Draft Final Report

Evaluation of the NH Alliance for Effective Schools School Improvement Program (SIP)

NOT FOR GENERAL RELEASE

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I. INTRODUCTION

This section of the final evaluation report on the NH Alliance for Effective School's School Improvement Program (SIP) discusses the purpose of this report and provides a brief background to SIP and the assumptions on which it is based. It also details the key elements of SIP, which are one of the subjects of this evaluation.

Report Status and Intent

This document describes an evaluation of the NH Alliance School Improvement Program (SIP) that was carried out by RMC Research Corporation between April, 1992 and January, 1993. It is intended to serve three primary purposes. The first is to report on the impact that SIP has had on participating schools. The second is to describe the influence that component parts of SIP have had on that impact in order to assist the NH Alliance to continue its efforts to modify SIP to make it more responsive to the needs of New Hampshire's schools and to meet the intent of the program's funders: the New Hampshire State Legislature and State Department of Education. The third is to create the baseline for an annual reporting and monitoring program that the NH Alliance will carry out with the assistance of the New Hampshire Business Round Table (BRT).

This final evaluation report follows an interim report that was presented to the NH Alliance in June, 1992, which described evaluation activities to that date and contained a set of preliminary conclusions. That report, together with recommendations from two previous evaluations of SIP[1], resulted in a decision by the NH Alliance to create a work group to define a "second generation" of SIP. To facilitate that process, RMC Research has informally informed the NH Alliance of evaluation outcomes as they have become available. Final analysis of all evaluation data was not completed until the week before the report was delivered however, so the final evaluation report will provide a document against which the NH Alliance can validate or question final recommendations of the "second generation" SIP work group.

SIP Background and Goals

The New Hampshire Alliance consists of traditionally independent groups who came together in April, 1986 and resolved to collaborate to improve education in New Hampshire's schools. By February, 1988, eighteen organizations in the state had joined to form the Alliance for Effective Schools and incorporated as a non-profit, in order to make their resolution a reality. Then Governor John Sununu held a press conference on June 13, 1988 to announce the first ten schools to be accepted into the SIP program. To date, forty-three schools, serving over 23,000 students have participated in SIP: twenty elementary schools, six middle and junior high schools, nine high schools, and one K-12 school. (See Appendix A for a complete listing of schools and their dates of entry into the program.) The seven schools that entered the program in 1992 were not included in the evaluation at all. They have just received their profiles. The six that entered the program in 1991 are not included in the data analysis because they had not completed action plans by the time the analysis took place. Neither were they included in the population from which schools were selected for site visits. (Throughout this report schools are described as SIP schools whether they have completed the three years of formal participation in the program or not, unless they have formally withdrawn from SIP.)

The SIP model is based on an extensive effective schools research base. A recent research synthesis of the characteristics of effective schools[2] for instance, draws on more than 800 research studies and summaries. Most of these are correlational studies of the attributes of schools in which all children learn and succeed, not just those who are from a relatively high socio-economic background, or whose parents are well educated.

The NH Alliance used the effective schools research to arrive at several assumptions that provide the "common ground" for its SIP activities. These assumptions, which are described in NH Alliance literature are that:

- It is in the best interest of everyone to work cooperatively for school improvement.

- There is a convincing body of research describing the characteristics of effective schools.
- More is known about educational effectiveness than is presently used.
- Although school effectiveness is influenced by many factors, it is clear that participatory management, collaborative decision making, and clearly defined purposes are essential. Organizations involved in school improvement must model these principles.

The NH Alliance literature also describes the two complementary strands that form the foundation of SIP:

> One is the **CONTENT** strand, which is based upon research describing the characteristics of effective schools... The other, the **PROCESS** strand, addresses the problem of <u>how</u> to bring about these desired changes. [The SIP] process begins with the collaborative school's team of stakeholders, their joint application, orientation, and summer training... The goal is to institutionalize the process: analyzing needs, making improvements, assessing the effects of these improvements on the school and on student outcomes, and going on to the next area of need and improvement.[3]

Both strands are deemed equally necessary by the NH Alliance for the success of each school's improvement program.

<u>SIP Elements</u>

While staff of schools that join SIP are given the freedom to determine how they will proceed to make their schools more effective, the NH Alliance provides all SIP member schools with the same set of services to promote the SIP goals described above. These services consist of:

<u>Creation of a school profile</u>
This consists of an analysis of student outcome data; parent, staff and student opinions gathered through questionnaires and interviews; and an analysis of the school mission, goals, policies and procedures to determine if they exist, and if they do exist, their characteristics and whether they have been implemented. The school profile is designed to provide the SIP team with comprehensive 'objective' data about their school that can serve as the basis for determining priorities for school change efforts. Until this year, school profile data was all collected by an external third party.

Creation of a school-based SIP team

This team must include representatives from parents, school staff, administration and the school board. It is this team that, with outside assistance from the NH Alliance, has overall responsibility for planning and implementing change that will make the school more effective. Each team is provided with funding for stipends to cover participation in team meetings that are held, at times, outside those defined as normal working hours in the local teacher's contract.

Provision of training to the SIP team

All SIP team members participate in a summer institute and subsequent in-service training in effective schools research and group process. They are taught techniques for 'mining' or analyzing the school profile, for planning school improvement goals and activities, and also process skills that will enable them to function as an effective group.

External facilitation

Each school is assigned a professional facilitator who meets regularly with the SIP team, provides them with ready access to process skills, and also helps them design an action plan. The facilitator is the primary link between the school and the NH Alliance office staff.

Action planning process

Each school that engages in SIP is expected to create and document an action plan consisting of goals, activities that will be undertaken to achieve those goals, and outcome measures of those goals and activities. These goals and activities are determined by the local school, which is expected to bring the school into alignment with those characteristics demonstrated by effective schools.

Technical assistance

Each SIP school is allocated funds that can be used for technical assistance. This provides each school with the opportunity to access outside expertise in either the planning or implementation phases of the change process.

Workshops and networking

The NH Alliance provides workshops to which all SIP schools are invited and also promotes networking between schools in order to expand the awareness and understanding that individual SIP teams have about school change and effective schools.

II. AN OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

In this section of the report, RMC sets out the principal evaluation questions to be addressed in this study, and briefly describes each of the components of the evaluation. Subsequent sections of the report provide more detailed descriptions of each component of the evaluation, including the:

- consultation process;
- administration and analysis of a survey questionnaire to SIP school staff;
- analysis of NH Alliance documentation of SIP school activities and reports of actual activities from a sample of SIP schools;
- interview of a sample of SIP facilitators; and
- site visits to a sample of SIP schools.

Purpose

The activities described in this evaluation report comprise the first steps towards building an objective, viable, outcome driven process for evaluating SIP that will:

- provide information to modify the SIP process; and
- inform local, state and national audiences about the accomplishments and outcomes of SIP.

This broad purpose has been translated into several objectives that have shaped the design and implementation of RMC Research Corporation's evaluation activities described in this report. The principle evaluation questions addressed by RMC in this first year of activity are the following:

Level of implementation
Were the services delivered to schools by the NH Alliance through SIP delivered in a timely fashion, were they perceived to be of high quality, and were these services useful in planning and implementing changes in the schools? Has the SIP team and the school improvement process become institutionalized in the school over time?

Soundness of SIP elements
Are the services provided through SIP those most needed by member schools seeking to improve their educational effectiveness? Do the processes put in place through SIP promote change and increase congruence with the factors research says are associated with effective schools? Are there barriers to the use of SIP services or the elements of SIP that the NH Alliance should take into account?

Performance outcomes
What changes in SIP schools can be attributed to SIP, and what are the nature of these changes? Are they superficial, or is there evidence that they will lead to long-term improvement in instruction and student learning? Are there indicators of change in instruction or student learning, and are there improvements in student outcomes at SIP schools? Is there any evidence that a school must have engaged in SIP for a minimum period of time before changes in student outcomes can be expected?

Adequacy of existing documentation and monitoring systems
Do schools monitor change efforts in a way that enables them to judge the efficacy of their activities? Does the current documentation system enable the NH Alliance to monitor change and program outcomes at SIP schools? What is the impact of the current documentation system on the SIP process?

Components of the Evaluation

Consultation. RMC's approach to defining the evaluation content and questions was designed to be congruent with the philosophical approach that the NH Alliance adopted for SIP. As a consequence it was determined that significant stakeholders in the process should be consulted in the evaluation design and that, to the degree to which they were willing, they should be engaged in ongoing consultation about its outcomes and about ways in which the evaluation and monitoring process should be modified to address the changing needs of the state's decision makers. It was recognized that the availability of data from which conclusions can be drawn will determine the extent to which questions about program outcomes can be answered, but in the longer term, engaging in discussions about the information needs of decision makers at all levels will fashion the types and quality of outcome data that are collected.

As a consequence, RMC Research staff met with several groups both within and outside the NH Alliance to discuss the evaluation. Within the NH Alliance this discussion began with the SIP Evaluation Committee, which has been responsible for guiding this stage of the evaluation,

and included discussions with the NH Alliance Board and the SIP facilitators, who meet regularly to plan SIP activities. RMC Research staff also met with interested legislators, staff from the NH Department of Education, the Commissioner of Education, and the NH State Board of Education.

Sample survey. In late May and early June, RMC Research designed and conducted a mail survey of staff in all SIP schools. Questionnaires were sent to all SIP team members, and to a random sample of teachers in SIP schools who were not members of the SIP team. Principals in SIP schools were also asked to complete a brief additional questionnaire.

The survey was designed to gather data on attitudes towards SIP, the degree to which respondents consider SIP has been integrated into the life of the school, and opinions about the outcomes of the SIP program to this point in time. Schools have participated in SIP for a range of one to three years, so the survey was designed to assess the impact of length of participation on these factors. Further description of the school survey, its design, and an analysis of findings follows in Section IV.

School activities analysis. A second component of the evaluation consisted of a review of documentation that describes the activities that schools have undertaken as a result of their participation in SIP. As part of SIP, all schools are asked to complete action plans that describe the activities they will undertake to attain school improvement goals. They are asked to submit copies of these action plans and semi-annual and annual progress reports to the NH Alliance. These written records were found to be incomplete however, and consequently RMC's document analysis was conducted in two stages. The first consisted of an analysis of NH Alliance records to determine what information has been documented and reported. The second stage of the analysis consisted of sending a summary of this information back to a sample of SIP teams using the facilitators that worked with them, asking them to review it for accuracy, and to add descriptions of activities that are outcomes of the SIP process that have not been previously documented. SIP

facilitators were trained by RMC to work with the schools to assist them in accurately completing the documentation.

In addition to providing a comprehensive description of activities undertaken by school staff as a result of SIP, this information also:

- provided information on the adequacy of NH Alliance records;
- enabled a more thorough description of the types of activities in which schools have engaged as a result of the SIP process;
- assessed the extent to which reported activities matched the needs or concerns raised through the profiling process;
- enabled an analysis of the relative complexity of reported change activities proposed and carried out as a result of SIP; and
- provided information on the extent to which school change and student outcomes have been monitored by SIP schools.

Analysis and findings from this portion of the evaluation are presented in Section V.

SIP facilitator interviews. Over the years SIP has attracted a cadre of organizational development consultants with experience in both business and education who have served as SIP facilitators. Most of these consultants have worked with several SIP schools, and consequently have extensive and detailed knowledge and experience about SIP activities. RMC Research conducted structured telephone interviews with a sample of ten of these facilitators to gain insight into the assumptions they have made as they facilitated SIP in the schools, about the strategies they used, and the patterns and issues they have observed in facilitating educational change in SIP schools. The results of facilitator interviews are presented in Section VI.

School site visits. Completion of the two evaluation activities just described resulted in the selection of schools for site visits. RMC visited eight schools that appeared likely to have substantive outcomes in order to obtain a more detailed insight into SIP and its influence on organizational, instructional and student learning outcomes. The primary questions asked at these schools were:

- What changes in student performance, teacher performance, school climate and school organization have occurred at these schools since they entered SIP?

- What can be learned about ways of utilizing SIP more effectively for school improvement in New Hampshire from the history of each school's involvement in the program?

- To what extent did schools with documented outcomes increasingly demonstrate the factors found in effective schools?

- What is the history of change in each school since the initiation of SIP, and what can be learned about patterns of change in these schools from their case histories.

- What strategies have SIP schools used to communicate to their communities about SIP, and what has been the impact of these strategies?

RMC will also visited two schools where there was minimal evidence of impact as a result of participation in SIP. The questions addressed in these schools were:

- What is the history of those schools that did not find SIP an intervention that promoted increased attention to educational outcomes or increased congruence with those factors found in effective schools?

- What SIP elements and school- or system-level barriers contributed to the low impact of SIP?

Each school in each category was visited by RMC staff who interviewed school staff and district administration, and reviewed pertinent school records. The analysis and findings of this aspect of the evaluation are reported in Section VII.

III. CONSULTATION

This section briefly describes the consultation process in which RMC Research engaged to initiate a dialogue about an evaluation and monitoring process for SIP. This was pursued with two immediate purposes in mind: learning from those engaged in SIP about the issues that most require elucidation through evaluation, and developing a set of responses that will inform the audience for the evaluation about the issues about which they are most concerned.

Consultation within the NH Alliance

NH Alliance Evaluation Committee. The details of the evaluation have been designed in ongoing consultation with the NH Alliance Evaluation Committee, a sub-committee of the NH Alliance Board. The committee emphasized that the evaluation should attempt to assess school and student outcomes of SIP. In response to that, RMC Research proposed to the committee a three stage evaluation consisting of:

- A survey of all staff of schools that are or have been in SIP. This survey would build on similar surveys developed by previous evaluators who conducted an initial evaluation of SIP and would assess SIP team and non-SIP team member's attitudes towards the different components of SIP.

- A comprehensive analysis of NH Alliance documentation of action plans and other reports from SIP member schools that would permit a paper review of the activities undertaken by SIP schools and provide information that would serve as the basis for selecting schools for on-site visits.

- Site visits to those schools that were most likely to reveal outcome data, and to a smaller group of schools at which there was the least evidence that SIP had made a significant impact. Those sites at which there was likely to be outcome data would serve as the best source for information about collecting that data. Those at which it appeared there had been little impact would be a source of information about sites that were not suitable for SIP, or components of SIP that should be changed to make it more universally effective.

The Evaluation Committee recommended the addition of a second stage to the documentation analysis since it was known that NH Alliance records were incomplete. Consequently it was suggested that a synopsis of records be sent to all SIP teams, and that they,

with assistance from their facilitator, be asked to confirm them, correct them, and add activities that had not been included in the documentation on file with the NH Alliance.

In order to provide a contextual sense of the program and outcomes, the Evaluation Committee requested that site visits document not only student and program outcomes of SIP, but should also describe the history of each school's involvement in SIP.

NH Alliance Facilitators. Two meetings were held with SIP school facilitators. At the first, the principles of the approach that would be taken to obtain additional information on SIP school activities were developed. At the second, the details of implementing the plan for obtaining comprehensive information on SIP-related school change activities were discussed, and the role of the facilitators in obtaining that information agreed upon. Out of these discussions came the decision to interview facilitators about their role in the implementation of SIP.

NH Alliance Board. Two consultative meetings were held with the NH Alliance Board. The first consisted of a brief overview of the intent of the proposed evaluation. The second, which was held after the details of the current evaluation design had been developed, extended to a broader discussion of the purposes of the evaluation and of ways in which the organizations that make up the NH Alliance could contribute to and extend the impact of SIP. The NH Alliance Board expressed the wish that the evaluation provide information that would feed an ongoing discussion on how member organizations might better coordinate their activities in a way that would contribute to SIP.

NH Alliance Staff. NH Alliance staff members contributed to the discussion of the Evaluation Committee, and also contributed to the design of the evaluation in less formal forums. They continued to be involved in discussions about the process of the evaluation, assisting in the document review process and selection of schools for site visits. They were also informed of evaluation outcomes as they became available where these were likely to influence the creation of a "second generation" SIP.

Consultation Outside the NH Alliance

NH State Representatives. On May 6, RMC Research staff met with members of the House Education Committee to present the objectives of the evaluation and to hear from them the questions they would like to have addressed. The legislators recommended that the evaluation directly address the issues raised by the State Board of Education in its evaluation of SIP, document changes in the program over time, and the degree to which SIP had been responsive to the needs of schools over time. They recommended that the evaluators investigate the extent to which community members (and parents in particular) who have not participated in SIP are aware of it's presence or the impact of its activities.

They also requested that RMC Research address the issue of how to extend SIP to all schools in the state. The rate of program expansion with the current model is, in their opinion, relatively slow, and will not directly impact the whole state in a reasonable period of time. An evaluation of the extent of change in SIP over time and some questions on SIP community awareness activities were incorporated into site visits.

NH Department of Education. Two meetings were held with the Department of Education. One was with Charles Marston, the Commissioner of Education, and the other was with the staff of the Curriculum Division of the Department. The results of these meetings suggested that the following be addressed in the SIP evaluation:

- a look at the role of leadership, particularly principal tenure and the rapid turnover of principals in NH schools, and also the role of the school board and parental leadership;
- issues of team selection and level of support for SIP among the entire faculty;
- teacher empowerment;
- the extent to which SIP schools address instructional issues;
- the tendency of SIP teams to become isolated from the rest of the school staff;
- the extent to which SIP schools have become more politically sensitive and politically viable in their communities;

- the ways in which school budgets reflect the impact of SIP and consequent support for SIP; and
- a variety of other issues such as differences in impact between elementary, middle and high schools, the impact of changing demographics in New Hampshire, and differences between rural and urban schools.

State Board of Education. RMC Research staff met with the State Board of Education at an informal session. Members of the State Board emphasized their interest in the program, and particularly, in student outcomes resulting from SIP, including an interest in whether or not SIP schools were focussing on broad system changes that would be likely to result in long term improvements in student performance. They also expressed concern about the cost of SIP. The program competes for scarce state dollars, consequently the State Board of Education feels that it needs to be assured that funds allocated to SIP are spent in a way that promotes effective and efficient change in New Hampshire schools. The current evaluation design did not extend to an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of SIP.

IV. SCHOOL SURVEY

RMC Research administered two similar questionnaires to staff in schools who have participated in SIP (and have completed the program) or are currently in SIP. An extensive 90-item questionnaire was sent to members of the SIP team (SIP team) at each SIP school and a second abbreviated 54-item questionnaire was completed by a random sample of school personnel who were not on the SIP team (non-SIP team).

Questionnaires were returned either directly to RMC Research Corporation in envelopes provided or were returned to the school principal who in turn forwarded entire packets of questionnaires to RMC Research. Thirty-one packets of questionnaires were sent to SIP schools and 30 were returned, yielding a return rate of 97%. Overall, 197 SIP team questionnaires and 268 non-SIP team questionnaires were received at RMC Research.[4]

This section describes the content of each questionnaire. A description of an analysis of the survey data follows. Responses have been analyzed by school type (elementary, middle and high), SIP team membership, and date of entry into SIP.

Content of the Questionnaires

The questionnaires for the SIP team and the non-SIP team include three scales: a SIP attitude scale, a school change awareness scale, and a control scale. Each is described below. In addition, both questionnaires contain items that were unique to either the SIP team members or the non-SIP team personnel. Descriptions of the scales and the elements contained in the questionnaires are provided below. Copies of the questionnaires are provided in Appendix D.

SIP attitude scale. A 17-item scale was designed to assess the attitudes of school personnel toward the SIP. The scale was sent to both SIP and non-SIP team members at participating SIP schools. School personnel responded by circling one of five responses (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or undecided) to statements regarding the relationship of

SIP to school related events, outcomes, processes, and personnel (items 1-17 on SIP questionnaire; items 14-30 on non-SIP questionnaire). A summary score indicates the basic attitude of respondents about SIP in their school. Analyses of responses from 395 school personnel indicate that the data are highly reliable (Cronbach's alpha=.95) and that the scale measures a single attitude construct.

School change awareness scale. A 17-item scale was designed to assess the perceived positive change in the school relative to effective schools and systemic reform practices. The scale was sent to both SIP and non-SIP team members at participating SIP schools. School personnel responded by circling one of five responses (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or undecided) to statements about positive change in schools.

The statements (items 18-34 on the SIP questionnaire; items 31-47 on the non-SIP questionnaire) address the extent to which the respondents perceive change in the indicators of school effectiveness specified in the SIP model. Several statements addressed perceived changes in systemic processes related to school reform. A summary score indicates perception of positive change relative to indicators of effectiveness. Analyses of responses from 406 school personnel indicate that the data are highly reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .94) and the scale measures a single change construct.

Personal control scale. A 7-item control scale was adapted from Neal and Seeman's (1964) *Powerlessness scale*.[5] The Control scale measures subjectively held probabilities that school outcomes can be affected by individuals acting within the school system. The scale was administered to both SIP and non-SIP personnel (items 35-41 on SIP questionnaire; items 48-54 on non-SIP questionnaire). A summary score indicates the perception of control over school-related activities or events. Data from 283 respondents indicate moderate reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .69).

SIP awareness scale. A 13-item scale was constructed to measure the general awareness of SIP by non-SIP team staff. The scale assesses the awareness of those not formally members on the SIP team regarding their knowledge of SIP events, persons, and processes. A summary score indicates the general awareness of SIP in the school. Responses from 222 non-SIP team members (to items 1-13 on the non-SIP team scale) indicate good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .82).

SIP elements. SIP team members responded to questions addressing the quality of implementation and effectiveness of the elements of SIP. These elements include the school profile, the SIP team, the SIP Institute, SIP facilitation, the action plan, technical assistance, and workshops and networking. Responses provided information on various dimensions of SIP elements related to timeliness of implementation and effectiveness, the relative importance of the various elements to the SIP process, and the value of different types of data to the needs of schools.

Survey Findings: Attitudes, Awareness of Change, Perceptions of Personal Control, and SIP Awareness

Using questionnaire data, we examined how perceptions and attitudes of school personnel vary with different school situations related to SIP. We examined how the date of entry of a school into SIP, the type of school (elementary, middle, high), and SIP team membership affect attitudes toward SIP, awareness of school change, and perceptions of personal control. We also examined the extent to which non-SIP team members are aware of SIP events, activities, processes and relations. SIP awareness for school personnel who are not SIP team members (non-SIP team) is analyzed and reported by the type of school (elementary, middle, and secondary) and date of entry of schools into the SIP program.

Variations in attitudes, awareness of change, perceptions of personal control, and SIP awareness by school level. Schools were categorized as elementary, middle, or secondary. All but one school fell neatly into these categories. Analyses indicate that school level contributes little,

if anything, to the variation in attitudes and perceptions of SIP. Figure 1 (Appendix B) shows the means and standard deviations for measures of **SIP attitudes, Awareness of Change, Control,** and **Awareness of SIP** by school level. Analyses of variance (ANOVA) indicate that no mean differences are evident on any measure as a function of school level (alpha = .05).

Variations in attitudes, awareness of change, perceptions of personal control and SIP awareness by date of entry into SIP. The SIP program came into existence prior to the 1987-88 school year. Since then schools have joined the SIP in five groups. Because each group is characterized by the time it joined SIP, we are able to compare attitudes towards, and perceptions of, SIP by the date of entry into SIP. Table 1 (below) identifies each group by number and indicates the date of entry into SIP as well as the date the group will complete three years of SIP participation.

Table 1: School Groupings by Date of Entry into SIP

Group Number	Date of Entry	Date of Completion
1	July 1991	June 1994
2	July 1990	June 1993
3	July 1989	June 1992
4	January 1988	December 1991
5	July 1988	June 1991

Figure 2, Appendix B, presents differences in SIP attitudes, awareness of change, personal control, and awareness of SIP according to the date of entry (SIP group) into the program.

The findings are summarized as follows:

- Respondents from Group 2 schools indicate a less favorable attitude toward SIP than respondents from Group 1 or Group 4 schools. Except for Group 2, no statistically significant differences in attitude toward SIP are evident for respondents from the other four groups.
- Respondents from Group 4 perceive that their schools became more effective than respondents from Group 2. Although an upward trend in awareness for all groups is apparent from Figure 2B, with the exception of the Groups 2 and 4, no statistically significant differences in mean scores are found.
- No statistically significant differences in perceptions of personal control are found between groups.
- Non-SIP team school staff in Group 1 schools are more aware of SIP events, persons and processes than non-SIP team staff from Group 3 and Group 5 schools.

Figure 2A depicts the differences in attitudes toward SIP as a function of date of entry into SIP. ANOVA indicate that groups differ in attitudes toward SIP, $F(4,217) = 6.6$, $p<.001$. Post hoc Scheffe tests (alpha = .05) show that respondents from Group 2 schools have a less favorable attitude toward SIP than respondents from Group 1 or Group 4 schools. Except for respondents from Group 2 schools, no statistically significant differences in attitude toward SIP are evident for respondents from the other four groups.

Figure 2B shows differences in perception of positive change as a function of date of entry into SIP. ANOVA indicate that perception of change is different for various groups, $F(4,405) = 3.4$, $p<.01$. The effects are relatively small, however; Scheffe tests (alpha = .08) indicate that only two groups differ. Respondents from Group 4 schools show a perception of greater change than respondents from Group 2. Thus, although an upward trend in perception of change is suggested by the figure, with the exception of two groups, the magnitude of the difference is small and not statistically significant.

Figure 2C shows differences in control as a function of date of entry into SIP. ANOVA reveal no statistically significant group differences in control. Thus, perceptions of control over school events do not vary with date of entry into SIP.

Figure 2D presents differences in SIP awareness for non-SIP team members as a function of date of entry into SIP. The graph indicates a general decrease in awareness with the passage of time for those not on the SIP team. ANOVA indicate reliable differences among groups, $F(4,221) = 6.6$, $p<.001$. Post hoc Scheffe tests show, however, that reliably greater SIP awareness scores are evident only when comparing the means of respondents from Group 1 schools to the means of respondents from Group 3 or Group 5 schools. Mean scores of non-SIP team respondents from Group 4 and Group 2 are not significantly different from other groups.

Influence of SIP team membership on attitudes, awareness of change, perceptions of personal control. How does SIP team membership influence attitudes about SIP, perceptions of school change, and personal control over school-related issues? Results indicate that, compared to non-SIP team members, SIP team members exhibit more favorable attitudes toward SIP, perceive more positive change occurring in the school, and feel more personal control over school-related events.

Figure 3 depicts differences between SIP team members and non-SIP team members on measures of attitude toward SIP, awareness of school change, and control. Figure 3A shows that SIP team members responded with a more favorable attitude toward SIP than those who are not team members, $t(394) = 9.17$, $p<.001$. Figure 3B indicates that SIP team members perceive more positive change occurring in school, $t(405) = 5.74$, $p<.001$. Figure 3C indicates that SIP team members perceive more personal control over school related events than those not on the SIP team, $t(281) = 5.07$, $p<.001$.

Survey Findings: The Elements of SIP

In this section, we examine data provided by SIP team members regarding the utility and implementation of the seven SIP elements characterized in this evaluation. The discussion reports percentages of respondents agreeing, disagreeing or having no opinion to questions about the elements of SIP. It is important to note that if 50% of respondents agree or strongly agree with a statement about SIP, this does not represent a strong positive (or negative) response; half the respondents do not have this view. Only responses with a percentage substantially above 50, say 65 to 75 percent, represent a strong endorsement (or rebuttal) of a questionnaire item.

The SIP team. The SIP team was rated the most important SIP element by 56% of respondents, and 90% of respondents rate the team as one of the top three elements).

We investigated aspects of the SIP team functioning by asking team members about changes in functioning and the team's representation in the school and community. Other questions relating to SIP team functioning are discussed elsewhere under other topics, e.g., some questions regarding SIP facilitation address the functioning of the SIP team.

We found that enthusiasm on the SIP team has increased and decreased with approximately the same frequency; 25% indicated that enthusiasm has not changed over time (Table 1, Appendix C). The SIP team is perceived as having become more effective over time in meeting the needs of the school with more than 77% saying the team has increased in effectiveness (Table 2, Appendix C). In addition, members feel that teams are changing in a positive manner in meeting school needs in a timely fashion (Table 3, Appendix C). Although more than 44% of team members feel that changes in team membership have not affected SIP process and functioning, 32% disagree and 22% are undecided about the effects of changing membership (Table 4, Appendix C).

SIP team members feel that, for the most part, the team represents the different interest groups in the community (63% agree; Table 5, Appendix C) and feel even more strongly that the

various school system interest groups and stakeholders are represented (85.8% agree; Table 6, Appendix C).

In sum, members of the SIP team feel that the team is constituted in such a way as to represent adequately both the community and the school. It is apparent that changes in team membership have some negative impact on team functioning and that enthusiasm has both increased and decreased over time. The team members report positive changes, however, in the way the SIP teams have met school needs and have perceived positive changes in the timeliness of the SIP in meeting those needs.

The SIP Institute. The SIP Institute was rated among the top three most important elements of SIP by more than 56% of SIP team members; 20.4% rated the Institute the number one element.

More than 84% of respondents agreed with the notion that the Institute aided in the development of basic skills that are important to the effective functioning of SIP (Table 7, Appendix C), and more than two-thirds felt that the Institute's training was enduring over time (Table 8, Appendix C). Although 63% felt that the SIP Institute meets the developmental needs of team members (Table 10, Appendix C), more than 80% believe that a follow-up training institute would be very useful (Table 9, Appendix C).

Outside Facilitation. The third most important element to SIP team members is external facilitation.

Almost half of team members strongly agreed that the SIP facilitator is central to the effective development of SIP teams (87.7% agreed; Table 11, Appendix C). When the statement suggested that facilitation was **not** useful in creating a fully functioning SIP team, resistance was strong (82.5% disagreed; Table 12, Appendix C). When the statement suggested that the facilitator represented an unnecessary expense to the SIP, 82.3% of respondents disagreed (Table 13, Appendix C).

In general, SIP teams thought that facilitators helped the team deal with power issues (80.3% agreed; Table 14, Appendix C), helped the team understand the group process (87.7% agreed; Table 15, Appendix C), and provided outside educational expertise (77.1% agreed; Table 16, Appendix C).

The Profile. The school profile was placed among the top three elements by 51% of the SIP team members; 24% placed it among the top two elements.

