Labor-Management Cooperation on Teaching and Learning Cleveland Municipal School District

Nancy E. Peace

Co-Sponsored by The Program on Negotiation at the Harvard Law School and The MIT Institute for Work and Employment Relations

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in the
Cleveland Municipal School District

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The Program on Negotiation at the Harvard Law School
And
The MIT Institute for Work and Employment Relations

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# Labor-Management Cooperation: On Teaching and Learning in the Cleveland Municipal School District

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAP        Academic Achievement Plan
AFT        American Federation of Teachers
CIE        Cleveland Initiative for Education
CMSD       Cleveland Municipal School District
CSE        Cleveland Summit on Education
CTA        Cleveland Teachers Academy
CTU        Cleveland Teachers Union
ER&D       Educational Research & Dissemination
IBB        Interest-Based Bargaining
JLMC       Joint Labor-Management Committee
SPI        School Performance Indicators
TURN       Teacher Union Reform Network
Labor-Management Cooperation on Teaching and Learning in the Cleveland Municipal School District

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) and the Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU) are committed to bringing about substantive and permanent change in the way Cleveland’s schools operate and in the quality of education they provide to the city’s students. The District and the Union have undertaken, individually and jointly, various initiatives to improve teacher effectiveness and student learning. This report has two purposes: (1) to assess the current climate of labor-management cooperation with respect to teaching and learning, and (2) to suggest additional steps the Union and District might take to broaden and deepen their joint efforts.

A site visit and telephone interviews were conducted in Fall, 2001. Therefore the content of this report covers developments up to that time. In the twelve months since that time, the initiatives described in this report have continued to progress and new ones have been undertaken. The CTU has joined the Teachers Union Reform Network, an action the report recommends. On May 14, 2002, the District and Union brought together the principals and Union chapter chairpersons from nine high-performing schools to celebrate their success, to identify key labor-management actions that fostered that success, and to develop strategies for assisting other schools to improve their performance. These actions were consistent with this report’s recommendations for developing strategies to broaden and deepen joint labor-management efforts on teaching and learning.

DISTRICT INITIATIVES

District and Union leadership is central to the current cooperative climate. In 1998, Cleveland’s mayor-appointed school board selected Barbara Byrd-Bennett as Chief Executive Officer. Byrd-Bennett came to Cleveland from New York City, where she had developed a reputation for turning around low-performing schools. Prior to Byrd-Bennett’s arrival, the Union, under the leadership of Richard DeColibus, CTU President, had undertaken some teaching and learning initiatives. In Byrd-Bennett the Union found an academic leader with whom it could form a partnership. DeColibus and Byrd-Bennett have demonstrated a joint commitment to fostering a labor-management relationship based upon mutual respect, cooperation, and a shared vision of high-quality education for all of Cleveland’s children.

The cornerstone of all educational planning undertaken by the District is its strategic plan, which is entitled, Educating Cleveland’s Children. Adopted by the School Board on June 28, 1999, it sets forth a vision for the CMSD and prescribes a five-year strategy for improvement of the City’s schools. The plan is organized around six strategic focal points: High Standards/Rigorous Curriculum; Effective and Committed Workforce; Quality Schools; Sound Financial, Management and Accountability Systems; Parent and Community Support; and Student Needs. For each initiative there are specific objectives and activities, a timeframe, and a description of the anticipated impact.

To ensure that the goals established by the strategic plan are realized at the level of the individual school, the District requires that each school create an Academic Achievement Plan (AAP). The process of creating an AAP requires each school to develop its own vision, which is to be
“a powerful, optimistic and inspiring verbal picture of what the school and the individuals in it want to create and want to become in the future.” Each school’s vision must be consistent with the District’s stated vision, which is that “each student in the Cleveland Municipal School District will be successful in a rigorous instructional program, and our teachers, principals and administrative staff will be valued, will hold themselves responsible and accountable, and will be rewarded for their professionalism.” The AAP process had been introduced prior to Byrd-Bennett’s arrival, but following her arrival it was revised substantially. The CTU and the CMSD leadership worked jointly on this revision.

A related initiative is the School Performance Indicators (SPI) process. This is a formal review process in which a school is visited and evaluated by a Review Team. The SPI review is constructed around ten essential elements of effective schools and contains 85 standards that the school must assess. Members of a joint labor-management Steering Committee that met with the investigator opined that the AAP is an aggregate of the various initiatives that the school district has undertaken. They expressed concern, however, about how to make the AAP real and aligned with the SPI process so as to lead ultimately to true self-assessment.

UNION INITIATIVES

The CTU has engaged in numerous projects that support teaching and learning, including a 1994 curriculum development initiative entitled First Steps Toward an African Centered/Multi-Cultural Curriculum: A Booklet by Teachers for Teachers, which predated the arrival of Barbara Byrd-Bennett as CEO of the District. More recent initiatives have focused on literacy and teaching. As part of an initiative entitled “Countdown 2002—Putting in Place the Conditions for Reading Success,” the CTU created a pamphlet that describes how parents can nurture a love of reading in their children, and made available, free of cost, a booklet entitled Helping Your Child Learn to Read.” It also funded a $40,000 effort to get books into the homes of all of Cleveland’s elementary school students.

The CTU’s initiatives are in alignment with initiatives sponsored by its parent union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), including the AFT’s Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) Program. This program was created to encourage classroom educators to improve their practice and their students’ achievement by becoming users of research. Although it is a Union-sponsored program, in Cleveland it has been institutionalized as a joint District-Union program. The collective bargaining agreement mandates 15 hours of ER&D training, and the Union’s Community Relations Director, who oversees the program, works closely with the District’s Executive Director of Professional Development to ensure that District employees who are responsible for developing and implementing professional development programs are knowledgeable about the ER&D program.

JOINT INITIATIVES

Carnegie Pilot Projects

The CTU and the CMSD have undertaken a variety of joint projects. Among these are Carnegie Pilot Projects. Inspired by the 1986 Carnegie Report on Teaching that highlighted the isolated and solitary experience of most classroom teachers, these projects focused on developing school-wide, collaborative strategies to educate children. Implementation of this initiative was supported by specific language in the parties’ 1988 collective bargaining agreement. The District and Union published a review of their experience with these projects in a publication entitled Carnegie
Pilot Projects: Seven Years of Teacher Leadership: Reports from Seven School, 1989-1995. While the initial focus of many of these projects was on student motivation, interest, and self-discipline, once teacher collaboration and student motivation had been established, many of the Carnegie projects began focusing on problems of weak student performance on state-mandated, standardized tests.

Cleveland Teachers’ Academy

Established in 1996, the Cleveland Teachers’ Academy (CTA) is a collaborative effort among several institutions: the Cleveland Initiative for Education (a non-profit organization whose mission is “to mobilize the business and philanthropic communities to advocate and support systemic reform of the governance, financial management and education delivery system of the Cleveland Municipal School District”), the CTU, the CMSD, and three institutions of higher education. The CTA’s mission is “to create a teacher renewal process that serves as a catalyst for professional growth opportunities needed to become more accomplished practitioners.” It offers courses that are designed by teachers and intended to create opportunities for professional development that are beyond what is offered by the District and local universities. These courses foster extended study, reflection, and dialog for teachers and lead to energized classrooms. The CTA also offers workshops, lectures, skills training, an author series, and preparation for National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

Report Card Alignment

Of particular significance to the parties’ joint efforts around teaching and learning is the work of the joint committee that was charged with developing new report cards for the entire district. The committee focused initially on the elementary schools. It designed a computer-based report card for elementary school students that aligns what is evaluated with the newly implemented educational standards. The committee tested the redesigned card in a pilot project involving ten elementary schools. In September 2002 the new card was implemented district-wide. Significant labor management collaboration at the building level will be required to successfully implement this path-breaking innovation.

Other Joint Undertakings

In addition to the three initiatives described above, the District and the Union have numerous joint committees and joint projects that they are working on or committed to. There is a Joint Labor-Management Committee that deals primarily with contract administration issues. There are also approximately twenty administrative committees that have labor and management representation. Among these are the Academic Intervention Team, the Health Care Subcommittee, the Joint Special Education Committee, and the Joint Committee on Class Size Reduction and School Performance/Attendance Incentives.

