meetings regarding occasional member absences suggested that each intermediary operated with strong norms regarding the importance of attendance. For example, frequently, such discussions resulted in a strategy for intermediary members to follow up with

absentees to discuss their attendance. When asked in interviews why they regularly attended meetings, central office administrators and site directors both reported that they believed missed meetings meant missed opportunities to help chart the course of policy implementation.

Documentation and dissemination of information. Beyond meetings, each intermediary organization increased central office administrators' and site directors' knowledge by operating as a primary documenter and disseminator of information about implementation at site and systems levels. Intermediary organizations' various written records of implementation included formal implementation reports, case studies, and meeting minutes. One Staff Group hired a former central office administrator as a consultant to write a ten-year history of sites' and the central offices' experiences with implementation that they later used to brief an incoming central office Superintendent among others about their progress with implementation and to inform their own priorities (Oakland School Linked Services Work Group, 1999). The Directors Group kept detailed minutes of meetings that their staff frequently reviewed at the start of subsequent meetings to remind themselves and others where they had been and where they were headed. Even though most public bureaucracies and policymaking councils document their meetings, their record keeping tends not to result in such "teaching documents".

Simplified information about experience. Interviews and observations also revealed that intermediary organizations strengthened central office administrators' and site directors' site and systems knowledge by helping them manage the sheer amount of complex implementation information. In particular, intermediary organizations "simplified experience"— they translated the day-to-day goals and events of site implementation into discrete, uncomplicated terms that central office administrators and sites more easily understood (Hatch, 1997; March, 1994). As

one participant in three intermediary organizations explained about the role Oakland's intermediary organizations played:

> Partnership is easier around specific shared goals without having to be in sync around everything else. Like if we know we want the district [central office and schools] to be more community-friendly we [the intermediary organization] can work through that together with the district and we can move the district on being more open to community involvement and other broad themes of the initiative…. Being able to work through those negotiation issues on a small level around four [sites] is doable. You know, forcing the district to have to be more community friendly in general— I mean how would you do that?

Simplifications of experience provided small, concrete steps that central office administrators and sites directors had the capacity to take immediately and successfully— what Weick called "small wins" (Weick, 1984). As one intermediary member from a county office described:

> And if you do A - if you can pin point the one or two things we can do differently immediately, then we can build the broader things. If people don't believe anything can change, you don't spend a year building a theory of change. There is some low hanging fruit…. We [policymakers] start making some incremental decisions. We start sharing data. Then gradually we will be doing other things that look more like real systems reform.

Ongoing knowledge building processes. Observations and interviews suggested that intermediary organizations helped build central office and site knowledge by creating regular opportunities for central office administrators and site directors to revisit past decisions and to view implementation as a process of continuous knowledge building. As one central office administrator explained, thanks in large part to the structure of engagement with sites that one

intermediary organization provided, he had come to understand collaborative policy implementation as involving ongoing knowledge development:

> [I learned] That you can't set something in stone and say this is the way it is going to be forever. It just doesn't work like that. You have to continue to revisit the process and the guidelines that you set forth. Does this still work for us based on our circumstances now? Is this still real for us? Then you modify and change it…. Assessment has to be ongoing. This [implementation] is a very fluid sort of operation.

Certain intermediary organizations set aside meeting time specifically to revisit past decisions. The Citizens Group, for example, reviewed previous decisions each year as part of their annual revision of their Request for Applications to fund sites. Central office administrators and sites indicated in interviews that they knew they had these opportunities to lobby for changes in the Citizens Group's decisions and actual annual amendments to their Requests for Applications confirmed their use of such opportunities to revise previous decisions.

Social and political ties to sites and policy systems

Collaborative education policies placed demands on central office administrators and site directors to forge ties with one another to enable the kinds of information sharing highlighted above. When asked whether and how they shared information about their goals and strategies with the district central office, site directors often referred to individual central office administrators with whom they had developed a direct relationship over time or through past work together rather than a relationship with the school district writ large. Central office administrators typically pointed out that applications for funding and sites' funding contracts provided information about what sites planned to accomplish but that the "real deal" about implementation decisions, successes, and pitfalls came through phone calls, site visits, and other

opportunities for direct, ongoing relationships with sites. Frontline central office administrators indicated that they too needed systems ties— relationships within the central office— to develop their systems knowledge and, ultimately, to marshal central office resources for site implementation. According to one central office administrator:

> It is our relationship [with senior central office administrators]. That is why I was able to present arguments as to why that… needs to be there [why specific resources needed to be allocated to sites]…. If you are not at the table, it makes it kind of hard to do that.

Long-standing site directors indicated that prior to their involvement with particular intermediary organizations they generally had weak ties with the district central office. Frequent turnover of school principals and competing demands on central office administrators' time challenged the continuity of central office-site relationships (Oakland School Linked Services Work Group, 1999). As one frontline central office administrator explained, the time necessary for building site ties far exceeded his available time given his other central office responsibilities:

> Zero. [That's how much time I spent with sites last week.] Well, actually maybe five percent…. That was about as deep as I was able to get into it last week even though I needed to get deeper into it…. The thing is I am going to meetings [regarding my other responsibilities]. They might start at 7:30 [a.m.]. My workday doesn't start until 8:30. My first meeting is at 7:30. The next one is at 9:00. The next one is at 11:00. Then there is one at 1:30, one at 3:00 and then when do I get to come in here [to the office]? Maybe at 4:15 I get to come in here and then you have voice mail messages and it takes me 30 minutes to listen to that and then I have got to return those phone calls and that doesn't give me a chance to get to the work.

Site directors also attributed their weak central office ties to their own mistrust of the district central office after years of the central office's mismanagement and broken promises (both alleged and substantiated) (Coburn & Riley, 2000; Gewertz, 2000; May, 2000). One central office administrator referred to a teachers strike in the mid 1990s as a point when "we [the district central office] were struggling" to establish strong relationships with sites even though issues related to teacher salaries and workplace conditions had not posed challenges specific to implementing collaborative education policies.