Approximately 78% of team members felt that the profile serves as a guide to school improvement (Table 17, Appendix C) and more than two-thirds think that the school has the capacity to gather data (such as that in the school profile) needed to guide effective school functioning (Table 18, Appendix C). A majority believe that the SIP team knows what type of data it needs to advance the SIP process. However, almost one-third of respondents remain undecided on this issue (Table 19, Appendix C).

SIP team members responded to questions assessing the relative value of certain types of data that might be included in future profiles or might be relevant to the SIP process. Tables 20 to 25, Appendix C, indicate that questionnaire and interview data are highly valued, followed by data regarding school policies and procedures, followed by attendance, tardiness, and vocational plans. The least valued types of data needed to advance the SIP process are student grades and standardized test scores of students.

The Action Plan. The action plan rates fifth on the list of most important SIP elements. The SIP team perceived that the action plan addresses the most important needs of the school (63% agreed; 15.5% strongly agreed; Table 26, Appendix C) and that the action plan was based on needs as revealed through the school profile (69.1% agreed; 15.5% strongly agreed; Table 27, Appendix C).

Although respondents considered the development of the action plan a group effort (85.1% agreed; Table 28, Appendix C), 37.8% disagreed and 26.3% remained undecided as to

whether all school personnel are involved in carrying out the action plan (Table 29, Appendix C). In addition, relatively large percentages of team members responded "undecided" to several statements about the plan. For example, 35% are undecided on whether modifications to the action plan were based on evaluations of the plans effectiveness (56.3% agreed; Table 30, Appendix C); 37.4 are undecided as to whether or not a method was in place to evaluate the action plan (30% thought there was no method in place; Table 31, Appendix C). Finally, the teams seem split on whether or not the action plan was too time consuming (nearly 50.1% thought it was not, 27.8% thought it was, and 22.8% remained undecided; Table 32, Appendix C).

Workshops and Networking. Workshops and networking rank 6th on the list of most important SIP elements.

When asked about the relevancy of SIP workshops, 58.1% of team members agreed that workshops are very relevant to the needs of the SIP team (34% are undecided, however; Table 33, Appendix C).

Two-thirds of the SIP team believe that workshops are easily accessed by team members (Table 34, Appendix C) and almost 80% disagreed with the notion that district policies prevented participation in workshops (only 7.8% were undecided on this issue; Table 35, Appendix C).

The SIP newsletter "Network News" is seen and read by 81.3% of SIP team members (Table 36, Appendix C) although 30.5% remain undecided as to whether it is an important source of information (47.6% agree and 10.7% strongly agree that "Network News" is an important source of information; Table 37, Appendix C).

Respondents are split on whether the team is aware of what other schools are doing in SIP (42.1% agree or strongly agree, 32.3% disagree or strongly disagree, and 25.8% are undecided; Table 38, Appendix C). A large proportion of respondents, however, disagree (47.6%) or strongly disagree (11.6%) that communication with other SIP schools is adequate (Table 39, Appendix C).

Technical Assistance. Technical assistance ranks 7th on the list of most important SIP elements.

Although SIP team members are aware of technical assistance (86% indicate awareness; Table 40, Appendix C), only 62.1% think the team is prepared to use it effectively (Table 41, Appendix C). In addition, 57.2% agreed that the team was able to discriminate between the use of facilitators and the use of technical assistance (although 29.4% are undecided; Table 42, Appendix C). More than three-fourths of the SIP team felt that more access to technical assistance will be needed in the future (Table 43, Appendix C).

V. SIP RECORDS ANALYSIS

This section begins with a description of the steps taken to analyze the NH Alliance's documentation of SIP school activities (the first stage of this activity) and to collect and analyze reports from a sample of SIP schools of the activities that they have undertaken other than those previously reported to the NH Alliance (the second stage of this activity). A discussion of the findings of this two-stage documentation analysis follows.

Purpose and Approach

NH Alliance records review. The NH Alliance SIP records analysis constituted the first step in a two stage documentation and analysis of all SIP school activities that have been planned and implemented as a direct result of SIP. The questions addressed in the first stage of this evaluation activity were:

- What do the records that the NH Alliance maintains indicate has been planned and implemented as a result of SIP?
- What is the relationship between records of planned activities and the SIP profile of each school?
- What do the records indicate about the likely complexity of planned SIP activities?
- To what extent do the records reveal that SIP schools planned to monitor either the implementation of activities or to measure outcomes of those activities?

The first step in the analysis consisted of mapping information from the school profile of each of the 30 schools in SIP that had completed the action planning process. This information was transferred onto a matrix that would serve as the basis for the records analysis. One dimension of the matrix consisted of the ten elements of effectiveness against which schools assess themselves through the SIP school profiling process. These elements include:

- program and student outcomes;
- mission, philosophy, goals, policies and procedures;

- resources;
- school program;
- instructional practices;
- staff characteristics, attitudes and relationships;
- leadership;
- school and classroom climate;
- parent participation; and
- community involvement and support.

(A sample matrix with information from a SIP school profile is shown in Appendix E.) Since there is extensive information on a school in each SIP profile, the data mapped onto this dimension of the matrix consisted only of:

- Program and student outcome data, including information on attendance, retention, suspension, dropout, and graduation rates, comments on grade performance, and three CAT mean scores - reading comprehension, math application, and math computation.
- Summary comments on the school's mission, philosophy, goals, policies and procedures.
- A listing of all school profile questions, whether from staff, students or parents, for which the mean score for the school had been less than **3.0** (on a scale of 1.0 to 5.0), a score judged by SIP to indicate that respondents considered there to be low evidence of the school's effectiveness in this area.

NH Alliance staff created folders for every SIP school, in which was placed whatever documentation had been received by the NH Alliance from that school about planned activities and reports on those activities. In general this consisted of, but was not limited to, SIP school action plan and semi-annual progress reports. Members of the NH Alliance SIP Evaluation Committee were then trained by RMC Research to use this data to assist RMC staff in completing the information matrix for each SIP school. (See Appendix F for a description of the tasks undertaken and the criteria used to complete this activity.)

NH Alliance Evaluation Committee members were included in this procedure for several reasons:

- To familiarize them with the approach that had been designed by RMC Research so they would be able to understand the implications of the analysis when it was completed.
- To give committee members a first hand knowledge of NH Alliance office records of SIP school activities.
- To facilitate the review and analysis of multiple records within a short period of time.

The analysis required reviewers to match goals and activities described in action plans and semi-annual reports with the most appropriate of the ten effective schools topic areas contained in the school profile and, where possible, to link them to questionnaire items from the profile that had a mean score below **3.0**. Once this initial activity was complete, the relative complexity of each change effort was rated (simple, complex/systematic, systemic), and the way in which the outcome for the action plan goal or activity would be documented was entered on the matrix, along with the plan for monitoring the activity's outcome, if one had been presented.

The NH Alliance Evaluation Committee spent an entire day with RMC staff on the activity. RMC Research staff subsequently completed the analysis of those schools the Committee was unable to examine.

Reports of activities from SIP schools. Following the initial analysis of school action plans and semi-annual reports by the NH Alliance Evaluation Committee and RMC Research, RMC staff met with SIP facilitators to train them in the review of the matrices and reporting of data from SIP schools in order to provide them with the knowledge required to assist schools in accurately reporting all activities, including those not currently documented, that had been completed (and their outcomes if these had been recorded) as a result of SIP. Because RMC Research had learned that in some schools SIP teams had facilitated change that was not formally identified with the SIP program for internal political reasons, the directions to schools and

facilitators explicitly included these in the definition of SIP activities. Ten schools, two that entered SIP in 1988, three that entered in 1989, and five that entered in 1990, were then selected and facilitators asked to assist them in completing the requested forms. Matrices completed by the SIP Evaluation Committee and RMC Research were sent to the schools, together with an additional blank matrix on which they were asked to briefly document activities (and their outcomes) that they had completed, or activities in which they were currently engaged, but had not reported to the NH Alliance.

Data was returned from nine of the ten schools. It was analyzed using a similar process to that used for the NH Alliance documentation so that the two data sources about each school could be compared.

Summary Discussion of Findings Related to the SIP Records Analysis

1. **There is some evidence that SIP schools generally begin by addressing issues related to school and classroom climate, parent participation, and mission, philosophy, goals, policies and procedures, and then move to addressing other SIP elements of effectiveness.**

An analysis of action plans and other data submitted to the NH Alliance revealed that the elements of effectiveness in which schools had initially most commonly planned action were school and classroom climate, parent participation, and mission, philosophy, goals, policies and procedures. Those elements of effectiveness that schools had planned initial activities to address least often were leadership, program and student outcomes, instructional practices, and staff characteristics, attitudes and relationships. Table 2 shows the number of schools addressing each one of the ten SIP elements of effectiveness.

Table 2: **No of schools reporting activities to NH Alliance, by Element of Effectiveness (N.= 30)**

SIP Element of Effectiveness	SIP Records of No. of Schools Addressing Element
Program and student outcomes	13 (43%)
Mission, philosophy, goals, policies and procedures	17 (57%)
Resources	10 (33%)
School program	16 (53%)
Instructional practices	15 (50%)
Staff characteristics, attitudes and relationships	15 (50%)
Leadership	9 (30%)
School and classroom climate	21 (70%)
Parent participation	18 (60%)
Community involvement and support	17 (57%)

An analysis of the documentation reports from the sample of nine schools that include activities planned in years after action plans were submitted revealed a much better balance of activities. Table 3 shows the elements of effectiveness addressed by each of the nine SIP schools.

Table 3: **Elements of Effectiveness Addressed by Nine SIP Schools Reporting to SIP in December 1992**

SIP Element of Effectiveness	Elements Addressed by Nine SIP Schools								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Program and student outcomes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-
Mission, philosophy, goals, policies & procedures	x	x	x	x	x	x	o	x	-
Resources	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	-	x
School program	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Instructional practices	x	x	x	-	x	x	-	x	x
Staff characteristics, attitudes and relationships	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-
Leadership	x	x	x	x	x	o	-	o	x
School and classroom climate	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Parent participation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
Community involvement and support	x	x	x	o	x	o	-	x	o

x indicates element of effectiveness addressed

o indicates element of effectiveness not addressed, but there were no profile scores below 3.0

- indicates element of effectiveness not addressed, and profile scores below 3.0

All nine of the sample schools had addressed items relating to school and classroom climate and school program, eight of the nine had addressed parent participation. Six of the nine had addressed items relating to leadership. Of the three that had not, the profiling process at two had not resulted in any items in the category with an average rating of less than **3.0** (indicating low evidence of effectiveness), and so no action was deemed necessary. Community involvement and support had been addressed by five, but of the four that had not, the profiling process at three had not resulted in any items in the category with an average rating of less than **3.0**, and so no action was deemed necessary. All other elements of effectiveness had been addressed by seven of the nine schools.

Draft Final Report

Evaluation of the NH Alliance for Effective Schools School Improvement Program (SIP)

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2. **There was little correspondence between SIP profile items with mean scores below 3.0 and the goals and activities described in initial action plans.**

RMC Research used a matrix to determine the extent to which action plan activities appeared to directly relate to those school profile items with mean scores of **3.0** or less on the SIP profile. This is the score below which the school is considered to demonstrate a low level of effectiveness related to that item. Except in one school, there appeared little direct relationship between SIP profile items and action plan activities.

A further analysis to determine if there was a correlation between the number of profile items with mean scores below 3.0 and general level of activity relating to a particular element of SIP effectiveness also revealed little correlation. Some schools with no profile items below **3.0** still reported planned goals and activities related to that element. Others with multiple items with a mean below **3.0** reported no activities to address it. This document analysis activity did not reveal whether this was because the profile served as a springboard for discussion of school dynamics that led to a deeper understanding of what was most needed to improve school effectiveness, or because many SIP teams did not use the school profile data to determine the content of action plans.

The documentation from the sample of nine SIP schools examined by RMC Research indicates that over time these schools addressed most elements of school effectiveness contained in the profile. This results in a high long-term correlation between the school SIP activities and those elements of effectiveness with scores below **3.0**, and could indicate that the profile is used as a guide to SIP-related activities in the long term. Yet reports from facilitators seem to indicate that the profile does not have a long shelf-life, and is probably not used after the first year by schools planning further SIP-related activities.

3. Most goals and resulting activities described in action plans represent relatively simple, single component responses to problems in the school.

Documentation reviewers were instructed to rate the level of complexity of each proposed action using the following descriptors:

- single component activities, which are those that address an aspect of a single indicator of effectiveness through simple interventions, and are not specifically related to actions that will address any of the other indicators;
- multiple level, complex activities, which are those that address multiple aspects of a single indicator of effectiveness through multiple activities, or that address more than one element of effectiveness, but which do not have all the components that would produce a systems change; and
- systemic action, which consists of a series of complex, integrated actions that comprehensively address a number of the elements of effectiveness and are likely to produce systemic change in the school.

Early research in school change, such as the RAND study[6] revealed that teachers were more likely to feel challenged by, and support, complex change efforts than more simple ones that did not address underlying causes. More recent literature on school and educational change has emphasized that in order to achieve lasting improvement, change must be systemic in nature.[7] Smith and O'Day,[8] for instance, argue that systemic change should address curriculum, professional development, support services for instruction, and accountability assessment systems.

RMC's analysis revealed that the overwhelming majority of planned activities that SIP teams reported were single component activities, rather than multiple-level or systemic. In other words, they appeared to address a single issue such as improving student discipline, reviewing the grading system, or developing a school-wide homework policy but did not set these activities in a context that related them to other elements of effectiveness and planned changes to increase the school's effectiveness.

In all thirty SIP schools, however, there were one or more reported examples of activities that were more than a simple, single isolated response to an indicator of effectiveness. Examples

included the development of scope and sequences in all curricula areas and a comprehensive approach to solving space problems in a school.

Ten of the thirty schools (33%) reported planned changes that could be considered to fall within the above definition of systemic change, although the amount of information from some of these schools made the interpretation tentative. Eight of the 30 SIP schools sampled (27%) reported planned activities that, while not systemic in nature, can be interpreted as complex, multiple level activities that are more than an isolated response to a single indicator of effectiveness. As an example of a multiple level complex change, one school reported plans to improve mathematics performance that included coordination of math materials, staff development for teachers on problem solving using calculators, creation of a school math club and purchase of updated mathematics text books. Another reported similar attempts to improve mathematics outcomes, including curriculum revision, staff development on a new instructional approach, re-allocation of instructional time, and involvement of parents in support for mathematics instruction.

4. **Within the sample of nine SIP schools from which updated reports on SIP activities were received, a minority of the schools have engaged in significant systemic change.**

Analysis of school reports by RMC Research indicates that three (33%) of the nine schools have engaged in activities that would seem to qualify as systemic change. One school that has completed the SIP program, for instance, has adopted a new mission, philosophy and set of school goals, institutionalized site-based management, revised its staff evaluation procedures, introduced cooperative learning and teacher planning time into the school day, revised the entire curriculum for continuity, and begun parent volunteer, and cross-age buddy programs, among other activities. The one piece missing from this systemic approach seems to be the assessment of the impact of its activities.

Some schools may need to take time to arrive at the point where they understand the power of, and see the need for, systemic change. In comments accompanying the report from another school that we judged to be not engaging in systemic change at this point (it joined SIP in 1990), a member of the SIP team states, "We are finding that all three action plans [discipline, communication, morale] are very much integrated, and any success in one area brings about success in the other areas." This comment may represent the first stages of understanding from experience that schools are "systems" and that change in schools results in complex interactions. Planners of the change process must take this complexity into account and consider the system as a whole rather than focusing on just isolated pieces.

Three (33%) of the nine schools show little sign of moving towards systemic change. In one, reports of SIP team activity would appear to indicate that the SIP team has become engaged in simply promoting the effective daily functioning of the school as it is currently organized at the request of the school administration. At another it would appear that philosophical differences between faculty and administration have not been resolved, and continue to limit the activities in which the SIP team can engage.

5. **Although approximately one third of the action plans specify activities with outcomes that can be measured, and reported plans to assess the impact those activities, there is no evidence of systematic attempts to monitor the impact of SIP activities.**

In general those SIP schools that have submitted documentation of planned, relatively complex, multiple level activities, or systemic change were more likely to report outcomes that can be measured that those that did not. These SIP schools were also more likely to report plans to measure those changes. Although no outcomes have been documented in semi-annual reports from schools to the NH Alliance, several reported that they would collect outcome data. Examples of the types of outcomes schools reported would be assessed include the following:

- changes in C.A.T. scores (and student grades) were listed as measures of outcomes by several schools;
- school-wide competency in selected skills and improved performance in problem solving skills as measured by a series of post-tests was specified by another as an outcome; and
- improved study skills and language arts skills as measured by unspecified assessments were specified by one school.

Non-academic outcomes included:

- a lower student absence rate;
- a lower student suspension rate;
- reduced acts of theft, vandalism and misuse of property;
- increased parent and community school participation through school volunteer programs; and
- increased attendance at parent nights.

In the majority of cases, however, the implementation of activities or completion of a product are the only outcomes reported rather than evidence of change in school, teacher, or student behavior.

Where goals specifically included improvements in student achievement, plans to monitor outcomes do not appear to have been systematically documented. Two (22%) of the nine schools that provided up-to-date information on SIP activities did report changes in student outcomes as measured by improvements in student performance on the CAT.

6. Records in the NH Alliance office are not comprehensive and do not reflect the accomplishments of SIP schools.

Although all schools within SIP are expected to submit action plans, and in the last two years they have also been expected to submit semi-annual reports of activities, not all schools have done so. Reports from a sample of schools indicate that all had done more than they had

reported to SIP in the action plans and semi-annual reports, and some had done substantially more.

Schools are expected to complete action plans at the end of their first year in SIP, but few appear to update them regularly and documentation of action planning has not been accepted as an ongoing aspect of school improvement in most schools. Evidence from other components of the evaluation suggests that SIP schools resist spending time documenting activities, and that in fact their organizations do not have the capacity to do so. Time spent on reporting is not part of anyone's job description in a SIP school. (The reports RMC Research was able to obtain from a sample of SIP schools to try to differentiate between what these schools had achieved and what they had reported were completed only in note form and with the assistance of a SIP facilitator.)

Discussion of Findings by SIP Elements of Effectiveness

The discussion in the following section addresses each of the ten indicators of effectiveness listed in the SIP profile. Data about each comes from two sources, the review of the NH Alliance records, and the information reported directly to RMC Research by the nine SIP schools sampled. Each is discussed separately.

Program and student outcomes - NH Alliance Records. Nineteen of the thirty schools (63%) in the SIP evaluation did not document activities in their action plans that directly addressed either program or student outcomes for this profile element. Schools were given no standards against which to assess their student and program outcome data. California Achievement Test (C.A.T.) scores can be measured against the national norms or, with less strong theoretical underpinnings, against expected scores for the students who take the test. The school profile provided no data against which to compare scores. Retention rates in SIP schools range from 0% to 14.4%, suspension rates from 0% to 29.5%, and drop-out rates from 0% to 9.5%, but again there is no basis of comparison for a school.

C.A.T. scores for those grades tested and reported in school profiles before the schools joined SIP reveal that math computation scores in fourteen schools (47%) were below the mean national percentile, one set fell below the mean in math application, and one in reading comprehension. The SIP school profile for one of the thirty schools did not flag any program and student outcome issues.

Activities, documented in action plans, designed to address this element of effectiveness included:

- Improvement of mathematics instruction through a single, or more often, multiple activities (seven schools).
- Improvement of language arts skills (two schools).
- Development of a critical thinking skills program (one school).
- Creation of a program for potential drop-outs (one school).
- Development of a program to improve student problem solving skills (one school)

Program and student outcomes - reports to RMC Research. Seven of the nine SIP schools in the sample (78%) reported addressing program and student outcomes. One of the two not explicitly reporting that it has addressed this element of effectiveness stated that it had already planned and implemented extensive changes in the instructional program that appear likely to directly impact student outcomes. Activities reported to RMC Research and not to the NH Alliance include creation of a portfolio assessment process and addressing skill deficits in language and arithmetic by an elementary school, adoption of an early prevention of school failure model by another, and extensive staff development activities focused on student outcomes by a high school.

Two of the nine schools had documented changes in student outcomes. In an elementary school student retention has decreased to 1.8% per annum from 4.4% prior to entry into SIP. At a high school, attendance and graduation rates have improved, as have CAT scores, since entry into SIP.

Mission, philosophy, goals, policies and procedures - NH Alliance records. Twenty-four of the thirty SIP school profiles (80%) analyzed indicated that some aspect of mission, philosophy, goals, policies and procedures was inadequate. Many were missing only specific procedures with the most commonly absent being policies and procedures for coordination and communication.

Seventeen of the thirty schools (57%) addressed some item relating to this general topic. This included:

- Developing or reviewing their mission (three schools);
- engaging in a vision exercise about the future of the school (one school);
- writing school goals (two schools);
- reporting that a schedule would be established to write school goals, policies and procedures (1 school);
- writing specific procedures (three schools);
- creation of a specific form to improve a procedure (one school);
- creation or revision of a student handbook (one school each; and
- visiting other schools to learn about their missions and how they had been implemented in terms of policies and procedures.

Mission, philosophy, goals, policies and procedures - reports to RMC Research. Six of the nine SIP schools (67%) reported completing mission statements that they had not reported to the NH Alliance. The other three (33%) all had mission statements before entering SIP, although one had inconsistent goals according to the profile. This school reported to RMC Research that it had adopted new goals for SIP and for the school that had not been reported to the NH Alliance. One school reported to RMC Research that it had written new faculty and student handbooks, another that it had created new hall pass and in-school suspension systems.

School resources - NH Alliance records. Twenty-seven of the thirty schools (90%) in the evaluation have SIP questionnaire items with mean scores below **3.0** for this profile element. Of these, seven (23%) had only one or two responses rated this low. Yet of the thirty schools,

twenty SIP teams (67%) did not report any planned action to address school resources. Of those that did, two (7%) reported plans for comprehensive action. In one instance this extended to multiple minor building changes, selection of portable classrooms, brainstorming of alternative instructional space within the community and planning improved handicapped access. The other reported plans to re-allocate space within the school, purchase computers, provide additional teacher aides, hire a teacher certified to teach the learning disabled, and to improve access to school media. Other SIP teams reported plans to add faculty room space (one school), expand a playground (one school), increase the number of aides in the school (one school), and develop a volunteer program.

The lack of attention in action plans to resources, particularly in the early stages of SIP, may not be surprising. It is likely that staff considered opportunities for additional resources limited in a time of relative budget stringency.

School resources - reports to RMC Research. Five of the nine SIP schools in the sample (56%) reported adding resources to the schools that had not been reported in their action plans. In one, space issues raised in the profile had been solved by building a new middle school (planned before SIP began), another had added new facilities, put down new floors, and reported that because of a more positive relationship with the community resulting from SIP, had resources such as a new computer donated by the community. A high school reported new cultural and ethnic materials in the resource center as a result of the SIP intervention, and another school reported a reallocation of resources now that teachers participate in making decisions about funds for materials and staff development. Two of the nine schools had previously reported addressing this element of effectiveness to the NH Alliance, two have not addressed it at all.

School program - NH Alliance records. Twenty-six of the thirty schools (87%) had SIP profile questionnaire items with mean scores below **3.0** for this profile element. Of these, ten schools (33%) had only one or two responses with scores this low within the SIP profile element.

Fourteen SIP teams (47%) did not report actions planned to address topics related to the school program element of effectiveness. Of those that did report planned actions, one SIP team reported that it would complete a program audit, but did not report activity following that audit, another reported plans to determine whether the school should follow a middle school philosophy or become a Junior High. A third reported extensive plans to change the school program including improving the continuity of the curriculum, reviewing the evaluation process, introducing Olympics of the Mind and the Granite State Challenge, using college students as tutors, and planning for the inclusion of critical thinking skills and cultural awareness activities into the curriculum. Other activities SIP teams planned included:

- comprehensive revision of the curriculum (three schools);
- review and revision of course offerings in a high school (one school);
- development of a comprehensive life skills guidance program (one school);
- creation of a student advisor program (three schools);
- establishment of an Odyssey of the Mind program (one additional school); and
- creation of a gifted and talented program and a senior life skills course and college essay workshop for college applicants (one school).

School program - reports to RMC Research. All nine SIP schools (100%) sampled had completed activities relating to the school program element of effectiveness. Five of them (56%) had completed activities they had not previously reported to the NH Alliance. One had become a center for student teachers from a state college, another had modified its mentor program. A high school had created flexible scheduling, a student advocate program, and a day on which students who would be entering the school the following year were introduced to it. One elementary school had instituted a tutoring program for at-risk students and another had added both pre-algebra and algebra to its curriculum, created a new social studies curriculum, and revised the entire curriculum to improve continuity between grades.

Instructional practices - NH Alliance records. Twenty-nine of the thirty schools (97%) had SIP profile questionnaire responses with mean scores below **3.0** for this profile element. Of these, seven (23%) scored this low on only one or two responses. Fifteen SIP teams (50%) did not report plans or activities related to instructional practices. Of those that did, planned activities can be divided into four categories:

- **Changes in school organization** (twelve schools); including examination of the impact of student tracking (one school); evaluation of the impact of pullout programs on student progress (two schools); investigation of ways to integrate special needs students into classes (two schools); investigation of assessment practices (two schools); investigation of the need for a Chapter 1 reading specialist (one school); planning to free teachers from administrative duties (two schools); better integration of specialists into the instructional program (one school); and changes in grade weighting and report cards (one school).

- **Staff development activities** (six schools); including training in teaching critical thinking skills and the severely handicapped (one school); staff development designed to improve continuity in the curriculum (one school); staff development in instructional practices (three schools); and development of a mentor program for new teachers (one school).

- **Changes in instruction techniques** (three schools); including team teaching (two schools); and cooperative learning (one school).

- **Services directly addressing other student needs** (three schools); including planning to improve student preparedness for high school and modify the student of the month program (one school); promotion of a kindergarten program (one school); and development of a supplementary reading program (one school).

Instructional practices - reports to RMC Research. Seven of the nine schools (78%) reported activities relating to the instructional practices element of effectiveness that had not been included in reports to the NH Alliance. One of the two that did not, had already included activities related to instructional practices in its original action plan. The two elementary schools that entered the SIP program in 1988 reported the most. One had introduced cooperative learning, instituted a third grade career unit, revised the day to provide for teacher planning time, de-emphasized the use of texts in instruction, and eliminated bells and use of the intercom during the day. This same school now mainstreams all students and has introduced heterogenous

grouping for all students. Finally, it has also introduced the DARE program. The other SIP school has integrated study skills throughout the curriculum to better prepare its students for high school, developed math and reading skills checklists to increase consistency of teaching between grades and monitor the performance of individual students. It also has a new program in which older students tutor younger ones. One of the schools that entered the SIP program in 1989 has adopted and published a new set of instructional objectives that introduce critical thinking skills across the curriculum. One that entered in 1990 has changed from provision of instruction to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students by single teachers to the use of part-time subject experts. Other schools had completed or were engaged in less substantive activities, including reviewing the school grading system (two schools), determining that all juniors would take the PSAT to encourage ore students to take the SAT, and promotion of informal adoption of coordinated teaching practices.

Staff characteristics, attitudes and relationships - NH Alliance records . Twenty-six of the thirty schools (87%) had SIP profile questionnaire responses with mean scores below **3.0** for this profile element. Of these, twelve schools (40%) had ratings this low for only one or two items relating to this profile element. Fifteen schools (50%) addressed this profile element in their action plans, including three for which no item was flagged as requiring particular attention.

Planned activities reported to the NH Alliance comprised:

- promotion of staff development (two schools);
- staff development activities (four schools), including workshops to improve curriculum coordination;
- involvement of all teachers in a school planning process (two schools);
- plans to improve the quality of faculty meetings (two schools), one of which intended to introduce SIP decision making to the faculty meeting; and
- plans to improve communication (four schools) and conflict resolution skills (two schools).

Staff characteristics, attitudes and relationships - reports to RMC Research. Seven of the nine schools (78%) had addressed this element of effectiveness. Four (44%) had already reported all their plans to the NH Alliance. One school had revised its staff evaluation process, increased staff participation in school committees, and the SIP team had mounted several informal programs to improve staff morale. A reported outcome was that staff salary negotiations were easier. A junior high school had focused on staff development activities. Teachers had received training in leading workshops, had planned and led staff development activities, and the school had increased the number of staff development days. The third had included teachers in planning staff development, and the SIP team had worked to increase principal and teacher agreement on discipline policies.

Leadership - NH Alliance records. Twenty-seven of the thirty schools (90%) had SIP profile questionnaire responses with mean scores below **3.0** for this profile element. Of these, ten schools (33%) had only one or two responses with a mean this low for the profile element. Only nine SIP teams (30%) reported plans to address the topic. One team had written up a series of specific activities. This team planned to develop a job description for the assistant principal, develop a school mission and philosophy with the superintendent to gain his support for school change, to increase the amount of time the principal allocated to consult with school staff, and to have the school leadership increase the number of public acknowledgments of staff and student accomplishments. Other planned activities included:

- development of shared decision making processes (three schools);
- improvement of communication between staff (two schools);
- daily notices of activities to the staff from the principal (one school);
- plans to further survey the staff on this topic (one school); and
- plans for the school leadership to increase public recognition of students (one school).

Leadership - reports to RMC Research. Six of the nine schools (66%) addressed this element of effectiveness. Four had already reported doing so, and two of the three schools not addressing it had no profile scores below **3.0** in this category. Of those that had not reported to the NH Alliance, one had reorganized it's administrative structure, another had twice changed the role of the principal and amount of time allocated to principal's duties. Other reported activities included increased site-based decision-making (two schools), better planning of faculty meetings and teacher events, and completion of a conflict resolution process between principal and staff.

School and classroom climate - NH Alliance records. Twenty-seven of the thirty schools (90%) in the evaluation had SIP profile questionnaire responses with mean scores below **3.0** for this profile element. Of these, eight schools (27%) had only one or two responses with a mean this low relating to this profile element. Twenty-one SIP teams (70%) reported plans for action on this topic with activities falling into the following general areas:

- **Student motivation** (thirteen schools); including general statements of intent to improve student commitment to learning (four school); plans to promote awareness of academic achievements of students (three schools); plans to recognize and appreciate students for achievements generally (four schools); plans to reward the class with the highest G.P.A., and a plan to create a rotating schedule to prevent loss of motivation in selected courses previously held at the end of the school day (one school).