Successful joint work requires timely coordination and follow-through. As with any large-scale effort, not all parts have functioned with equal effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Keeping Track of All Initiatives within the School District

Simply keeping track of the initiatives underway in the Cleveland Municipal School District is the first challenge. One approach is to create a visual map or other graphical presentation that would enable anyone to quickly gain an overview of all that is happening. Such a map would not only
create clarity and provide a blueprint for what needs to be monitored, but it could also be a useful tool for educating the larger Cleveland community about the system’s activities.

The greater challenge is how to glue all the initiatives together. The strategic plan is the cornerstone of this effort. So long as an initiative flows from and supports one or more elements of the strategic plan, it is likely to complement and reinforce other work that is going on within the District.

Because some of the initiatives that need tracking emerge from sources other than the District, it would seem that either the Steering Committee created by the parties to support their joint work around teaching and learning, or a committee appointed by the Steering Committee and reporting to it, would be the likely group to undertake such tracking. What actions are to be taken and by whom, if an initiative is not moving forward, is something the parties will have to negotiate. Specificity about both timeframes and persons responsible is also recommended.

2. Standards Implementation

Most of those interviewed believe the District is well along in its effort to develop standards. Work on the English Language Arts Standards has been completed and widely distributed to the schools and to the community. Work on the remaining standards is in process. There are now two challenges with respect to these standards: (1) system-wide implementation and (2) impact assessment.

There is some research data that suggests that the greatest resistance to standards is in the elementary schools. Assuming the data are correct, it would appear the parties need to focus on getting greater buy-in at the elementary school level. The appointment of professional developers for grades K-5 would have a major impact on elementary school teachers’ engagement in standards-driven teaching. In addition, a joint effort by the District and the CTA would seem to offer a fruitful approach, as would workshops or other types of professional development.

Continued experience with the AAP and SPI processes should build commitment to standards. As teachers and other school personnel learn to use these processes effectively and begin to see the improvements in student learning that these two programs are designed to achieve, resistance can be expected to wane. Moreover, if the AAP and SPI processes work as the parties hope, they should create permanent, systemic change that is independent of current District and Union leadership.

3. Organizational Culture: Principals and CTU Chapter Chairpersons

District and Union leaders envision a significant—some might say massive—change in the organizational culture of the Cleveland school system. The new culture will not be realized unless the vast majority of administrators, teachers, and other school personnel understand, accept and actively support this new culture at the building level. There appears to be consensus among District and Union leaders that building principals and CTU Chapter Chairpersons are critical agents of this change and that in order to be successful, both the principals and the chairpersons must see themselves as educational leaders. There was also apparent consensus that they must exercise their leadership, at least in part, through effective collaboration with each other. The report makes several suggestions regarding the recruitment and evaluation of principals and associate principals and the role of CTU Chapter Chairpersons.
4. Professional Development

There is a considerable amount of professional development being offered by the District, the CTU, the CTA, the CIE, and even local universities. The District’s professional development programs received high praise and were contrasted favorably with what had been offered prior to 1999. Programs offered by the Union and the CTA are also highly regarded. Nevertheless, many of those interviewed expressed the opinion that there continue to be unmet needs. Most often mentioned was the need for training to work collaboratively in teams and effective teaching. Technology training was also cited as a need, especially for more senior personnel.

Another common concern was whether the training that is being offered is aligned with the District’s focus on standards and teamwork. Specifically, is the training truly producing changes in the classroom that will increase student learning? This is, of course, an assessment issue. This report notes that assessment needs to be done in several ways. It also notes that sufficient time and money are key to creating a successful, system-wide professional development program.

5. Union Leadership

In discussions with Union leaders, one of the themes that emerged was that the leadership must model the conduct and approach to labor-management relations that it expects from its building representatives. This includes both how leaders conduct themselves (do they model conflict resolution and joint problem-solving skills), and what they emphasize in their work (i.e., not only contract administration, but also educational innovation, professional development, and the need to move toward a more collaborative organizational culture). Thus, while acknowledging the Union’s responsibility to uphold the collective bargaining agreement and defend its members, leaders also expressed the view that there are important matters, including student learning, that fall outside the contract but are important to teachers and others the Union represents.

6. Interest-Based Bargaining for Future Negotiations

At present the parties do not appear to have an interest in what has generally come to be called Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB). IBB tends to build and strengthen relationships, while traditional bargaining can sometime derail even the strongest of them. IBB also tends to hone teamwork, facilitation, and joint problem-solving skills—skills that are essential to the type of collaborative relationship the CMSD and the CTU are seeking to foster. The CMSD and the CTU may want to consider IBB training, even if they are not interested in using this model for their 2003 negotiations.

7. Grievance Processing

One way labor and management interact on an almost daily basis is through the handling of grievances. While the relationship between grievance processing and teaching and learning may not at first be apparent, the former does have an impact on the latter. The CMSD/CTU efforts around collaboration, teamwork, and open communication is premised on the conviction that such cooperation creates a more effective teaching and learning environment. If the processing of grievances is handled in an adversarial manner, it can undermine the collaborative, joint problem-solving culture that the CMSD and CTU seek to cultivate. On the other hand, if grievance processing is marked by collaboration and joint problem solving at the building level, it will support the desired organizational culture.
It would be useful for the parties also to look at the causes of grievances. Evidence of a repetitive pattern in a single school or even across the district would alert the parties to problems that could be effectively addressed through proactive measures. The Labor-Management Committee might take on this task. There was a sense among some of those interviewed that it might be beneficial for the Labor-Management Committee to re-think its role.

8. Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN)

The CTU is not currently a member of TURN, but at least two members of the Union leadership have shown an interest in the work of this organization by participating in national and regional (i.e., Great Lakes) TURN meetings. TURN would seem to be a natural affiliation for the CTU. The values and goals of the unions that comprise TURN seem to be in harmony with those of most of the CTU leadership. Giving CTU leaders the opportunity to meet with other cutting-edge thinkers will enrich their thinking and give them tools and strategies that may prove useful in the current collaborative efforts with the CMSD around teaching and learning.

9. Role of the Steering Committee

A Steering Committee consisting of three CTU and three District representatives was created to support the parties’ joint work around teaching and learning. The scope of the Steering Committee’s work could include such tasks as keeping track of all reform initiatives; providing information, insight, and feedback to the CEO and Union President; and describing what a successful school looks like. To function effectively, this committee will need to determine which tasks it will undertake and develop a plan for accomplishing them and for reporting back.

CONCLUSION

The CMSD and the CTU have established a collaborative relationship that has enabled them to work jointly on a number of innovative programs designed to improve teaching and learning in the schools of Cleveland. The educational standards set forth in *Educating Cleveland’s Children* are the foundation for much of this work. The challenges now facing the District and the CTU are to keep track of all these programs, assess their effectiveness with respect to teaching and learning, and ensure that the changes in organizational culture necessary to support this work are realized in each school.

The breadth and depth of change to which the parties have committed demands a tremendous investment of time, money, and energy. As CTU President Richard DeColibus noted, such a vast undertaking will require resources beyond what the Union and the District can contribute. It is fortunate that in Cleveland the schools have the support not only of the city administration, but also of parents, civic and business leaders, foundations, social service agencies, and other city employees. If the District and the Union can continue to engage these other entities, it seems likely they will be able to create a high-functioning learning community that is uniquely equipped to meet the needs of all of Cleveland’s children.

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1 As noted earlier in this Executive Summary, in fact the CTU has now joined TURN. However, this Summary reflects the recommendation as set forth in the Report itself.
INTRODUCTION

The Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) is a large, urban district serving approximately 77,000 students in 122 schools. Like many such districts, it has faced numerous challenges during the past twenty years. Today, however, the district appears to be in the early stages of a renaissance. Political and civic leaders have made public education a top priority. Several civic and philanthropic organizations have contributed time, money, and expertise to various initiatives and projects. Former Mayor White has appointed the School Board and a dynamic and focused chief executive officer (CEO) with proven leadership capabilities. Cleveland citizens have passed a bond issue that will enable the city, with approximately 68% in state matching funds, to renovate, repair, and rebuild many of the city’s school facilities.

