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Transformational Leadership: An Urban Leaders' Autoethnography

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Chapter 1

Introduction

I consider myself an urban transformational leader who has had a career that impacted the lives of many students, their families and the many colleagues that I have worked with over the course of almost forty-years. As the practitioner, I understood the importance of balancing my personal development and having the presence of mind to develop those with whom I served. This foresight set the stage of inclusion where all stakeholders understood their responsibility for raising student academic achievement that ultimately benefited students.\(^1\) According to James M. Burns and Bernard M. Bass, transformational leaders conceive a vision and use it to inspire their subordinates to work beyond themselves for the best interest of the organization.\(^2\)

I started as a classroom teacher and ended my career as the Associate Superintendent of a charter school. Along the way I transitioned from one job to another in the Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) district before being asked to become a contributing administrator in three additional school districts. One of my proudest moments as a career educator/building principal came as I watched my students sit next to President George W. Bush who visited our school to recognize an urban schools’ accomplishment of earning the United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon honor for outstanding student achievement on the heels of earning Gold Star honor from


the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for outstanding student achievement under the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Legislation. My lived experiences as an educator in the SLPS district, my transition to other urban districts, and my eyewitness accounts have prompted me to tell my story in retrospection using autoethnography to provide insight that may be of benefit to other educational leaders in urban education and beyond.\(^3\) Autoethnography details a style of autobiographical writing that employs narratives to explore an individual’s lived experiences.\(^4\) Autoethnography is a “highly personalized account that draws upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding”.\(^5\)

My journey to transformational leadership began with my mother as a child growing up watching her struggle in the early 1950’s. My mother was the twelfth child of thirteen siblings, growing up on a farm in a small racially polarized community in southeast Missouri. She had to leave home after eighth grade, travel to St. Louis, Missouri to live with an older sister. My mother could not attend the local high school as it only educated white students. She chose to attend St. Joseph’s catholic high school, as her family embraced Catholicism and an older brother attended the school as well. The school stood on the corner of Page and Whittier at the time and she graduated with her diploma in 1945. My mother started her family in 1947 which interfered with her aspirations of becoming a nurse as she now had to provide food, clothing and shelter for

\(^4\) Carolyn Ellis, "Heartful Autoethnography,” \textit{Qualitative Health Research} 9, no. 5 (1999): 669-683.  
her children on her own. She worked a number of jobs that included Glaser’s drugstore located in the area of Big Bend and Forest Park and the Coronado Hotel located on Lindell and Spring. My mother eventually settled into working for wealthy white families cleaning their homes, cooking their meals and raising their children. During this era, this kind of work became known as ‘day work’. Because my mother had been denied access to a free and unfettered education as promised by the constitution of Missouri, she continuously engrained in our young minds that failure to get a good education would not be an option in her home.

While she worked very long hours for very little pay, she trusted me to be ‘in charge’ during her absence. My mother had already established the ‘blueprint’ for me to follow. My watchful eyes followed how she demonstrated the vision and capacity to transform a two room apartment with a shared bathroom with another family which lived in the two room apartment on the east side of the bathroom, into a cozy, warm, structured, ordered inviting home for her family. Our most treasured possessions were the many books that she brought home from her employers. She loved reading all manner of books, newspapers, magazines and passed that love of reading on to us with an updated version of the importance of getting an education that included a new caveat, her fervent comment: without an education you may as well put a gun to your head and pull the trigger. I did not understand at the time but I would come to completely understand the full measure of her statement.

As the books became central in our make-believe world, I pretended to be the teacher and my siblings, the students. I knew that I aspired to be a teacher. I continued to watch my mother’s approach of meeting the challenges of life with steadfastness in the
face of adversity, perseverance, a vision of the possibilities, personal commitment, unconditional love, a quiet calm under pressure, and the uncanny ability to make a way out of no way. I have come to understand through hindsight that she helped me to craft my early leadership skills, critical thinking, ability to manage people (my siblings), the intestinal fortitude to be unwilling to compromise my conviction and character. Years later I came to know that my mother had exposed me to transformational leadership which embodies trust in others, awareness of others’ emotions, and the value of the power of hope against seemingly unattainable goals and aspirations. Her beliefs, lived experiences, and expectations framed the person, friend, student, teacher, wife, mother, life-long learner, and transformational leader I would become in my personal and professional life. The most enduring character trait that she shared with me above all else simply put: your words and actions must demonstrate truth – in other words do what you say you are going to do. It is my lived experiences as a transformational educator in SLPS, Wellston, Normandy, and Ethel Hedgeman Lyle Charter Academy along with my eyewitness accounts that have prompted me to tell my stories in retrospection using autoethnography to provide insight that may be of benefit to other educational leaders in urban education and beyond.

St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS)

I started my career as a classroom teacher at a non-integrated K-8 elementary school on the west side of the largest public school district in St. Louis, Missouri, in the early 1970s. This once thriving community had become a crime-infested, gang-filled, illegal drug trafficked area riddled with vacant residences/businesses described by law enforcement as having the highest crime rate in the city. The high rates of crimes
coupled with generational poverty adversely impacted many of the families of students attending the school, which became my first-year teaching assignment.