- **Student discipline** (nine schools); including establishing new discipline policies in general (five schools); plans to improve student behavior on buses, at athletic events and other school functions (three schools); and the use of the SIP team as a sounding board for discipline decisions (one school).

- **Student participation** (five schools); including plans for a student council (two schools); inclusion of a student on the school board (one school); plans for a student suggestion box (one school); and plans to explore student participation in school decision-making (one school).

- **Building and environs** (four schools); including a plan to improve the school appearance (one school); another to improve the fire alarm system (one school); plans for a school store (one school); and plans to improve traffic flow round the school building (one school).

- **Staff morale** (three schools); comprising a general statement of an intent to improve staff morale, plans to discuss teacher and administrator roles, and plans for a presentation by a motivational speaker.

Other SIP teams reported that to improve school and classroom climate they intended to promote a supportive school community (one school), create a student-centered school (one school), create an advisor program (one school), and promote understanding and acceptance of individual differences among students (one school).

School and classroom climate - reports to RMC Research. All nine schools (100%) addressed this element of effectiveness, and four had reported all their planned activities to the NH Alliance. Those activities not reported to the NH Alliance by one school included a cross-age buddy system and creation of a student council. The reported outcome was reduction of vandalism to virtually nil. A second school had developed and implemented a consistent school discipline policy, and instituted a student council, school newspaper and yearbook. A third had created a student sounding board, provided workshops on student-conference instruction, and worked on communication between staff and students. Of the other two, one had provided faculty training in Glasser's behavior methods and self-esteem, and instituted an Officer Bill education program. The other reported improving physical facilities in the school, e.g., carpeting, lighting, etc.

Parent participation - NH Alliance records. Twenty-seven of the thirty schools (90%) had SIP profile questionnaire responses with mean scores below **3.0** for this profile element. Only three (10%) of these SIP school profiles contained either one or two responses with a mean this low. Eighteen schools (60%) planned action to address this element of effectiveness.

Activities planned and reported by schools fall into the following categories:

- Activities generally intended to promote **two-way discussion and involvement** (fifteen schools); including plans to survey parents about their interest (three schools); presentation of parent workshops (two schools); parent orientations or open-houses (three schools); plans to involve parents in pupil placement (one school); creation of a regular parent-teacher meeting (one school); plans to involve parents in math homework (one school); a general statement of a plan to increase parent involvement (one school); and improve communication (two schools); and plans to explore a program entitled Parents-as-Partners (one school).

- Activities intended to **disseminate information about the school to parents** (eleven schools); including dissemination of a newsletter (three schools); creation of a student-parent handbook (two schools); institution of the requirement that parents pick up report cards (one school); institution of regular teacher notes to parents (one school); dissemination of information on middle schools to parents (one school); plans to provide information on SIP to parents (one school); and a general statement of intent to improve the flow of information to parents (one school).

Parent participation - reports to RMC Research. Eight of the nine schools (89%) addressed this element of effectiveness. (The ninth already had extensive parent involvement in the school.) Only three (33%) reported activities to RMC Research that had not previously been reported to the NH Alliance. Of the three, two had begun informal parent groups, the third had created a parent volunteer program, instituted a weekly parent newsletter, expanded parent conferencing, created a parent teachers association, and put parents on every one of its SIP action committees.

Community involvement and support - NH Alliance records. Eighteen of the thirty schools (55%) had SIP profile questionnaire responses with mean scores below **3.0** for this profile element. Seven (23%) of these profiles contained only one or two items with ratings this low for the element. Thirteen schools (43%) planned action to increase community involvement and support. General topic areas into which reported plans fell included:

- **Dissemination of information** (nine schools); including plans for newspaper columns or articles on the school (three schools); investigation into school access to cable or other television (two schools); creation of a brochure (one school); a rotating exhibit to be placed in businesses (one school); and general statements of plans to communicate about SIP (two schools).

- **Planned use of community resources** (six schools); including plans to include community representatives on the SIP team (three schools); development of a speaker's bureau (one school); creation of a list of business and community resources for use by teachers (one school); and a statement of the intent to enrich the school program through the use of community resources (one school).

- **Other activities** (three schools); comprising plans for developing a community-wide discussion on the school budget (one school); plans to expand the district adult education program (one school); and plans for a community festival (one school).

Community involvement and support - reports to RMC Research. Five of the nine schools (55%) had addressed this element of effectiveness. Three of the four that did not had no profile scores below **3.0** in this category. Three of the schools (33%) reported activities to RMC Research that were not contained in NH Alliance records. One of these had created a partnership with New England Telephone, and created a relationship with the court system. Another regularly published school news in the newspaper. It also reported that a previously planned and reported expansion of adult education offerings at the school had not been achieved. The third school had created a community bulletin board, community education program, latchkey program, and had engaged in a series of community activities. The reported outcome was that the school's budget had been easily passed by the town for two years in a row.

VI. FACILITATOR INTERVIEWS

Purpose and Approach

This section of the report provides background on SIP school facilitators and their role in the SIP process and describes a telephone survey conducted with a sample of the facilitators. This is followed by a report on, and analysis of, their responses to the survey questions.

Facilitators are the primary link between the NH Alliance and SIP member schools. They provide initial training for school SIP team members at the SIP Institute, and at the Institute work specifically with the teams for which they will be facilitators for the coming three years. Following the Institute, schools are allocated eleven facilitator days during their first year in SIP, six in the second year, and four in the third. The facilitator spends most of this time meeting on-site with the SIP team to which he or she is primarily responsible, but is also available for consultation at a distance, either by telephone or through written correspondence. Facilitators are in no way in charge of the SIP program in the individual school. Their capacity to influence the process depends upon their personal skills and relationships, and the messages that the NH Alliance gives to schools about the steps SIP schools are expected to follow.

Most of the 14 people who have served or currently serve as facilitators are organizational development consultants in business and continue their business practice. Some of these became SIP facilitators with little or no experience in working with schools, and built their understanding of school change and effective school practices over a period of time. A few have found the work so challenging and interesting that they have diversified, expanding their education consulting beyond SIP, and committing time to reading research on educational change. A minority are former school educators or educational consultants who have begun learning the process skills that the organizational development consultants offer and that are part of the NH SIP model.

RMC Research designed a questionnaire and conducted extensive telephone interviews with ten facilitators, seven of whom currently work for SIP, and three who have recently ceased

doing so. Those selected for interviewing included one facilitator who has worked with more schools than any other (seven) and one who had only worked with a single school. The facilitators were questioned on their observations and opinions on the elements of SIP - the SIP Institute, formation of the SIP team, mining of the school profile, the action planning process, implementation of the action plan, use of SIP-funded technical assistance funds, and the evaluation of plan implementation and program outcomes - and on their perceived roles in helping schools deal with each element of SIP. They were also asked questions about the nature of their relationship with the NH Alliance, about their perceptions of the skills necessary for a facilitator, and on the role and impact of the principal in the SIP process. The facilitator interview protocol is included as Appendix G.

Summary Discussion of Findings Related to SIP Facilitator Interviews

1. **The content of the SIP Institute needs focusing, and a process should be designed to assist schools to choose a membership that is appropriate to the goals of the team, and ensure that all key members attend.**

The SIP Institute is considered extremely important by the NH Alliance and is reported to be one of the most significant elements of the SIP program by SIP team members. The content of the Institute has changed over time and there is evidence throughout SIP that staff in the field and in the central office have been quick to respond to the comments, interests and experience of SIP schools to make the Institute more effective. It provides superior, and much needed, training to SIP team members. The list of skills and attitudes that facilitators consider important to communicate to participants appears to be more than can realistically be accomplished within this single Institute. Rossmiller and Holcomb[9], for instance list two sets of equally necessary skills for team members. The first includes conflict resolution, decision-making techniques, and communication. The second emphasizes collecting and analyzing data, defining clear objectives,

and developing action plans, to which we recommend the addition of assessing program and student outcomes.

The NH Alliance should more clearly define the purpose of the Institute. Skills and information not needed by the SIP team immediately following the Institute can perhaps be conveyed at another time or in another format. Skill building should become a defined part of the facilitator role, but cannot all be adequately addressed in the Institute and other times facilitators work with schools. Some skills could perhaps be offered to selected members of teams at a common training offered at some other point in the process. It may also be important not to have participants leave the Institute with the attitude that change is urgent. This attitude may have promoted an orientation towards activity without adequate prior planning.

It is clear that when not all team members were present, or those selected were not those best equipped to carry out the task ahead of them, the effectiveness of the SIP team was impaired. The NH Alliance should consider clearly defining, in collaboration with the sending school, the role and task of the team on its return, and selecting those most appropriate to the task before the Institute takes place and of ensuring their participation in this most significant team building activity.

2. **The role of the SIP team should be clearly defined before its members are sent to the Institute for training so that the people most qualified to lead the expected change are appointed to the team, and so that the formal leadership in the school system understands the type of change in which the school is likely to engage.**

The ways in which teams formed, and facilitators worked with them, appeared to vary widely. In addition, definition of the role of the SIP team in the change process has evolved over time, and current thinking is reflected in facilitator responses. In the early stages the SIP team planned and implemented change, it is now perceived as the facilitator of change. Clear definition of its role may promote decisions about changes in the content of the SIP Institute and

also better communication with the school community, lessening the reported anxiety of participants at the Institute about how to communicate what they have learned to the wider school community on their return.

The commitment of the formal leadership of the school system and the presence of trust within the school and school system are also reported to be crucial to the early success of the SIP team, and consequently of the SIP process. There may now be enough examples of what is expected of schools and school systems entering SIP and enough interest in systemic reform among schools in New Hampshire for the NH Alliance to be more explicit about the commitment it expects from the formal leadership in schools that apply. SIP should also consider investigating whether the climate (trust, readiness for change) within applicant schools or school systems is such that the applicant is likely to be able to engage in planning and implementing change on the scale expected by the NH Alliance.

3. The content of the profile and the approach used to collect profile data should be modified.

Facilitator opinions of the profile and profile analysis are mixed at best, and some are quite negative. The NH Alliance has already committed itself to revision of the content and approach of the profile process so that schools can learn to collect and monitor their own data, and has obtained funding to carry out the first stages of this revision. Data from the facilitator interviews support this decision.

4. The NH Alliance should create a clear strategic planning process of which action planning, in some form, is only one part.

SIP teams address, or fail to address, action planning in many different ways. Strategic, long-term planning is not a natural part of public school culture. Public schools tend to perceive themselves as recipients of fixed numbers of students who enter and leave in given cycles, and to

have little control over the resources at their disposal. Consequently the realms in which they can plan strategically are perceived to be limited. The emphasis on action planning may limit long-term planning, which is also alien to most schools and may convey the need for activities, not changes in systems.

The recent move to engage the entire school community, and sometimes members of the community in which the school functions in the planning and implementation process, is perceived as positive by facilitators. In addition, there is consensus within the NH Alliance and among facilitators that schools need a clear mission and statement of what students need to learn to know, do and value that can serve as a focus for planning. There is also agreement that schools should monitor and document their progress towards the long-term goals emerging from their mission statements.

Development of a clear strategic planning process and less emphasis on early sequential and linear planning may facilitate the systems thinking that the NH Alliance wishes to promote. Facilitators do not all have a clear model or series of models for such a process that takes schools throughout the components of the SIP process, and the NH Alliance should seek to define one or more models. This model would probably be most effective if it engaged both the entire school staff and interested members of the community from which the school draws its students early in the SIP process.

5. The NH Alliance should explore ways to communicate to SIP schools the most effective ways in which TA can be used to promote changes in school practice.

The limited amount of technical assistance seems to have been used primarily for single event presentations or workshops. These are necessary components of a change strategy, but insufficient on their own. There is nothing to suggest that technical assistance was used as a component of a comprehensive change model that would promote a high level of adoption of new practices or further systemic change. There is also little evidence that there was more than an

informal network for seeking technical assistance providers. Research suggests that the most effective technical assistance providers are other practitioners engaged in the same or similar endeavor. The Alliance should consider ways to increase the types and amount of technical assistance, and to develop a formal network of practitioners within NH who can provide technical assistance and consultation to each other.

6. **The NH Alliance should focus SIP schools change on student outcomes as early in the SIP process as possible and provide SIP schools with technical assistance in assessing program and student outcomes.**

Some facilitators begin the SIP planning process by engaging the school community in discussions about student outcomes. Given the high priority that the NH Alliance and SIP program funders place on student outcomes, this process should be adopted and adapted for use in all SIP schools. Even with this process in place, it appears that neither facilitators nor school personnel have the tools with which to assess the impact of their actions in a manner that provides data that those schools and the NH Alliance can use to evaluate the impact of SIP. The problem is not unique to SIP, and if the NH Alliance is able to develop a process that provides school personnel with the knowledge of how to assess program impact in a realistic and cost-effective manner, and helps them implement such programs, it will contribute significantly to school improvement in NH and the school effectiveness movement nationally. The recent Pew grant, in part, is an attempt to contribute to this effort.

7. **The NH Alliance should arrive at, and communicate a more clear role and philosophical approach to its facilitators, and strengthen the relationship between facilitators and NH Alliance staff.**

Facilitators are key to the success of SIP because they serve as the primary contact between SIP schools and the NH Alliance and because the skills they bring to the process are so needed by the schools. The facilitators have also developed a strong support network that

facilitates communication and increases their effectiveness. On the other hand, their primary contacts appear to have been with each other, and there are significant philosophical differences between them about their role. Although each school is different and the skills of facilitators make it inappropriate to be prescriptive, the NH Alliance should arrive at a common philosophy about the facilitator role, and enlist all facilitators in adhering to it. There is evidence to suggest that the term 'facilitator' does not clearly communicate the tasks they undertake when they are most effective. They are primarily consultants and trainers, teaching others to become facilitators of the change process.

Finally, the NH Alliance should seek to strengthen the relationship between its staff and the facilitators so that they become more directly responsible to the NH Alliance for the way in which they carry out their responsibilities in the schools.

8. The NH Alliance should explore ways to expand its training for principals of schools exploring entry into, or participating in, SIP.

The NH Alliance should ensure that the principals of schools applying to be part of SIP support the application and are aware of its implications. The Alliance should also routinely convey to superintendents and school boards that when school principals change while the school is in SIP, the hiring process should take compatibility of a new principal with the SIP philosophy into account. Finally, the NH Alliance should explore ways, possibly workshops for principals, to convey to them the leadership skills and understanding of systemic change that they will need to function effectively within the SIP program. Putting this responsibility on facilitators stretches already lean resources, and can change the dynamics of their relationship with the SIP team.

Discussion of Findings by Survey Question

SIP Institute

Facilitators were asked what they perceived SIP team members had obtained from the Institutes in which they had participated, what had been the primary concerns of SIP team members leaving the Institute, what their own role had been during the SIP Institute, and what skills and attitudes they considered most important to communicate during the Institute.

SIP team learning from the Institute. Facilitators reported that the Institute had, in the majority of cases, been effective in building a strongly bonded team. Said one facilitator, "People are still leaving the Institute committed for life." The Institute, said facilitators, provides SIP team members with a common language, training in team skills such as group decision making, validates their role and, and provides a sense of purpose. The content and way in which the Institute is conducted conveys that participants are engaged in a serious professional venture, and creates a new source of energy, hope and enthusiasm. The team bonding and collaborative decision-making that is taught as part of the Institute change the dynamics of the team so that hierarchical dependence on the principal and other formal leaders for team direction and decisions disappears or is at least diminished. Individuals within each team also gain personal insights through exposure to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (an indicator of personality types) and are able to use it to understand their interaction with others in multiple settings, and so gain new insight into their personal capacity to influence their environment.

Facilitators also reported that the content of the SIP Institute has changed over time. There has been decreasing emphasis on process alone and the belief that this will produce desired change in schools, and a clearer focus on the importance of student outcomes and information on effective schools research. Yet some facilitators report that there still has not been as much training on change in schools and on effective schools research as they would like. This increase

in specific school content, said one facilitator, has come at the cost, among other elements, of training on issues of power and dealing with power relationships.

Primary concerns of team members leaving the Institute. Participants left fired up and with a sense that change in their schools was necessary and urgent, reported several facilitators. In general, SIP team members' greatest concern was how to communicate their purpose, energy and what they had learned to the larger school community. They were concerned, said one facilitator, that SIP not be labelled the "Secret Improvement Program." One facilitator mentioned that some leave the Institute bored because of its length.

Some SIP teams left concerned because not all members of the SIP team had attended the Institute, and they realized that imparting the knowledge learned and incorporating these people into an already bonded team would be overwhelming. This was particularly true if one of those not present for the duration was the principal or other formal school leader. Others left concerned because they realized, after gaining an appreciation of the task ahead of them, that the composition of their team was wrong - that they did not have the right people at the Institute.

Role of the facilitators at the Institute. Facilitators reported a wide range of roles, ranging from serving as a facilitator and leader helping the team work together through an agenda, to that of coach and trainer, teaching the team to think systematically and plan for the future, to exemplify how to run effective meetings, deal with conflict and reach consensus. Facilitators also reported that their focus had shifted over time, and that they were more likely to direct teams to thinking about issues related to teaching, learning and educational outcomes than they had done three years ago.

Skills and attitudes facilitators considered important to communicate to SIP teams. The skills and knowledge that facilitators considered important to communicate to team members can be grouped into five categories: communication, group and team building, change agent skills, school reform and systems change, and 'other'. How to listen, clarify and talk to each other were

commonly cited. Group and team building skills cited included understanding of team development, conflict resolution, consensus building, goal setting, and planning. Change agent skills cited included understanding that they should serve as influencers of change, not the changers, of how to influence and empower others, of understanding the power structure in schools, and the capacity to teach their colleagues the same skills. Facilitators also said it was important that Institute participants learn about school culture and change, and learn to differentiate between tinkering with the system and systems change. SIP team members need to understand, said facilitators, that they are being asked to engage in continuous improvement, and that what they are embarking on cannot be fixed in one brief effort. They also need background in effective schools research and research driven best educational practices, something which sometimes even the principals attending the Institute know little about. Other important skills information, and attitudes mentioned by facilitators include an understanding of the purpose of the SIP program itself. "The largest need," said one facilitator, "is to understand what SIP is about and what is required over the SIP year." "They need a sense of ownership in the process," said one, and "they need courage, a positive attitude and a sense of urgency," said another.

Creation of a Cohesive, Functioning SIP Team

Elements that promoted or hindered creation of a functioning SIP team. Virtually all teams appear to cement at the Institute. The issue, said one facilitator, was whether they subsequently came apart. Facilitators reported that support for the team and its process on the part of the formal school leadership, particularly the school principal and district superintendent, strongly influenced the functioning and effectiveness of the SIP team. One facilitator reported that the principal had said to him, "You want me to be a leader. Tell me how you want me to lead." The result was that the team had little confidence in the principal, and the team did not function effectively in his presence. Facilitators differentiated between those principals who use

consensus decision making only when working with the SIP team and those who have internalized the approach and integrated it into the function of the school. The latter legitimates the SIP team and its processes, the former carries a negative message about the process as a whole and the worth of the SIP team. Another facilitator questioned whether school boards really understood the intent and potential impact of SIP.

SIP teams that were trained in group process and communication skills by their facilitator tended to work more efficiently over time than those in which the facilitator interpreted her or his role literally and performed the facilitation function whenever present. Teams were reported to function effectively when they had taken the time to think through a mission and set of beliefs, and when they met regularly. Institutionalization was facilitated when their long-term existence was legitimized, as it was in one school that is now no longer formally part of SIP and a governing council with a similar representation and process has been created in place of the SIP team, and where a process had been established for allowing old members to leave and new members to join the team.

In some instances teams did not function effectively because of deep-seated conflicts between members. In most instances these were divisions that had occurred before the school entered the SIP process, and although the SIP process did heal some of them, the time and energy required detracted from planning and implementation of long-term school change. In one school, for instance, the school had had a work to rule order for almost the entire previous year, and decisions were impossible until adequate trust was developed between staff and administration. One facilitator also mentioned that team functioning is hindered if substantial numbers of team members do not show up for meetings.

Facilitators also stated that teams tend to be insufficiently reflective and too quick to engage in action in order to demonstrate that they were making an impact. Both tended to result

in short-term activity that was not sufficiently focused or that was not part of an overall strategy for long-term improvement in student learning.

Role of the facilitator in team formation and institutionalization. Facilitators saw themselves as crucial to team formation. One commented that they were catalysts, mediators, and that they are now the educational pushers. Another saw herself as: first, a leader and facilitator; second, an enunciator of direction; and finally, a process consultant. Another reported being a coach and facilitator, and a source of information about group process, but not an expert in schools or education. All reported an evolution in their role as SIP has become more focused on student outcomes, but said one, "Our role was never well defined. I bet we'd be amazed if we knew what each other was doing."

Role of SIP team in promoting school change. Said one facilitator, "SIP team members define it. I think their role during the first year is to keep their constituent groups aware of SIP as a program and process, involving them in some kind of visioning, or something that helps the school get clear about what kind of school it wants to be. I also think their role during that time is to become more educated about effective schools research and the change process, and how to work together. I think their role then shifts. Once there are action teams to work on the actual priorities, they need to help educate people about the things they know, and be effective consultants to those teams." Said another, "SIP team members are a catalyst for school change and improvement. I think of them as a non-profit board of directors." Yet another supported this interpretation, saying that SIP team members should be seen as managers of an improvement process that includes all groups and focuses on student outcomes. Another facilitator distinguished between their role as problem solvers and opportunity finders. He suggested the latter, and that SIP teams must address the future, not become primarily focused on past deficits.

Role of facilitator once SIP team has become a functioning group. Facilitators reported that their role changed over time as they moved from facilitating and leading, to serving as an observer and critical friend, consultant, and resource linker.

Mining the School Profile

SIP team attitudes toward the school profile. The school profile provides schools with a fairly extensive, organized set of information across variables related to effective schools that few institutions ever otherwise receive or take the time to prepare themselves. On the other hand, in the past the information has been collected by the NH Alliance before the SIP team has been formed and trained, and it consists of responses to questions formulated by the NH Alliance, not the schools themselves. How it has been used, and the attitudes of facilitators to the profile vary, but some themes emerge.

Facilitators reported that the profile tended to take on a high value before it arrived at the school. Data collection, and analysis, and incorporation into the extensive report given to each school takes several months, and resulted in nervousness before its arrival. In addition, decisions about who should have access to the profile has taken time. The report is lengthy, and expensive to copy for all staff. It also sometimes contains information critical of the role of the principal. When all in the school community have not had reasonable access to its content, repercussions and negative feelings about its contents have sometimes been significant and negative.

SIP teams have tended to rationalize the data contained in the profile, but they never totally discount it. The data is collected the year before the SIP team analyzes it, and one of the responses most frequently heard by facilitators was that the data was old. This response was particularly addressed to the section on school leadership. Questions on school leadership tend to

focus on the role of the principal, and in a number of instances the schools entered SIP with a new principal, invalidating much of the data collected the previous year.

In some instances the SIP teams used the profile to determine what additional information needed to be collected before engaging in an improvement effort. A facilitator reported that in one instance a school conducted a second profiling after initial implementation, gathering useful information about the impact of the changes that had been made in the interim, and using this information to proceed with subsequent corrective actions.

Time taken to analyze profile. The amount of time that schools take to analyze the profile has generally decreased significantly from the first two years in which SIP was in existence, when facilitators agree that it was assigned more time and weight in the improvement process than was appropriate. Facilitators have considerable influence on the amount of time teams now spend with the profile, and the amount of time varies with their perceptions of its import. One facilitator reported schools spending six months, and one or two meetings each month reviewing the profile. According to facilitators, SIP team members tended to become discouraged and feel bogged down by data. Another reported that the SIP teams spent much time planning for its arrival and dissemination, about two hours of an overview presentation followed by individual study, then 12 to 15 hours of analysis or "mining." "It has been," said another, "a major piece of work." Yet another reported that her teams spend only about four hours (one meeting) on the profile.

Conclusions drawn from, and use made of, profile data. Some SIP teams have perceived the profile as a report card on the school, rather than as a set of data from which to work. In those that did so, it often either confirmed negative perceptions about the school and reinforced beliefs that they were failures, or else conveyed that there was nothing significantly wrong and consequently nothing that required improvement. One facilitator reported that school constituents, other than the SIP team whose members had been prepared for the profile and were

identified with school change, were particularly defensive. Not all fell into this category however. Some said that it primarily served as a confirmation of what the school already knew about itself.

Facilitator responses about the uses made of the profile were mixed and sometimes divided. Said one facilitator, "If we supported its value, the team did. I also think they made independent judgements about whether they wanted to base changes on it... They didn't feel tied to it." Another facilitator reported that schools with which she works never really used the data. Another said that the profile data was summarized into a formal matrix of the ten areas of effectiveness that it addresses, and that this promoted extensive discussions about the school. Said another, "In terms of a cost/benefit analysis, I give it a mixed review. SIP teams might have come up with similar elements [for the action plan] without it. In one school, using a visioning technique, they came up with a similar list of needs." Said another with a background in effective schools research, "The reason there is less focus on instruction and student performance and instruction is that the profile has insufficient items, or asks the wrong questions in these areas. The profile has ten components which drives schools in ten different directions." Said another, "The ten areas help [the SIP teams] think about systemic change."

Facilitator roles in data analysis. Facilitators stated that they attempted to serve as neutral and objective observers, providing feedback on whether team members were accepting or resisting the data. They helped the team probe, look deeper into the data than would have otherwise been the case. One stated that she helped the team see connections between disparate data and also guided the team into asking broader questions when it appeared their focus was too narrow. Facilitators also reported that they helped the team move to consensus on those things that it was most important to address.

Action Planning

Discussion as SIP teams moved into action planning. Several facilitators stated that a major topic of discussion as SIP teams moved into action planning was how to involve the larger community. "They talked about power and control issues. They were concerned about public support and how to get them involved," said one facilitator. Several facilitators reported concern on the part of SIP teams that the action plans not become concretized. "As long as they were living documents, they were fine," said one facilitator representing this perspective.

How schools decided what to include in action plans. Facilitators reported a tension between creating plans that were activity oriented and addressed a series of obvious and sometimes superficial issues, and those that addressed deeper issues and would take time to work through. "There was," said one facilitator, "attention to current events regardless of whether they related to the profile, and the team wanted to produce useable action rather than long term systemic change." One facilitator reported that parents were particularly activity-oriented and impatient with long-term change strategies. The facilitators and formal leaders such as the superintendent often promoted discussion that probed to determine the real problems that should be addressed in the action planning process. Said another facilitator, "We don't do anything unless we answer three questions: 1. is it related to student outcomes; 2. is it vital rather than a good idea; and 3. is there buy-in?" Finally, several facilitators stated that many of the significant actions resulting from SIP were often not mentioned on action plans at all, even when an action plan had been completed.

Who is engaged in action planning and writing. Facilitator responses reflect an evolution in the way SIP is implemented and also convey that at present there is no single action planning process. Those reporting on schools entering SIP in the first few years reported that the SIP team members carried out the action planning process themselves. Even at this stage, one of the most successful of the early SIP teams engaged in a process of drafting actions, referring them to

the whole faculty for comment, revising and then referring them back until there was agreement at all levels. The process has evolved to the point where facilitators now help SIP teams facilitate an action planning process in which the school staff or school staff and community volunteers are engaged. For instance, one facilitator works with the SIP team to create a goal-oriented statement, then encourages the SIP team to set up an action team with membership from the rest of the school to carry out the process. Those teams, reports the facilitator, rarely write up action plans since they are so eager to work. They usually create a report after the fact. Another facilitator has developed a more formal process. She facilitates a community-wide forum whose members are trained in action planning by her. School staff and community members then break into planning and implementation teams, and the SIP team becomes a facilitator of the entire process.

Attitudes of SIP team members to action planning. Facilitators reported that SIP team attitudes towards action planning were mixed. Two facilitators reported that in the schools with which they worked, action planning had naturally followed analysis of the profile and creation of a set of priorities for school change. Other teams were impatient or frustrated with discussion and planning, and wanted to move to action. The planning tended to be rushed, and there was little energy put into it. Said one facilitator of the school with which she had worked, "I don't think they saw action planning as a tool. I think they saw it as a demand from the NH Alliance," and this perception was echoed by others. Some SIP teams simply avoided the process. Said one facilitator, "One team didn't say they didn't want it. They just didn't do it."

Roles played by facilitators in the action planning process. In a minority of cases schools did not engaged in action planning, consequently facilitators played no role. Some played an active role, training community members or training the SIP team to act as facilitators and trainers of action teams. At the minimum they provided a focus and helped team members combine issues and clarify their intent.

Facilitator opinions of the action planning process. Facilitators were generally supportive of a planning process but mixed about the format provided to schools by the NH Alliance. Said one, "I think it's important for teams to be reflective. And it's important for them to document what they have done. What format it occurs in seems a lot less important. They, and we, are accountable to funding sources, so we must present documentation in a way both the team and funders can learn from." Said another of the current format, "It may force the team into a project mode." Another commented that he had a strong positive feeling about the process as it evolved into a more strategic approach. "I would never," he said, "call it an action plan. Action planning is the last stage of strategic planning."

Plan Implementation

Role of the SIP team during plan implementation. In the SIP model, implementation conceptually follows action planning. In SIP schools much implementation takes place as the plan is written, and in early years some SIP schools or the SIP team would do a project, then write about it in action plan format to meet the requirements of the NH Alliance. Consequently the two steps cannot be separated in the manner implied by the questionnaire we administered to SIP facilitators.

In the first two or three years of SIP, the teams saw themselves as both planners and doers. The school community was usually a recipient of changes, and actively involved only if the team judged that it was useful or necessary to do so. Increasingly the SIP team serves as a resource to action teams. SIP team members usually serve on action teams, either as members who can report back to the central team, or as its facilitators.

Conditions that facilitate and hinder plan implementation. Action plans were more likely to be implemented in schools in which the principal modeled collaborative decision making outside the SIP team and in which there was open communication within the school. In instances

where there was inadequate support for SIP, the SIP team members sensed that the plan was an exercise in futility and would not significantly change the school, in which case they put little energy into its implementation.