The Cleveland Teachers’ Union (CTU) and its members have been key partners in this renaissance. The teachers and support staff whom the CTU represents are the primary conveyers of the education that the district is charged with providing to the children of Cleveland. The CTU has partnered with the district on several important initiatives, including teacher training and professional development and district-wide literacy programs. Richard DeColibus, President of the CTU and Barbara Byrd-Bennett, CEO of the CMSD, have demonstrated a joint commitment to fostering a labor-management relationship based on mutual respect, cooperation, and shared vision.

This report was commissioned by the CMSD and the CTU with the support of The Cleveland Foundation. The charge to the investigator was to survey current labor-management initiatives with respect to teaching and learning, and to make recommendations for broadening and deepening these joint efforts. The District and the Union are keenly aware that they have a unique opportunity at this moment in time to bring about substantive and permanent change in the way Cleveland’s schools operate and in the quality of education they provide to the city’s students. They are not naive about
the challenges such change presents. They appear committed, however, to meeting these challenges
and to making Cleveland a model for urban education and effective labor-management partnerships.

As part of my preparation for writing this report, I spent two days interviewing members of the
district administrative staff, the CTU leadership, and three representatives from two of the
district’s strategic partners.¹ I asked them about their views of current joint labor-management
initiatives around teaching and learning, including what they believed to be working well and what
they regarded as obstacles and challenges. I also spent one two-hour session with Ms. Byrd-Bennett
and Mr. DeColibus together. Finally, I met for an hour and a half with a group of District and Union
representatives selected by Byrd-Bennett and DeColibus to serve as a steering committee for the
parties’ ongoing joint work on teaching and learning. Michael Charney, Meryl Johnson, and Sandra
Green represent the CTU on this committee. District representatives are Dr. Myrna Elliott Lewis, Lisa
Ruda, and Peter Robertson. Barbara Byrd-Bennett and Richard DeColibus also participated in the
Steering Committee meeting, as did a representative of the Cleveland Foundation, William S.
McKersie.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is two-fold: (1) to assess the current climate of labor-management
cooperation in the areas of teaching and learning, and (2) to suggest additional steps the parties might
take to broaden and deepen their joint efforts in these areas. It has not seemed worthwhile to provide a
history of the parties’ relationship. What is relevant to this inquiry is where the parties are now, how
they are working together, and the issues they are working on.

Central to the current tone of labor-management relations in the CMSD was the appointment
of Barbara Byrd-Bennett as CEO of CMSD in November 1998. Ms. Byrd-Bennett has been described
as “a New York City educator with 22 years’ experience and a reputation for turning around low-

¹ These interviews took place on October 29 and 30, 2001. I met with Barbara Byrd-Bennett, CEO, CMSD;
Richard DeColibus, President CTU. Also interviewed were the following CTU representatives: Joanne
DeMarco, First Vice President and Negotiations Director; Michael Charney, Professional Issues Director; Jan
Brundage, Bargaining Unit Director; Sandy Green, Grievances Director; and Meryl Johnson, Community
Relations Director. CMSC personnel interviewed were Peter Robertson, Chief Research and Information
Officer; Adrian Thompson, Chief Counsel; Carol Hauser, Executive Director of Human Resources and
Employee Services; and Thandiwe Peebles, Regional Superintendent for CEO Schools. Telephone interviews
were conducted with Sherry Ulier, Executive Director of Professional Development, CMSD and Leaura
Materassi, Chief Instructional Program Officer, CMSD. The following representatives from external partner
organizations were also interviewed: Rosemary Herpel, Executive Director of the Cleveland Initiative for
Education; Marya Richards, Executive Director, Cleveland Summit on Education; and Helen Williams,
Cleveland Summit on Education. Dr. Myrna Elliott Lewis, Chief Academic Officer, and Lisa Ruda, Chief of
Staff, participated in a joint meeting, but were not part of the interview process.
performing schools.” She joined a system in which the teachers’ union had demonstrated a commitment to teaching and learning. Even before Byrd-Bennett’s arrival, the CTU had undertaken some teaching and learning initiatives. While it is neither possible nor useful to note each initiative, it does seem important to describe key efforts by both parties that have set the stage for where they are now. Thus, this report begins with a brief review of selected Union and District initiatives, as well as joint initiatives. These initiatives provide the context for the discussion of future steps the parties might consider.

**DISTRICT INITIATIVES**

**Strategic Plan**

While Barbara Byrd-Bennett and her management team have undertaken numerous initiatives since her arrival, the cornerstone for all that has followed has been the District’s strategic plan. Submitted to the Board of Education and the community in May 1999, Ms. Byrd-Bennett described it as a “plan for accelerating the pace of change and academic achievement in the Cleveland Municipal Schools.” The Board adopted the plan on June 28, 1999.

Entitled *Educating Cleveland’s Children*, it sets forth a vision for the CMSD and prescribes a five-year strategy for improving the City’s schools. The vision has been well publicized in school documents and publications and is posted in each school. It states:

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<td>Each student in the Cleveland Municipal School District will be successful in a rigorous instructional program, and our teachers, principals, and administrative staff will be valued, will hold themselves responsible and accountable, and will be rewarded for their professionalism.</td>
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In February 2000, Ms. Byrd-Bennett presented a revised and final version of the strategic plan, with a progress update as of the 1999-2000 school year. *Educating Cleveland’s Children* is notable for its detail and clarity. It is organized around six strategic focal points:

1. High Standards/Rigorous Curriculum
2. Effective and Committed Workforce
3. Quality Schools
4. Sound Financial, Management and Accountability Systems
5. Parent and Community Support

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6. Student Needs

Within each of the focal points, the plan establishes a limited number of initiatives. For each initiative, there are specific objectives and activities, a timeframe, and a description of the anticipated impact.

Thus, under “High Standards/Rigorous Curriculum”, the first initiative is: “Develop and implement academic content and performance standards.” Among the activities undertaken to implement this initiative are the development of benchmark and grade-level academic content standards for literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies for all students. The goal was to complete the English language arts standards by June of 2000. This was accomplished and these standards have been widely publicized.\(^3\)

Another initiative under the High Standards/Rigorous Curriculum focus is: “Implement a comprehensive literacy program.” Among the objectives and activities within this initiative are the adoption of a district philosophy and comprehensive plan for literacy; an increase in teachers’ and principals’ use of new concepts of literacy; increasing student opportunities to develop literacy skills; developing literacy-rich classrooms throughout the district; implementing a 90-minute literacy period in the elementary schools; and developing strategies for increasing instructional time spent on literacy in secondary schools.

It was the sense of several of those interviewed that this initiative is well underway. The District has adopted a philosophy and comprehensive plan for literacy that it has published as Building a Literate Community of Learners. The 90-minute literacy period has been established in the elementary schools. Other elements, including the use of Literacy Instructional Specialists and enhanced tutoring initiatives that provide one-on-one tutoring, are either in place or nearly so. The District has also undertaken literacy pilot programs, such as the School-to-Home Literacy project, a program whose goal is to provide high-quality educational enrichment resources and training for families and their kindergarten children to enhance literacy skills and support reading success in...

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\(^3\) With the hard work of the Cleveland Summit on Education, and funding from several foundations, including the Cleveland Foundation, the Codrington Foundation, the George Gund Foundation, and the Joyce Foundation, these standards have been published in well-designed, easily comprehensible pamphlets and posters. There is a separate pamphlet for each grade, kindergarten through 4th grade, and for every two grades for grades 5 through 12. With respect to each standard, the pamphlet describes the performance expectations for that grade level and gives examples of performance indicators. By publishing the English Language Arts Standards in such a graphically appealing and easily readable format, it would seem that the district has made them accessible and understandable to the vast majority of Cleveland parents and citizens, enabling them to become true partners in the education of Cleveland’s children. It would be useful for the District to ascertain what impact this publishing effort has had on parent engagement. While there is no commitment at present to publish in the same format the standards that have been developed for art, mathematics, science, and social studies, if research shows that this kind of dissemination has been effective in reaching a broad cross-section of the community, the District might be wise to seek support for publication of the remaining standards in a similar format.
grade one. The next step will be to evaluate these programs to ascertain whether they are having the intended impact.