Such long-standing tensions about central office performance carried over into collaborative policy implementation. For example, site directors explained that in Oakland, historically, only "squeaky wheels get new textbook money or portables [buildings] or program money" and that they approached early intermediary meetings with central office administrators as new opportunities to demand assistance. Site directors reported that they intended "to throw a hissy [fit]" at meetings or that implementation would "really break apart" if the meetings ended without specific agreements about resources the central office would allocate to sites. Central office administrators reported a willingness to be responsive but that the time constraints noted above curbed the extent to which they actually responded.

Budget crises, changed superintendents (four between 1990 and 2000), and threats of state takeover were not infrequent in Oakland (Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, 2000). Frontline central office administrators struggled to manage the frustrations such crises generated among site directors. One conversation at a Staff Group meeting illustrates such tensions:

> FORMER CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR [trying to explain why he believes particular sites can do without additional funding from the central office in the short term]: I

> think depending on your vision and what you are doing costs can vary greatly. I know some places would die for your budgets…. I'm saying it varies widely….
>
> SITE DIRECTOR: You have never even been to my site. You don't even know our budgets. You make us crazy every time you talk like this. I don't care what my total budget looks like to you, if I can't make my payroll because I may not receive the check you promised this is going to hit the fan. We need to follow up on this. This is really contentious.

Intermediary organizations helped manage such long-standing tensions between sites and the district central office. Site directors in particular counted such management as among Oakland's intermediary organizations' central contributions to collaborative policy implementation. As one site director highlighted:

> 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 [the Staff Group].

Another site director corroborated the important role for intermediary organizations as managers of central office-site ties. When one intermediary convener proposed that the intermediary organization play a lesser role in implementation, the site director reacted:

> I don't want [the intermediary organization's assistance to start consisting of] a list of people in the district [who I can contact for support]. What I don't want is for someone to tell me to talk to [an Assistant Superintendent]. It's a question of are you [the intermediary] marshalling the process or are you taking it on?

Sustained observations revealed that "taking it on" involved two specific strategies: translating sites' implementation experiences into terms on which central office administrators could/would take action and buffering sites from central office non-responsiveness.

Translation of sites' demands into actionable terms. Intermediary organizations helped sites temper and translate their implementation experiences into requests to which central office administrators could reasonably respond, similar to the simplifications of experience highlighted above. For example, one site faced significant curbs on implementation that they attributed to persistent safety problems before and after school. Site directors, seasoned community organizers and advocates, had made frequent presentations at school board and city council meetings to call for radical reform of Oakland's entire system of public policing but neither the school district nor the city police department had responded. When asked about their sense of sites' primary implementation challenges, frontline central office administrators almost unanimously cited safety as a significant concern but did not report taking any specific action to address such challenges. At a series of Staff Group meetings during their first years of operation, the site directors and other intermediary members translated the site directors' original demands into a specific, de-politicized request for changed police schedules at a particular street intersection that they identified as a "tipping point" for neighborhood safety problems. Two Staff Group members (who were also staff to the Directors Group) submitted this proposal to the City Manager's Office and, subsequently, the Chief of Police, central office administrators, and site directors agreed to a series of meetings to explore both the specific safety proposal and whether the sites' neighborhoods would provide useful testing grounds for broader police reforms that the department already had planned.

Buffers for sites. Intermediary organizations also helped manage long-standing, strained relationships between sites and the central office by buffering sites from central office non-responsiveness. For example, intermediary organizations occasionally made special grants to sites out of their own funds to help sites meet their payroll demands and otherwise weather delays in the processing of payments by the central office. The Staff Groups in particular had limited but relatively discretionary funds they used for this purpose. The Citizens Group continued to fund sites, regardless of central agency budgets, thanks to the 12-year amendment to the city charter that allocated a set percentage of the city general fund as their annual budget.

Intermediary organizations also buffered sites from unexpected central office policy changes by serving as a sort of advance warning team that communicated central office rules and procedures to sites, explained the rationale for existing policies and policy changes, and offered suggestions for how to manage such changes. For example, Staff Groups often deployed members to sites to provide such updates and to seek their input on options for how the intermediary organization might assist with implementation. During one period of particularly tight central office fiscal constraints, one Staff Group sent a letter to all site directors explaining the situation and taking responsibility for not leveraging the promised central office funds. As one member of both Staff Groups explained when reflecting on the role of intermediary organizations in such instances, "We need to be the conscience of the process and the constant face in the face of change."

Administrative infrastructure

Collaborative education policy designs called for sites to develop goals and strategies specific to the needs and strengths of their students; in turn, central office administrators would

shift from distributing relatively uniform resources across all sites to providing resources specific to individual site goals and strategies, including the deployment of staff to work with sites individually. I call these demands site-by-site decision-making and support. One long time central office administrator captured the views expressed by several respondents regarding the rationale for site-by-site decision-making and support:

> I think the thing in my experience that really makes [implementation of collaborative education policy] work is somebody having the resources to really staff and move it forward. Actually that's probably the single most important thing… individualized support for it. 'Cause I think they just take more time and energy [than more traditional approaches to school improvement] to work with each school and [community partner] about what they need and what costs, what things cost. So much really depends. It's really a case-by-case, school-by-school basis.

Oakland Unified School District, like other government bureaucracies, generally did not have an administrative apparatus — budget and evaluation systems and staff training and deployment— for site-by-site implementation. A comprehensive state audit found the districts' budgeting systems inappropriate for school site-based decision making let alone collaborative school site-based decision making (Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, 2000). The interim superintendent observed that traditional central office administrator training had left his central office and school staff ill prepared to implement policy strategies involving site-based decision-making:

> Because of the diversity of the community and of this district and of the individual people working here there has always been the feeling that no one size fits all and those decisions are best left to school site personnel including parents and community members. Problem is,

> none of these folks [central office administrators or school principals] have had training in supporting that kind of decision-making.