Implementation went more smoothly when the SIP team met regularly at a time that was convenient for all members, and when they engaged the rest of the faculty and others in SIP early enough for them to participate in planning school change. The process was also facilitated if SIP team members were able to provide good leadership to action teams in the school. The Institute and informal training by facilitators provided SIP team members with skills that are often missing in the school environment. Not only were they (SIP team members) a resource to action teams, in some instances they were reported to have taken over faculty meetings to improve their effectiveness. One facilitator reported that the most successful way of involving all faculty in SIP and facilitating the SIP process was for SIP team members to take the time to intervene individually with other school staff, to listen to their concerns and communicate SIP program goals to them.

Implementation of plans was hindered when teams did not understand what goals were, and consequently how to write appropriate ones, and when there was inadequate time for the team to meet and carry out its tasks. Some SIP teams became emotionally and physically burned out towards the end of their three years in SIP as they re-encountered issues that blocked implementation of planned activities again and again. Finally, in some schools there was no norm that meetings were valuable, consequently it was difficult to get the right people together as much as necessary, and participants had low expectations of what would be achieved in meetings.

Facilitator role in the development of action plans. Facilitators reported that they tended to serve a consultant role: problem solving, asking questions, providing process resources, and helping the team maintain an environment in which issues faced by the team could be discussed openly. They helped the team focus on the school mission and goals when it appeared that this

focus had been lost, and pushed teams to discuss whether they were accomplishing something they thought was worthwhile. One reported that he trained teachers in skills necessary for implementation of the action plan, but few seem to have played this role as their training was primarily as process consultants. Another reported that he engaged the SIP team in discussion about continuation of SIP beyond the three years in which it was supported by the NH Alliance, and in discussion of post-SIP budgeting.

Technical Assistance and Staff Development

In addition to the facilitator time, each school is allocated the equivalent of two eight-hour days of technical assistance time during the first year it is in SIP, four in the second year, and eight in the third. Facilitators were asked a series of questions about how this resource was used.

How SIP teams used technical assistance funding. SIP teams usually spent the technical assistance funds allocated to them. They were primarily used to bring in outside "experts" for single presentations, sometimes the funds were used to send school personnel to training or information workshops outside the school. In no instance did facilitators report that these funds were used for the benefit of the SIP team alone. Outside presenters were always brought in for the faculty as a whole or a group that extended beyond the SIP team. One facilitator reported that teams with which she worked always used the funding for activities that could be related to improving student outcomes.

SIP team attitudes towards technical assistance. SIP teams generally saw the technical assistance funds as a welcomed asset which they could use as the need arose. SIP teams saw it, said facilitators, as an opportunity to put themselves into "receive mode." "It," said another, "got them energized." "My teams have mostly made well informed decisions about how to use technical assistance funds, and have been creative about getting extra money [to supplement SIP funds]," said yet another.

The only factors that appeared to hinder its use were that initially SIP teams did not understand how to use it (the first 20 page booklet on technical assistance produced by the NH Alliance was not concise or clear enough), and that the SIP teams sometimes could not define what they really needed.

Facilitators role in the provision of technical assistance. Facilitators prodded SIP teams to use their technical assistance resources, helped them define what they needed, identified people who could provide them with the technical assistance, and acted as administrative interfaces with the NH Alliance office. They also sometimes served as a check on requests for technical assistance, asking schools to justify their requests by demonstrating that it was connected to something they were engaged in changing. Some facilitators served as technical assistance providers, occasionally to their own schools, but more often to those of schools with which another facilitator was working.

Evaluation of Implementation or Outcomes

Review of action plans by SIP teams. Facilitators reported that most schools did not put much energy into reviewing their action plans, if they revisited them at all.

Types of outcomes discussed and specified by SIP teams. One facilitator stated that considerable time was spent discussing student outcomes. The conclusions were that SIP activities in which the school was engaged were related to student outcomes, but that the changes that would occur could not be measured in the short term. Said another, "The literature and intuition tell us what we are doing will lead to improved student outcomes." Yet there had been no attempt to measure student outcomes. One facilitator reported that there had been discussion of what the students should know and be able to do, stating that this discussion solidifies people because it creates a common goal towards which all are working. Others stated that there had

been little concern for measurement other than monitoring activities, and another that SIP teams had discussed products and activities, but not student outcomes.

Facilitators' roles in plan review and discussion of outcomes. Roles reported included those of detached questioner, clarifier, and resource person who could help them find others from whom to learn about assessment.

Relationship Between Facilitators and NH Alliance Central Office Staff

Training and preparation for work as a facilitator. Facilitators meet with NH Alliance central office staff for four or five day-long sessions each year. These sessions provided opportunities for communication of central office policy, discussion of approaches and a chance for facilitators to learn from each other, and were reported as the major training provided for facilitators. In addition, the facilitators have established an informal mentoring system. Facilitators new to the system were provided with a person whom they could call to discuss their work, and who could check in with them to see how their work in the schools was progressing.

Definition of facilitator role. Facilitators stated that their role was clearer than it had been in the first few years of operation of SIP, but all agreed that it still had not been clearly enough defined by the NH Alliance. "It is clearly defined by me, but not necessarily shared by others," said one facilitator. "We need more philosophical consensus about the role, but not a prescription." Others shared the same opinion. Said another, "The role is not clear at all. We have defined our roles ourselves. There needs to be more definition. That's coming, but we haven't decided what that will be. Are we consultants or facilitators? There's a huge difference. A lot do only facilitating. I do facilitating, training and consulting."

Facilitator's source of advice and information. All facilitators stated that their primary source of advice and information was other facilitators. "There is a tremendous reservoir of skills out there [among the facilitators]," one responded. A secondary source of information was the

NH Alliance office staff. Two facilitators said they were now more likely to seek advice from the NH Alliance director because he had extensive experience in schools and in school change. One respondent stated that she would seek advice of, "other facilitators, the director, and anybody on staff. I think it's an organization that supports that it's okay not to know and to ask for help."

Facilitators' Perceptions of School Principals

Role and impact of the school principal. The school principalship, said one facilitator, "is the most vulnerable position in the whole thing, and needs a lot of support. Who's the client? The principal in normal circumstances." Said another, "Principals need to know what to do with empowerment and shared leadership. It takes about ten years to develop this. The first three years are just the beginning."

Some facilitators have adjusted their approaches in response to their perceptions of the importance of the principal's role. "I have been much clearer since the first year about being available to them in a coaching role," said one. Another suggested that principals need more coaching than they have received, more workshops to help them learn the difference between managing and leading.

The principal's impact on SIP is vital. "Where the principal could take on a learner and modeler role with staff, it raised the quality of the effort. Defensiveness, power plays, and sarcasm lowered the effort," said one facilitator. Another stated that he, "sees little evidence that most of the principals in schools involved in SIP really embrace effective schools research and implications for change in the role of the principal that are clearly addressed in the literature." Some facilitators have experienced the impact of a principal supportive of SIP leaving and being replaced by one not committed to the process. This has tended to result in conflict that temporarily paralyzes the SIP team. Even when a new principal is supportive of SIP, the change is difficult. A facilitator stated that when this occurred in a school with which she was working it

took some time for the principal to identify herself with the SIP agenda. The principal also discovered that the SIP team was more comfortable going to the superintendent and school board about problems than to her because of the non-hierarchical relationships that had developed in the team, and it took her about two years to become completely comfortable with the team and support its agenda. "I used my best skills to orient and integrate her," said the facilitator.

VII. SCHOOL VISITS

Ninety-seven interviews were conducted at ten SIP schools over a four week period during November and December, 1992. All of the schools visited had been participating in SIP for at least two years. Some schools had completed the SIP program and were no longer receiving SIP funding. Schools were selected for site visits based on their potential for informing the SIP process and the findings that are reported here are based on analyses of the combined interview data from all ten schools. The general findings are discussed under the following general headings:

- The SIP Team
- The Profile
- Facilitation
- Action Planning
- Technical Assistance
- Systemwide Effects
- Specification and Measurement of Student Outcomes
- Factors Associated with Student Outcome Measurement

Method

Interviews were conducted at ten schools that had been participating in SIP for at least two years. Four of the visits were conducted at SIP schools that had completed the SIP program and had not received SIP support since December 1991. Three schools were visited that had completed the SIP program and had not received funding since June 1992. Finally, three schools were visited that were in the last year of SIP and were still receiving SIP support. The sites visited represented a cross section of school sizes and grade levels. Five schools served elementary grades only; three K-6; one K-4; one K-6. One school served middle grades only, 5-8.

Three schools served junior or senior high grades; two 9-12; one 7-12. One school served grades K-12.

School sites were selected by mutual agreement of RMC and the NH Alliance after examining SIP records. A school was considered for a site visit if it had received SIP support for at least two years and if records suggested that schools might inform the evaluation of SIP regarding organization practices, instructional practices, and student learning.

Four RMC staff conducted the interviews. At each school, the staff relied on the principal or the SIP team contact person to set up 45-60 minute interviews with both SIP team and non-SIP team personnel. In some instances, when certain school personnel were not available at the site, interviews were conducted by phone following the visit. Overall, 97 people were interviewed, including seven superintendents of schools, one assistant superintendent, ten school principals, 34 SIP teachers (teachers on SIP team), 19 non-SIP team teachers, three teaching assistants who were members of SIP teams, 17 parents (five of whom were also school board members), two students on SIP teams, one businessperson on a SIP team, and three guidance counselors on SIP teams. All superintendents and principals were interviewed individually, others were interviewed either individually or in small groups. In some cases, RMC staff also examined SIP team minutes and other records maintained on school sites.

The goal of the interview was to gather information related to the history and development of the SIP team, the nature of the SIP process at schools, school's conception and use of outcome data, and the dynamics of leadership and decision making. The interview protocol may be found in Appendix H.

The SIP Team

Impetus For the Decision to Join SIP

As with any major change, there is usually an event, person or group of people that set up the decision making process involved in making a change. The catalyst may be external, internal, or a combination of both. Regardless, once the impetus occurs, the fledgling steps of the long term process for change begin. The decision to join the New Hampshire Alliance for School Improvement requires a major commitment for a school. The themes that emerged across the ten SIP sites selected for intensive interviews regarding the impetus to join the NH Alliance SIP included access to information, leadership, and their desire to improve the school.

Sources of information about SIP. Prior knowledge about the efforts of the NH Alliance was reported to be instrumental regarding the decision to join SIP. Both teachers and administrators stated that they had heard about the results of SIP from colleagues who were participating in SIP at other schools. Others reported reading SIP related publications or attending presentations made by the N.H. Alliance at Phi Delta Kappa meetings. The concept of school based improvement and the enthusiasm expressed by those already involved fueled newcomer's support, piqued their curiosity and gave them the confidence to pursue involvement in SIP at their local schools.

Several of the administrators interviewed during the on-site visits have a history of experience with the NH Alliance. For example, some have been members of SIP teams in previous jobs. One superintendent served on the Board of the NH Alliance. Another superintendent listened to a presentation made by the NH Alliance during its start up phase at one of the monthly meetings required of superintendents by the Commissioner of Education. As trailblazers, these administrators have stories to share that persuade others to invest in what they believe works based on their experiences.

Leadership. The decision to join SIP may symbolize a transition in leadership and a move toward involving more constituents in the process of schooling children. A majority of respondents reported that principals who had been recently hired brought their knowledge about SIP with them to their new positions. Several principals remarked about how important it was for new principals to send a strong signal to teachers and parents, that indicates their ideas and opinions are valued. Principals also commented that SIP assisted them as a new administrator with the critical task of understanding what was really going on at the school and how the school got to be what it was.

In some school systems the superintendent and the principal worked together to launch the idea of SIP to the faculty and the community. In all schools, the administration was involved in raising the faculty's level of awareness about SIP, through presentations, discussions and written information. The influence of the principal on staff acceptance and willingness to join SIP cannot be overstated. The respondents reported that their principal worked with a cadre of supporters and actively recruited other people to build commitment to the idea of SIP and the development of educational leadership within the school.

Desire to improve the school. SIP was viewed by respondents as a vehicle through which the school could make changes through increased involvement. At these schools, before joining SIP dissatisfaction was evident among the faculty concerning educational results and strategies. Poor communication and tensions among staff members were sometimes eroding the collective sense of purpose and mission of the school. In one secondary school, a new superintendent discovered a long held perception that the school was "off limits" to the community. This in addition to problems with drugs and alcohol in the school provided motivation to join SIP. The SIP process looked promising as a means of dealing with conflict by increasing communication and developing a sense of a "new start" for the school.

Using SIP as a structure to implement the New England Association of Schools and Colleges recommendations was another reason to join SIP. As part of the NEASC accreditation process, schools complete a self-study based on NEASC criteria; the self-study serves as a portrait of the current conditions in the school. A visiting team of teachers and administrators observe the school in session, refer to the self-study and recommend whether to accredit the school. The process is very demanding, and schools involved in NEASC are highly motivated to implement the recommendations and complete the process.

Although the staff in one school that had been involved in the NEASC accreditation was lukewarm to the idea of SIP at first, the SIP profile validated the results of the NEASC report, thereby establishing credibility for the previous efforts of the school staff and setting up a baseline for school improvement. The SIP process was thus viewed as a mechanism to continue the dialogue about improvement and facilitate the involvement of the faculty in school development.

How the Decision to Join SIP was Made

The decision to join SIP did not happen spontaneously. The Alliance prescribed a process to those schools interested in joining SIP. The support of the principal, school board and vote of the faculty was necessary to agree to become a SIP school and then nominate and select a SIP team. Building a base of support was approached differently by different sites, although the other aspects of the decision making process faculty approval, asking for volunteers and recruits, making nominations and voting to select the SIP team were relatively similar.

Building a base of support. Communicating formally through presentations with the key stakeholders early on in the process and securing support either verbally or through written form establishes that the school community is informed and accepts the SIP. In two schools, a vote was first taken to support the idea. After voting the business of nomination and selection of team members proceeded. Another school formed a SIP steering committee that requested the

Alliance to brief the faculty on team selection. After that briefing, the vote was taken. At two sites presentations by the principal were made to the faculty as well as to the school board and the parent organization. Signed letters of support were also obtained from the schoolboard, parent organization, and teachers union before the team got started at one site.

Volunteers. In all the schools interviewed the principal asked for parent and teacher volunteers to participate in SIP. The involvement of all interested parties was promoted. At a couple of schools, it was difficult to find volunteers. A principal stated, "I took anyone I could get." At another school a teacher reported " I signed up on the last possible day. I felt that if this was coming at us, I wanted to be on the inside rather than the outside." Positive results are usually obtained when people who are interested in serving as a member of a committee, team, or organizational activity make their own decision to join and accept the responsibility that accompanies the decision. Some strategies used to inform potential volunteers included newsletters, oral presentations at meetings, and chats with the principal. Information was gathered from potential volunteers through surveys and questionnaires about their concerns and opinions about SIP.

Recruits. At each site there was a certain amount of recruiting that took place informally. In some cases the principal spoke with some key faculty. A few respondents reported that "the principal spoke to them." Other principals worked with key teachers to influence their support. Subsequently the support of others followed as indicated by one teacher who said "the teacher's union was supportive of the idea." A few teachers expressed that the SIP process "was imposed on them and it was a forced choice."

Nominations and voting to select the team. The emphasis of the SIP team was on involvement. The open invitation to join the SIP team reinforced this principle. In some schools volunteers were plentiful. Whether volunteers, recruits, or appointees, the potential SIP representatives were first nominated and then either accepted or rejected the nomination. The

majority of the schools conducted secret ballot elections to vote on the nominations. In one small school, volunteers were accepted and "no official ballots were marked." Regardless, the representatives of the SIP team were elected and eventually took their places on the SIP team.

Structure of the Team

The structure of the SIP team was not static and evolved over time. As the SIP team developed a group identity formed that defined the parameters of their activity. The structure also shifted to accommodate the needs of the developing SIP team. The structure of the team framed the operation of the team at the school site and included team roles and responsibilities.

Operations. In many sites the SIP team met after school during the first year, and the majority of teams had limited communication with non-SIP members. Meetings were conducted at the school site and also held at SIP members' homes. Regular meetings were conducted by the majority of SIP teams and attendance was expected of members. A few sites had difficulty establishing regular meeting times and member attendance was sporadic. The belief in working cooperatively with other people to improve schooling was strong. It was acknowledged that there was a lot of extra work for those involved in SIP activities. The time and energy expected of a SIP team member was a problem for some sites.

The profile provided a written structure around which SIP and non-SIP team members could communicate. Upon completion of the profile and the development of action plans the SIP team activities expanded. The original members of the SIP team were referred to as the CORE members and new subcommittees formed to design the best approaches to implement action plans. It was reported that subcommittees at some sites decided to develop their own plans related to the SIP goals. This indicates a decision made by the subcommittee which was not required by SIP, to carry out a specific plan of work.

Roles and Responsibilities. The roles of SIP team members were not delineated. Many of the SIP team members viewed themselves as communicators and problem solvers. They described their responsibilities as brokering ideas, serving as information and resource persons and identifying and solving problems. It was reported by a majority of the respondents that all the SIP team members exerted the same amount of effort. One teacher said, "We all worked very hard as members of the team." Regardless of their rank in the school system, they worked to flatten the hierarchy and promote school improvement. In addition, each SIP team identified a key contact person for the team who would facilitate the provision of information from outside and inside the school to the SIP team. At two sites the principal volunteered to be the key contact person. At one of those sites, SIP team members acknowledged that their key contact person did a lot more work.

Initially, training was required for the SIP team members and many reported that the institute provided a common understanding of the SIP process and helped the participants to understand their roles and structure team activities at the site. There was strong support for the SIP institute and several sites suggested that the new members without the training needed to be socialized before they could be contributors and accepted into the group.

When the SIP team expanded to a system of subcommittees, as it did at a minority of the sites visited, communication with colleagues was part of the Core SIP team member responsibilities. Brokering information with the right people to make things happen at a subcommittee level was also important. Some SIP schools required teachers to serve on the subcommittees, at other SIP schools, teachers were encouraged to volunteer to serve on them. The SIP subcommittees were the vehicles for actualizing specific tasks and goals.

As the system of SIP subcommittees developed, the role of the chair of core SIP team emerged in several schools as well as a recorder who kept and posted the minutes. Some core SIP team members also served as members of the subcommittees providing links between the two

groups and strengthening schoolwide efforts. At other sites the SIP team suffered from staff turnover or lack of direction. This caused a sense of failure which slowed the process and perhaps limited the teams perception of its effectiveness at influencing school wide change.

Qualities of the SIP Team

Individual SIP team members contributed to the growth of the SIP process at each school site. When interviewed about the qualities of the SIP teams the respondents at the 10 sites discussed continuity of the membership, involvement of the team in schoolwide efforts, and the relationships between team members.

Continuity. The comments about SIP team continuity were mixed. Some SIP teams were stable as funding and improvement activities evolved. At one site lack of continuity was perceived to be democratic, based on the individual's desire "to give someone else a turn" but was somewhat problematic in terms of fueling and sustaining the efforts of the group.

In some situations the turnover was positive. The replacement of SIP team members that could not put aside bad history and projected a doom and gloom approach to improvement helped the SIP team evolve. One SIP member said, "We wanted to be on the initial SIP team and did not make it. We waited for them to leave and now we are members."

In other situations, the turnover caused a sense of disconnection. A SIP member explained, "The turnover of members caused the remaining members of the group to regress as it socialized the new members."

Still another situation involved turnover in those schools no longer formally involved in SIP. One former SIP school has created a new structure, called the school council, which includes some of the original SIP team members. The council is generating enthusiasm and continues to extend the work of the SIP team. Another former SIP school that had high

involvement may have "burned out" through over-activity and now, without the support of the Alliance, this school is having difficulty building and sustaining membership.

It appears that external factors can also impact the continuity of SIP team activities. Reduction in force, changes in leadership, budget reduction, impasses, and collective bargaining can redirect energies and sometimes reorder priorities. Several sites put SIP activities "on hold" while they dealt with other system based issues.

Involvement. Although the degree of involvement differs across schools, a majority of those interviewed described a shift over time from team based activities to activities that were schoolwide. During the initial phase of the SIP process team meetings were closed to non-members. One respondent reported, " An 'us' versus 'them' attitude prevailed. Non-SIP teachers wondered "what are they up to? As the profile evolved in our school, non-SIP teachers began to understand what we were up to and some became curious." At this school, it was after this that subcommittees formed to implement SIP goals that were developed and approved by the entire faculty.

During the evolution of SIP involvement, a great deal of communication occurs. At one SIP school, non-SIP team persons did not understand the role SIP played in catalyzing discussions nor did they understand that some effective school activities originated with the SIP team. The effects of SIP as it moves from team based influence to school wide influence can be very subtle.

Some schools were transformed even further, brokering information and disseminating knowledge resulting from a schoolwide network of committees. It was reported by several schools that SIP serves as a clearinghouse that makes things happen schoolwide through the people in the school. Respondents indicated a change in practice at these schools that includes gathering opinions from all constituents to make school decisions and a greater sense of shared responsibility for the future of the school.

Relationships. All of the schools commented about the effect of SIP activities on building relationships between and among team members. The cooperative spirit that accompanies teamwork evolved in most teams. Through discussion and cooperation around goals, beliefs and action plans, team members began to look at each other differently and understand how each other thoughts and what the different team members valued.

According to respondents, respecting differences became an unspoken rule. SIP team members shared responsibilities and assumed different roles based on their strengths, weaknesses and interests. It was reported in two sites that conflict and tension produced a split among team members, but the team worked through it. Three other SIP schools however, spoke of the power of bonding as a team and described themselves as a close social group, comparing themselves to a family.

By discussing ideas, beliefs, and goals, in a safe environment, SIP team members reported that they learned to trust each other, express themselves openly, and learned to disagree without "falling apart." This led to a more satisfying decision making process for all involved. The resolution of conflict is part of shared decision making. Again, according to those interviewed, not all sites progressed at even rates in these feelings or developed the same level of skills.

Many respondents commented about their own personal and professional development as a result of participating in SIP team activities. Assuming new responsibilities, successfully completing schoolwide tasks, and learning to express their opinion were seen to be valuable accomplishments. Others experienced some of the tensions and conflicts that arise when activities evolve that run contrary to popular opinion. For some developing strength of conviction and purpose reflected their personal growth.

The schoolwide training activities that were related to the activities of SIP also contributed to the professional development of the entire faculty. For instance, training in the NCTM Math Standards, Responsive Classroom Techniques, literacy, cooperative learning, or parent

partnerships, focused on a schoolwide improvement goal and brought about through professional development activities. These kinds of activities generated a collective sense of purpose among the staff at the school, creating avenues that could be used to build professional relationships.

The Profile

Each SIP team closely examined a profile of their school. The document served as a needs assessment identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each SIP school. The benefits that teams reported from examining the profile included a focused start, analysis and problem identification, and usefulness over time.

A focused start. Each SIP school has a different context. However, regardless of the climate of the school, all sites reported that examining the profile was initially very useful. It was among the first tasks that the SIP team had to complete. Many respondents reported it served as a good team building exercise. As the first project, the examination (or "mining" as it was called) of the profile gave the SIP team a starting point. It was concrete and provided members with a direction. One administrator said, "The guidelines of the profile itself structured the thoughts and discussions of the SIP team which gave members work a certain authenticity especially during the first year."

Mining the profile framed the situation for the team. According to one respondent the mining process helped "shift the climate to a more 'change ready' state." Another SIP member explained, "The profile allowed us to develop our roles as team members."

Analysis and problem identification. During the mining of the profile people voiced their concerns. The perceptions held by different constituent members gave the SIP team a good baseline of information. One principal said, "Everyone realized that we were in this process together." The SIP team mined a lot of information and reducing the data was difficult for some

sites. One SIP teacher commented, "There was too much data to sort through. We needed more on-site guidance on how to interpret what we got."

The profile also helped identify the weaknesses of the schools. A principal said, "There were a few surprises for some team members, and problems surfaced. This part of the process was not easy, it took a lot of time and assistance was necessary to identify what the real issues and needs were." The respondents also indicated that in general some of the profile questions were not as specific as they could have been.

The profile was also used to develop an action plan. "It helped to shape and implement our work." However, one school principal stated, "We grabbed some goals to get started and then wondered if the right set of goals were identified." Another team member said, "After all that work on the profile, the goals were almost anticlimactic."

Usefulness of the profile over time. According to respondents the usefulness of the profile appeared to decrease over time. There seem to be three phases of the profile as described by those interviewed. These include start up activities, use of the profile as a reference tool, and watching the profile become out-dated and move out of circulation. During the start up phase it was reported that the profile had high relevance to team building, process activities, problem identification, and finally the development of action plans. Some stated, however, that the mining process took too long to complete and held up the development of action plans.

As the action plans were implemented the profile was not used by the majority of SIP schools. Few people referred back to the voluminous document in order to evaluate progress. Others described it as more of a symbol of the SIP process. One teacher explained, "It was not a useful working document and not everyone read it." As the team changed and factors within the school or school environment changed many viewed the profile as out of date. Some suggested that using it to monitor progress of the action plans might help. A SIP member explained, "Much of the SIP team's initial work has now extended into new goals for the school and where it all

started is hard to identify". One superintendent stated, "we should probably use the profile to frame a longitudinal study. It could help confirm our progress by providing concrete benchmarks of progress. Where we were then and where we are now."

Facilitation

All of the SIP schools reported that the facilitator provided by the NH Alliance played a very important role in the school improvement process. The themes that emerged from comments about the facilitator include the person, task orientation, neutral guide and information provider.

The Person. The facilitator influenced how the SIP team operated. The majority of the sites valued the contributions of the facilitator, crediting the teams early successes to the skill to their facilitator. However, it was recognized that much depended on the person and the context. Some SIP schools were frustrated by their facilitator, claiming that the facilitator was more process oriented than necessary. One Sip member said , "The team wanted more direction and decisiveness than our facilitator provided. He thought that the feelings of people were more important than outcomes, which led us to a 'group grope ' situation and very little forward movement." In another school, a teacher commented, "The facilitator was recognized for her enthusiasm and knowledge, but she was not always well received because she did not recognize our constraints." One superintendent summed it up when he said, "It is critical to match the needs of the school with the skills and personality of the facilitator. Different situations require different approaches to bring people through the SIP process."

The role as task master. The majority of the schools indicated that the facilitator modeled good process skills, kept them focused on the task at hand, and provided leadership to the SIP team. The respondents repeatedly emphasized the importance of "the neutral outsider" who kept people on track, did not let the group wander too much, and brought the group back to

task if they did wander. The facilitator in these schools was perceived to be critical to the cultivation of a safe group environment, where collaborative decision making and progress occurs. A few SIP schools indicated that they needed more explanation and direction about the task at hand. According to respondents, a lack of information and research at the appropriate time, exacerbated their problems. A teacher on the SIP team commented, "We floundered, not believing that we were making enough progress and feeling a lot of frustration."

The role as neutral guide. All of the sites acknowledged that the facilitator served as a neutral outsider, refereeing and motivating the activities of the SIP team. As the neutral outsider, he or she could guide the group through the initial phases of the school improvement process providing a frame of reference at a time when none existed. In doing this the facilitator helped build the team as well as lead the members through the process. This type of facilitator guidance allowed the SIP team to develop confidence in their ability to do more on their own with regard to process activities.

The role of the information provider. The facilitator was also perceived by respondents as an information provider. By presenting information about research findings, what is working elsewhere, and ideas, the team progressed and move forward with its agenda. Without the information some teams blamed the facilitator for their "lack of direction and lack of purpose."

Action Planning

The SIP teams created their action plans after the profile was mined so that the profile data was used to identify goals and activities. SIP team member's comments about the actual process of action planning clustered around three themes: linear plans vs. implementation spins; time pressures and pace; and problems caused by action planning.

Linear plans vs. implementation spins. During the interviews the SIP participants described a variety of planning and implementation scenarios. They reported that much of the

process of action planning is linear on paper. The plan is mapped out as an orderly sequential process with very specific goals, outcomes and timelines. However, the implementation of plans as one superintendent said "leads people off the linear landscape into spin-offs - unanticipated and unexplored areas."

As the plans were implemented modifications and revisions were made to the original goals and activities. Some changes reflected timeline shifts. Several members of SIP teams acknowledged that it was the people that made SIP work; shifts were made to accommodate people. One SIP member said, "Expecting fast change was not acceptable to many educators. We just had to slow down." People who are involved in the process have limits and need rewards.

The development of people, confidence in the process, and the ability to think and problem solve are not specified outcomes on plans. A principal stated, "The reduction of conflict and tension and increase in communication doesn't always show up on the plans, but as people participate in team-based work the climate in the school shifts. The environment opens itself up more to change, and learning is valued." Several SIP schools at both the elementary and secondary level commented that children's opinions were considered as part of the information gathering process now and hadn't been earlier.

Time pressures and pace. Many SIP team members reported that most of the pressures to complete tasks were self imposed. The three year time period took away the urgency of obtaining immediate results for some participants because they were focused on long term change. Another perspective was identified by a teacher who said that, "The sense of time took on more of a project orientation where deadlines and pressures existed to complete a specific task that had been identified by the group." The majority of the SIP schools reported some degree of unrealistic expectations with regard to accomplishing the goals and tasks that were a part of the action plans. A SIP team temporarily without a principal felt responsible for justifying the funds

spent on SIP. One member stated, "We were kicking ourselves that first year. We finally figured out that accomplishment takes longer and we started savoring more of our efforts."

Two other SIP members reported that they understood the unspoken expectations and pressure associated with justifying the expenditure of legislative funds. One teacher stated, "Much of our time was spent involved in discussions and team building activities. Especially during the first year. When people asked us, "What are you doing?" What have you done?" it was not easy to explain." Lack of a regular meeting time created different time pressures for some of the teams exacerbating the sense that nothing was getting accomplished. Scheduling meetings and finding the time to sit and work together as a team was problematic for several sites.

Problems caused by action planning. Several problems emerged as a result of the action planning process. The productivity of the group was not visible as most of the information about team efforts was not recorded. Therefore, the accomplishments were not always clear. One respondent stated, "Credibility does not show up on plans. Three years is just not enough to produce results." It was reported by one SIP team that the action plan and implementation was viewed by some faculty as a lot of additional work.