**Academic Achievement Plan**

To ensure that the goals established by the District’s strategic plan come to fruition in individual schools, the District requires that each school create an Academic Achievement Plan (AAP). An AAP format has been developed for each school level—elementary, middle and secondary. The AAP process requires each school to develop its own vision. This vision is to be “a powerful, optimistic, and inspiring verbal picture of what the school and the individuals in it want to create and want to become in the future,” and is to be consistent with the District’s vision, which was quoted earlier. The AAP further requires that each school engage in data analysis so that its planning process is data-driven. Once the data is collected and analyzed, the school is expected to use the resulting information to develop strategic goals, performance objectives, strategies, a work plan, and a professional development plan.

It is important to note that not only does the AAP process flow from and support the District’s strategic plan and vision, but it also incorporates the Union as a partner in this effort. At each school, the process is driven by a Core Planning Team. The team is composed of up to ten representatives and includes the school principal and the CTU chapter chairperson. Both jointly designate a team facilitator and define the facilitator’s roles, responsibilities, and compensation. The facilitator must be a CTU member from that school.

The AAP process was introduced prior to the arrival of Byrd-Bennett. However, following her arrival, it was substantially revised. The CTU and the CMSD leadership worked jointly on this revision.

**School Performance Indicators**

A related initiative is the School Performance Indicators (SPI) process. This is a formal review process in which a school is visited and evaluated by a review team composed of the CEO or her designee, a School Improvement Facilitator, community and parent representatives, a representative of the Academic Intervention Team in selected schools, and members of the school core planning team. The SPI review is constructed around ten essential elements of effective schools:

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4 The Home-to-School Literacy Project is supported by World Book, Inc. To date, the program has been piloted in three CMSD elementary schools involving 62 kindergarten students and their families. An evaluation component was built into the design of the program.

school mission/philosophy, school climate, school organization, curriculum and instruction, professional development, instructional resources, parent/community involvement, student support services, external and physical resources and assessment/evaluation. It contains 85 standards on which the school is assessed. According to the SPI training document, “it is anticipated that the SPI process will direct the school’s core planning team to focus on effective planning to improve teaching and learning, thereby ensuring that each student receives access to quality instruction guided by rigorous academic standards.” Findings from the SPI review are used as a basis for revisions to the school’s AAP in a continuing process of self-evaluation and improvement. As with other initiatives, the District monitors the SPI process to see that it is implemented as envisioned and then assesses its effectiveness. Planning for this assessment is built into the SPI program design. The Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment will be doing this assessment on an ongoing basis. School-based and SPI teams will also monitor the SPI process.

Those attending the Steering Committee meeting noted that they viewed AAP as an aggregate of the various initiatives the school district has already undertaken. They expressed concern about how to make AAP real and aligned with SPI so as to lead ultimately to genuine self-assessment. While this is a legitimate concern, it is important to remember that SPI is only in its second year of operation. All but four schools have been visited and at least two of these—Charles Orr and Jesse Owens—have not been visited because they are new schools. Approximately 40 schools have been visited twice and all but two showed improvement over the preceding year. Moreover, evaluation of SPI has been built into its design. Thus, while both AAP and SPI need ongoing assessment, they seem to be carefully thought-out initiatives geared to making real the standards that were originally established in *Educating Cleveland’s Children*.

### Professional Development

Supporting these initiatives is the District’s commitment to professional development. Each elementary school now has two professional developers for grades K-5—one for mathematics and one for English language arts. The teachers who hold these positions are released from their regular

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8 In K-8 schools, the professional developers work with the K-5 teachers. In grades 6-8 at these schools, and at the middle schools, subject specialists are responsible for professional development. The teachers who serve in the latter capacity do not have full-day release. At the high school level, professional development is done by the department chairs. However, because these chairs do not have a guaranteed unassigned period under the collective bargaining agreement, the time available to perform development work is up to each building principal. As a result, there is great variation across schools. Some principals continue to require department chairs to teach six classes per day, including a ninth grade class, which is often more work. Such workloads leave little time for professional development initiatives at the building level.
teaching duties. In their capacity as professional developers, they are responsible for mentoring and coaching other teachers, preparing demonstration lessons, and participating in team teaching. They also sit in on grade-level meetings and work with small groups of students for at least ten hours per week.

Each of the K-5 professional developers has received Pathwise and Critical Friends training. The Pathwise training is required by the State of Ohio and supports the mentoring that all Ohio school systems are required to provide to first-year teachers. The Critical Friends program is based on the idea of “providing deliberate time and structures to promote adult professional growth that is directly linked to student learning.” Teachers who participate in Critical Friends Groups “learn to work collaboratively by participating in professional development activities, such as examining student or teacher work . . . . [A]s a result of a continual process of teacher reflection, action, and feedback, student achievement improves.” The Cleveland K-5 professional developers encourage the creation of Critical Friends Groups in their schools. The goal of the District’s professional development efforts is to create the capacity for professional development at the building level.

**UNION INITIATIVES**

The CTU has engaged in numerous projects that support teaching and learning. Some have been undertaken jointly with the District and some have been conceived and carried out solely by the Union. The CTU’s initiatives in this area are aligned with initiatives sponsored by its parent union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). As Sandra Feldman, President of the AFT, noted in her address to the 1998 AFT Convention in New Orleans, teachers and their union have important roles to play in school improvement efforts. The standard by which she would like teachers to evaluate the success of their schools is: “Would I want my own child to be there?”

**Curriculum Development**

Reflecting the extent to which the CTU has led change efforts in teaching and learning was its response to the Board of Education’s 1990 decision to move away from a Eurocentric curriculum toward the infusion of the so-called African-Centered/Multicultural curriculum. Recognizing the potential for polarization that such a change presented, the CTU decided that teachers needed to take

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9 Information published on the website of the Harmony School, www.nsrfharmony.org, which is now the home of the National School Reform Faculty, developers of the Critical Friends program.
an integral role in developing the new curriculum because the CTU believed a top-down approach
would not bring successful change.

In the introduction to a booklet that was a product of this change effort, Michael Charney,
Professional Issues Director for the CTU, described the process in which teachers and their Union
engaged:

No administrative directive, no matter how thoughtfully developed, could substitute
for motivated teacher leadership.

As a result, for the last few years the Cleveland Teachers Union has been working to
encourage a collaborative process where motivated classroom teachers share their
experiences with one another as a way of building self confidence for all teachers to
infuse the African Centered/Multicultural curriculum. A few key people with
knowledge, confidence, and initiative in selected schools then become the fulcrum
for gradual implementation. This collaborative model can only work when teachers
are given the opportunity to experiment within a flexible framework.12

This union-led response to a School Board-sponsored change effort predated the arrival of
Barbara Byrd-Bennett in November 1998. Thus, as noted above, the Union evidenced a co mmitment
to leadership in education even before her arrival. However, those interviewed clearly believe that the
current administration not only welcomes but encourages such bottom-up, teacher-initiated efforts.
The challenge is to track and assess these efforts, to learn which ones have led to improved teaching
and learning and then to share those successes across the system.