One long-time frontline central office administrator indicated that barriers to site-by-site support included significant demands on central office staff time not atypical of urban districts during this period:

> Once we launched the Healthy Start program… and it grew to four to five schools… it got to the point where we realized, wow, now I had so much else on my plate that we really need to bring in somebody. So we… hired S-… the same thing happened to him. Then we got L-… and pretty soon it just, the quicksand starts sucking you down. And that's just the way it is in a bureaucracy…. It's inevitable that it will happen.

Adding to the implementation challenge, central office administrators and site directors did not always agree about how to define site-by-site support and these disagreements strained relationships between the two parties. For example, during one particularly contentious debate at a series of Staff Group meetings, central office administrators argued that certain sites had just received significant federal grants and, with annual operating budgets over $1 million in some cases, did not need the same level of assistance from the district central office as sites without such grants. The grant-winning sites objected on the grounds that the central office should not penalize them for their hard-won success at attracting additional funds and that the size of their particular programs meant that their annual budgets barely covered their costs. Both central office administrators and site directors advocated for distribution of resources on a site-by-site basis. However, central office administrators assessed site-by-site support by comparing sites' budgets whereas certain site directors defined site-by-site support as funding commensurate with their particular expenses.

Intermediary organizations addressed these capacity gaps by helping to establish central office-based resource allocation systems appropriate to individual site's goals and strategies, augmenting staff time spent on site-by-site issues, and developing standards for resource allocation to sites and sites' accountability for funds.

Site and central office systems for resource allocation. Intermediary organizations promoted the use of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for the allocation of resources and other supports on a site-by-site basis. Unlike some other government contracts that typically delineated services a vendor would provide in return for payment, Oakland's MOUs were agreements between two parties that clarified the contributions each party would make to achieve specific, shared implementation outcomes. The three intermediary organizations that disbursed funding directly to sites used MOUs to clarify how the intermediary organizations would assist sites with implementation and each site's reciprocal obligations to raise additional funds, develop a collaborative planning process, and improve specific student outcomes. The intermediary organizations worked with the central office to develop a template for its own MOUs with sites and thus enabled the central office to enter into site-by-site agreements without tackling the total reinvention of the central offices' budgeting and staffing systems in the short term. As one former central office administrator described, MOUs provided a basic guiding structure for site-by-site support:

> MOUs really were a Healthy Start thing. The state [Department of Education] suggested MOUs but the [Staff Group] really gave shape to them. Then when we had [funds for sites] coming in through [the Staff Group] we used MOUs to give the money out and to establish sort of basic agreements about the money, because each site would use it differently. Then we used MOUs for the Village Centers, for the Village Center funds, to give out those funds

> to help start village centers…. Well by then MOUs were how we did things but there was no template. So we worked to develop a template for the MOUs and now that's pretty much, pretty much how it's done at the central office and intermediary levels.

Staff time. Intermediary organizations increased the number of staff hours available for site-by-site support through several strategies. First, interviews and observations confirmed that the intermediary meetings provided regular, structured opportunities for central office administrators to focus on individual site issues. As discussed above, the meetings typically featured reports by site directors about their implementation progress and provided other opportunities for site directors to bring their goals, strategies, and experiences to central office administrators' attention. In addition, each intermediary organization hired or dedicated staff that increased the sheer number of person hours spent responding to sites' requests for support. A citywide non-profit organization managed the Staff Groups and helped sites develop their collaborative partnerships, evaluate their programs, and raise funds. The Directors Group hired staff experienced with site-by-site coaching who were not necessarily eligible for or interested in formal positions within governmental agencies. These staff provided a range of assistance including convening sites to network with their peers.

Standards and accountability. Intermediary organizations also managed disputes about the deployment of resources on a site-by-site basis by developing and maintaining clear standards and accountability for site-by-site support and by providing regular opportunities for dialogue and debate about both. Observations suggested that such clear agreements and processes for revising agreements helped establish expectations that rules and resource allocation would vary site-by-site and overtime and that sites, central office administrators, and others could participate formally in establishing the terms of resource allocation decisions. For

example, the Citizens Group operated under a provision in the Oakland City Charter to develop a five-year strategic plan for grant making and to issue applications for funding to sites annually based on criteria set out in the plan (Planning and Oversight Committee of the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, 1997). This structure provided two different kinds of opportunities for setting and revisiting standards. For one, the strategic plan outlined the broad parameters for grant making and an opportunity every five years to revisit those parameters. The Request for Applications could also be changed annually in ways consistent with the five-year strategic plan. When a city council member lobbied to decrease site funding one year to cover costs for a new housing program, the Citizens Group pointed to the strategic plan as the basis for rejecting this request and successfully avoided this displacement of funds.

Intermediary organizations without legal mandates regarding regular review of rules created structures for themselves by clarifying their decision rules after the fact and establishing explicit lines of accountability. One Staff Group, for example, publicly took responsibility for its decision not to provide promised funding to particular sites and communicated this decision and its rationale widely at meetings and through letters to site directors.

Intermediary organizations' constraining and enabling conditions

The section above identified functions that all four focal intermediary organizations carried out during collaborative policy implementation. In this section I review data concerning the extent to which each intermediary organization performed these functions. My comparative analysis of Oakland's intermediary organizations revealed two broad sets of findings regarding conditions that constrained and enabled intermediary organizations' functions.