A source of tension reported by the respondents appears to be members' different orientations toward planning. Those individuals that are process oriented reported that premature action was not positive. These respondents used words such as team building, open communication, bonding, trust, and thinking things through. The action oriented individuals want to "just do it." They preferred to move into implementation sooner, adjusting their actions as they implement goals. They made comments like "I don't want to sit around and talk about it for too long," "the process did not justify the ends", "the group was too close, I'm more businesslike."

Technical Assistance

The focus of technical assistance changes as the team influences more of the activities at the school. All of the respondents indicated a high level of support for technical assistance provided by outside consultants that includes information, training, and /or funding that is site specific.

Information. Those interviewed at the SIP schools stated that providing SIP teams with program and instructional models and research findings that inform their practice and can also influence board level policy and community support is critical to the SIP process. Summaries of practices that are recognized as successful as well as a research liaison to interpret the research findings would reduce the information gap that currently exists at some SIP sites.

The respondents stated that the facilitators provided by the Alliance were very helpful in guiding the process and crucial to start up activities. However, the facilitator was only part of technical assistance. One teacher said, "We need to know what is working and how other schools went about making school change so we can decide what is best for our school. The SIP process is only one approach." Many respondents reported that the classroom and instruction is at the heart of improvement. Developing a pool of resource people and sites that SIP team members could contact to inform decision making was repeatedly mentioned as potentially very useful to SIP efforts.

Training. According to the respondents, the need for additional training and materials from outside of the school system is critical to building teachers self esteem as well as providing an incentive to learn. It was reported by one teacher that " We need a lot more than we got." Several sites have identified and selected training in program and content areas to address their action plan goals. For example, training would be useful in the use of manipulatives to teach mathematics, cooperative learning, responsive classroom techniques, and assessing student writing samples.

The majority of SIP school members interviewed indicated that technical assistance in assessment could be very useful in meeting their action plan goals. However, it was emphasized that the request to participate in technical assistance should start at the local school. Acknowledging the current shift away from standardized testing, many identified the need to learn more about alternative forms of assessment. A superintendent stated, "We don't want to reduce six weeks of student work into one letter, but that is hard to sell to the public." Another respondent stated, "We need help in developing and assessing student portfolios." A principal reported, "We are seriously looking at outcome based education now."

There were a range of responses about technical assistance in the area of assessment. Some specific suggestions made by the respondents included the need to understand what an outcome measure means, how to organize and analyze data, how to conduct student observations, and how to build an evaluation tool to measure student outcomes. One SIP team member reported that, "Developing a dynamic measurement document that incorporates different ways to measure results would be very useful." The reticence to expand assessment was also stated very succinctly by one principal who said "Measuring everything we do is viewed as burdensome by teachers. If we start to measure everything, I'm afraid that they won't try new things."

Funding. The continued need for financial support was also reported by several administrators. School board support and funding is still a necessary part of SIP and there is proof of success in positive outcomes. "Our accountability is going to count. Measuring outcomes is important to our continuation in the NH Alliance." In addition, the expensive hidden costs of professional development were identified. The respondents reported that "Conference fees, provisions for substitutes as well as consultant costs all add up. Keeping these costs down helps."

System Wide Effects From SIP

The superintendents in the school systems where SIP schools are located were asked if there had been any systemwide effects as a result of participating in SIP. The majority of superintendents interviewed stated that their system was effected from participating in the NH Alliance. Their responses reflected effects in the areas of communication, planning and informal leadership.

Communication. It was recognized by respondents that SIP provided a forum for educators, parents and community members to talk about education. Through SIP related activities such as newsletters, committee meetings, and events, parent and community involvement, was encouraged and school system efforts could be highlighted.

The majority of superintendents reported that at district management team meetings, administrators share information about the SIP and that through reports and anecdotes interest in SIP is building. One superintendent stated, "I wish all my schools could be SIP schools." Another respondent indicated that, "SIP serves as a symbol to all the administrators in the district. We are all more aware of the need to involve people in decision making. I tell them we've got to do more of it."

Planning. Two systems are now involved in a more comprehensive approach to planning. According to one superintendent "The system wide strategic planning model was easier to promote due to the successful example of SIP. There was a lot of support for involving different constituents in planning and decision making."

In addition, another superintendent pointed out that, "The effective schools literature, quality team management principles, and the strategic planning approach all emphasize aspects of the SIP process." He continued to explain his point and said, " I am meeting monthly with my administrators away from the school site to conduct district planning sessions. The process has resulted in a blueprint for the school system."

Informal Leadership. Many of the Superintendents acknowledged the role SIP played in helping staff to develop both professionally and personally. Several of the school systems experienced some degree of external conflict during the implementation of SIP. Budget cutbacks, reductions in the teaching staff, the firing of a superintendent and contract disputes caused a great deal of strain on the SIP process, and in some cases to individual members, yet informal leadership emerging from the SIP team had positively impacted the system as a whole.

A superintendent further explained the value of SIP in developing leadership skills among teachers. There is a big difference between the teacher's work environment and the business world. "In the business world adults are expected to work with adults and learn how to communicate and solve problems together. Many teachers leave their families, go to college and return to the world of schools where they primarily work with children." He stressed the historical isolation and the unfortunate lack of community for teachers in schools acknowledging the need for this to change. He also said, "The SIP process has really contributed to helping many teachers that are beginning to understand how to communicate about school wide issues, resolve conflict among themselves and work effectively as a group of adults."

The Specification and Measurement of Student and School Outcomes

School outcomes refer to the SIP indicators of effectiveness such as leadership, school and classroom climate, and community involvement and support. These indicators have been shown to correlate with positive student outcomes at effective schools. Student outcomes refer to measures of student academic, attitudinal, skill, and behavioral development. In the discussion that follows, the term "outcomes" refers to both school and student outcomes unless specified as either student or school related.

The interview data addressing the specification and measurement of school and student outcomes was interpreted in terms of five separate constructs. Each construct represents a

unique facet of outcome measurement in schools and includes the following issues: school and administration beliefs about school and student outcomes; the challenge schools face in obtaining outcomes; the capacity of schools to measure outcomes; the social and institutional factors related to obtaining outcomes; and the complexity of the relationship between SIP activities and outcomes. A summary of the key findings regarding the specification and measurement of outcomes is as follows:

- School staff and administration reported an almost universal belief in the importance of outcome measures for informing the educational process.
- Even though respondents exhibited a pervasive positive belief in the importance of student outcomes, schools were significantly challenged in the process of understanding and measuring school and student effects.
- There is considerable disagreement concerning whether or not schools possess the capacity, will, desire, or commitment to measure.
- Measuring and reporting outcomes is related to the evolution and development of an institutionalized school and community support network.
- Although some SIP activities result in very simple and straightforward outcomes, other activities are very complex with respect to the outcomes produced. The evidence suggests that SIP often stimulates people to act by making them feel part of the school and community; this is a unanticipated aspect of the complex social consequences of SIP.

Beliefs about School and Student Outcomes

With just a few exceptions, respondent's comments about the utility and function of outcome related information were positive. No matter how long schools had participated in SIP and regardless of whether they were elementary, middle, or high schools, the administration and staff indicated a belief that the measurement and reporting of outcomes was vital for education.

Those interviewed felt that outcome data are useful to inform and validate the entire local education process, including SIP. Respondents realized and commented that the progress of students is the key to validation of the SIP program. They also noted that information on school indicators such as school climate and leadership is important. Although many individuals felt that

some educational goals were unmeasurable, most believed that some information was needed to demonstrate the effectiveness of educational programs.

In addition to demonstrating the effectiveness of education, there were many other suggestions offered as to why measurement is important. A sample of those suggestions is presented as follows:

- A knowledge of outcomes in some districts will have a positive effect on other districts.
- Outcome information is great for public relations for both SIP and schools; everyone needs to be informed and results must be disseminated.
- Outcomes are useful for guiding instruction; outcome based education is extremely difficult, but extremely important; measurement may provide the necessary help in expediting the process of outcome based education; measurement leads to a revised curriculum.
- Outcomes are vital for communication between teachers, between teachers and parents, and between the administration and school board.
- Assessments are needed to measure change; measures contribute to consistency throughout the school.
- Having numbers are important to a school board for funding; measurements are important to the extent that they justify expenditures and show that school actions count.
- Outcomes are an important part of record keeping and are needed for historical review.
- Having outcomes is "expected"; i.e., outcomes are part of a set of expectations.
- Expectations must be set academically; outcomes would indicate if they are met.
- Outcomes motivate teachers to perform and improve their teaching.
- Measurable outcomes justify the time and energy of SIP. It is the only way that people will believe SIP is working and makes the SIP process understandable.

It was interesting to find that people believed that student outcomes are the driving force behind what SIP does, even if no systematic measurement of those outcomes are available. In spite of the positive attitude regarding the value, importance, and utility of outcome data, schools

remained challenged in obtaining outcome information. The difficulties involved in the systematic measurement of outcomes appear related to social and technical factors inherent in defining, collecting, and reporting school and student effects.

Challenges in Obtaining Outcome Information

Evidence gathered from the interviews indicates that schools had difficulty conceptualizing and measuring school and student outcomes. One person noted that the problems related to outcomes represent the "trickiest part of school change." The data suggested that difficulties are due to a complex array of social, technical, and institutional factors inherent in conceptualizing, collecting, and reporting outcomes.

Considerable variation in the meaning of outcomes was found in SIP schools. Most school personnel had difficulty conceptualizing outcomes (regardless of whether they were related to SIP actions or other schoolwide activities) and few SIP teams considered "outcomes" when designing action plans. A SIP team member suggested that one of the first significant challenges for SIP team members and school personnel is conceptualizing and defining outcomes. Evidence for this notion was abundant as respondents expressed considerable uncertainty regarding the meaning of outcome data and often did not distinguish the difference between activities and outcomes.

This conceptual difficulty was evident in nearly every SIP site visited. For example, members of several SIP teams commented that outcomes (meaning activities or goals) were noted in the minutes of meetings. Outcomes were often discussed in terms of goals, revealing a confusion between specifying goals and measuring outcomes. The difficulty here suggests the failure to recognize that goals are desired ends, not outcomes that may be measured, observed, and documented. Activities, in contrast, are events that produce outcomes. On SIP action plans, for example, goals were the objectives to be reached (the desired end), actions were the activities or events in which people engaged, outcomes were the measurable results produced by the

activities. Some team members observed that goals were more likely to be specified on action plans than outcomes.

School personnel were asked during the interview to list some of the "outcomes" that were specified on the SIP team action plans. The responses are listed on the table that follows (Table 4). Note that only some of the events listed are actually "outcomes." Other events that were characterized by respondents as "outcomes" are actually activities or goals. Table 4 reclassifies the "outcomes" identified by respondents in terms of outcomes, activities, or goals. By reclassifying the "outcome" responses, the table reveals the lack of conceptual clarity that exists regarding actual outcomes.

Some of the events characterized as outcomes are, in fact, legitimate measurable and observable outcomes, as indicated in the school and student outcomes section of the table. These outcomes are further categorized as having data collected, as having no data collected, or as being documents or structures. Other events identified as "outcomes" are reclassified in Table 4 as being activities or goals.

Some schools had not conceptualized the role that outcome measurements might play in the SIP process. In a few instances, outcomes were given little thought and even the basic concept of outcomes was foreign. When one group of SIP team respondents was probed about outcomes, they agreed that the idea makes a lot of sense, but they really had not previously thought about outcomes. Respondents suggested that they "knew why" they were taking action, but measuring the impact of actions was not considered. The concern was with "what SIP did," not with the result of those activities on the effects of the students, the school, the staff, and the community.

Some SIP schools did collect, report, and use outcome data. CAT tests have continued to be administered at several schools, and some had collected other data through opinion surveys, for example. Yet the collection and use of outcome data was neither systematic or sophisticated.

For example, in one instance, when some student outcome data were collected in the form of writing samples, a respondent indicated that the information was not reported to the staff in any systematic way and she was not sure if anyone even recorded the information in a form that could be disseminated. In fact, "gut feeling" and story telling were the prevalent methods for assessing results.

Finally, schools often felt they received no guidance regarding what outcomes were important or how they might be measured, although respondents occasionally suggested that the outside facilitator was pressing for a more concrete plan for assessing outcomes. When facilitators suggested that outcome data be collected, one team reported that the team did not know what, who, or how to ask to get information about collecting outcomes. A teacher who developed an innovative program to improve student attitudes and interpersonal relations commented that she would love to "know the results," but asked, "how would you find out?" There was agreement by respondents that the lack of understanding of outcome measurement is a tremendous weakness in the schools that was not even considered until the problem was made clear by SIP.

The School's Capacity to Develop Outcome Measures

The interviews indicated some disagreement over whether or not schools have the desire and capacity to gather outcome information. When asked about the staff and administration's capacity to measure outcomes, some teachers and administrators responded with a confident "absolutely," while others showed severe reservations. Most said "yes, but" and strongly suggested that technical assistance of some sort would be required for schools to develop measurement instruments, collect outcome data, and communicate that information to others.

There were some indications that the desire to assess was present (although some suggested that schools do not have the will to measure). Most felt that accountability is important and reported that they want to develop outcome measures. Respondents are consistent, however,

TABLE 4. Reclassification of School and Student Outcomes Statements Elicited From On-Site SIP School Interviews

School & Student Outcomes

Outcomes Specified: Data Collected
■ Math achievement tests ■ Some student behavior data collected and reports prepared ■ Survey of mentoring groups ■ Writing samples ■ Staff opinion data (e.g., related to the effects of SIP programs on families) ■ CAT scores ■ Survey results ■ Attendance at 95% ■ Confidence in the school as illustrated by the number of teachers (20 of 29) that volunteered to have a student teacher in their classroom
Outcomes Specified: No Data Collected
■ Self-esteem of teachers ■ Parts of SIP incorporated in other schools in the district ■ School pride, moral, safety ■ 8000 parent and grandparent volunteer hours ■ Parent's lunch better organized (no documentation-indirect observation) ■ Library tutors helped ■ Parent involvement increased dramatically ■ A fundamental belief of a majority of school staff (including those not participating on the SIP team) that the SIP is effective in enabling all students to learn
Outcomes: Documents/Structures Produced
■ Degrees of Involvement ■ Mid-year reports to SIP central (of activities) ■ Mission statement ■ Built playground ■ New updated site developed profile

Activities

Communication
■ Site-based communications packet ■ Communication with parents through newsletters, and report cards ■ Communication, politics ■ "SIP reports their efforts to the whole faculty" ■ Parents survey to determine their opinions ■ Principal teas ■ Designed a protocol for open house ■ Activities billboard installed ■ Hosting morning coffees and teas ■ Piloting visitation day for first graders ■ Student forums ■ Focus group meetings ■ Breaking down walls ■ SIP parent teacher committee ■ SIP show and tell session in a New Hampshire town where information is disseminated to other school systems ■ Morning meetings to increase teacher communication ■ Parents put on a show ■ School news line ■ News letter to parents ■ Built volunteer program
Administration
■ Process of principal selection ■ Collaborative decision making process ■ Shifted from two to three lunch periods ■ Documentation of outcomes through the Alliance's reporting system
Development
■ Site-based management seminar ■ SEEDS program
Curricular
■ Calculators in the classroom ■ Cooperative learning ■ Kid behavior plans
Facilities
■ Parents landscape project ■ Building cleanliness project

Goals

Student
■ Student empowerment ■ Student behavioral control; developing a more student-focused school; using logical consequences to make kids more accountable for behavior ■ Student representation on the school board ■ Student participation in study groups ■ More teachers are asking the student's opinion ■ Student involvement in activities
School
■ Improve school environment and facilities ■ Creation of school council for visioning ■ Increased communication in classrooms ■ Reading and math goals were specified
Community
■ To coordinate parents time in schools ■ To coordinate library time ■ Community involvement

with the belief that time limitations and other demands for attention place too much of a burden on the professionals working in the school. In other words, the SIP teams reported a desire and a commitment to measure outcomes, but argued that it all comes down to time. They said that another task, added to an already "hefty-plate," may be too overwhelming for the SIP team.

Many commented that school personnel possess the requisite knowledge and ability to construct measures. Most people believed that everyone has the capability to qualify and quantify. In general, nearly everyone thought that the capacity to measure is in the schools, and this capacity can be developed with a little technical assistance.

When outcome based education was the focus of attention at one SIP school, the staff exhibited confidence that measurement was possible. Some suggested that staff need to start thinking more in terms of measuring student outcomes and in developing positive attitudes about measurement. Respondents noted that external technical assistance helps drag people out of the mud when things bog down and would be especially helpful in developing a second generation or follow-up profile.

With regard to the role of technical assistance in measurement, one person thought that schools would measure if they could, but they definitely need technical help. She also suggested that if technical assistance related to measurement was offered, it should be highly specific. Workshops on general topics, such as the "mathematics of effective schools" definitely work against meeting school needs in an effective way. Some thought that technical assistance would be helpful to "sell" the school board and the public on issues related to outcome measurement and it would prevent reinventing the wheel.

One person suggested that staff confidence in the capacity to measure and report would be increased if the SIP could provide for them an illustrative model of how the collection of student outcome data has worked in other settings. A superintendent noted the problem of developing a set of expectations about what an assessment should look like while at the same time writing the assessment -- what he called "the chicken and egg thing." He posited that the difficulties related to measuring student outcomes are generally not attributable to the desire or capability of the staff or administration in schools. Instead, most difficulties in measuring outcomes relate to social or systemic factors.

Social and Institutional Factors Related to Measuring and Reporting Outcomes

Respondents generally agreed that several years of participation in SIP is necessary for schools to get to the point where student outcomes become the focus of attention. Based on the

types of goals set and activities performed by SIP teams during the first several years in the program, it was evident that SIP teams sometimes sense other social and cultural priorities (school outcomes) before focusing on student outcomes. For example, during the first several years of SIP, the focus of SIP teams was on social and behavioral changes such as discipline codes, parent-teacher relations, community involvement, and student councils. These outcomes were all school related, not student related.

The reasons for the extended amount of time needed before outcomes are measured are rooted in complex social phenomena related to the perceived social and emotional consequences of school and community awareness of student outcomes. Respondents indicated that the culture of measuring and using student outcome data as a vehicle for curriculum adjustment and school change is almost nonexistent in schools. One person mentioned a personal belief that "schools have this incredible resistance to measuring. You can see teachers bristle. . . ."

The resistance to measurement and ultimately to the school and community knowledge of outcomes was indicated by the comments of a superintendent who refuses to get "bogged down in the measurement of student outcomes -- the age old problem in education." The superintendent argued that, regardless of whether the criteria are written or measured, every person will evaluate the school and will know how they feel about the school. The "bog" metaphor suggests the social and emotional morass associated with measuring student outcomes.

Information provided by the SIP teachers indicated that the extended length of time required before SIP schools considered addressing curriculum concerns and measuring student outcomes was related to the time required for building institutional and community trust. The building of trust enables school staff to cope with the possibility of negative student outcome effects. Evidence from SIP teacher interviews suggested that the practice of not measuring and not reporting student learning stems from the apprehension related to the possibility of negative student outcomes.

Negative outcomes, it was felt, are hard to share with both the school and community and, in fact, may not reflect the quality of a school or a program. Teachers and others associated with the school and SIP argued this point with conviction and provided dozens of explanations for why "official" assessments of student learning should not occur. For example, one set of SIP teachers pointed out that negative test scores may just reflect the particular sample of children attending school in a given year and may not indicate anything about the quality of the school or the teachers. A school with a small group (less than 100) of children of a particular age may have considerable variability in scores from year to year and this variability may not be related to teacher proficiency, curriculum, instructional practices, leadership, or school climate.

The possibility of a negative outcome measurement over which school personnel felt they would have little control creates a fear of backlash from the community. The issue relates to how the teachers, administrators, parents, and other community members attribute responsibility and blame. The implication of this analysis for SIP was suggested by respondents who acknowledged that measuring student growth was entirely too risky in the absence of an effective community wide support system and with no systematic effort to advance such growth.

SIP participants believed that in order for schools to get to the point where they can feel safe enough to measure student outcomes, several years of progress in school leadership, parent participation, improved climate, communication, and shared decision-making must first occur. That is, social needs must first be met before outcome measures are addressed. Support for this notion was provided by a respondent who noted that empowering the staff and community is necessary to get past the threatening aspects of measurement; and the time it takes is longer than we realize -- it is an evolutionary process. The evolutionary process refers to the development of an institutional support system that needs to be in place in a school and community. This system, noted a SIP teacher, requires a considerable school and community wide effort to maintain.

The role of SIP in improving student outcomes, therefore, may be to enable schools to focus on student outcomes through the evolution and development of an institutionalized community support network in which the involvement of the entire community is acknowledged as a requirement for a continuously improving school system. There was a strong suggestion from the interview data that SIP helps schools and communities in the planning process in moving toward outcomes; and that this process may take several years before a school is even ready to begin looking at outcomes.

In sum, as SIP progresses in a school and a community, lower level social and security needs are met along with the development of trust. With the advent of increased skills and knowledge of measurement in an atmosphere of trust, there may be an increased emphasis on the development and measurement of outcomes. During this period of development, the focus of the school and SIP team may change over time from school activities to student social behavior to student academic behavior along with a parallel movement to develop curriculum goals and guidelines; this analysis also suggests that the development of specific curriculum goals parallels increased interest in the assessment of achievement. Some SIP participants suggested, however, that it takes several years of SIP program development for this to occur and it must be a school and community wide effort.

The Relationship Between SIP Activity and Outcomes

During the on-site visits SIP and school personnel commented on the nature of the relationship between SIP activities in the school and the complexity of outcomes that were expected to result from such activities. That is, were SIP activities resulting in rather simple straightforward outcomes that were isolated from other events and outcomes in the school, or were SIP activities resulting in effects that were complex and systemic in nature, affecting more than a one or two components of a school system simultaneously?

There was little disagreement that some SIP activities were very simple and clear in terms of the outcomes. For example, the SIP team activity of developing a mission statement for the entire school resulted in a rather straightforward written mission statement. Many other simple mechanical act-outcome relations were also in evidence, such as hanging a bulletin board in an effort to increase communication, and the creation of a teacher-of-the-month parking space to increase feelings of teacher recognition and esteem.

There was also little disagreement that many SIP activities were very complex in nature, some having very unpredictable outcomes. In reference to this complexity, one person observed that "nothing that SIP does is simple." The complex nature of many SIP activities is evident when consideration is given to the context in which SIP operates. In one elementary school, for example, the SIP team proposed a relatively straightforward and simple goal: build a playground. In the end, the school found the community built much more than the playground. They also built feelings of participation and belonging in some local people who otherwise never participate in elementary school events. In other words, SIP acted so as to change the culture of schools and the relationship of schools to people and groups in the community. SIP seemed to change the way people think about the school and the way they do things in and for the school.

Many respondents found it difficult to separate the activities of SIP from the activities of the school in general. Most said that most simple SIP activities are indistinguishable from schoolwide activities. The main difference between SIP and schoolwide activities seemed to be the level of involvement of the entire school and community; SIP seemed to increase the level of community involvement across many activities, even the activities not specifically sponsored by SIP. This means that attributing effects of any schoolwide program to SIP alone would be problematic, but to exclude SIP influence as a factor would also be inaccurate.

Factors Associated with Student Outcome Measurement

An examination of the information generated by the on-site interviews conducted by RMC Research suggests that whether or not SIP teams and SIP schools produce evidence of outcomes depends on factors that are idiosyncratic to every SIP team, school, school system, and community. Although no SIP schools as yet have established a systematic program for measuring and reporting outcome data, the schools that are most advanced in the process seem to be characterized by at least five factors:

- The majority of school staff (including those not participating on the SIP team) were enthusiastic about SIP and believed that the SIP was an effective tool for school change.
- There was a recognizable commitment by all leadership that SIP were the chosen vehicle for continuous improvement in the school. Leadership includes the school board, the district superintendent, and most importantly, the school principal.
- The schools have been engaged in SIP for several years and were moving from discussions on school outcomes such as staff development, community involvement, communication, and school governance to discussions on student outcomes.
- Distractions to the school in general such as building programs, reductions in force, restructuring of grades, significant changes of leadership, deliberate attempts by subgroups to undermine the SIP process, cynicism, or impatience did not reach such an intensity that the SIP team was unable to function.
- Facilitation that provided external guidance on two fronts: (1) group processes and communication; (2) curriculum and instructional content.

In the table that follows the ten schools visited were rated according to the extent to which they exhibited each of the characteristics referenced above. The table indicates that the first characteristic was either descriptive or partially descriptive of all ten schools. Most school staff at all ten schools were enthusiastic about SIP and believed that the SIP was an effective tool for school change.

The table also indicates that most schools are currently characterized by a recognizable commitment by all leadership (including the superintendent, the school board, and the principal)

to the notion that SIP was the chosen vehicle for continuous improvement in the school. In one school this was not the case.

Most SIP schools were not moving from discussions of school outcomes to discussions of student outcomes. Lack of facilitation may be a factor in inhibiting the movement of discussion to improved student outcomes. Seven of the schools that were visited had completed the three year program and no longer had access to facilitation.

Perhaps the most problematic factor for most SIP teams was distraction that resulted from certain types of social or leadership upheavals. Reductions-In-Force (RIF), restructuring of grades, or significant changes of leadership, for example slowed the SIP teams progress and sometimes stopped the process altogether. Only two of the ten teams were dubbed free of such distraction and six of ten were considerably troubled by some distraction. The effect of distractions is to temporarily remove the attention and support of key leadership, or to create disharmony on the team. In the face of overwhelming leadership and social difficulties, the SIP team effectively ceases to function and forward movement grinds to a halt. Usually, when the problem is resolved, the process revives itself, allowing forward progress to resume.

The final factor of facilitation, both process facilitation, and curriculum and instructional facilitation described some schools well. Some facilitators were very weak on the curriculum and instructional dimension, however. When facilitators focused on process, but did little to advance the team toward curriculum goals and instruction, there was little evidence that SIP teams discussed student outcomes.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENT OUTCOME MEAUSREMENT

FACTORS		SCHOOLS INTERVIEWED									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	The majority of school staff (including those not participating on the SIP team) were enthusiastic about SIP and believed that the SIP was an effective tool for school change.	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+
2.	There was a recognizable commitment by all leadership that SIP was the chosen vehicle for continuous improvement in the school. Leadership includes the school board, the district superintendent, and most importantly, the school principal.	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	+
3.	The schools have been engaged in SIP for several years and were moving from discussions on school outcomes such as staff development, community involvement, communication, and school governance to discussions on student outcomes.	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	0
4.	Distractions to the school in general such as building programs, reductions in force, restructuring of grades, significant changes of leadership, deliberate attempts by subgroups to undermine the SIP process, cynicism, or impatience did not reach such an intensity that the SIP team was unable to function.	+	0	-	-	0	+	-	-	-	-
5.	Facilitation that provided external guidance on two fronts: (1) group processes and communication; (2) curriculum and instructional content.	+	+	0	-	0	-	0	+	+	+

KEY: + Describes

0 Partially Describes

- Does Not Describe

VIII: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section of the report, RMC Research describes what appear to be the most significant themes that emerge from its different evaluation activities. Key findings that reflect on SIP as a whole are followed by brief discussion of findings about each of the elements of SIP. The section concludes with a set of summary recommendations.

Key findings

School and student outcomes

The primary question of most audiences consulted about the content of this evaluation was, "What evidence exists that SIP has had an influence on student outcomes?" There is a short answer and a long answer to the question. The short answer seems deceptively simple and clear cut. The long answer is more complex and vague, but also provides more insight as we struggle to understand schools, the process of change in schools, and the role of school and student outcome information.

The short answer is that schools are able to describe examples of changes that have been made as a result of SIP, and a few even have some isolated reports of program impact in terms of student outcomes. Schools have engaged in many activities as a result of SIP. Some of these have been simple in nature and do not reflect a deep understanding of school change. Many have been complex and resulted in significant long-term change in schools. Yet despite the acknowledgement of all the parties involved with SIP, from SIP team members to the NH Alliance Board, that school and student outcome data is valuable in the school improvement process and essential in validating SIP, there has been no systematic collection of outcome data by any SIP school. This finding, however, is consistent with experience in school effectiveness initiatives throughout the nation, as it is the tendency for schools to address outcomes and student learning only after several years involvement in the effective schools movement.

There is some evidence that a few SIP schools in their third and final year and SIP schools that no longer receive SIP funding but who have institutionalized SIP, have begun to define school and student outcomes. There were even a small number that have collected outcome data such as norm-referenced achievement tests, and absentee, retention and graduation rates that show positive changes since the school has been in SIP. Yet SIP schools are not currently engaged in the process of defining and collecting school and student outcome data related to long-term interventions on any systematic basis. Through the Pew Charitable Trust grant, the NH Alliance will create a more systematic process for identifying and collecting outcome data, providing technical assistance in using this data to inform the SIP process, and creating a school culture that incorporates outcome information in a continuous improvement process.

The long answer provides insights into why, if everyone acknowledges the importance of outcome data, it is not being routinely and systematically collected. The evaluation revealed at least five contributing factors.

There seems to be genuine confusion on the part of SIP school staff about what is meant by outcomes, and what expectations exist for when and how they are collected, reported, and used. Many SIP team members reported that the products and activities resulting from SIP were outcomes. Many did not distinguish between activities, program implementation and program outcomes. They are not alone in their misconception. There is adequate documentation of this misconception in education throughout the nation.

In many school cultures the normal sequence is a.) to identify the need, b.) plan the intervention, c.) implement the intervention, and d.) collect school and student outcome data. This sequential approach often results in the interpretation that it is not appropriate to talk about measuring outcomes at the same time one is defining needs and planning interventions. If

monitoring of program and student outcomes is to become an integral part of SIP, this paradigm has to change, and defining and measuring outcomes has to be part of early discussions.

Another factor was the lack of technical assistance available to SIP schools to help them better understand and measure outcomes. While some facilitators pressed for more dialogue among SIP teams about outcomes, there was not much expertise available to move beyond this stage. This expertise does not exist within SIP and is not readily available from other sources, and providing this technical assistance to schools will require concerted and creative effort on the part of the NH Alliance.