**Literacy**

The CTU has undertaken several projects that support the District’s focus on literacy. In
response to what one teacher described as a “high-stakes law” that requires fourth-grade students to
read at grade level, the CTU instituted “Countdown to 2002—Putting in Place the Conditions for
Reading Success.” A pamphlet describes how parents—who are a child’s first teacher—can nurture a
love of reading in their children. In addition, the Union made available, free of cost, a booklet
entitled, *Helping Your Child Learn to Read.*13 Funding for distribution of the Countdown 2002
pamphlet and the *Helping Your Child Learn to Read* booklet was provided by the CTU.14

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12 Cleveland Teachers Union. *First Steps Toward an African Centered/Multicultural Curriculum: A Booklet by
13 This booklet was prepared by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of
Education and published by the Department of Education and the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.
14 Legislation that required 4th grade students to read at grade level in order to be promoted to grade 5 was to
have gone into effect in 2002. However, the legislation was never implemented. Instead, the State of Ohio
recently passed Senate Bill 1, which requires that students must meet academic content standards in reading,
writing, math, social studies, and science in order to graduate from an Ohio high school. Senate Bill 1 requires
Ohio school districts to focus on what students have learned, not merely on what they have been taught.
Achievement tests for grades 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 are to be developed.
Another project undertaken by the CTU is called “Literacy for the Future Generations.” Launched in July 2001, the CTU’s literacy project is designed to increase pre-school and elementary school students’ literacy by getting books into their homes and encouraging their parents to read to them twenty minutes every day. The Union has invested $40,000 in the program, and has just begun a reading project (in conjunction with the CMSD) to have Cleveland students read one million books. To implement this program, the Union created posters that promote twenty minutes of reading and asks parents to sign a pledge that they will commit to this standard.

The Union is also in the process of publishing a booklet entitled Literacy for the Future Generations, a how-to manual for helping community agencies work with schools to establish home libraries. Under this project the Union directs resources toward people who work with parents of pre-school children, such as county workers who go into the homes of new parents to support positive parenting, as well as pediatricians and other health professionals. In addition, every elementary school will have a literacy point person who coordinates school-based activities that promote literacy and helps parents understand the importance of regular reading time at home.\textsuperscript{15}

Explaining the Union’s decision to undertake the literacy campaign, President Richard DeColibus noted in an article in the Union newspaper, \textit{Critique}, that too many of Cleveland’s children arrive at kindergarten unprepared to learn and are not receiving adequate support once they arrive. He wrote:

\ldots if the roots of pupil academic difficulties (both in terms of preparedness before kindergarten and ongoing during the school year) mainly lie outside the school, then, logically, the solution must also lie outside what is perceived as the school’s normal sphere of influence. If that is where we need to go to ensure better educational outcomes, then we need to go there. To say, “That’s not our responsibility,” is both perfectly true and perfectly irrelevant since it leads to nothing changing for the better.\textsuperscript{16}

Asserting that the type of change the Union envisions will require “a multi-year, multi-million dollar campaign,” DeColibus argued that such a daunting task will require massive assistance from other sectors of society, not just the Union and the School District.\textsuperscript{17}

The Union appears to be reaching out to other sectors with its literacy campaign and by doing so is helping the Cleveland school system realize its goal of a comprehensive literacy program. As with the District’s initiatives, however, assessment is needed if the Union is to know the impact of its programs.

\textsuperscript{15} “Home Libraries Goal of CTU Literacy Project,” \textit{Critique}, August 2001, pp. 4, 16. \textit{Critique} is the official publication of the Cleveland Teachers’ Union.


\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.
Educational Research and Dissemination

The CTU’s commitment to improving teaching is evidenced also by its Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) Program. This program was created by the American Federation of Teachers “through collaboration between practitioners and researchers to encourage classroom educators to improve their practice and their students’ achievement by becoming users of research.”

Established in 1981 as a teacher-education program, in 1990 it was expanded to provide training to paraprofessionals. In 1997 a research-based course on managing student behavior in non-classroom settings for all school-related personnel was added.

According to an AFT information bulletin, what makes ER&D different from other professional development programs is that it is meant to be an ongoing process rather than an in-service event. The bulletin states that the ER&D Program is committed to:

- providing credible, research-based information;
- offering a non-threatening, non-judgmental learning environment;
- providing opportunities for thoughtful discussion about teaching and learning with colleagues and researchers;
- providing opportunities for self-reflection and collegial inquiry;
- making a process available that allows for individual understanding and implementation of instructional strategies that result in real changes in practice;
- providing opportunities for professional growth, continuous learning and validation of existing practice; and,
- offering a program that builds a sense of pride in the quality of a union service.

Meryl Johnson, Second Vice President and Director of Community Relations for the CTU, is the ER&D site coordinator for Cleveland. Her enthusiasm for the program is apparent, which may be why sixty Cleveland teachers and paraprofessionals participated in a week-long training program in August 2001. The research topics covered included Beginning of the Year Classroom Management, Effective Group Management, Interactive Direct Instruction, Time on Task, User-Friendly Homework, Cooperative Learning, and Teacher Praise.

Although the ER&D program is a Union-sponsored effort, it has been institutionalized in two ways as a joint District-Union program. First, the contract for 2000-2003 mandates that new teachers

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18 American Federation of Teachers, “Educational Research and Dissemination Program for Local Unions,” p.1. This is a 13-page handout that describes the evolution of this program, course offerings, and requirements for local implementation.
participate in fifteen hours of ER&D training. Second, Meryl Johnson works closely with Sherry Ulery, Executive Director of Professional Development for the District, to ensure that District employees who are responsible for developing and implementing professional development programs are knowledgeable about the ER&D program. Johnson has provided ER&D training to all of Ulery’s staff.

**JOINT UNION-DISTRICT INITIATIVES**

**Carnegie Pilot Projects**

The Cleveland Carnegie Pilot Projects were inspired by the 1986 report of the Carnegie Foundation entitled *A Nation Prepare: Teachers for the 21st Century,*[^19] which highlighted the isolated and solitary experience of most classroom teachers. The Carnegie Report urged a more collaborative, school-wide strategy to educate all children. The District and the CTU developed the framework for a Carnegie process during negotiation of the parties’ 1988 collective bargaining agreement. It provided that teams of teachers could be awarded grants. The contract specified that an administrator, a CTU representative, and a university professor would decide which schools should receive grants from the $250,000 pool of school system funds.

The District and the CTU subsequently published a review of the schools’ experience with the Carnegie process. Entitled *Carnegie Pilot Projects: Seven Years of Teacher Leadership: Reports from Seven Schools, 1989-1995,*[^20] the volume consists of case studies. While the information is primarily anecdotal, in the introduction to the report Michael Charney was able to elicit some lessons. Among these was that although collaboration was not easy, the professional and personal rewards gained from working together overshadowed the satisfaction of relative autonomy within the traditional model of classroom instruction. Moreover, the collective bargaining agreement did not prove to be an obstacle, as some predicted. According to Charney, although the collective bargaining agreement contained a mechanism that allowed a school to apply for a waiver from any of the contractual obligations that might hinder implementation of a school-based Carnegie project, no school even began the waiver process during the seven-year study period. With respect to teaching

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[^20]: Cleveland Board of Education and Cleveland Teachers Union, *Carnegie Pilot Projects: Seven Years of Teacher Leadership: Reports from Seven Schools, 1988-1995*, Cleveland, 1995?.
and learning, Charney noted that issues of student motivation, interest, and self-discipline initially dominated the focus of this classroom innovation, but that once teacher collaboration and student motivation had been established, many Carnegie projects began focusing on problems of weak student performance on state-mandated standardized tests.

**Cleveland Teachers’ Academy**

Established in late 1996, the Cleveland Teachers’ Academy (CTA) is a collaborative effort among the Cleveland Initiative for Education, the Cleveland Municipal School District, the Cleveland Teachers Union, and three local higher-education institutions: Cleveland State University, John Carroll University, and Baldwin-Wallace College. The CTA’s mission is “to create a teacher renewal process that serves as a catalyst for professional growth opportunities needed to become more accomplished practitioners.” It grew out of a program initiated by the Governor of Ohio. His concept was to create six or seven urban centers that would foster teacher professional development. One requirement was that each center had to be in a collaborative relationship with an external non-profit entity. Each of the other centers established under this initiative was linked with a university. The CTA is linked with the Cleveland Initiative for Education (CIE), a non-profit organization whose mission is “to mobilize the business and philanthropic communities to advocate and support systemic reform of the governance, financial management and education delivery system of the Cleveland Municipal School District.” CIE houses and is the fiscal agent for the CTA. The CMSD contributes one million dollars a year toward CTA’s support.