First, systematic differences between Staff Group resources and those of the Citizens and Directors Groups suggested a tradeoff regarding particular constraining and enabling conditions: conditions that enabled site knowledge and ties seemed to constrain systems knowledge and ties and vice versa. In practice, these tradeoffs meant that Staff Groups generally knew about the site goals, strategies, and experiences that policymakers might support to advance implementation but had relatively weak systems knowledge and ties to affect such support. On the flipside, the Citizens and Directors Groups had the systems knowledge and ties for taking action within the district central office and other policy systems but not the access to regular knowledge about sites' decisions on which to base such actions.[4]

Second, at least three of the four intermediary organizations over time faced fiscal constraints that made it difficult for them to maintain their independence from the central office and other funders. Eventually, these fiscal constraints limited intermediary organizations' ability to perform their functions, and, ultimately, prompted three intermediary organizations to cease intermediary operations or completely disband.

Resource tradeoffs: Site versus systems knowledge and ties

Staff Groups tended to have stronger site knowledge and ties but weaker systems knowledge and ties than either the Citizens or the Directors Groups. As elaborated above, members of Staff Groups included site directors themselves who shared sites' goals, strategies, and experiences directly. Representatives to Staff Groups from the district central office typically held positions on the frontlines of the organization and came with relatively more site experience than other policymakers. An analysis of meeting minutes and transcripts between

1998 and 2000 revealed that site directors brought significantly more issues to Staff Group tables than to the Directors and Citizens Group combined.

Observations uncovered several striking instances in which Staff Groups' demonstrated gaps in their systems knowledge and ties. For example, site directors participating in one Staff Group requested information about district procedures for hiring adults to work on school campuses. State and federal law clearly indicates rules for background screenings. However, participating frontline central office administrators did not know these rules. When site directors and non-profit members of the Staff Group turned to the participating central office administrators for information, the administrators gave the impression that the rules were ambiguous (as opposed to just unclear to them) and asked the districts' legal staff to clarify existing procedures. Weeks of debate ensued among Staff Group members who believed they had some discretion to invent hiring procedures. Eventually, the legal department returned a "judgment"— essentially a copy of federal and state laws— that contradicted sites' wishes. By that time, Staff Group members had exhausted weeks that might otherwise have been spent working to document sites' goals and strategies and negotiating for central office policy changes.

On the flipside, the Directors and Citizens Groups typically had precisely the systems knowledge and ties that Staff Groups lacked. As elaborated above, members of the Directors Group essentially were "the system"— interim superintendents, city managers, school board members, and their counter parts from other sectors each of whom had the authority to set at least the official direction of their central agencies. The Directors Group had as its official mandate to affect systems changes in support of site implementation. The Citizens Group members were handpicked to represent not only their home neighborhoods and schools but also city council members and the mayor. Importantly, the Directors Group's full-time staff also

managed the Citizens Group and reported that one of their main roles was to support relationships and the flow of information between the Citizens Group and various public agencies including the district central office.

However, a review of meeting minutes for both groups confirmed the reports of site directors presented above that at least in the course of their formal meetings the Directors and Citizens Groups had significantly less knowledge of and ties to sites than the Staff Groups. For example, between 1997 and 2000, the Citizens Group altered their criteria for funding sites each year. Official explanations for these changes by Citizens Group members suggested that members were trying to stay current with what they believed to be best practices at implementing sites. One year the alterations were substantial enough that one of Oakland's flagship sites did not receive funding. Several Citizens Group and Staff Group members suggested that perhaps the flagship site directors had not put adequate effort into a grant proposal they considered a "sure thing" given their favorable local reputation. However, the site directors and several other respondents offered an alternative interpretation of events: that this denial of funding indicated that the Citizens Group's sources of site knowledge (i.e., the applications sites submitted for Citizens Group funding) were inadequate to keep members informed. In particular, directors of the affected site highlighted in public testimony at a Citizens Group meeting that Citizens Group members failed to conduct site visits and otherwise develop the knowledge necessary for decisions relevant to "site realities".

An analysis of these resource differences revealed a tradeoff: the conditions that enabled Staff Groups' site knowledge and ties seemed to constrain their systems knowledge and ties; the conditions that enabled the Citizens' and Directors' Groups systems knowledge and ties seemed to constrain their site knowledge and ties. For example, site directors and other site participants

frequently indicated in meeting conversations that occasionally they avoided sharing information or establishing ties with the Citizens or Directors Group. They viewed the Staff Groups as resources for their own day-to-day challenges but they believed that the Citizens and Directors Groups threatened sites' promised discretion over implementation. Site directors indicated that policymakers tended to renege on promises of alternative policymaking and citizen-run government if sites, in the words of one site director, "got too far out the box". Frequent comments from site directors in meetings and interviews indicated that the Directors Group members "already [had] all the money and the power" and that sites needed to be "careful about letting them know too much" about their implementation experiences. Comments of site and non-profit agency directors regarding the Citizens Group reflected concerns that Citizens Group members were primarily agents of city government not representatives of neighborhoods and that information about implementation when shared with them should be shared with caution.[5] In other words, staff Groups' distance from "the system" seemed to help augment their site knowledge and ties.

Conversely, the Citizens and Directors Groups' relatively strong systems knowledge and ties seemed to result from certain conditions— namely, their authority with and close connections to policy systems— that constrained their site knowledge and ties. Underscoring site directors' suspicions cited above, at the end of the 1990s, Directors Group members including the interim superintendent requested that Directors Group staff, in conjunction with frontline central office administrators, survey middle schools in an attempt to increase the Directors Group's knowledge of the community partnerships in which each school was involved. In conversations, the lead Directors Group staff person and central office administrator on this project both expressed their frustration with the limited information this labor-intensive effort

yielded. They reported and demonstrated with returned surveys that school principals provided incomplete information or laundry lists of program titles with little indication of how many students participated or other fundamental implementation details. When asked why the information was so incomplete, the respondents suggested that school principals were bombarded with requests for information and likely did not see the value in completing a survey associated with the Directors Group. Their comments included that the Directors Group lacked "the pull" with schools and that school principals, that schools might not have a clear sense of "what's in it for them" to work with the Directors Group, and that many involved with school-community sites were "suspicious" of the Directors Group because they did not understand the Directors Group's claims that the Group supported site implementation when the Group did not provide finding directly to sites.