The elimination of the statewide California Achievement Test (CAT) assessment was another factor affecting outcome measurement. While there are lots of arguments against norm-referenced tests, the CAT would have been at least one source of student outcome information for SIP schools. Yet even when state assessments or district testing policies require participation in the systematic collection of data, they are frequently viewed as isolated assessment "events." Meaningful outcome data will not be available until schools recognize its value as part of an internal on-going system of assessment and are trained in interpreting and using that information.

Finally, it appears that before SIP schools are prepared to address the issues of outcomes they have to move through certain stages and have special conditions in place. These stages or special conditions appear to include the building of trust sufficient to deal with a controversial topic, movement to a paradigm in which consideration of outcomes is an natural part of the goal setting discussion, and the development of skills in defining and measuring outcomes. It also involves confronting and dealing with fears of increased accountability in an environment that is difficult to control and the perception that where they have been available, student outcomes have often been misused by both the public at large and the educational community.

Evidence of the Impact of SIP in Participating Schools

Although evidence of outcomes has not been systematically collected, SIP has impacted the schools that have engaged in it, and there is a pattern to the impact. In the first year of involvement, SIP has provided schools with a set of process skills (facilitation, conflict resolution, decision making techniques, communication), a mechanism for planning and implementing change (the SIP team, profile and planning process), and the presence of an external facilitator who has in some cases been invaluable as an outside perspective. With these skills in place, schools have begun a series of activities that have tended to focus on school and classroom climate, parent participation, community involvement and support, and the revision of school mission, philosophy and goals, or specific procedures. School and classroom climate activities addressed included student motivation, student discipline, student participation, the building and environs, and staff morale. Parent participation activities were designed to promote two-way discussion between parents and school, parental involvement in the school and to disseminate more information about the school to parents. Community involvement activities included dissemination of information about the school and the use of community resources in schools. These activities tended to be relatively simple and few schools addressed school leadership, school resources, or program and student outcomes. In many instances school staff perceived these changes, and resulting changes in school culture, to have made a significant impact on the operation of the school.

In subsequent years, schools in which events such as significant changes in formal leadership, reductions in force, or contract deadlocks did not significantly interfere, SIP schools tended to engage in more complex interventions that changed not only the school environment, but instructional practices, process and educational content. An outstanding example of the impact of SIP is an elementary school that has competed its formal three years in SIP and has used SIP to complete the following activities related to each of the ten SIP elements of school effectiveness:

- **Program and student outcomes:** it has addressed academic deficits in language arts and introduced portfolio assessment.

- **Mission, philosophy, goals and procedures:** it has written a new mission, goals and philosophy.

- **Resources:** it has created a safe playground and improved other facilities.

- **School program:** it has added a pre-algebra course to its curriculum, created a new social studies curriculum and revised all other curricula for continuity.

- **Instructional practices:** it has introduced cooperative learning, provided teachers with planning time, introduced heterogenous grouping, de-emphasized texts and had teachers use literature and simulations, and eliminated mainstreaming and the use of the intercom during the school day.

- **Staff characteristics, attitudes and relationships:** it has increased staff participation on school committees, introduced informal programs to improve staff morale, and revised the staff evaluation process.

- **Leadership:** site-based decision making is now institutionalized into its decision-making process.

- **School and classroom climate:** it has created a student council and cross-age buddy program.

- **Parent participation:** it has introduced a school volunteer program, sends a weekly newsletter to parents, has expanded parent conferencing, instituted a parent teacher association, and has parents on every action committee in the school.

- **Community involvement and support:** it runs a community bulletin board, has become a community education site, and has become a site for many community activities.

Reported outcomes include a decrease in student retention, easy faculty contract negotiations, donation of resources such as computers, and approval of the school budget by the community for two years in a row.

Factors influencing the effectiveness of SIP

SIP is a complex intervention in the life of a school and school system. In some schools it has had extensive and deep impact. In others, the interventions resulting from SIP have been

limited and relatively simple. The following factors were present in schools in which it had a significant impact:

- The majority of the school staff (including those not participating on the SIP team) were enthusiastic about SIP and believed that SIP was an effective tool for school change.
- There was a recognizable commitment by all formal leadership that SIP was the chosen vehicle for continuous improvement in the school. Formal leadership includes the school board, the district superintendent, and the school principal.
- The schools have been engaged in SIP for several years and were moving from a discussion of school outcomes such as staff development, community involvement, community involvement and school governance, to a discussion on improving student outcomes.
- Distractions to the school in general such as building programs, reductions in force, restructuring of grades, significant changes in formal leadership, and deliberate attempts by sub-groups to undermine the SIP process did not reach such an intensity that the SIP team was unable to function.
- The external facilitator provided external guidance on two fronts: (1) group process; and (2) curriculum and instructional content.

Conversely, where these factors were absent, the impact of SIP was weakened.

SIP as an Evolving Model of School Change

Data from different components of the evaluation and schools at different stages in the SIP process revealed that SIP is not a fixed model. The NH Alliance and facilitators have responded to feedback from schools and from information from expert sources on school change in modifying the content of, and approach to, each of the elements of SIP. This evolution is reflected in the NH Alliance's "second generation SIP," the content of which has been informed by the June 1992 interim evaluation report and informal communication of data from the ongoing evaluation by RMC Research as they have become available. There are a number of characteristics of the "second generation" that take into account the findings and recommendations of this report. The "second generation SIP" is based on a concise and clear set

One component of the evolutionary change both within the NH Alliance and SIP schools has been a growing understanding that educationally significant change in schools requires complex interventions and change in systems, not just tinkering with components of the system. Early assumptions that addressing individual elements of school effectiveness and "fixing them" in isolation would result in improved student outcomes are similar to those that have been made in other school effectiveness models, and are inappropriate. Recent research shows a low correlation between changes in single indicators of school effectiveness and changes in school outcomes, and builds on the misconception that the elements of school effectiveness other than student outcomes cause improved student outcomes if they are present. In general, effective schools research communicates that schools with relatively high levels of student outcomes tend to exhibit these factors. There is a low correlation between the improvement of single factors and improvement of student outcomes.

Soundness of SIP Elements

The SIP elements have provided continuity and coherence to an evolving model of school change. The SIP team, the institute through which the SIP team is created and provided with the skills necessary to function, and external facilitation are all reported to be sound and valued elements. Less strong elements are the profiling and action planning processes. Although necessary in the school effectiveness model, as currently defined neither fits smoothly into the life of the SIP school or process, and each has generated resistance. Comments on each of the SIP program elements follow this section.

Adequacy of existing documentation and monitoring systems

The absence of systematic outcome data and resistance to the action planning process result in inadequate monitoring or documentation of change within schools. This renders the NH

of beliefs about education to which the NH Alliance has committed itself. These convey that the focus of SIP is student learning, and that schools that receive funding through SIP will be expected to address student outcomes from the beginning and make a commitment to systematically collect data on program and student outcomes. They also require a formal commitment to shared governance. Finally, there will be four levels of engagement in SIP that are intended to ensure only those most likely to make significant use of SIP funding are given the full level of support currently enjoyed by SIP schools, to quickly create a more extensive statewide impact, and to provide limited services to schools that complete SIP as it is currently known. These four levels include:

- **Network schools**, which will be able to participate in conferences and workshops, and engage in dialogue without receiving extensive support from the NH Alliance.
- **Exploratory schools**, which will mutually determine with the NH Alliance whether SIP is appropriate and likely to be effective or whether they will require further preparation before receiving more substantial, long-term support from SIP.
- **Demonstration schools**, which will conduct their own needs assessments and write proposals for funding that will serve as implementation plans, and that will have their progress reviewed annually.
- **Sustaining schools**, which will be those that have completed SIP or are no longer eligible for funding as demonstration schools, but elect to continue to participate in the statewide SIP network as they engage in continuous improvement.

Schools, in turn, have adapted the SIP paradigm to their needs, and the approach and activities taken by each school is different. Although the evolution has sometimes been systematic and considered, it also has been an **ad hoc** reaction to the needs of a particular situation. Yet the constancy of the SIP elements has given form to a continuously evolving model that appears entirely appropriate if the NH Alliance is promoting continuous improvement in schools. In fact, the NH Alliance appears to be modeling the behaviors of reflection, improvement, and assessment of outcomes for SIP schools statewide.

on the principal, and in a number of instances there were changes of principalship between the time the profile data were collected and the school received the completed profile.

The profile provides data on "ten correlates of school effectiveness" (program and student outcome; mission philosophy, goals, policies and procedures; resources, school program; instructional practices; staff characteristics, attitudes and relationships; leadership; school and classroom climate; parent participation; and community involvement and support), in a form which implies that student outcome data is one correlate among equals. This format may have promoted attempts to "fix" problems in each of the correlates, not to create coherent systemic change, the goal of which is improved student outcomes.

The profile data has been collected by the NH Alliance, not school staff, and no questions in the profile were determined by the local schools. Both factors would tend to decrease "ownership" of the data. In addition the data in the profile are so voluminous that SIP teams sometimes had difficulty digesting the document and also experienced difficulty in communicating its content to the other school staff.

The SIP Team

The SIP team was judged a powerful intervention by nearly all those questioned. One of the fundamental effects produced by this intervention is an increase in communication across levels within the school district because team membership includes representatives of the school board, central office, the principal, school staff, and sometimes students. SIP teams have changed the decision making and leadership structures of schools, expanding participation in school decision making. SIP teams appear to become more effective over time, and are most effective when the principal internalizes the SIP decision making principles and uses the same process outside the confines of the SIP team meeting.

Alliance incapable of systematically monitoring the impact of SIP as a whole. Action plans that are returned are seldom updated, and other documentation consists primarily of the activities and discussion of the SIP team.

Creation of adequate documentation will require constant attention to the process as it will involve changes in school culture. A major intervention funded by the Pew Charitable Trust will design a monitoring system that is intended to provide both SIP schools and the NH Alliance with access to data with which to systematically monitor school input and program student outcomes.

Summary Findings By SIP Element of Effectiveness

The School Profile

SIP school profiles provide data regarding the SIP indicators of school effectiveness to inform the local SIP efforts. The profile has provided schools and SIP teams with information schools seldom, if ever, have. As expected, the profile sometimes identified strengths and weakness in the schools that were previously not realized. In other cases the profile affirmed what was intuitively known or arrived at thorough an accreditation process. Thus, although some people indicated surprise at profile results, others evaluated the information in the profile as "nothing new."

The profile served to focus the attention of some SIP teams as they began the action planning process. In some instances the profile became the "content" around which process issues necessary to the function of the group were resolved.

Resistance to the profile tended to surface through comments about its validity and reliability. The most common comment was that the data had been collected the previous year and were out of date. The leadership section is particularly vulnerable to this charge as it focuses

Action Planning

The action planning element of the SIP process was not used by all SIP teams and when it was used was seldom revisited or updated. The action planning process was faulted on several fronts. First, the most important and effective results of SIP activities were often complex, systemic, and unanticipated. Thus, many positive outcomes were unplanned and unmeasured. In addition, there appeared to be many more actions undertaken by SIP teams than action plans could accommodate.

Although planning sometimes provided a means for focusing the energy of the team, that focus was often in terms of simple, non-systemic goals. Planning appeared to promote a "fix-it" and isolated problem mentality, rather than allowing the SIP team to expand its vision and think in terms of larger systemic solutions to problems.

There were also mechanical problems related to action planning. Some plans committed schools to unrealistic time schedules, for instance. In several cases, no one on the team was assigned to write the plans or record them in any way. In the absence of documentation, many people could not recall the details of plans, if they existed, and there was no way to revisit the plans for review or modification. Finally, action plans did not appear to be directly related to the needs of the schools as indicated in the school profile. SIP team members commented that action plans were sometimes drafted in response to most urgent need of the moment and had little to do with any type of strategic plan to meet the long term needs of the school.

SIP Facilitators

The facilitator was highly valued by SIP team members, many of whom emphasized the crucial need for a facilitator especially during the start up phase of SIP. The respondents reported that the facilitator enhanced group formation and served as a model. The process skills they bring

Concerns were expressed that in some situations SIP team members have become part of an "in-group" and in some instances it was dubbed with names such as "Secrets In Progress." Respondents reported that teams had difficulty allowing members to leave and introducing new members. Some SIP team members suggested that representation on the team was not appropriate to the tasks that the team defined for itself, and in some, personality clashes diminished the effectiveness of the team. Finally, team roles and responsibilities were not formalized in most schools. This sometimes decreased team functioning and increased the personal risk of SIP team members during changes in administration.

The SIP Institute

SIP institutes were reported as an intense training period in which the SIP team bonded into a working unit, and the SIP institute has been characterized as one of the high points of the SIP team's experience. The institute provided SIP team members with interpersonal, decision making and conflict resolution skills as well as information on effective schools research. In addition the institute helped remove some of the barriers to communication that were related to the educational hierarchy.

Some respondents perceived that trainers attempted to cover too much in too little time at the institute, and some felt that they would have profited by knowing in advance what was expected of the SIP team and knowing what role the SIP team would be expected to play in the school. This might have helped the newly formed SIP team ensure that the right people were on the SIP team and that everyone on the SIP team was present at the institute. Finally, in leaving the institute and returning to home schools, some team members expressed concern that the enthusiasm could not be transferred to the members of the school staff at large. There was some anxiety about taking the information back to the schools, especially surrounding the upcoming challenge of involving others in the SIP process.

Workshops and Networking

SIP team members reported that all NH Alliance workshops were relevant to the needs of the team, that they were accessible and that attendance at the workshops was supported by their school districts.

The majority of SIP team members reported that they read "Network News", the NH Alliance newsletter, and find it a useful source of information. Although some reported informal communications across SIP sites, many reported that they do not know what other sites are doing, and would like to know more about other SIP school practices. Beyond "Network News" there is little evidence of any formal assistance for networking between current SIP schools, or between current and former ones.

Summary Recommendations

Each section of this report contains detailed conclusions about aspects of SIP. The following recommendations are made from the perspective that SIP has made an impact in schools, but that information from this evaluation can potentially lead to changes that will extend its impact, increase its effectiveness in schools, and produce the outcome information requested of SIP by its primary funders.

1. **The NH Alliance should redefine SIP so that schools and school systems interested in, and committed to, continuous school improvement can participate in SIP on an ongoing basis at the level of engagement most suited to their needs.**

The evaluation revealed that a number of schools that have been involved in SIP have achieved less than might have been expected because events beyond the control of the SIP team, such as change in the grades taught in the school as a result of a district-wide decision or a deadlock in teacher contract negotiations that has severely limited the impact of SIP for a period of time. Provision of full SIP services to such schools while they are engaged in those issues benefit the school, but may not be the best use of SIP funds. A process that enabled schools to

with them are highly prized, but facilitators that balanced process, content, and skill building were more highly valued than those that just facilitated the group.

Facilitators tended to be seen as adapting well to the context of individual schools, but several facilitators report that their role in SIP is inadequately defined. One rather ambiguous role for facilitators was that of communicator and enforcer of NH Alliance policy. There appears to be a need for the SIP facilitators to work from a common philosophy and consensus about their role.

The facilitators have built a strong mutual support network and even though there is ample encouragement from the NH Alliance staff for facilitators to seek assistance from other sources in their work with SIP schools, they seldom do so. Development of an improved linkage between facilitators and the NH Alliance could decrease their role ambiguity.

Technical Assistance

The technical assistance funded through SIP was valued by SIP team members. It was used to fund activities that related to school-wide change, and was never spent on activities limited to the SIP team. Technical assistance activities tended to consist of funding for participation in workshops or for bringing in presenters. Usually these were single events. Given the limited funds available, this is not surprising, but there was little evidence that these technical assistance activities were integrated into a long-term strategy for technical assistance that would result in high levels of adoption of a new skill.

There is no formal list of technical assistance providers available for SIP teams, and it appeared that facilitators often sought suggestions through the informal facilitators network. Finally, although respondents stated that they would have been interested, there was little evidence that technical assistance funds were used to develop skills in measuring outcomes.

"check out" of SIP for a period of time could increase the impact of limited SIP funds, which could instead go to those schools that are both willing and able to address school effectiveness issues.

We also found that many schools that are no longer formally in SIP have institutionalized the process in one form or another. If improvement is a continuous process, a philosophy that has been communicated by the NH Alliance, these schools could benefit from ongoing contact with, and access to SIP. Some of these schools also have experience that would benefit schools now entering SIP. Development of networking among SIP schools is a stated goal of the NH Alliance, and these schools can contribute to that network.

Finally, some schools appear to have entered SIP despite the fact that there has been less than complete understanding of, and commitment to, the process than is necessary for full implementation of a school implementation program. Schools in this category could benefit from some of the services that SIP has to offer, but may not be ready to take full advantage of the services that are currently part of the SIP package. Limited services might allow them to move to the point where they are ready to do so at their own pace, at the same time allowing the NH Alliance to focus its comprehensive services where they will make the most impact.

Engaging schools at different levels might also address the concern addressed by legislators that SIP impact as many schools and school districts in the state as possible. Networks and reduced services to a potentially large number of schools while concentrating services in those schools most able to make significant change would spread the impact without diluting the intensity of the current SIP model for those schools where this would be effective.

2. **The NH Alliance should develop an approach and package that will assist schools to collect data systematically and use school and student outcome data productively.**

Schools that are engaged in systemic change and continuous improvement need data to determine where change is most needed and monitor the impact of those changes. The profiling

process was created because the first of these needs was recognized, but it does not assist schools to develop their own capacity for collecting and monitoring data, and in only one or two schools was the profiling process repeated to assess the impact of the implementation of action plans. This is probably because the school profile is so comprehensive that it is beyond the capacity of most schools to readminister. The profile as currently conceived and implemented should be replaced with a process where data is collected and examined by participating schools at regular intervals.

Systematic collection of data and its use for monitoring will require the creation of a flexible system that can be adapted by all schools that participate in SIP, and also will require considerable technical assistance to schools. This technical assistance should include creation of a common language within SIP schools that will enable school staff and others involved in the SIP process to differentiate between outcomes and activities, and a process that will enable schools to address outcomes from the beginning of the planning process. This preliminary technical assistance will provide the context within which a monitoring system could be useful, and will have to be followed with training in data collection and in use of the monitoring system itself.

Finally, the monitoring system should have a common core and reporting component that will enable the NH Alliance to collect records from all SIP schools and create its own monitoring process.

The NH Alliance has already committed itself to creating such a monitoring system and, with the N.H. Business Roundtable, has obtained funds for its initial development from the Pew Charitable Trust. If the system is successfully developed and adopted, the NH Alliance will be at the national forefront of efforts to develop such monitoring systems.

3. **Even when SIP is adopted by a single school there should be clear communication to the school board and superintendent about the intent and possible outcomes of SIP, and the NH Alliance should obtain their full commitment to the program before enrolling the school in SIP.**

SIP requires changes in relationships, policies and procedures that impact the whole school district even if only a single school within the district is formally enrolled in the program. It involves an evolution to shared decision making within the school and, if there is to be a focus on student outcomes, is likely to require changes in curriculum, instructional approach and school organization. These changes will undoubtedly effect other schools in the system, and their impact will require district-wide understanding and cooperation. There are, for instance, several instances where school boards and superintendents have hired new principals for schools that are already engaged in the SIP process and these principals are not knowledgeable about, or sympathetic to SIP. The result has been destructive for SIP and traumatic for both teachers engaged in SIP and the principal involved. In one instance the school board realized its mistake, removed the principal and involved the SIP team in hiring one who was more supportive of the process. This consumed much of a year of SIP activity. The informed consent of the school board and the superintendent are necessary if SIP is to reach its potential.

4. **Recent modifications to the SIP model that involve the entire school community and volunteers from the community in defining the goals and outcomes for SIP early in the change process should be continued.**

Schools involved in the first years of SIP reported that a negative dynamic was established between the SIP team and the rest of the school staff because those not on the team were unsure of its purpose and the content of its deliberations. SIP team members, in turn, have been anxious about communicating with others in the school about what they have learned and its potential impact on the school as they have left the institute. Involvement of all school staff and the community in establishing SIP goals will provide the team with an early focus, legitimize its role, minimize this negative dynamic, and may serve to engage more resources in the change process

than was the case in the former model. There is no reason why, with the assistance of a facilitator, this engagement should not occur before the SIP institute takes place.

5. **The NH Alliance should help schools formally define the purpose and role of the SIP team before it is formed, and promote SIP's institutionalization by helping schools define a process whereby members will be replaced.**

In some instances SIP teams members reported that the team did not include all those who were most appropriate once the task of the SIP team became clear. In addition, although there has been an evolution from a strategy where the SIP team both planned and carried out school improvement activities to one in which the SIP team facilitates school-wide involvement in both planning and change, there still appear to be some schools in which roles are not clearly understood.

This recommendation dovetails with the previous one. If the school and community are able to define SIP goals before the SIP team is formed, the team's role can be clearly defined and its members selected with the previously defined goals in mind. This procedure might also increase the chance that all key members participate in the institute.

Finally, a number of SIP teams had experienced stress over changes in membership. Those on the initial team tend to become bonded into a cohesive working group. Norms appear to become established that make it difficult for people to leave the group and for new members to join. The group also has to reform when new members are added. Early institution of a procedure for transitions in membership early in the life of SIP would help institutionalize the SIP team in schools.

6. **The NH Alliance should continue to offer the SIP institute, but its content should be more focused. SIP schools should also be provided with additional training through other channels.**

There is strong support for the SIP institute. Participants emerge with a new understanding of the dynamics of communication and group process. They are also immersed in effective schools research. Respondents indicated that because this is the primary training for SIP

teams, more than can reasonably be expected to be communicated or absorbed is addressed during the five day session. The need to develop outcome data gathering skills will add yet another topic to the crowded agenda. A clear focus of the role of the SIP team and of its initial task may help define the necessary content of the institute. Additional skill training might then be provided to selected team members at other points in the SIP cycle to ensure that at least some school staff have the capacity to move the school and SIP team through the different elements of SIP.

7. Moves to integrate action planning into a strategic planning process should be pursued and redefined as a new SIP element.

Action planning has been resisted by many schools, and action plans have tended to consist of multiple independent activities that seldom appear to be part of a comprehensive plan for school improvement. Early definition of what students should know, be able to do and value can create the basis for a long term plan for systemic change, and the action plan should be folded into a strategic planning approach of which it is only one part. The strategic planning should accommodate non-linear planning models that will promote thinking about the ramifications of system-wide change that relate to long-term goals, and should be developed in such a manner that it can be easily informed by the school monitoring process.

8. The NH Alliance should define the role that it expects facilitators to play, and the skills that facilitators need in order to carry out that role.

Facilitators indicated that their role was not well defined by the NH Alliance, and evidence from both facilitators and schools indicated that the roles they have played were largely self-defined and varied considerably. The organizational development and group process skills that facilitators bring to SIP schools were recognized as necessary for the change process, but did not necessarily propel schools towards significant educational change or provide school staff with skills that assisted in the institutionalization of SIP. Schools most highly valued those facilitators who brought expertise in school change, the capacity to talk intelligently about school reform, a

basic understanding of curriculum and instruction, and the capacity to focus the team on the task of reforming the school. There was also evidence to suggest that facilitators who trained SIP team members in group process and school change skills and knowledge were more successful than those who defined their role almost entirely as that of facilitators of SIP team process.

9. **In order to help schools move toward defining and using student and program outcomes to measure the impact of school change, the NH Alliance should establish a dialogue with schools for the purpose of developing and maintaining a common vocabulary, understanding, and set of skills related to outcome measurement needs.**

Effective schools movements throughout the nation have found their attempts to make measurement of program and student outcomes a part of school culture frustrated. Evidence from this evaluation suggests that many school staff cannot clearly define outcomes, and have less that an adequate grasp of outcome measurement. In addition, schools indicated that they lack the resources to access information that would enable them to gain those skills. It is not surprising that the SIP schools do not systematically collect and use outcome data.

The NH Alliance has already signified its commitment to the measurement of student and program outcomes. As a necessary first step of advancing schools toward measuring student outcomes, the NH Alliance should establish a dialogue with schools and training activities for the purpose of developing a common vocabulary and understanding related to outcome measurement needs. In addition, SIP should adopt planning models, both for itself and for SIP schools, in which the question, "How will we know when we get there?" is routinely asked. The intent of such an approach should be to integrate discussion of the measurement of outcomes into the earliest stages of the planning process. Schools that are speaking a common language regarding measurement issues and are perceiving a common outcome measurement support network are more likely to make significant strides toward student outcome measurement than those that do not have these skills.

Notes and References

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2. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (1990). Effective schooling practices: A research synthesis, 1990 update. Portland, OR: author.

3. New Hampshire Alliance for Effective Schools. (1988). The New Hampshire school improvement model: Indicators of effectiveness, assessment system, and implementation procedures. p.4.

4. Because of missing data (i.e., not all questionnaires were returned fully completed), some differences are noted in the number of responses used in the calculation of scale values.

5. Neal, A.G., & Seeman, M. (1964). Organizations and powerlessness: A test of the mediation hypothesis. American Sociological Review, 29, 216-226.

6. McLaughlin, M.W., & Marsh, D.D. (1978). Staff development & school change. Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation.

7. See for instance, Smith, M., & O'Day, J. (1990). Systemic school reform in Politics of Education Association Yearbook 1990 (pp.223-26), and also Fullan, M., & Miles, M. Getting reform right: What works and what doesn't. Phi Delta Kappan, June 1992.

8. Smith, M., & O'Day, J. (1990). Systematic school reform in Politics of Education Association Yearbook. New York: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. pp.233-26.

9. Rossmiller, R.A. and Holcomb, E.L. (1992). The effective schools process for continuous improvement. Unpublished paper. National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Appendix A: New Hampshire School Improvement Program Participating Schools

NEW HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Entered Program July 1988 (10) (Complete Program June 30, 1991)

WILKINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU # 39 (Grades 2-4) 673-4411
Boston Post Road, Amherst, NH 03031-0120

ANDOVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #46 (Grades 1-8) 735-5494
School Street, Andover, NH 03216

COLEBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #7 (Grades 1-8) 237-4801
166 Main Street, Colebrook, NH 03576

HAVERHILL COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAU #23

WOODSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, (Grades 9-12) 747-2781
Woodsville, NH 03785

HAVERHILL COOPERATIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL, (Grades 4-8) 989-5571
Haverhill, NH 03785

WOODSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, (Grades K-3)
Park Street, Woodsville, NH 03785 747-3363

SEMINARY HILL SCHOOL, SAU #32 (Grades 2-6) 298-8500
20 Seminary Hill, West Lebanon, NH 03784

NORTHWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #44 (Grades K-8) 942-5488
Northwood Road, Northwood, NH 03261

WEARE SCHOOLS, SAU #24 (Grades R-8) 529-7555
East Street, Weare, NH 03281

CUTLER SCHOOL, SAU #38 (Grades 4-6) 352-3383
P.O. Box 628, West Swanzey, NH 03469

Entered Program January 1989 (5) (Complete Program December 31, 1991)

ALLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #54 (Grades R-6) 332-2280
Granite Street, Rochester, NH 03867

BROWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #3 (Grades K-4) 752-1471
190 Norway Street, Berlin, NH 03570

JAFFREY-RINDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL, SAU #47 (Grades 5-8) 532-7744
109 Stratton Road, Jaffrey, NH 03452

PELHAM HIGH SCHOOL, SAU #28 (Grades 9-12) 635-2115
Marsh Road, Pelham, NH 03076

RAYMOND HIGH SCHOOL, SAU #33 (Grades 9-12) 895-6616
45 Harriman Hill Road, Raymond, NH 03077

Entered Program July 1989 (8) (Complete Program June 30, 1992)

ELLIS SCHOOL, SAU #14 (Grades 1-8) 895-2511 (dropped from Program, February, 1991)
Main Street, Fremont, NH 03044

GOFFSTOWN AREA HIGH SCHOOL, SAU #19 (Grades 7-12) 497-4841
27 Wallace Road, Goffstown, NH 03045

HOLLIS-BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL, SAU #41 (Grades 9-12) 465-2270
Main Street, Hollis, NH 03049

WHITE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAU #35

LAKEWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, (Grades K-6) 444-2831
Union Street, Littleton, NH 03561

DAISY BRONSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 7-8)
LITTLETON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 9-12) 444-5601
Littleton, NH 03561

MASTRICOLA MIDDLE SCHOOL, SAU #26 (Grades 6-8) 424-6221
26 Baboosic Lake Road, Merrimack, NH 03054

McCLELLAND SCHOOL, SAU #54 (Grades R-6) 332-2180
Brock Street, Rochester, NH 03867

PLYMOUTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #48 (Grades K-8) 536-1152
Old Ward Bridge Road, Plymouth, NH 03264

Entered Program July 1990 (8) (Complete year two, June 30, 1992)

HILLSBORO-DEERING HIGH SCHOOL, SAU #34 (Grades 9-12) 464-4555
12 Hillcat Drive, Hillsboro, NH 03244

PARKER-VARNEY SCHOOL, SAU #37 (Grades K-6) 624-6338
223 James Pollock Drive, Manchester, NH 03102

MILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #64 (Grades R-5) 652-4539
P.O. Box 337, Milton, NH 03851

NASHUA SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAU #42

NASHUA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, (Grades 10-12) 594-4311
36 Riverside Drive, Nashua, NH 03062

PENNICHUCK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, (Grades 7-9) 594-4308
207 Manchester Street, Nashua, NH 03060

STRATFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL, SAU #58 (Grades K-12) 922-3387
Route 3, North Stratford, NH 03590

TROY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #38 (Grades K-6) 242-7741
P.O. Box 240, School Street, Troy, NH 03405

WATERVILLE VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #48 (Grades K-8) 236-4700
Waterville, NH 03215

Entered Program July 1991 (6) (Complete First year June 30, 1992)

HILLSBORO-DEERING MIDDLE SCHOOL, SAU #34 (Grades 5-8) 464-5904
School Street, Hillsboro, NH 03244

MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, SAU #30 (Grades 6-8) 524-4632
McGrath Street, Laconia, NH 03246

NUTE JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, SAU #64 (Grades 6-12) 652-4591
Elm Street, Milton, NH 03851

RICHARDS SCHOOL, SAU #43 (Grades K-4) 863-3710
School Street, Newport, NH 03773

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAU #52

DONDERO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Grades K-5) 436-2231
Vanburen Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801

LITTLE HARBOUR SCHOOL (Grades K-5) 436-1708
Clough Drive, Portsmouth, NH 03801

Entered Program July 1992 (7) (Complete First year June of 1995)

BEDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAU #25

BEDFORD MEMORIAL SCHOOL (Grades 2-4) 627-1776
55 Old Bedford Road, Bedford, NH 03110

MCKELVIE MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 5-8) 472-3951
108 Liberty Hill Road, Bedford, NH 03110

PETER WOODBURY SCHOOL (Grades K-2) 622-0431
180 County Road, Bedford, NH 03110

NEW FRANKLIN SCHOOL, SAU #52 (Grades K-5) 436-0910
Dennett Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801

NOTTINGHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #44 (Grades K-8) 679-5632
Route 152, Nottingham, NH 03292

TOWLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAU #43 (Grades 4-6) 863-2050
86 North Main Street, Newport, NH 03773

WILSON SCHOOL, SAU #37 (Grades K-3) 624-6350
401 Wilson Street, Manchester, NH 03103

Appendix B: Figures Derived From SIP School Survey Data

FIGURE 1

Attitudes toward SIP, Awareness of School Change, Control, and SIP Awareness by School Level.