Rosemary Herpel, Executive Director of the CIE explained that the CTA is about building relationships. It facilitates different kinds of conversations among teachers and between teachers and other professionals. Asserting that the CTA, as it is currently designed and operating, could not have existed without the collaborative environment established by Barbara Byrd-Bennett and Richard DeColibus, Herpel said that one outcome of their leadership has been that conversations about teacher quality are no longer perceived as anti-teacher. Rather, they are seen as a joint venture intended to benefit the teachers as well as the children they serve.

CTA courses are designed by teachers and are intended to create opportunities for professional development outside what is offered by the District and local universities. Course offerings foster extended study, reflection, and dialogue for teachers and lead to an energized classroom. Moreover, the courses are delivered so as to model the teaching and learning that the Academy wants teachers to use in the classroom. Offerings for the 2001-2002 school year include Standards Support, Middle School/Middle Grade Team Leadership Development, Reduce & Gain (a program designed to provide strategies for maximizing teacher effectiveness and increasing student
achievement in reduced class-size settings), and Teacher Leadership Development Programs. Some of the latter programs include AAP facilitators, CTU chapter chairs, and principals. Workshops, lectures, skills training, an author series, and preparation for National Board of Professional Teaching Standards are also offered by the Academy.

On July 15, 2001, the CTU received the Saturn/UAW Award sponsored by the AFT and the Saturn/United Auto Workers Partnership. This award recognizes local teacher unions that work together with their local school districts to improve the teaching profession and enhance education. It was given to the CTU for its collaborative efforts to promote teacher quality.

Other Joint Undertakings

In addition to the two initiatives described above, the District and the Union have numerous joint committees and joint projects that they are working on or committed to working on. There is a Joint Labor-Management Committee that deals primarily with contract administration issues. There are also approximately twenty administrative committees that have labor and management representation. Among these is the Academic Intervention Team, the Health Care Subcommittee, the Joint Special Education Committee, and the Joint Committee on Class Size Reduction and School Performance/Attendance Incentives.

The parties have also jointly undertaken short-term projects. One that was described in positive terms by a committee member is the committee charged with aligning report cards to the new standards. The committee focused first on elementary school report cards. It redesigned the cards, computerized them, and is currently testing the new design in a pilot project involving ten elementary schools. The committee in now working on redesigning middle school report cards. The goal is to implement computerized, standards-based report cards in all 122 schools. Also described as successful was the work of the Joint Committee on Grade Level Chairpersons. This committee was charged with developing a job description and pay schedule for these newly created positions.

Successful joint work requires timely coordination and follow-through. As with any large-scale effort, not all parts have functioned with equal effectiveness. Moreover, some interviewees complained that the District does not always appoint its representatives to joint committees in a timely fashion. Thus, while the parties made a commitment to “revitalize the joint committees to become more efficient and effective,” some committees are not functioning at all.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The parties asked me to make recommendations that would instill labor-management collaboration on teaching and learning into the system’s culture so that it becomes “the way we operate” and is not dependent on a small group of District and Union leaders. It is my belief that effective change will require not only drilling down to individual school-level initiatives developed by the District and the Union leaders, but also sharing initiatives and change efforts across schools and upward from schools to the District level. As was often articulated by those whom I interviewed, lasting change requires the buy-in of staff at all levels. Such buy-in is more likely to occur if staff have a role in developing the means of change.

The following recommendations are based substantially, but not exclusively, on ideas generated during a meeting of the Steering Committee on the second day of my visit. I have also incorporated ideas gained during my interviews with other members of the CMSD/CTU community and through my own experience in other school districts and in labor relations.

Recommendation 1. Keep Track of All Initiatives Within the School District

The initiatives highlighted in this report do not represent the full range of initiatives underway in the Cleveland School System. Cleveland is a large, urban system with many activities going on at all levels. Those who participated in the Steering Committee meeting expressed concern that with so many initiatives in motion (District, Union, and joint), it is difficult to keep track of them all, much less ensure that they all complement and reinforce each other and not working at cross-purposes. Among the questions raised by the committee were:

- How to glue them together?
- How to ensure that each is moving ahead?
- Who is accountable for each? Is this known by all?
- What actions are to be taken and by whom, if an initiative is not moving forward?

Simply keeping track of the initiatives is the first challenge. At the Steering Committee meeting, the idea was suggested to create a visual map. Such a map, or some other graphical presentation, would enable anyone who is interested to quickly gain an overview of all that is happening. Such a map would not only create clarity and provide a blueprint for what needs to be monitored, but it could be a useful tool for educating the larger Cleveland community about the system’s activities. However, given the enormous number of initiatives and activities that are
currently in motion, a multi-level map would probably be necessary—one showing the major spheres of activity and then separate maps for each sphere.

The greater challenge, of course, is how to glue all the initiatives together. Certainly the strategic plan is the cornerstone of this effort. So long as an initiative flows from and supports one or more elements of the strategic plan, it is likely to complement and reinforce other work that is going on. The AAP and SPI programs have been designed in this way. What will have to be ascertained is whether, as initiatives are rolled out, they do in fact conform to and support the strategic plan.

In addition to a map of initiatives pertaining to student achievement, the parties might also benefit from creating a document similar to the one developed for the strategic plan. This document would list each initiative and for each, provide a description of the initiative, its goals with respect to teaching and learning, who is responsible for each part, and when each part is to be completed. It might also contain information about what actions are to be taken and by whom, if an initiative is not moving forward.

Because some of the initiatives that need tracking have come from sources other than the District, it would seem that the Steering Committee or a committee appointed by the Steering Committee and reporting to it, would be the likely group to undertake this work.

A response to the question regarding what actions are to be taken and by whom if an initiative is not moving forward is something that would have to be negotiated. The Steering Committee’s instinct to be specific about both timeframes and persons responsible is sensible.

**Recommendation 2. Standards Implementation**

Most of those interviewed believed that the District is well along in its effort to develop standards. Work on the English Language Arts Standards has been completed and widely distributed in the schools and the community. Work on the remaining standards is in process. There are now two challenges with respect to these standards: (1) system-wide implementation and (2) impact assessment.

It seems likely that the AAP and SPI programs will be effective vehicles for fostering implementation of the standards at the school-building level. It appears, however, that some teachers are still skeptical or cynical about this effort. It was reported that some teachers view the standards as just another program imposed on them by the District, even though teachers participated in the development of the standards, and standards are now required by state law. It was also reported that some regard the standards initiative as just a “passing fancy” of the current administration, like so many they have seen before. Some teachers apparently expect the standards would disappear if the
current CEO left Cleveland. Time and District-Union insistence on standards work will cure some of this cynicism. However, there are steps the parties can take as well.

Some research data, gathered by the Cleveland Summit on Education (CSE),\(^\text{22}\) suggests that the greatest resistance to standards is in the elementary schools. It is hypothesized that elementary teachers are less receptive to standards because they are not specialists, and the standards are tied to specialized areas such as language arts, science, social studies, and so forth. Assuming that the CSE data are correct, it would appear that the parties need to focus on getting greater buy-in at the elementary school level.\(^\text{23}\)

The appointment of professional developers for grades K-5 should have a major impact on elementary school teachers’ buy-in to standards-driven teaching. However, a joint effort by the District and the CTA also might offer a fruitful approach. First of all, if the Union leadership is truly behind these standards (and it appears to be), it is in a unique position to get the message out on a school-by-school basis through its Chapter Chairpersons and the Union committees that are elected in each school. Since this effort would probably need to be led by the Union vice presidents for elementary education, it is important to obtain their buy-in. Perhaps they and a small group of District representatives could develop a plan for addressing elementary teachers’ doubts and concerns about the standards initiative.