Between at least 1998 and 1999, the intermediary organizations seemed to recognize their respective strengths and weaknesses and attempted to overcome their constraints. Interestingly, rather than trying to enhance their own capacity as individual organizations, such as by adding new intermediary members, the intermediary organizations aimed to strengthen their ties with other intermediary organizations and to increase the overall effectiveness of Oakland's system of intermediary organizations. Specifically, at the end of 1998 and early 1999, the two Staff Groups met together to discuss whether the two groups essentially served identical purposes and should be merged. Staff to the Directors and Citizens Groups participated in these discussions. Members' comments at these meetings revealed a consensus among members that each intermediary organization linked to a different constituency of sites and thus provided a distinct and unduplicated opportunity to draw schools and communities into what some called a school-community reform "movement". The three intermediary organizations devised a plan that built

on their respective strengths and changed the parties between which each intermediary operated: the Staff Groups and the Citizens Group would mediate between sites and the Directors Group and the Directors group would mediate between the Staff Groups and the central office and other public systems that supported school-community collaboration.

Fiscal constraints and diminishing independence over time

Before this intermediary re-organization plan reached full implementation, however, Oakland's intermediary infrastructure underwent significant changes. As indicated at the start of this paper, intermediary organizations walk a delicate balance between independence from and dependence on the parties between which they mediate. Independence helped intermediary organizations add value to the parties among which they mediated. However, intermediary organizations also depended on those parties to carry out their purposes; in this case, the needs of these two parties helped define intermediary organizations' functions and several of Oakland's intermediary organizations drew on those parties for the lion's share of their memberships. Each of Oakland's intermediary organizations managed this tension between independence and dependence throughout the 1990s as evidenced by the provision of new resources, but each over time each faced fiscal constraints that jeopardized their independent status, and, ultimately, the functions of three of the intermediary organizations.

For example, one of the Staff Groups at the end of the 1990s dedicated significant time to devising a plan to fund additional sites. After approximately six months of plan development, the interim school district superintendent announced that, regardless of what the intermediary organization decided, the school district would not contribute funds for additional sites in the short term. Shortly thereafter he transferred the Staff Group's primary central office

representative to a school principalship and shifted responsibility for that policy initiative to another frontline central office administrator who had multiple other competing responsibilities. In 1999, the school district faced a significant budget shortfall and a comprehensive state audit that found the district deficient in many aspects of basic district operations (Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, 2000). The interim superintendent explained that such developments left him little choice but to freeze spending across multiple areas including collaborative policy implementation. He indicated in an interview and at two separate intermediary meetings that he hoped the budget freeze would be temporary. Rather than proceed with expansion as planned (i.e., by drawing on their reserves and looking elsewhere for funding) members of this Staff Group decided to halt site expansion. Comments at several Staff Group meetings and in informal conversations suggested that various Staff Group members believed they could not proceed without financial and political support from the school district central office. The time-limited private foundation grant that originally sparked the formation of the intermediary organization had expired and the Staff Group's members from non-profit organizations and their non-profit conveners expressed concern about dedicating their own organizational funding to run the intermediary when their "primary systems players weren't doing their part". Attendance at intermediary meetings waned among site directors and central office administrators until the convener disbanded the intermediary organization.

By the late 1990s, the other Staff Group had a budget of approximately $300,000 in new state and federal revenue to allocate to sites. At the time of the late 1990s budget shortfall, the interim superintendent requested that the Staff Group commit 80 percent of its funds to cover the costs of basic district health services. The interim superintendent argued the one-time commitment of funds would help alleviate some of the districts' fiscal strains. After significant

debate and a change in superintendent, the Staff Group agreed to surrender the 80 percent. Several Staff Group members commented that they believed the "funds were lost anyway" and at least the "voluntary" contribution could cast them as supportive of the superintendent and thereby put them in a potentially stronger bargaining position in the future. Shortly thereafter, the non-profit staff person who had been convening the Staff Group took a position in another organization, and without funding to allocate, the Staff Group suspended further meetings at least for the short term.

Meanwhile, the Directors Group faced increasingly negative pressure from the national foundation that provided its base budget to cease support for collaborative policy implementation. The foundation indicated in correspondence, publications, site visits, and conversations that the foundation had taken a position that school-community collaboration would not yield the kinds of demonstrable improvements in the status of youth that the foundation's initiative required. Members of the Directors Group spent approximately one and a half years rebutting the funder's concerns and debating internally whether the group should proceed with its own plans and surrender the foundation funds. Several Directors Group members pointed out that as heads of major county and city agencies collectively they could construct a budget for the intermediary organization using local funds. Ultimately, Directors Group members decided that the value of participating in the high profile national initiative outweighed the limitations. They abandoned the school-community partnership strategy at least in the short term, launched a new policy initiative to provide targeted services to juvenile offenders, and changed their name to amplify that they had become a new organization.

The Citizens Group ran significantly less risk of redirection. The amendment to the city charter that authorized both the Citizens Group and its funding operated for twelve years or

longer if a subsequent popular ballot initiative enabled extension. However, the Citizens Group depended on the Directors Group for its full time staff. As part of its own reinvention, the Directors Group decided that staff support to the Citizens Group was inconsistent with its new juvenile justice focus. Subsequently, a local community foundation agreed to provide staff support to the Citizens Group. The effects of this change on the Citizens Groups' intermediary role could not be observed within the period of study. However, given the significant role Citizens Group staff played in helping this organization operate as an intermediary organization rather than simply as a surrogate grant maker for the city, this change did not bode well for the Citizen's Group's operation as an organization with distinct, intermediary functions.