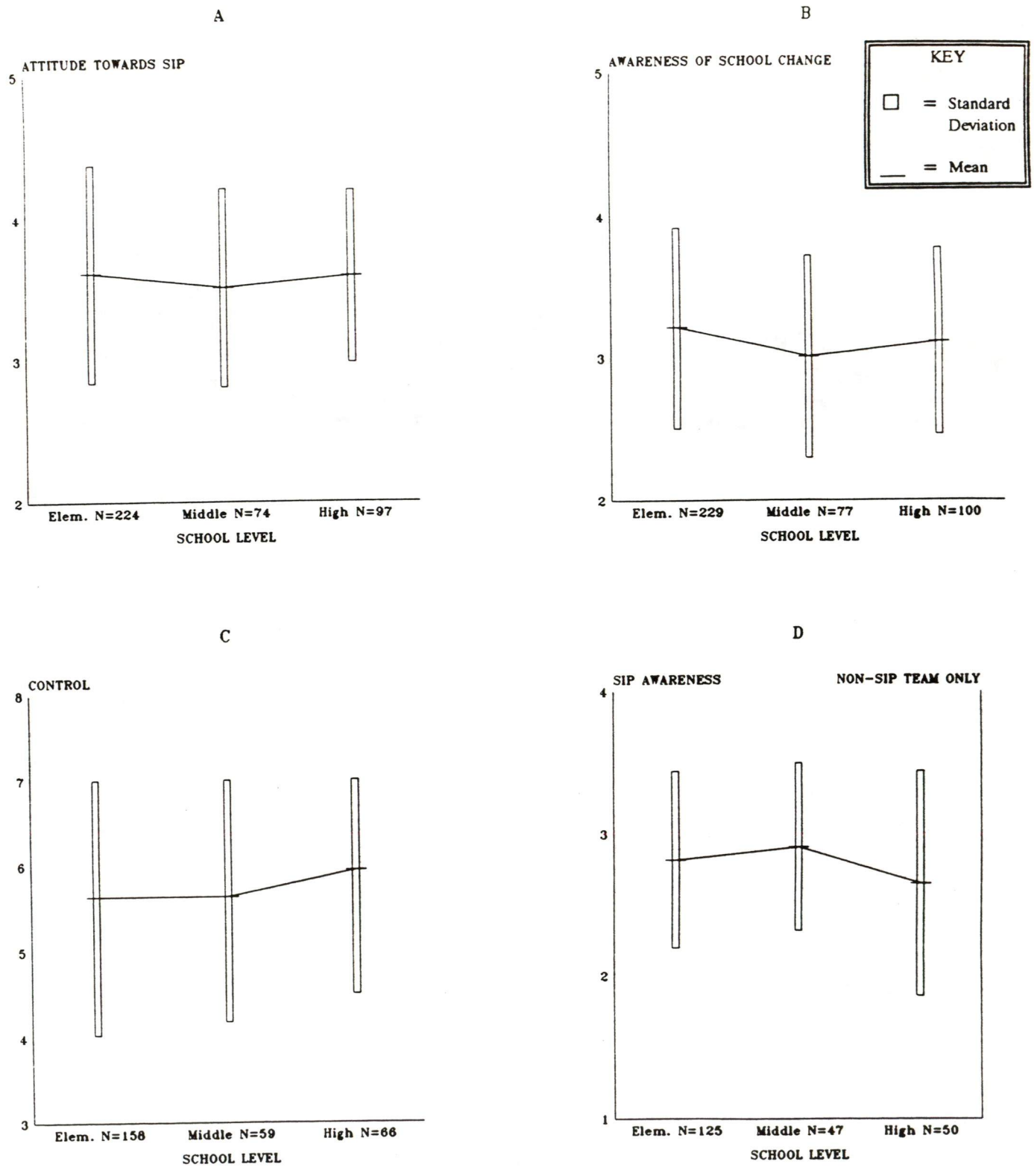


FIGURE 2

Attitudes toward SIP, Awareness of School Change, Control, and SIP Awareness by Group Entering SIP

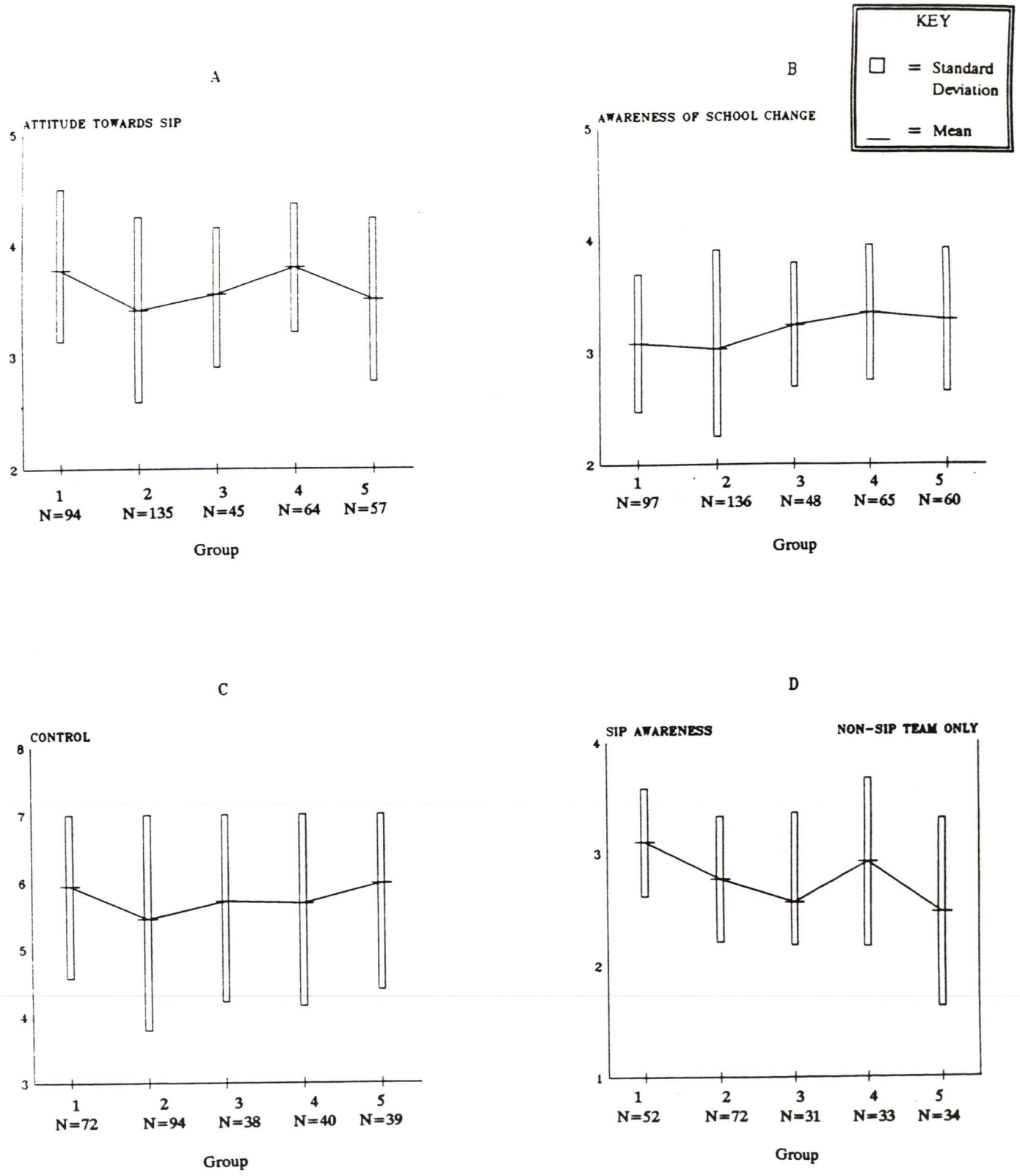
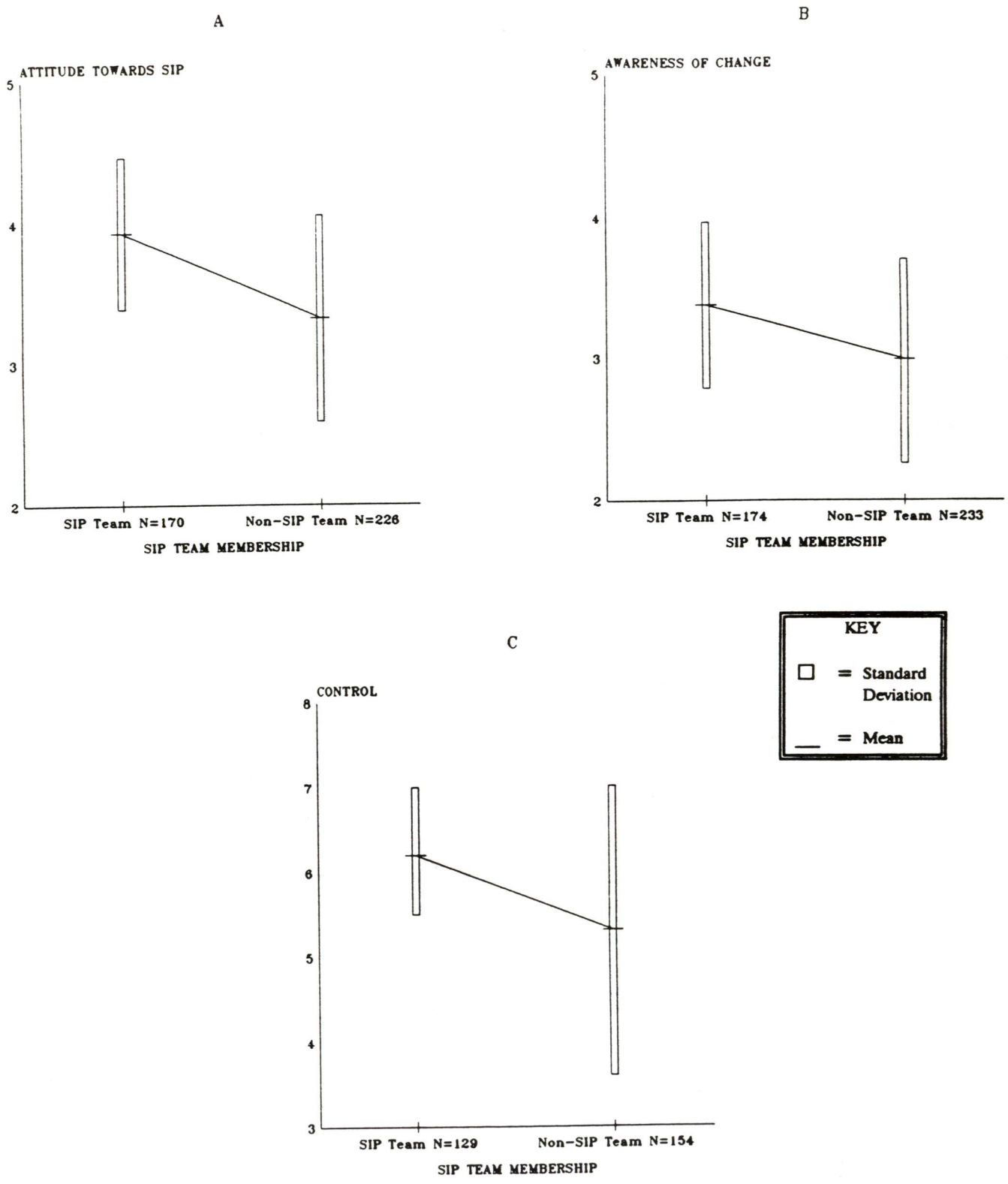


FIGURE 3

Attitudes toward SIP, Awareness of School Change, and Control, by SIP Team Membership



Appendix C: Tables Derived From SIP School Survey Data

TABLE 1

Perceived Changes Over Time in SIP Team Enthusiasm

Response	Frequency	Percent
Increased Substantially	15	7.9
Increased	60	31.7
Decreased	55	29.1
Decreased Substantially	12	6.3
Not Changed	47	24.9
Total	189	100.0

TABLE 2

Perceived Changes Over Time in SIP Team Effectiveness in Meeting School Needs

Response	Frequency	Percent
Increased Substantially	27	14.1
Increased	121	63.0
Decreased	9	4.7
Decreased Substantially	2	1.0
Not Changed	33	17.2
Total	192	100.0

TABLE 3

SIP Team Changes in Meeting School Needs in a Timely Fashion

Response	Frequency	Percent
Increased Substantially	16	8.4
Increased	103	53.9
Decreased	14	7.3
Decreased Substantially	4	2.1
Not Changed	54	28.7
Total	191	100.0

TABLE 4

Changes in the SIP team membership have **not** affected the SIP **process and functioning.**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	14	7.6
Agree	70	35.5
Disagree	45	24.5
Strongly Disagree	14	7.6
Undecided	41	22.3
Total	184	100.0

TABLE 5

The SIP team as presently constructed, represents various interest groups in the **community.**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	21	11.1
Agree	98	51.9
Disagree	46	24.3
Strongly Disagree	5	2.6
Undecided	19	9.6
Total	189	100.0

TABLE 6

The SIP team as presently constructed, represents the various stakeholders, or interest groups in the **school system.**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	49	25.8
Agree	114	60.0
Disagree	16	8.1
Strongly Disagree	3	1.6
Undecided	8	4.2
Total	190	100.0

TABLE 7

The SIP institute aided in the development of basic skills that are important to the effective functioning of SIP.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	54	26.6
Agree	106	57.6
Disagree	3	1.6
Strongly Disagree	2	1.1
Undecided	24	13.0
Total	184	100.0

TABLE 8

The SIP institute had an enduring effect on SIP team members that has carried over into the present operation of the team.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	34	18.5
Agree	93	50.5
Disagree	17	9.2
Strongly Disagree	3	1.6
Undecided	37	20.1
Total	184	100.0

TABLE 9

A follow-up training institute would be very useful.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	73	39.5
Agree	77	41.6
Disagree	8	4.3
Strongly Disagree	1	.5
Undecided	26	14.1
Total	185	100.0

TABLE 10

The SIP institute meets developmental needs of SIP team members.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	22	12.0
Agree	93	50.8
Disagree	11	6.0
Strongly Disagree	4	2.2
Undecided	53	29.0
Total	183	100.0

TABLE 11

The SIP facilitator is central to the effective development of the SIP teams.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	92	48.9
Agree	73	38.8
Disagree	12	6.4
Strongly Disagree	1	.5
Undecided	10	5.3
Total	188	100.0

TABLE 12

SIP facilitation was not useful in creating a fully functioning SIP team.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	1.6
Agree	14	7.4
Disagree	70	37.0
Strongly Disagree	86	45.5
Undecided	16	8.5
Total	189	100.0

TABLE 13

The facilitator represented an unnecessary expense for the SIP in our school.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	1.1
Agree	7	3.7
Disagree	58	30.2
Strongly Disagree	98	52.1
Undecided	23	12.2
Total	188	100.0

TABLE 14

The SIP facilitator helped the SIP team deal effectively with power issues and related team dynamics.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	76	40.4
Agree	75	39.9
Disagree	12	6.4
Strongly Disagree	4	2.1
Undecided	21	11.2
Total	188	100.0

TABLE 15

The SIP facilitator helped the team understand the group process.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	76	40.6
Agree	88	47.1
Disagree	3	1.6
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Undecided	20	10.7
Total	187	100.0

TABLE 16

The SIP facilitator provided outside educational expertise.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	57	30.3
Agree	88	46.8
Disagree	12	6.4
Strongly Disagree	3	1.6
Undecided	28	14.9
Total	188	100.0

TABLE 17

The school profile serves as a guide to the school improvement process.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	29	15.2
Agree	121	63.4
Disagree	13	6.8
Strongly Disagree	3	1.6
Undecided	25	13.1
Total	191	100.0

TABLE 18

Our school has the capacity to gather the data (such as that provided in the school profile) necessary to inform and monitor effective school functioning.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	24	12.7
Agree	104	55.0
Disagree	15	7.9
Strongly Disagree	5	2.6
Undecided	41	21.7
Total	189	100.0

TABLE 19

The SIP team knows what type of data it needs to successfully advance the SIP process.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	10	5.3
Agree	102	54.0
Disagree	15	7.9
Strongly Disagree	3	1.6
Undecided	59	31.2
Total	189	100.0

TABLE 20

Value of Questionnaire Data

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very Valuable	64	34.6
Valuable	76	41.1
Some Value	32	17.3
Little Value	12	6.5
Useless	1	.5
Total	185	100.0

TABLE 21

Value of Interview Data

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very Valuable	66	35.9
Valuable	79	42.9
Some Value	28	15.2
Little Value	8	4.3
Useless	3	1.6
Total	184	100.0

TABLE 22

Value of Student Grades

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very Valuable	22	12.0
Valuable	61	33.3
Some Value	75	41.0
Little Value	19	10.4
Useless	6	3.3
Total	183	100.0

TABLE 23

Value of CAT Scores

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very Valuable	14	7.9
Valuable	35	19.7
Some Value	78	43.8
Little Value	37	20.8
Useless	14	7.9
Total	178	100.0

TABLE 24

Value of Attendance, Drop-out, Tardiness, Vocational Plans, and Similar Data

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very Valuable	26	14.6
Valuable	59	33.1
Some Value	66	37.1
Little Value	20	11.2
Useless	7	3.9
Total	178	100.0

TABLE 25

Value of School Policies and Procedures

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very Valuable	43	23.9
Valuable	78	43.3
Some Value	48	26.7
Little Value	7	3.9
Useless	4	2.2
Total	180	100.0

TABLE 26

The action plan helped the SIP team address the most important needs of the school.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	28	15.5
Agree	114	63.0
Disagree	10	5.5
Strongly Disagree	1	.6
Undecided	28	15.5
Total	181	100.0

TABLE 27

The action plan was based on needs revealed through the school profile.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	28	15.5
Agree	125	69.1
Disagree	7	3.9
Strongly Disagree	1	.6
Undecided	20	11.0
Total	181	100.0

TABLE 28

The development of the action plan was a true group effort.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	50	27.6
Agree	104	57.5
Disagree	4	2.2
Strongly Disagree	1	.6
Undecided	22	12.2
Total	181	100.0

TABLE 29

All school personnel are involved in carrying out the action plan.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	4.7
Agree	55	32.2
Disagree	51	29.8
Strongly Disagree	12	7.0
Undecided	45	26.3
Total	197	100.0

TABLE 30

Modifications of the action plan were based on evaluations of the plan's effectiveness.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	9	5.4
Agree	85	50.9
Disagree	12	7.2
Strongly Disagree	3	1.8
Undecided	58	34.7
Total	167	100.0

TABLE 31

A method is in place to evaluate the action plan.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	1.7
Agree	54	31.0
Disagree	43	24.7
Strongly Disagree	9	5.2
Undecided	65	37.4
Total	174	100.0

TABLE 32

Completing the action plan was too time consuming.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	7	3.9
Agree	43	23.9
Disagree	74	41.1
Strongly Disagree	15	8.3
Undecided	41	22.8
Total	180	100.0

TABLE 33

SIP team workshops are very relevant to the needs of the school SIP team.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	24	12.8
Agree	89	47.3
Disagree	9	4.8
Strongly Disagree	2	1.1
Undecided	64	34.0
Total	188	100.0

TABLE 34

SIP workshops are easily accessed by SIP team members.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	13	6.8
Agree	114	60.0
Disagree	28	14.7
Strongly Disagree	9	4.7
Undecided	26	13.7
Total	190	100.0

TABLE 35

School district policies prevented participation in workshops.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	10	5.3
Agree	13	6.9
Disagree	102	54.3
Strongly Disagree	47	25.0
Undecided	16	8.5
Total	188	100.0

TABLE 36

I have seen and read "Network News."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	43	23.0
Agree	109	58.3
Disagree	22	11.8
Strongly Disagree	8	4.3
Undecided	5	2.7
Total	187	100.0

TABLE 37

"Network News" is an important source of information.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	20	10.7
Agree	89	47.6
Disagree	12	9.6
Strongly Disagree	3	1.6
Undecided	57	30.5
Total	187	100.0

TABLE 38

The SIP team is aware of what other schools are doing with SIP.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	6	3.2
Agree	74	38.9
Disagree	54	28.4
Strongly Disagree	7	3.7
Undecided	49	25.8
Total	190	100.0

TABLE 39

Communications with SIP teams in other schools is adequate.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	1.6
Agree	22	11.6
Disagree	90	47.6
Strongly Disagree	22	11.6
Undecided	52	27.5
Total	189	100.0

TABLE 40

The SIP team was aware of the availability of technical assistance.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	46	24.7
Agree	114	61.3
Disagree	12	6.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Undecided	14	7.5
Total	186	100.0

TABLE 41

The SIP team was prepared to use technical assistance effectively.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	25	13.4
Agree	91	48.7
Disagree	30	16.0
Strongly Disagree	3	1.6
Undecided	38	20.3
Total	187	100.0

TABLE 42

The SIP team was able to discriminate between the use of facilitators and the use of technical assistance.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	24	12.8
Agree	83	44.4
Disagree	22	11.8
Strongly Disagree	3	1.6
Undecided	55	29.4
Total	187	100.0

TABLE 43

More access to technical assistance in the future is needed.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	44	23.5
Agree	98	52.4
Disagree	7	3.7
Strongly Disagree	2	1.1
Undecided	36	19.3
Total	187	100.0

Appendix D: SIP School Survey Questionnaires

NEW HAMPSHIRE ALLIANCE FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (SIP)
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

RMC Research Corporation
1000 Market Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Enclosed in this packet are two bundles of questionnaires:

   Pink questionnaires require about 15 minutes to complete and should be filled out by school personnel who are **not** members of the SIP team. Hopefully, the people completing these forms will be selected in a quasi-random fashion.

   Blue questionnaires are to be completed by members of the SIP team. The time required is about 30 minutes.

2. We have also included a special one page questionnaire for the principal and a separate one page questionnaire for the SIP contact person. These pages are on white paper attached to these instructions.

3. If possible, we would like the principals to distribute, collect, and return the questionnaires in the postage page envelope provided. We have included our address on the questionnaires just in case some people would rather return them directly. We also have provided envelopes so people may be sure their anonymity is maintained.

4. **Please return questionnaires by Friday, June 12, 1992.**

5. We realize that this is a very bad time of the year to ask anyone in the school system to perform extra work. Unfortunately, the timing was not under our control. So we really appreciate the extra effort that everyone is making on behalf of the SIP process in the state of New Hampshire.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SIP TEAM CONTACT PERSON ONLY

C1. Name of School_____ C2. Town_____

C3. Gender: F M (circle one)

C4. Were you with the SIP team from the beginning at this school, i.e., from the SIP training institute to the present?

yes no (circle)

C5. Fill in the blank spaces with a number (even if zero) indicating how many people have left or joined the SIP team since the SIP process began.

_____ people have left the team; _____ people of joined the team

C6. In just a few words, describe how the SIP team **functioning** has changed with the departure of old members or arrival of new members.

C7. What do you think the New Hampshire Alliance for Effective Schools needs to know about the SIP team at your school in order for them to better understand how your SIP team functions?

C8. Other comments...

RETURN TO: RMC RESEARCH CORPORATION or **School Principal**
1000 MARKET STREET
PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PRINCIPAL ONLY

Name of School_____ Town_____

Gender: F M (circle one)

P1. How many years have you worked in education (in any capacity)? _____

P2. How many years have you worked in **this school** in any capacity?_____

P3. In all of your educational experience, have you ever worked at a school that attempted a program similar to SIP (excluding this school)?

yes no (circle one)

P4. Were you on the SIP team of this school (or another school in New Hampshire) prior to becoming principal of this school?

yes (this school) yes (another NH school) no (circle one)

P5. Were you the principal of this school when SIP "started out" or was the SIP "already in place" when you became principal?

started out already in place (circle one)

P6. If you circled "already in place," were you asked about your attitude towards or experience with school effectiveness programs in your job interview?

yes no (circle one)

P7. Were you a principal in another school before coming to this school?

yes no (circle one) if yes, how many schools_____
how many years _____

P8. If your answer to P7 above was yes, was a school effectiveness program similar to SIP in place during your tenure as principal?

yes no (circle one)

P9. How many years have you served as the principal of this school? _____

PLEASE RETURN ALL QUESTIONNAIRES IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED TO:

RMC RESEARCH CORPORATION
1000 MARKET STREET
PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ALL SIP TEAM MEMBERS

General Instructions:

This questionnaire is part of an evaluation of the School Improvement Program (SIP) being conducted by RMC Research Corporation on behalf the New Hampshire Alliance for Effective Schools. It should take about 30 minutes to complete. Please follow the directions provided for each segment of the survey. We appreciate your thoughtful and accurate responses. ALL QUESTIONNAIRES ARE ANONYMOUS (individual envelopes are provided if you are returning your questionnaire to a third party to mail).

Please respond appropriately to the following items:

S1. Name of School_____ S2. Town_____

S3. Gender: F M (circle one)

S4. Check your present role in the school system by placing a "P" next to the appropriate category; place a checkmark next to other roles you perform (or have performed), and indicate the number of years in each role (this school and others):

	Role	**Number of years**	**Specify (district, building, etc)**
____	Teacher	_____	_____
____	Counselor	_____	_____
____	Library	_____	_____
____	Nurse	_____	_____
____	Maintenance	_____	_____
____	Cafeteria	_____	_____
____	Administration	_____	_____
____	Secretarial	_____	_____
____	Specialist	_____	(type)_____
____	Parent	_____	_____
____	School Board	_____	_____
____	Town leader	_____	_____
____	Interested person	_____	_____
____	other	_____	_____

S5. Please indicate the number of years you have been involved with this school (in any capacity)._____

PLEASE RETURN TO: **School Principal, SIP team contact person, or RMC RESEARCH CORPORATION, 1000 MARKET STREET, PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801**

Please indicate your reaction to the following statements regarding the School Improvement Program (SIP) in your school by circling one of the alternatives to the left of each statement. The key to the alternatives is as follows:

SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree U - Undecided D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

SA A U D SD 1. SIP improves the quality of children's education.

SA A U D SD 2. SIP does not help teachers with problems related to instructional practices.

SA A U D SD 3. SIP is mechanical, artificial, and fails to address the real problems of schools.

SA A U D SD 4. Most groups and interested parties in the school system are represented on the SIP team

SA A U D SD 5. SIP is a good investment in New Hampshire's educational future.

SA A U D SD 6. SIP is ineffective because it upsets the traditional relationships between administrators, teachers, and parents.

SA A U D SD 7. SIP helps school administrators respond to the needs of the school.

SA A U D SD 8. SIP does not result in improved student outcomes.

SA A U D SD 9. SIP helps schools motivate children to do better in school.

SA A U D SD 10. SIP is important because it addresses many of the problems schools are experiencing today.

SA A U D SD 11. SIP is important for producing better educated children.

SA A U D SD 12. SIP enables teachers to instruct children more effectively.

SA A U D SD 13. From an administrative standpoint, SIP is merely "more of the same" in a different package.

SA A U D SD 14. SIP will eventually result in increased standardized test scores.

SA A U D SD 15. SIP prevents some teachers and students from doing their best.

SA A U D SD 16. Teachers, parents, and administrators work together effectively with SIP in place.

SA A U D SD 17. Money and time devoted to SIP could be put to better use elsewhere.

Please indicate your reaction to the following statements regarding changes that are occurring in your school. Circle one of the alternatives to the left of each statement. The key to the alternatives is as follows:

SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree U - Undecided D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

SA A U D SD 18. Knowledge about SIP and communication of the SIP process has been increasing in our school.

SA A U D SD 19. Methods of instruction (teaching practices, instructional organization, and assessment practices) are improving.

SA A U D SD 20. There have been increases in the availability of resources (such as funding, staffing, services, and materials).

SA A U D SD 21. Staff skills, attitudes, and satisfaction with the school are changing for the better.

SA A U D SD 22. Members of the community (excluding parents) have been making more contributions and have been increasingly involved in school functioning.

SA A U D SD 23. The school staff has detected a positive change in the shared leadership of the school.

SA A U D SD 24. I have noticed positive changes in student skills, attitudes, and satisfaction with school.

SA A U D SD 25. Members of the school community have noticed that the flow of information throughout the school is improving.

SA A U D SD 26. The administration, teachers, and students have noticed an improved atmosphere in the school (e.g., increased student expectations, a safer environment, increased caring, and pleasant learning conditions).

SA A U D SD 27. Members of the school community (students, teachers, and administrators) are developing a clearer sense of the schools mission and goals.

SA A U D SD 28. The overall program of the school (program options, curriculum options, program coordination, program evaluation) has been steadily improving.

SA A U D SD 29. Knowledge about SIP and communication of the SIP process has been increasing in our local community.

SA A U D SD 30. Student skills, attitudes, and satisfaction with the school are changing for the better.

SA A U D SD 31. Positive changes are occurring in parent's school involvement and parental acceptance of school roles and responsibilities.