Second, workshops or other types of professional development would also be an effective way to gain greater buy-in. It might be that Union-sponsored workshops focused specifically on the rollout of standards within the elementary schools would have a greater impact on certain teachers. This is not to say that District or joint District-Union professional development efforts might not also be effective. Given that the adoption of the standards approach to education requires a totally different mindset—focus on output rather than concern with input—multiple strategies for gaining buy-in will be required. And given the magnitude of the change that the shift to standards represents, it cannot be expected that buy-in will occur either quickly or uniformly throughout the system.

Continued experience with the AAP and SPI processes should serve to build commitment to standards. As teachers and other school personnel learn to use these processes effectively and begin to see the improvements in student learning that these two programs are designed to achieve, resistance

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\(^{22}\) The Cleveland Summit on Education was founded in 1990 as the result of a meeting called by Mayor White and other civic leaders to address educational priorities around education reform. It initially focused on reorganization of the schools. It has since sponsored a variety of programs and undertaken several research projects.

\(^{23}\) This is not to say that resistance in unknown in the middle and high schools.
can be expected to wane. Of the schools that received second visits from the SPI team, all but two improved their overall rating. The average improvement rate was 40 points.

Moreover, if the AAP and SPI processes work as the parties hope, they should create permanent, systemic change that is independent of District and Union leadership.

**Recommendation 3. Organizational Culture: School Principals and CTU Chapter Chairpersons**

District and Union leaders envision a significant—some might say massive—change in the organizational culture of the Cleveland school system. However, the new culture will not be realized unless the vast majority of administrators, teachers, and other school personnel understand, accept, and actively support this new culture at the building level. There appears to be consensus among District and Union leaders that school principals and CTU Chapter Chairpersons are critical agents of this change, and that in order to be successful both the principals and the chairpersons must see themselves as educational leaders. There was also apparent consensus that they must exercise their leadership, at least in part, through effective collaboration with each other.

**School Principals**

Those I interviewed held varying views on the effectiveness of the system’s principals. Some viewed principals, especially elementary principals, as a major barrier to meaningful reform. Others, while acknowledging that some principals are autocratic and risk-adverse, saw the majority of principals as willing to take risks, respectful of teachers, and able to work collaboratively with both teachers and building chairs. These differing perceptions likely result from differing individual experiences. In a system of 122 schools, there is bound to be considerable variation.

Whatever the current situation with respect to principals, it is incumbent upon the CEO and the rest of the District administrative team to communicate their expectation that principals are to be building and instructional leaders, not just managers. They must also be clear about what it means to be an instructional leader. The CEO appears to be making considerable effort to communicate her expectations to the principals, to coach those who need assistance, and to counsel out those who are unwilling or unable to accommodate their operating style to current expectations. It is less clear that regional superintendents are effectively supporting and reinforcing the CEO’s message. At least one person described the regional superintendents as being barriers to communication and change. Whether this is the case, or not, is a question the CEO may need to examine.

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24 Of the schools that received second visits from the SPI team, all but two improved their overall rating. The average improvement rate was 40 points.

25 In the discussion, the terms “manager” and “instructional leader” were used as if they were mutually exclusive. However, I understand the distinction to be an autocratic, top-down manager vs. a collaborative manager. The collaborative manager works with and in teams, leads by example, and sees his or her job as assisting teachers to hone their craft and find resources. The autocratic, top-down manager tends to give directions and not work collaboratively. It was suggested that there is a disconnect in some school, with principals not recognizing that teachers do the core work and the principal’s role is to facilitate that work.
New roles require new skills. Skills that work effectively for top-down managers are different from the skills needed by leaders who are expected to collaborate rather than direct. Assisting principals to acquire leadership skills must be a high priority.

Principals have several venues from which to acquire new skills. The District provides training, and the CTA invites principals to some of its offerings. The CIE, through its Pogue Institute, also offers principals professional development opportunities. So long as the programs that each of these organizations offer are aligned with the District’s vision of principals as educational leaders, they will advance the cultural change sought by the District and Union leadership, as well as provide needed skill development.

The performance review process should also reinforce the administration’s expectations of principals. Evidence of instructional leadership and the ability to work collaboratively with teachers and CTU Chapter Chairpersons should be imbedded in the principals’ goals and should be part of their annual assessment. Assessment of performance expectations as part of the performance review is another means of encouraging desired changes in the organizational culture.

**Recruitment of New Principals**

The Steering Committee discussion of the important role played by principals led to a discussion of recruitment. It was the sense of the meeting that teacher leaders might be particularly effective as principals. This led to the idea of setting up a program that allows good teachers to move into principalships on a trial basis and without risk. One idea that surfaced was the possibility of giving such recruits the opportunity to serve as principals for a couple of years and then allowing those who were unsuccessful, or who simply did not enjoy the position, to return to their former positions without loss of seniority, in the same way that the Union President is allowed to return to his/her former position under Article 2, Section 8 of the collective bargaining agreement.

Other avenues for recruiting principals will also need to be explored. What was important about the Steering Committee’s discussion was the fact that both CMSD and CTU leaders recognized the key role that principals play in the success of their schools and in the ability of a school to operate in the collaborative manner that is jointly envisioned. Also of importance was the willingness of both groups of leaders to think creatively about recruitment.

Related to the recruitment of principals is the role of assistant principals. In most systems, the assistant principal position offers teachers an opportunity to gain knowledge and experience that will prepare them for moving into a principal’s position. It may be useful for the parties to jointly examine assistant principal recruitment and cultivation. If these positions were seen as developmental
opportunities with clear performance expectations tied to career advancement, they might become a more effective source of future principals.26

**CTU Chapter Chairpersons**

There was apparent consensus among Union and District leaders that CTU building chairpersons need to become engaged in the broader vision of their Union’s role and their own role with respect to teaching and learning. It was the sense of the group that the chairpersons must stop seeing their role as limited to protecting their members (although this is certainly a key responsibility) and begin to see themselves as educational leaders who are willing to ask how they and their constituents can make educational reform—i.e., improve teaching and learning—happen.

The challenge for the Union is how to make the desired role changes explicit. What does it mean to be an educational leader? How does the chairperson’s job description change? Discussion of these questions at the Steering Committee meeting led some participants to wonder whether there was a need for two different people, each with a distinct role—one to handle the traditional representational issues and one to serve as an educational leader.

While it is understandable that there may be a perception that these are two different roles, if the organizational culture is truly one of collaboration and joint problem solving, it would seem more effective to have one person take responsibility for both tasks. After all, grievance handling, at least at the building level, is hopefully about trying to solve problems.27 Issues that require litigation are normally handled by Union staff rather than the building chair. However, as is true with so much labor relations work, there is no single model that fits all situations. It may well be that in Cleveland, or in some schools in Cleveland, the educational leadership and the grievance handling roles at the building level would be better divided between two CTU representatives.

Like principals, building chairpersons will also need training if they are to operate in new ways. Some training will have to focus on team building, joint problem solving and working collaboratively in groups. Some will also have to focus on the changing role of the Union with respect to education reform. The CTA has already offered one program entitled, “The Union’s Role in Improving Teaching and Learning.” Other programs for both building chairs and their constituents will surely be needed if both the leaders and those they represent are to be comfortable with the changed expectations of what it means to be a Union leader.

As in any situation where leaders are elected, it is important that CTU leaders not get too far out in front of the membership. An ongoing dialogue between leaders and members is crucial for

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26 One person indicated that assistant principal salaries may be too low to attract the most experienced teachers. The parties may want consider whether this is a hindrance in effective recruitment.

27 See discussion of grievance processing in Recommendation 7 below.
moving forward with any change effort. Where there is too great a disconnect, the leadership can be turned out and the entire effort put in jeopardy. Patience and constant communication are critical. So too is a willingness to hear and respond to member concerns.

It appears that the CTU leadership is doing an effective job of communicating its vision to the membership. Its newspaper, Critique, has published numerous articles and presidential columns about the leadership’s direction and the reasons for it. President DeColibus also publishes short, informative presidential updates. However, the Union would probably do well to assess the impact of its communications on different school communities. It may be that a greater variety of communication strategies is needed if the Union is to reach the vast majority of its members. Frequent, informative, and targeted communication, combined with effective listening, should ensure that the CTU leadership and its members will be true partners in shaping the Union’s responses to the changes that are occurring in the Cleveland Municipal School District.