In sum, Oakland's intermediary organizations faced several bumps in the road during collaborative policy implementation. In particular, no one intermediary organization seemed to have the capacity to address all the site-central office resource gaps at equally high levels, each intermediary organization seemed to face tradeoffs in enhancing its own resources, and fiscal constraints jeopardized their survival. However, the persistence of Oakland's intermediary organizations over the course of the 1990s, the support they provided for implementation, and the promise of their reorganization plans suggest that intermediary organizations can specialize in certain functions in ways that make important contributions to a system of implementation.

Summary, conclusions, and implications

Intermediary organizations have become increasingly integral participants in education policy implementation. While various policy groups have written about intermediary organizations, they typically have not defined intermediaries as a distinct class of organizations, the dimensions along which they vary or their constraining and enabling conditions.

Consequently, policymakers of various stripes may misjudge the resources available for policy implementation and miss opportunities to enable change. Intermediary organizations themselves may misunderstand their particular tasks, strengths, and weaknesses, and not make best use of their distinctive institutional resources.

This paper draws on findings from a strategic research site and begins to build theory about intermediary organizations as distinct actors in education policy implementation. First I clarify that intermediary organizations refer to a class of organizations that operate between two parties to mediate changes for both. Organizations that fit this description vary by the types of organizations between which they mediate as well as their membership, location, scope of work, and funding source. Findings presented here from an empirical investigation of one type of intermediary organization suggest that intermediary organizations can function to provide specific new resources that are essential to implementation but typically not available from policymakers or implementers. The resources in this case included site and systems knowledge, site and systems ties, and administrative tools. Oakland's intermediary organizations depended on the two parties between whom they mediated—central office administrators and site directors/staff— to carry out their functions. Specifically, central office and site needs defined intermediary organizations' functions, and site and central office participation helped intermediary organizations execute those functions. However, interviews, observations, and document reviews in Oakland strongly suggested that these resources were not available to support implementation in the absence of intermediary organizations. In other words, the capacity of Oakland's intermediary organizations equaled something other than the sum total of its parts— a key indicator of institutional independence (March & Olsen, 1989). Thus the empirical findings from this Oakland case study support the theoretical definition of an

intermediary organization posited at the start of this paper: *An intermediary organization occupies the space in between at least two other parties, provides distinct value beyond what the parties alone would be able to develop or to amass by themselves, and depends on those parties to perform their essential functions*.

Pushing beyond this definition, findings from the Oakland case suggest several other propositions that can guide further inquiry specifically to uncover whether they apply to other types of intermediary organizations in other contexts. First, as the display of data above suggests, it may be virtually impossible to understand the value of the resources that intermediary organizations provided without an analysis of the demands that policymakers and implementers faced and their limitations in meeting those demands. This observation suggests a corollary to the basic definition of intermediary organizations noted above: *Intermediary organizations' functions and their ability to perform those functions are context specific—contingent on given policy demands and policymakers' and implementers' ready capacity to meet those demands themselves.*

The Oakland case also shows that intermediary organizations may vary in terms of the conditions that constrain and enable them in performing their functions even among intermediary organizations that operate in the same location and essentially focus on similar implementation challenges. Oakland's intermediary organizations with frontline central office administrators and site directors as members tended to have stronger site knowledge and ties than the intermediary organizations with direct or indirect representation by senior administrators and other policymakers. The latter intermediary organizations typically had stronger systems knowledge and ties than the former. In this study, site and systems knowledge and ties appeared as tradeoffs. In part to address such tradeoffs, Oakland's intermediary organizations began to

reorganize so that multiple intermediary organizations linked together to form a bridge between sites and "the system" including the district central office and other policy agencies. In the new configuration each intermediary organization would mediate between either sites or the system and other intermediary organizations. This proposed reconfiguration suggests that the fact that no one intermediary organization had all the necessary resources to fill the resources gaps is not inherently problematic. The more fundamental implementation question is do intermediaries and other organizations comprise a web of relationships and operate in connected and coordinated ways to fill gaps between policymakers and implementers? These observations suggest another corollary to the working definition of intermediary organization: *Intermediary organizations can augment their own capacity to carry out their core functions as needs change and lessons are learned; intermediary organizations may augment their capacity not simply by adding on new organizational members or by purchasing additional resources but by changing the gap between the two parties among which they mediate.*

The Oakland case also suggests that *long-term fiscal independence may be fundamental to the survival of intermediary organizations*. Recall that Oakland's intermediary organizations did not seem even to run the risk of over dependence on the district central office or its other funders throughout most of the 1990s. In fact, the Staff Groups in particular helped sites weather the somewhat regular central office fiscal constraints over the course of the 1990s. One change by the end of the 1990s was that these intermediary organizations had begun to exhaust their own discretionary resources for sustaining both sites and themselves and the central office suspended its promised support. The latter not only limited intermediary organizations' short term resources but jeopardized their long term fundraising capability. For example, several respondents commented that they had been told by program officers from at least two local

foundations that those foundations were poised to award grants to school-community sites and intermediary organizations in Oakland, pending the demonstration of public sector commitment to collaborative education policy. By the end of the 1990s, these foundations still had not made the promised grant awards.

Implications for practice and research

This study examined a single albeit strategic case, which limits its power for providing direct lessons for practice. Nonetheless, the Oakland case raises several policy questions and suggests policy directions to guide future research and practice. For one, should policymakers and implementers regularly involve intermediary organizations in implementation? The Oakland case does not provide a direct answer to this question but rather shows that Oakland's central office administrators and site directors faced regular barriers to implementation that they frequently overcame over the course of the 1990s thanks in large part to the resources of intermediary organizations. In keeping with the corollary that intermediary organizations' functions and constraining and enabling conditions are context specific, it is possible that intermediary organizations— especially intermediary organizations that draw members from other organizations— may be an implementation support strategy that suited Oakland particularly well. Consider that Oakland's site directors generally had the wherewithal to hold their own (and then some) in potentially intimidating intermediary meetings with central office administrators and other traditional site monitors and funders. Central office administrators and representatives from Oakland's well developed non-profit sector tended to have experience in working with other organizations. Similar intermediary organizations in districts without strong site leadership and central office and non-profit experience with collaboration may not fare as

well as Oakland's. Accordingly, policymakers might consider not how to establish intermediary organizations just like Oakland's but what intermediary arrangements might be appropriate to their particular local contexts.