SA A U D SD 32. School staff are aware of increased feedback from school leadership regarding their own personal efforts to make positive changes in the school system.

SA A U D SD 33. The capacity of school staff to make choices and decisions in school related matters is improving.

SA A U D SD 34. The school has been getting better at meeting the needs of all students.

For each of paired statements listed below, place a check mark next to the one of the statements that best describes your beliefs.

35. _____ I think we have adequate means for improving school effectiveness.

_____ There is very little we can do to make our schools better.

36. _____ Person's like myself have little chance of protecting our personal interests in school when they conflict with pressure groups.

_____ I feel that we have adequate ways of coping with groups who put pressure on schools.

37. _____ Schools can be improved by those of us who work toward that goal.

_____ There is very little difference that groups can make in changing schools.

38. _____ There is very little that persons like myself can do to improve the perception of schools in the community.

_____ I think each of us can do more to improve the communities opinion of schools.

39. _____ Schools are run by a few people in power, and there is not much the individual can do about it.

_____ The average person can influence schoolwide decisions.

40. _____ It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence the schools internal decision process.

_____ People like me can change the course of school decision making if we make ourselves heard.

41. _____ More and more I feel unable to help in the face of the school's changing needs.

_____ I sometimes feel personally responsible for the state of affairs in schools.

For items 42-44, please circle the term that best describes how the functioning of the SIP team has changed over time with respect to the categories listed:

42. **Enthusiasm** (circle one)

1. Increased Substantially
2. Increased
3. Decreased
4. Decreased Substantially
5. Not Changed

43. **Addressed perceived needs of our school effectively** (circle one)

1. Increased Substantially
2. Increased
3. Decreased
4. Decreased Substantially
5. Not Changed

44. **Addressed perceived needs of our school in a timely fashion** (circle one)

1. Increased Substantially
2. Increased
3. Decreased
4. Decreased Substantially
5. Not Changed

Please indicate your reaction to the following statements regarding the implementation of the SIP (School Improvement Program) in your school by circling one of the alternatives to the left of each statement. The key to the alternatives is as follows:

SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree U - Undecided D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

The School Profile

SA A U D SD 45. Our school has the capacity to gather the data (such as that provided in the school profile) necessary to inform and monitor effective school functioning.

SA A U D SD 46. The school profile serves as a guide to the school improvement process.

SA A U D SD 47. The SIP team knows what type of data it needs to successfully advance the SIP process.

The SIP Team

SA A U D SD 48. The SIP team, as presently constructed, represents the various stakeholders or interest groups in the **school system.**

SA A U D SD 49. The SIP team, as presently constructed, represents various interest groups in the **community.**

SA A U D SD 50. Changes in the SIP team membership have **not** affected the SIP **process and functioning.**

The SIP Institute

SA A U D SD 51. The SIP institute had an enduring effect on SIP team members that has carried over into the present operation of the team.

SA A U D SD 52. A follow-up training institute would be very useful.

SA A U D SD 53. The SIP institute meets developmental needs of SIP team members.

SA A U D SD 54. The SIP institute aided in the development of basic skills that are important to the effective functioning of SIP.

The SIP Facilitator

SA A U D SD 55. The SIP facilitator is central to the effective development of the SIP teams.

SA A U D SD 56. The facilitator represented an unnecessary expense for the SIP in our school

SA A U D SD 57. The SIP facilitator helped the SIP team deal effectively with power issues and related team dynamics.

SA A U D SD 58. The SIP facilitator provided outside educational expertise.

SA A U D SD 59. SIP facilitation was not useful in creating a fully functioning SIP team.

SA A U D SD 60. The SIP facilitator helped the team understand the group process.

The Action Plan

SA A U D SD 61. Completing the action plan was too time consuming.

SA A U D SD 62. A method is in place to evaluate the action plan.

SA A U D SD 63. The action plan was based on needs revealed through the school profile.

SA A U D SD 64. The action plan helped the SIP team address the most important needs of the school.

SA A U D SD 65. The development of the action plan was a true group effort.

SA A U D SD 66. Modifications of the action plan were based on evaluations of the plan's effectiveness.

SA A U D SD 67. All school personnel are involved in carrying out the action plan.

Technical Assistance

SA A U D SD 68. The SIP team was aware of the availability of technical assistance.

SA A U D SD 69. The SIP team was prepared to use technical assistance effectively.

SA A U D SD 70. The SIP team was able to discriminate between the use of facilitators and the use of technical assistance

SA A U D SD 71. More access to technical assistance in the future is needed.

Workshops and Networking

SA A U D SD 72. I have seen and read "Network News."

SA A U D SD 73. School district policies prevented participation in workshops.

SA A U D SD 74. The SIP team is aware of what other schools are doing with SIP.

SA A U D SD 75. SIP workshops are easily accessed by SIP team members.

SA A U D SD 76. "Network News" is an important source of information.

SA A U D SD 77. Communication with SIP teams in other schools is adequate.

SA A U D SD 78. SIP workshops are very relevant to the needs of the school SIP team.

For questions 79 to 84 below, please rate the value of the type of data used to inform SIP team members of the needs of the school. In the blank space next to each type of data listed, enter a number (1-5) indicating the value of the data.

5=very valuable 4=valuable 3=some value 2=little value 1=useless

79. _____ Questionnaire data (teachers, administrators, students, staff)

80. _____ Interview data (teachers, administrators, students, staff)

81. _____ Student grades

82. _____ CAT scores

83. _____ Attendance, drop-out, tardiness, vocational plans, etc

84. _____ Analysis of school policies and procedures

For questions 85 to 87, circle the answer that you think is most accurate.

85. The "shelf life" (length of effectiveness) of the school profile is (circle one)
    a. one year
    b. two years
    c. three years
    d. four years
    e. cannot say

86. The school profile is referred to
    a. never
    b. seldom
    c. occasionally
    d. frequently
    e. very frequently

87. Changes in the action plan occurred (circle one):
    a. never
    b. seldom
    c. occasionally
    d. frequently
    e. very frequently

Respond appropriately to the following items:

88. Rank order the SIP elements listed below by placing the number (1 through 7) that indicates the relative importance of that element to the success of the SIP process.

____ Action Plan
____ Technical Assistance
____ Workshops and Networking
____ SIP Team
____ SIP Institute
____ School Profile
____ External Facilitation

89. Please list (briefly) any barriers to the effective implementation of the SIP process for each element listed.

Profile_____
SIP Team_____
SIP Institute_____
External Facilitation_____
Action Plan_____
Technical Assistance_____
Workshops and Networking_____

90. Please list (briefly) how technical assistance might be used more effectively in the SIP process.

_____
_____
_____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL WHO ARE NOT SIP TEAM MEMBERS

General Instructions:

This questionnaire is part of an evaluation of the School Improvement Program being conducted by RMC Research Corporation on behalf the New Hampshire Alliance for Effective Schools. It should take about 15 minutes to complete. Please follow the directions provided for each segment of the survey. We appreciate your thoughtful and accurate responses. ALL QUESTIONNAIRES ARE ANONYMOUS (individual envelopes are provided if you are returning your questionnaire to a third party to mail).

N1. Name of School_____ N2. Town_____

N3. Gender: F M (circle one)

N4. Check your present role in the school system by placing a "P" next to the appropriate category; place a checkmark next to other roles you may perform (or have performed), and indicate the number of years in each role (this school and others):

	Role	**Number of years**	**Specify (district, building, etc)**
____	Teacher	_____	_____
____	Counselor	_____	_____
____	Library	_____	_____
____	Nurse	_____	_____
____	Maintenance	_____	_____
____	Cafeteria	_____	_____
____	Administration	_____	_____
____	Secretarial	_____	_____
____	Specialist	_____	(type)_____
____	Parent	_____	_____
____	School Board	_____	_____
____	Town leader	_____	_____
____	Interested person	_____	_____
____	Other	_____	specify_____

N5. Please indicate the number of years you have been involved with this school (in any capacity)._____

PLEASE RETURN TO: **School Principal, SIP team contact person, or RMC RESEARCH CORPORATION, 1000 MARKET STREET, PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801**

To what extent do the statements below describe your personal involvement in the School Improvement Program (SIP)? Please indicate your involvement by circling the extent to which you agree or disagree that a statement applies to you. The key to the alternatives is as follows:

SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree U - Undecided D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

SA A U D SD 1. I need to know more about SIP in our school in order to evaluate it with a high degree of confidence.

SA A U D SD 2. I rarely attend SIP meetings.

SA A U D SD 3. I am aware of the time schedule for achieving SIP goals.

SA A U D SD 4. I rarely discuss the SIP process with people not in the school system.

SA A U D SD 5. I regularly seek information regarding SIP.

SA A U D SD 6. I have discussed the SIP process with a member of the SIP team.

SA A U D SD 7. I have been asked to provide others with information about SIP.

SA A U D SD 8. I can identify most of the people on our school's SIP team.

SA A U D SD 9. I am unfamiliar with the goals of SIP.

SA A U D SD 10. I speak to groups on the topic of SIP.

SA A U D SD 11. I am a former SIP team member.

SA A U D SD 12. I have discussed SIP issues with others in the school system.

SA A U D SD 13. I can list most of the major features (or constituent elements) of the SIP process.

Please indicate your reaction to the following statements regarding the School Improvement Program (SIP) in your school by circling one of the alternatives to the left of each statement. The key to the alternatives is as follows:

SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree U - Undecided D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

SA A U D SD 14. SIP improves the quality of children's education.

SA A U D SD 15. SIP <u>does not</u> help teachers with problems related to instructional practices.

SA A U D SD 16. SIP is mechanical, artificial, and fails to address the real problems of schools.

SA A U D SD 17. Most groups and interested parties in the school system are represented on the SIP team

SA A U D SD 18. SIP is a good investment in New Hampshire's educational future.

SA A U D SD 19. SIP is ineffective because it upsets the traditional relationships between administrators, teachers, and parents.

SA A U D SD 20. SIP helps school administrators respond to the needs of the school.

SA A U D SD 21. SIP does not result in improved student outcomes.

SA A U D SD 22. SIP helps schools motivate children to do better in school.

SA A U D SD 23. SIP is important because it addresses many of the problems schools are experiencing today.

SA A U D SD 24. SIP is important for producing better educated children.

SA A U D SD 25. SIP enables teachers to instruct children more effectively.

SA A U D SD 26. From an administrative standpoint, SIP is merely "more of the same" in a different package.

SA A U D SD 27. SIP will eventually result in increased standardized test scores.

SA A U D SD 28. SIP prevents some teachers and students from doing their best.

SA A U D SD 29. Teachers, parents, and administrators work together effectively with SIP in place.

SA A U D SD 30. Money and time devoted to SIP could be put to better use elsewhere.

Please indicate your reaction to the following statements regarding changes that are occurring in your school. Circle one of the alternatives to the left of each statement. The key to the alternatives is as follows:

SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree U - Undecided D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

SA A U D SD 31. Knowledge about SIP and communication of the SIP process has been increasing in our school.

SA A U D SD 32. Methods of instruction (teaching practices, instructional organization, and assessment practices) are improving.

SA A U D SD 33. There have been increases in the availability of resources (such as funding, staffing, services, and materials).

SA A U D SD 34. Staff skills, attitudes, and satisfaction with the school are changing for the better.

SA A U D SD 35. Members of the community (excluding parents) have been making more contributions and have been increasingly involved in school functioning.

SA A U D SD 36. The school staff has detected a positive change in the shared leadership of the school.

SA A U D SD 37. I have noticed positive changes in student skills, attitudes, and satisfaction with school.

SA A U D SD 38. Members of the school community have noticed that the flow of information throughout the school is improving.

SA A U D SD 39. The administration, teachers, and students have noticed an improved atmosphere in the school (e.g., increased student expectations, a safer environment, increased caring, and pleasant learning conditions).

SA A U D SD 40. Members of the school community (students, teachers, and administrators) are developing a clearer sense of the school's mission and goals.

SA A U D SD 41. The overall program of the school (program options, curriculum options, program coordination, program evaluation) has been steadily improving.

SA A U D SD 42. Knowledge about SIP and communication of the SIP process has been increasing in our local community.

SA A U D SD 43. Student skills, attitudes, and satisfaction with the school are changing for the better.

SA A U D SD 44. Positive changes are occurring in parent's school involvement and parental acceptance of school roles and responsibilities.

SA A U D SD 45. School staff are aware of increased feedback from school leadership regarding their own personal efforts to make positive changes in the school system.

SA A U D SD 46. The capacity of school staff to make choices and decisions in school related matters is improving.

SA A U D SD 47. The school has been getting better at meeting the needs of all students.

For each of paired statements listed below, place a check mark next to the one of the statements that best describes your beliefs.

48. _____ I think we have adequate means for improving school effectiveness.

_____ There is very little we can do to make our schools better.

49. _____ Person's like myself have little chance of protecting our personal interests in school when they conflict with pressure groups.

_____ I feel that we have adequate ways of coping with groups who put pressure on schools.

50. _____ Schools can be improved by those of us who work toward that goal.

_____ There is very little difference that groups can make in changing schools.

51. _____ There is very little that persons like myself can do to improve the perception of schools in the community.

_____ I think each of us can do more to improve the communities opinion of schools.

52. _____ Schools are run by a few people in power, and there is not much the individual can do about it.

_____ The average person can influence schoolwide decisions.

53. _____ It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence the schools internal decision process.

_____ People like me can change the course of school decision making if we make ourselves heard.

54. _____ More and more I feel unable to help in the face of the school's changing needs.

_____ I sometimes feel personally responsible for the state of affairs in schools.

Appendix E: Sample Documentation Analysis Matrix

School:

Indicators of Effectiveness	Relative Rating	Indicators Addressed by School	Complexity of Proposed Action(s)	Outcome Specified	Monitoring Plan/Outcome
Program and Student Outcomes • Attendance Rates • Retention rates • Suspension Rates • Dropout Rates • Graduation rates • Grade Performance • Achievement Test Scores reading comprehension math application math computation • Other • Satisfaction	92.2%(88-89);92.4%(89-90) 3.7%(88-89);3%(89-90) 17.3%(88-89);19.6%(89-90) 1.2%(88-89 & 89-90) Increased D & F in Eng., Math, Sci. Grade 8 56%tile(88-89); 66.5%tile(89-90) 66%tile(88-89); 79%tile(89-90) 65.6%tile(88-89); 70.2%tile (89-90) **J13.6** Students develop skills re concrete/realistic plans for future(T) **J13.7** Students develop skills re understanding the consequences of actions(T) **J33.1** Staisfied with school policies/procedures(T) **J33.4** Satisfied with communication/coordination (T) **J33.3** Satisfied with school discipline(T)				

Indicators of Effectiveness	Relative Rating	Indicators Addressed by School	Complexity of Proposed Action(s)	Outcome Specified	Monitoring Plan/Outcome
Mission, Philosophy, Goals, Policies, and Procedures • School Mission and Philosophy • School Goals • Policies and Procedures - Student - Staff - Coordination and Communication - Parent and Community	Written & operational Approved by faculty Written & operational Do not promote teacher interaction Do not promote teacher community support				
Resources • Funding and Staffing • Services, Materials, and Equipment • Facilities					
School Program • Curriculum and Program Options • Program Coordination and Evaluation					
Instructional Practices • Organization of Instruction • Teaching Methods and Behaviors • Assessment Practices	**D2.2** Students' needs decides class sizes(T) **D10** Teachers work together **D5** Clerical tasks compete minimally with teaching/learning(T) **D7** Flexible short term groups being reassessed frequently(T) **D11** Support given to teachers for behavioral problems(T) **D13.2** Fooling around (S)				

Indicators of Effectiveness	Relative Rating	Indicators Addressed by School	Complexity of Proposed Action(s)	Outcome Specified	Monitoring Plan/Outcome
Staff Characteristics, Attitudes, and Relationships • Staff Characteristics and Attitudes • Staff Relationships • Staff Evaluation • Staff Development	**E15** Staff participate in planning/ideas/methods(T) **E2** Teachers help students believe in themselves(S)				
Leadership • Instructional • Administrative • Supervisory	**F4** Principal shares responsibility for planning/decision making/problem solving(T) **F13** Principal resolves conflict(T) **F17** Staff involved in planning/implementing(T) **F16** Principal communicates goals/priorities(T) **F6** Principal promotes communication/commitment (T) **F39** Instructional leaders support teachers(T) **F7** Principal unifies/motivates staff(T) **F34** Instructional leaders schedule sufficient time for staff to plan(T) **F12** Principal implements policies/procedures(T)				

Indicators of Effectiveness	Relative Rating	Indicators Addressed by School	Complexity of Proposed Action(s)	Outcome Specified	Monitoring Plan/Outcome
School and Classroom Climate • Safe and Orderly Environment • Belief That Students Can Succeed • Pleasant Learning Conditions • Pervasive Caring • High Expectations	**G11** Student morale high(T)(S) **G8.1** Students show respect(T) **G8.2** Students show respect for staff(T) **G15** Students take responsibility for rules/standards(T)(S) **G17** School encourages leadership among students(T) **G16** Staff involved in decisions (T) **G13** Discipline is fair and consistent (S)(T) **G9** Teachers respect students(S) **G7** Students/teachers get along well(S) **G8** Students respect teachers(S)				

Indicators of Effectiveness	Relative Rating	Indicators Addressed by School	Complexity of Proposed Action(s)	Outcome Specified	Monitoring Plan/Outcome
Parent Participation • Home-School Coordination and Parent Involvement • Parent Roles and Responsibilities	**H21** Parents assist(T) **H22** Parents play an active role(T) **H20** Parents demonstrate interest/support(T) **H23** Parents cooperate in homework(T) **H16** School involves parents in programs(T) **H11** Staff help parents understand(P) **H12.2** Staff seek parent views(P) **H12.1** Staff help parents recognize changes(P) **H17** School provides parents with opportunities to develop skills(P) **H18** School provides support for parent meetings(P) **H9.2** Staff seek info about child's potential(P) **H13** Parents and staff talk often(P)				
Community Involvement and Support • School Communications and Community Involvement • Community Roles and Contributions					

Indicators of Effectiveness	Relative Rating	Indicators Addressed by School	Complexity of Proposed Action(s)	Outcome Specified	Monitoring Plan/Outcome
Activities Not Related to Indicators of Effectiveness					

Appendix F: *Directions for Completing Action Plan and Year End Report Analysis Matrix*

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING ACTION PLAN AND YEAR END REPORT ANALYSIS MATRIX

OBJECTIVES

1. To lay out information provided by schools in their Action Plans and reports in a manner that allows us to observe patterns of behavior. At this stage we are not attempting to judge those patterns.

2. To make global observations about the information provided by each school by responding to the summary analysis sheets for each school.

3. To generalize the experiences of the entire evaluation committee through a discussion of findings.

GENERAL APPROACH

1. Data from each school will be analyzed by two people. Each pair will work together, each agreeing on the data they have arrived at and entering it on the matrix.

2. If you are unable to determine where data should be entered, or what should be entered, an RMC Research staff person will be available to assist in the decision.

3. Read through all the information on a school - the Action Plan, reports and the matrix - before you begin the analysis. This will provide you with a perspective of the task and prevent unnecessary duplication of entries.

4. Read all the following directions and the questions on the Summary Analysis sheet so you are aware of the general questions you will be asked to respond to once you have completed the matrix.

5. Write legibly so your analysis can be read by others.

INDICATORS ADDRESSED BY SCHOOL

1. Read both the action plan and end of year reports, using both to determine what activities were planned for goals set as a result of SIP.

2 Record a summary of each proposed action opposite the appropriate indicators of effectiveness. If the action plan item has multiple components (e.g. curriculum, staff development, instructional practices), record each component against the appropriate indicator. If there is no relationship between a component in the Action Plan or on the end of year report and the Indicators of Effectiveness, record the planned activity in the section entitled, "Activities not related to indicators of effectiveness."

3. Develop a short-hand for entering data and relating it to indicators of effectiveness.

Alternatives include writing in a short description of the activity and drawing a line to the appropriate indicator, or writing in the letter and number to which the activity corresponds.

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY OF PROPOSED ACTION

1. Rate the level of complexity of each proposed action using the following descriptors:
   - single component
   - multiple levels
   - systemic
   - ?

   Each is described below.

   Single component activities are those that address a single indicator of effectiveness and are not specifically related to action that will address any other indicators. e.g. planned improvements to a playground (**Resources** - facilities) that are not part of improving overall school climate or instruction for children, or a program addressing student behavior but not in the context of school climate or other relationship issues that may have been raised by the profile.

   Multiple level activities are more than an isolated response to a single indicator of effectiveness, but ones that do not address all elements that would be required to make a comprehensive change. e.g. A plan that addresses a particular curriculum and materials and equipment related to that equipment, but does not also address staff development and student outcomes.

   Systemic action consists of proposed action that comprehensively addresses all components related to the proposed change. e.g. a plan to improve mathematics performance that includes seeking parental support, a change in curriculum, teacher instructional practices that will be brought about through staff development, and an increase in the amount of time allocated to mathematics instruction.

   Use ? where there is insufficient information to determine the level of complexity of the proposed action.

2. Enter your rating in the appropriate column opposite the relevant Indicator of Effectiveness.

OUTCOME SPECIFIED

If a target outcome has been specified in a manner that would permit its measurement, briefly note what that target outcome is opposite the relevant Indicator of Effectiveness. If there is not one specified write in "no". e.g. "Student retention will decrease by 50%", or "Math curriculum based on NCTME standards in place by 9/1/91." Abbreviate this using whatever pattern you and your partner decide upon.

MONITORING PLAN/ OUTCOME DATA

If the action plan describes how or who will monitor the outcome of a goal or series of activities, note how this will take place or the documentation that will be used. If a report provides outcome data, or if it states that outcome data exists, briefly describe what this. If there is no plan for monitoring or outcome data indicated, write "none."

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Once you have completed the Action Plan and year end report matrix, complete the summary analysis sheet. In some instances a single word will be sufficient to respond to a question. In general a single descriptive sentence will be adequate.

Summary Analysis

School:_____ Commentor(s): _____

1. **In general, did the Action Plan and related activities address the areas in which the school was rated as being least effective? Did it omit significant areas of deficit?**

2. **Is there at least some indication that the writers of the Action Plan attempted systemic change? How would you characterize the level of change?**

3. **What are your comments on the quality of the Action Plan and related activities?**

Appendix G: Facilitator Interview Protocol

Appendix G
Facilitator Interview

Interview set-up call

a. Establish date & time for interview
One component of multi-stage evaluation. Individual responses are confidential. Facilitator may charge an hour consulting time. If So, bill SIP, clearly stating purpose so SIP can bill RMC Research .

b. Provide context for prior reflection
Interview will last ca. one hour. It will consist of discussion of process of working with SIP schools. Will ask for a historical recounting of your experiences with different schools. We wish to know your perceptions of each stage of the process, the range of ways in which schools have engaged with the SIP process, and your role(s) in the process. We want a composite history and your reflections on that history so we can understand why SIP functions as it does, and your role in that.

Possible preparation: review your involvement with SIP schools as they have addressed each element of the SIP program - the training institute (and team formation), profile mining, action planning, plan implementation, use of technical assistance and staff development, and evaluation of implementation or outcomes. What have SIP teams and schools had to deal with, and what roles have you played throughout the project?

Interview

As a background so I can understand the experience from which you are drawing:

1. How long have you been involved with SIP?

2. For what schools have you been the facilitator.

I now want to go through the steps that you have been through with SIP schools for which you have been the facilitator.

SIP Process	Facilitator Role
3. SIP Institute	
3.1.1 What have SIP teams for which you have been a facilitator obtained from the SIP Institutes?	3.2.1 What has your role been at the SIP Institute?
3.1.2 What have been the primary concerns of SIP team members leaving the Institute?	3.2.2 What skills & attitudes did you think were the most important to communicate to your teams through the Institute?

4. Creating a SIP team

4.1.1 Once a formal SIP team had been created, how was its role cemented and institutionalized or, if this never occurred, what elements prevented this from occurring?
[Probe:what issues surfaced & how were they dealt with?]

4.1.2 Do you conceive of SIP teams as going through stages? If so, what are these?
[Probe: attitudes, feelings]

4.2.1 What role did you play in this process?

4.2.2 How do you define the role of the SIP team?

4.2.3 What did you see as your role on the SIP team once it had become a cohesive group?

5. Mining the profile

5.1.1 What types of conversations did the SIP team have about the profile?
[Probes: Did they accept the data, think it accurate, etc? Did they involve others?]

5.1.2 How long did SIP teams actually take to discuss the profile?

5.1.3 What conclusions did they tend to draw, and how did they use the data? Why?

5.2.1 What role did you play as the data was discussed?

5.2.2 What role did you play as the SIP team drew conclusions from the data?

6. Action planning

6.1.1 What types of discussions took place as teams moved into action planning?
[Probes: mission, overall goals, power & control issues, involvement of others?]

6.1.2 How did schools decide what to include in the action plans?
[Probe: principal leadership, resistance, gut feelings, profile data?]

6.1.3 Who was engaged in the action planning and writing?

6.1.4 What were SIP team members (& other's) attitudes towards the action planning? Why?

6.2.1 What role did you play in the action planning process?
[Probes: promote focus, focus on mission, engage whole school, monitor process?]

6.2.2 What is your opinion of the action planning process?
[Probe: took to much time, taught participants to think through steps required for implementation, did not relate overall actions, did not reflect quality of discussion and real activities in school?]

7. Plan implementation

7.1.1 What role did the SIP team play during plan implementation? [Probes: did it themselves, coordinated others?]

7.1.2 What were conditions that facilitated or hindered their implementation? [Probes: support, antipathy, wait & see, power issues?]

7.2.1 What role did you play in the school and on the team once the plans had been developed? [Probes: group process, bringing in resources, serving as technical resource?]

8. Technical assistance & staff development

8.1.1 Did, and if so in what ways did, the SIP team use SIP to bring in technical assistance & staff development? [Probes: to discuss alternative action plan approaches, to detail action plans, for implementation, not at all?]

8.1.2 What were SIP team member's attitudes towards technical assistance?

8.2.1 What did you see as your role in the provision of technical assistance? [Probes: was the T.A., was process person, accessed specialized assistance?]

8.2.2 What did you perceive were the factors facilitating/hindering the use of T.A.?

9. Evaluation of implementation or outcomes

9.1.1 Did SIP teams revisit their action plans? If so, how often, and for what purpose? [Probes: to modify or update them, to check on progress?]

9.1.2 What types of outcomes did SIP teams discuss? What types of outcomes did they arrive at, and what were the issues that were raised as they discussed outcomes?

9.2.1 What was your role in promoting schools to revisit or revise their action plans?

9.2.2 What was your role in discussions and drafting of plan outcomes?

9.2.3 What, in your opinion, drove the discussion of outcomes, and the decisions made about outcomes?

10. Links with SIP central office:

10.1 What training or other formal preparation were you given before you began working as a facilitator with SIP schools?
10.2 Do you consider that your role as a facilitator is clearly defined?
10.3 How do you define it?
10.4 If you are looking for advise or suggestions in your role as a facilitator, to whom do you turn?
[Probe: administrative, process, educational content?]
10.5 Is direction from SIP central timely, clear and adequate?

11. Other

11.1 What was the overall role/impact of the principal? Did you experience a change of principals, and if so, what impact did this have on SIP?
11.2 What are the most vital skills a SIP facilitator should have?
11.3 What do you think is the greatest strength of SIP as presently configured?
11.4 What do you see as the greatest weakness of SIP as it is presently configured?

Appendix H: School Site Visit Protocol

Name of School_____ Date_____

Time begin:_____ Time end:_____

Person or Group interviewed_____

Identify the participant(s) in the space(s) provided below (if more than one person is being interviewed at a time, identify their comments on the response sheet according to the informant code). The interview is confidential; names of informants should be listed with their consent only.

Code	Name	Role in School
P1.	_____	_____
P2.	_____	_____
P3.	_____	_____
P4.	_____	_____
P5.	_____	_____

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE PARTICIPANTS: The information obtained in this interview is confidential. In the reporting of the data obtained during this interview, no reference will be made to individual persons or schools. There are no right or wrong answers in the interview; we are interested in your opinions and perceptions. Finally, no suggestion of correctness or oughtness is being made about the SIP activities at your school; we are only interested in the nature and dynamics of SIP team activities for the purpose of improving the effectiveness in the New Hampshire School Improvement Program.

How long have you been affiliated with this school? (Specify roles and the number of years in each role)

What is your current role? (Specify years in present role)

Do you live in the local community?

Why is a school improvement program operating in this school?

How was the SIP team formed? How did you come to be on it?

Describe your personal history with the SIP program? For example, were you a part of the SIP team from the beginning?

Has the team changed much over time? If so, how have changes affected SIP team functioning?

Describe your role and level of participation with the team over time. Is your role and level of involvement similar to other SIP team members?

How have interpersonal relations among team members changed as a result of working together on the SIP team? (probe: especially among people with different roles, such as administrators and teachers)

In your opinion, how important or useful has the school profile been over time.

Did the SIP team identify any outcomes or effects that resulted from SIP actions? Did the SIP team ever collect information related to their actions or action plans? If so, what was the nature of outcomes that were specified; i.e., were outcomes considered simple or complex? Is any of that data available? **[ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN ANY DOCUMENTATION THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE RELATED TO OUTCOME DATA]**

Can you describe your beliefs regarding the importance of developing outcome measures for the purpose of informing local SIP or school related activities?

Do you think that the administration and staff at this school have the capacity to develop and use measures of desired school and student outcomes?

To what extent would specific technical assistance be useful in the development of outcome measures related to SIP or school activities?

What is the relationship between SIP activity and school outcomes? (probe: simple or complex?)

Do you think that all the activities and accomplishments of the SIP team are specified on action plans with specified outcome statements? If not, what type of activities remain unspecified?

Have the way decisions been made at this school been affected by SIP activity?

What is the importance of local leadership (principal, superintendent, and school board) to an effective SIP?

Has the SIP team felt any time pressure to accomplish its objectives?

How would the local SIP program be affected if the N.H. Alliance were more directive or prescriptive in SIP activities?

Describe the importance of the outside facilitator to the SIP program.

To what extent is the SIP a "school wide" activity versus a SIP team activity?