**Recommendation 4. Professional Development**

As I have noted, there is a considerable amount of professional development being offered by the District, the CTU, the CTA, the CIE, and even local universities. The District received high praise for its professional development programs, which were contrasted favorably with what had been offered prior to 1999. Programs offered by the Union and the CTA are also highly regarded. Nevertheless, many of those interviewed expressed the opinion that there continue to be unmet needs. Most commonly mentioned was the need for training around working collaboratively in teams and effective teaching. Technology training was also cited as a need, especially for more senior personnel.

Another common concern was whether the training that is being offered is aligned with the District’s focus on standards and teamwork. Specifically, is the training that is offered truly producing changes in the classroom that will increase student learning? This is, of course, another assessment issue. Such assessment, however, will need to be done in several ways. As part of the SPI process, the Office of Instructional Programs is already trying to assess the impact of professional development efforts by asking schools to name three outcomes or changes that they believe the visiting team should look for as the result of professional training. The goal is to ensure that professional training is undertaken with a purpose, and that what is learned is translated into actions that directly impact student learning. This seems to be a sensible innovation, but its effectiveness will have to be monitored over time.

At another level, there is need for an overall picture of what is being offered, by whom, and how it relates to the standards, the AAP, the SPI, and the organizational culture changes that the District and the Union seek to effect. With such an overview, and feedback from school personnel
about their perceived training needs, it would be possible for the entities that offer training to develop new programs to fill any gaps and to eliminate programs that do not meet current needs. Because professional development programs are offered by the District and the Union, as well as by external organizations, responsibility for coordinating such a training survey, and even planning the menu of future offerings, might be most effectively managed or coordinated by the Steering Committee or its designees.

The Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment also has a role in assessing the effectiveness of at least some professional development efforts. A primary focus of this office is assessing student learning. Because the ultimate goal of all professional development undertakings is (or should be) student learning, it would seem that the effectiveness of selected professional development programs is an appropriate area of inquiry for this office.

Finally, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that sufficient time and money are critical to creating a successful, system-wide professional development program. If teachers are to take courses, conduct research, and participate in Critical Friends Groups and other collaborative endeavors, they must have time to do this work. There are many strategies for blocking out the needed time. Doing so, however, will surely require funding for additional staff. Moreover, the training itself will require financial support.

**Recommendation 5. Union Leadership**

In discussions with Union leaders, one of the themes that emerged was that the leadership must model the conduct and the approach to labor-management relations that it expects from its building representatives. This would include both how leaders conduct themselves (do they model conflict resolution and joint problem-solving skills), and what they emphasize in their work (i.e., not only contract administration, but also educational innovation, professional development, and the need to move toward a more collaborative organizational culture). Thus, while acknowledging the Union’s responsibility to uphold the collective bargaining agreement and defend its members, leaders also expressed the view that there are important matters, including student learning, that fall outside the contract but that are important to teachers and others that the Union represents.

Two ideas emerged from the conversations with Union leaders. The first was the possibility of restructuring Executive Committee meetings so that they might effectively address a broader range of issues. The second was a restructuring of the Delegate Assembly conversation so that time is allotted for various substantive topics such as teaching and learning. Leaders suggested that much of what is currently covered during Assembly meetings is information that could just as effectively be conveyed in writing, thus freeing up time for more substantive work.
Recommendation 6. Interest-Based Bargaining and Future Negotiations

At present the parties do not appear to have an interest in what has generally come to be called Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB). This approach to bargaining focuses on interests (the parties’ true needs and concerns about an issue) and joint problem solving, as opposed to the traditional adversarial bargaining model. While IBB is not appropriate for all parties under all circumstances, it is something that parties that are trying to develop a more collaborative relationship may want to consider. IBB tends to build and strengthen relationships, while traditional bargaining sometimes derail even the strongest of them. IBB also hones teamwork, facilitation, and joint problem-solving skills—skills that are essential to the type of collaborative relationship that the CMSD and the CTU are seeking to foster.

There are many ways to adapt IBB principles. During negotiations, one can use IBB for specific issues only or for the entire bargaining process. One can also usefully apply IBB principles within a traditional bargaining context. The ability to identify interests that underlie a party’s stated position can be a valuable negotiation skill. The CMSD and the CTU might want to consider IBB training even if they are not interested in using this model for their 2003 negotiations.

Recommendation 7. Grievance Processing

One way labor and management interact on an almost daily basis is through the handling of grievances. While the relationship between grievance processing and teaching and learning may not at first be apparent, the former does have an impact on the latter. The CMSD/CTU efforts around collaboration, teamwork, and open communication are premised on a conviction that such cooperation creates a more effective teaching and learning environment. If the processing of grievances is handled in an adversarial manner, it can undermine the collaborative, joint problem-solving culture that the CMSD and CTU seek to cultivate. On the other hand, if grievance processing is marked by collaboration and joint problem solving at the building level, it will support the desired organizational culture.

Based on interviews with members of the Joint Labor-Management Committee (JLMC), it appears that, with respect to the processing of grievances, the Union and the Administration have shifted from an adversarial to a cooperative relationship. This change has resulted in an increased number of resolved grievances and therefore a decrease in arbitrations. Nevertheless, between January and October of 2001, 286 grievances were filed. It would seem useful for the parties to look at whether the way these grievances were handled was in harmony with the organizational culture they are working to create.
It would also be useful for the parties to look at the causes of the grievances. Evidence of a repetitive pattern in a single school or even across the district would alert the parties to problems that could be effectively addressed through proactive measures. The JLMC might take on this task. Some JLMC members suggested that it might be beneficial for the committee to re-think its role.

**Recommendation 8. Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN)**

The CTU is not currently a member of TURN, but at least two members of the Union leadership have shown an interest in the work of this organization by participating in national and regional (i.e., Great Lakes) TURN meetings. TURN would seem to be a natural affiliation for the CTU. The values and goals of the Unions that comprise TURN seem to be in harmony with those of most of the CTU leadership. Giving CTU leaders the opportunity to meet with other cutting-edge thinkers will enrich their thinking and give them tools and strategies that may prove useful in the current collaborative efforts with the CMSD around teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 9. Role of the Steering Committee**

As noted in the introduction, a Steering Committee consisting of three CTU and three District representatives was created to support the work of managing the parties’ joint work around teaching and learning. The Steering Committee met with me on October 30. Much of the substance of this meeting is presented in the preceding pages. However, the participants also discussed the scope of the committee’s work in the future.

**Possible tasks**
- Track all pieces of reform initiative.
- Provide information, insight, and feedback to CEO and Union President.
- Describe what a building that imbeds our vision looks and feels like.

**Helping the Steering Committee to work effectively**
- Define a list of next steps that lead into deliverables.
- Decide who does what and when.
- Develop a process for reporting back.
- Facilitate meeting where all members participate and all voices are heard.
- Use the Steering Committee to model the interactions that the parties want to see on the local level.
CONCLUSION

The CMSD and the CTU have established a collaborative relationship that has enabled them to work jointly on a number of innovative programs designed to improve teaching and learning in the schools of Cleveland. The educational standards set forth in *Educating Cleveland’s Children* are the foundation for much of this work. The challenges now facing the District and the CTU are keeping track of all these programs, assessing their effectiveness with respect to teaching and learning, and ensuring that the changes in organizational culture necessary to support this work are realized in each school.

The breadth and depth of change to which the parties have committed themselves demands a tremendous investment of time, money, and energy. As CTU President Richard DeColibus noted, such a vast undertaking will require resources beyond what the Union and the District can contribute. It is fortunate that in Cleveland the schools have the support not only of the city administration but also of parents, civic and business leaders, foundations, social service agencies, and other city employees. If they can continue to engage these other entities, it seems likely they will be able to create a high-functioning learning community that is uniquely equipped to meet the needs of all of Cleveland’s children.