A second policy question raised by the Oakland case is how can the participation of intermediary organizations be strengthened to improve the quality of education policy implementation? The Oakland case suggests that policymakers could build dedicated resources for intermediary operations into policy design. As discussed above, a sustained funding source specifically for their operations could help mitigate intermediary organizations' over reliance on other organizations for support. This recommendation comes with two cautions: dedicated funding can lead to unproductive over reliance on the funder, particularly if the funder and intermediary organization disagree about intermediary functions as was the case with the Directors Group and, by extension, the Citizens Group; dedicated funding for intermediary operations may create intermediary constituencies with investments in perpetuating the intermediary organizations even after they have outlived their use. However, the Oakland case demonstrates a well-worn lesson of organizational change: any shift— particularly an institutional shift— requires an infusion of new resources to facilitate reform. Policymakers might consider providing short-term funding for intermediary organizations to establish their infrastructure and decreased funding over time as intermediary organizations generate other revenue or exhaust their purpose and fold.

Policymakers and others may strengthen individual intermediary organizations also by supporting multiple intermediary organizations. When viewed together Oakland's four intermediary organizations had the makings of a system of support linking various sites with different levels of the central office (and other policy systems). Given significant gulfs between

policymakers and implementers in public school districts and other public arenas, arguably it is unreasonable to expect any one intermediary organization alone to provide a sufficient bridge.

This case also suggests particular avenues for future policy research. For one, findings come from a single case of a particular type of intermediary organization. Do the propositions presented here hold for similar intermediary organizations in other contexts or other kinds such as external intermediary organizations or those not comprised of members from other organizations? Oakland's intermediary organizations seemed to have special opportunities to connect with policymakers and implementers because policymakers and implementers participated directly as intermediary members. External intermediary organizations may fare well in other districts or struggle from lack of regular access to policymakers and implementers. Future research might illuminate the specific tradeoffs of internal versus external intermediaries in different contexts.

Likewise, Oakland's intermediary organizations were established anew primarily to serve intermediary functions. However, the scan presented at the start of this paper suggests that many self-identified intermediary organizations add that descriptor on to a repertoire of other, sometimes well-established tasks. Does adding on intermediary functions raise different opportunities and obstacles than those presented here?

Third, intermediary organizations operate in complex arenas that include not only the policymakers and implementers between whom they mediate but their various funders as well. The trajectory of the Directors Group in Oakland suggests that funders can significantly curb intermediary organizations' operations when funders and intermediary members disagree about goals and strategies. However, other findings from this particular study did not warrant broader statements in this article about the role of intermediary organizations' funders. An exploration of

funders' roles seems essential, particularly in cases in which intermediary organizations operate without their own revenue streams.

Fourth, how do intermediary organizations fare over the long term? Will intermediary organizations evolve, change, and possibly die over time as sites and central offices enhance their own resources and change their practice? Will sites and central offices become over-reliant on intermediary organizations and avoid building the necessary knowledge, ties, and tools themselves? Will dedicated funding over the long term help or make matters worse? These questions seem imperative given that a main function of intermediary organizations is to enable changes in other organizations not to establish intermediary organizations for their own sake. Various studies of organizational growth have suggested that over time organizations tend to perpetuate their own existence even after they have outlasted their use. Will intermediary organizations display similar tendencies?

Finally, as intermediary organizations become more prominent participants in education policy implementation and future research elaborates their processes, researchers must attend to questions of success and failure: on what basis shall the success and failure of intermediary organizations be judged? This study provides some initial definitions, parameters, and propositions that can help frame such an inquiry. In particular, this study emphasizes that intermediary organizations inherently are dependent on other parties for the definition and execution of their core functions— a dependency that will challenge researchers who aim to develop discrete measures of intermediary organizations' specific added value in various contexts. Regardless of future discoveries about intermediary organizations' success or failure, research on these organizations promises to shed new light on how policy implementation unfolds, who participates, and how it should be measured.

APPENDIX

TABLE A1
Distribution of Meeting Observations

FORMAL INTERMEDIARY MEETINGS	Frequency of meetings	Hours of direct observations	Range of direct observations	Range of record data (hours)[a]
Staff Group (Healthy Start)	Monthly	12.5	12.11.98-1.31.00	11.25.98-11.23.99 (19)
Citizens Group	Semi-monthly	31	11.24.98-3.8.00	7.15.98-3.8.00 (55)
Staff Group (Village Center Initiative)	Weekly	43	12.11.98-10.19.99	3.9.99-12.15.99 (10)
Directors Group	Monthly	17	9.16.99-3.2.00	2.4.99-7.19.99 (10)
TOTAL		103.5		92
INFORMAL SETTINGS				
Conversations and observations between meetings	Ongoing			
OTHER MEETINGS				
City Council		3	10.26.99	0
School Board		16	10.27-28.99; 1.31.00	0
Mayor's Ed Commission		33	6.23.99-9.13.99	0
GRAND TOTAL		**155.5**		

[a] Meetings analyzed through official minutes not direct observation. Number of hours in parentheses indicates the number of meeting hours captured in the official minutes.

Table A2
Distribution of Interviews

Individual	Intermediary Affiliation(s)				Other affiliations	No. of Interviews
	Staff Group (Healthy Start)	Citizens Group	Staff Group (Village Center Initiative)	Directors Group		
A			X		Central Office	2
B	X				Central Office	2
C	X				Central Office	1
D			X		Central Office	2
E			X		Central Office	1
F					Central Office	1
G				X	Central Office	1
H					Central Office	1
I	X	X	X		Central Office→Non-profit[a]	2
J					Site	1
K	X				Site	1
L	X				Site	1
M			X		Site	1
N			X		Site	2
O			X		Site	2
P			X		Site	1
Q	X				Site→Alameda County	2
R					Alameda County	1
S			X		Non-profit Organization	1
T			X		Non-profit Organization	1
U		X	X	X	Non-profit Organization	1
V		X	X	X	Non-profit Organization	1
W					School Board	1
X				X	School Board	1
Y				X	School Board	1
Z					City of Oakland	1
AA		X	X	X	City of Oakland	2
BB				X	City of Oakland	2
CC					City of Oakland	1
DD					City of Oakland	1
EE					City of Oakland	1
FF		X			City of Oakland	1
GG		X			City Council	1
TOTAL: 33	6	6	13	7		42

[a] Denotes a change of affiliation during the study period

Table 1. Oakland's Intermediary Organizations[6]

CENTRAL OFFICE MEMBERS	INTER-MEDIARY ORGAN-IZATION	SITE MEMBERS	OTHER	INTERMEDIARY DIMENSIONS				
				Mediated between Central Office and Sites?	Membership (M) or Dedicated Staff (DS)	Location	Scope of Work	Funding Source
2 Frontline Administrators	**"Staff Group" (Healthy Start)**	Representatives from 3-6 school-community partnership sites	County Services Agencies	YES	MEMBERSHIP	INTERNAL	OAKLAND	PUBLIC (federal revenue; state grants) PRIVATE (non-profit agency funds)
1 Frontline Administrator	**"Staff Group" (Village Centers)**	Representatives from 3 school-community partnership sites	County Services Agencies City Manager's Office	YES	MEMBERSHIP	INTERNAL	OAKLAND	PUBLIC (central office funds) PRIVATE (foundation and non-profit agency funds)
2 Oakland School Board Members 1 Senior Central Office Administrator (Superintendent)	**"Directors Group"**	Faith-based organization representative 2 Representatives from community-based services organizations Parent Advocate Youth	County (Services Agencies and Supervisors) City (Attorney General's, Mayor's, and Vice Mayor's Offices) Oakland Children's Hospital	YES	MEMBERSHIP	INTERNAL	OAKLAND	PUBLIC (redirected public agency resources) PRIVATE (foundation and non-profit agency funds)
NONE	**"Citizens Group"**	NONE	CITY COUNCIL/ MAYOR appoint citizen members	YES	MEMBERSHIP	INTERNAL	OAKLAND	PUBLIC (city parcel tax)

Table 2. Oakland's Collaborative Education Policies

	INITIAL IMPLEN-TATION YEAR	INITIAL FUNDER	POLICY DECRIPTION	SCOPE
Healthy Start	1992	STATE—California Department of Education	School-community partnerships: assess community needs/strengths; develop local education goals; devise strategies to reorganize, coordinate, and strengthen school/community programs to achieve local goals. Emphasis on school-linked case management services.	1,244 schools statewide (~20% of California's public schools) 16 Oakland schools (18% of Oakland's public schools) Up to $400,000/site over 3 years
Oakland Fund for Children & Youth	1996	CITY—Dedicated set aside of the city general fund	Applicants develop local goals related to youth development and education and devise strategies for reorganizing, coordinating, and strengthening existing school and community programs to achieve goals.	24 schools citywide (26% of Oakland's public schools)[7] ~$5.7 million/year for each of 12 years
Village Center Initiative	1998	NATIONAL PRIVATE FOUNDATION	School-community partnerships: assess community needs/strengths; develop local education goals; devise strategies to reorganize, coordinate, and strengthen school/community programs to achieve local goals. Emphasis on school-linked youth development programs and transforming schools into community centers.	24 schools citywide (26% of Oakland's public schools)[8] ~$5.7 million/year for each of 12 years
Oakland Child Health & Safety Initiative	1998	NATIONAL PRIVATE FOUNDATION	Oakland's implementation plan proposed to support implementation of Village Centers citywide as a primary strategy for improving these outcomes. (See Village Center Initiative above.) Emphasis on reform of the district central office and other public systems.	5 cities nationwide 15 centers (proposed) including all Oakland middle schools ~$1 million over 3 years

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[1] See for example: Cibulka & Kritek, 1996; Mawhinney & Smrekar, 1996; Smylie & Crowson, 1996; Smylie, Crowson, Chou, & Levin, 1994; Marsh, 2003.

[2] I elaborate on these demands in two separate papers (Honig, 2001a, 2001b).

[3] Filling member vacancies appeared as the most frequently discussed topic for the Citizens Group. As discussed later, the most frequent topic for the Directors Group concerned how to negotiate their mission with their national funder.

[4] Elsewhere I have called this tradeoff the "paradox of the periphery" (Honig, 2003).

[5] Respondents' most frequent comment about the Citizens Group concerned members' inexperience with site implementation. Several respondents noted and reviews of meeting minutes and group procedures confirmed that city laws regarding conflicts of interest barred individuals from serving on the Citizens Group if they had personal or professional ties to implementing sites or other investments in the futures of their potential grant recipients.

[6] Institutional and individual membership changed over the course of each organization's life. The rosters in this chart indicated the roles most frequently represented in each organization between 1998-2000.

[7] Measures of school involvement in the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth were only available for 2001-2002. Staff estimate that these figures have remained fairly consistent since 1997. These counts indicate programs provided on a school site not other school-linkages (e.g., recruiting from schools, collaborations with schools not involving the provision of programs in a school facility) and therefore comprise conservative estimates of school involvement.

[8] Measures of school involvement in the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth were only available for 2001-2002. Staff estimated that these figures have remained fairly consistent since 1997. These counts indicate programs provided on a school site not other school-linkages (e.g., recruiting from schools, collaborations with schools not involving the provision of programs in a school facility) and therefore comprise conservative estimates of school involvement.