The ensuing assignments included a short teaching experience at Mullanphy Elementary as a displaced teacher assigned to establish the Title I reading classroom. This job opportunity informed my decision to seek a reading certification (Kg – 12) by returning to Harris Teachers College, which had transitioned to Harris Stowe State College. I then transferred from Mullanphy to Williams Middle School as a writing enrichment teacher for the next eight years. I designed and implemented a writing curriculum in the absence of an established/written curriculum provided by the school district. It mattered to me to be able to provide a high quality instructional program, driven by hands-on engagement for my students. This experience prompted my return to Harris Stowe State College, for additional training in creative writing.

In three years’ time, I returned to Williams Middle School as the instructional coordinator. Then, the school district’s area superintendent selected and assigned me to the historic Harrison Elementary School as building principal (my first Principalship). In the middle of my second year at Harrison Elementary, January 1993, I was reassigned to my former middle school, Williams, as the principal. In that same meeting the area superintendent approached me regarding serving as the school district’s principals’ representative at the Superintendent’s cabinet meetings. Considered an honor, I agreed. My journey to the Assistant Superintendent position at the central office continued to grow this time out of my transformational work as a building principal/lead learner at Pierre Laclede Elementary School. My recruitment to the central office position of Executive Director for middle school education seemed a natural fit as I spent a great
portion of my career working with that age group with demonstrated success. I sequentially moved from the position of Executive Director of Middle Schools to the Assistant Superintendent of Priority Schools (low performing) and ended my career at SLPS as the Assistant Superintendent of Professional Development. I brought my transformational skill, personal humility, and professional will to each location, position, and every challenge that I faced in the SLPS district which ultimately benefited staff with whom I interacted and student academic achievement.

**Wellston School District/State Appointed Board (SAB)**

The Superintendent/State Appointed Board (SAB) member recruited me to serve in the capacity of Assistant Superintendent/Chief Academic/Chief Operating Officer for the newly constituted Wellston School District. This school district had been unaccredited for years and finally declared failed by DESE. Upon receiving this recruitment phone call, I had only just retired from the St. Louis Public Schools district a week earlier. The SAB did not provide a process or a blueprint to follow to reopen a failed public school district. I relied on previous leadership experiences in the St. Louis Public Schools District that allowed me to formulate a guiding document, ‘Blueprint for Success’. I utilized this document to direct all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers/staff, and the broader community) in their roles to reestablish the newly-formed Wellston School District. The SAB determined the first day of school to be six weeks from my start date.

The next steps to be taken to accomplish the goal of opening the seven schools in the district included but not limited to hiring competent staff in key positions that would earn points on the Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP), establishing attendance
goals for the elementary, middle, and secondary schools, insuring every building principal was certificated, establishing AP courses at the high school, ordering books and supplies, rewriting the Title 1 application to ensure additional monies to purchase necessary resources, and establishing teams of teachers to begin the work of curriculum development, engaging the broader community along with the school district to begin the work on the Wellston School District strategic plan. Several challenges had to be met head on. One centered on the high school, where students historically left the building, rode the metro link downtown, and ate lunch and returned to school for dismissal.

Another challenge involved the ‘paid professional’ (teachers, staff, and building principals). The tone of the initial professional development meeting prior to school opening dealt specifically with professional responsibilities and accountability, on-task instruction and the learning process, and the impact of student attendance in all classes as a mechanism essential to meeting the accreditation requirements. A difference in philosophy with the superintendent provided enough information for me to make an informed decision to submit my letter of resignation after the opening of school in October, 2006. Three years later, the Wellston School District failed again, this occasion, under state supervision. Once again, I brought my transformational skill, personal humility, and professional will to the first State of Missouri (DESE) public school district takeover.

Normandy School District/Provisionally Accredited

Shortly after I submitted my letter of resignation to the Wellston School District (WSD), the human resource office of the Normandy School District (NSD) contacted me. The director of the office scheduled a meeting for me with the superintendent. The
superintendent explained that she had followed a career in St. Louis Public Schools shortly after she assumed the duties of superintendent of the Normandy School District. She reminded me that we met briefly at a meeting at the Saint Louis Science Center regarding curriculum design. By then I was serving in the Wellston School District. We met again at an awards banquet where one of the principals in the NSD received an award. The NSD superintendent indicated that she noticed that I did not attend a meeting with the WSD superintendent as customary and wondered if I would agree to join the NSD as an Effective Instructional Coordinator (EIC). I agreed to join the NSD.

Upon my arrival to the district I assumed the role of coordinating MAP strategies across the district. A job description did not exist and so the day-to-day schedule followed a day-to-day format. The curriculum office provided the district-wide professional development and training. Every professional development session was held at the high school and determined without input from the district principals, teachers and support staff. At one of these professional development sessions I designed a MAP presentation for the staff titled MAP: 39 days and counting. Immediately following the training session the news media asked the superintendent to discuss next steps regarding additional MAP preparation. This interview earmarked one of the few times the media seemed interested in the NSD. The superintendent insisted that I go to every school and reiterate those strategies.

The Board of Education in the NSD had been slow in deciding whether or not to extend the contract of the superintendent so she applied to an out-of-state district and received the position of superintendent of schools. The superintendent called all of the central office staff together to share that she would be leaving and if they had any
questions concerning the district, I would be a good resource. She also insisted that I apply for the vacant superintendent position and shared that I displayed a great deal of humility for a person who received a great deal of notoriety for increasing student achievement that met and exceeded local and state benchmarks.

I appreciated the out-going superintendent’s recognition of my transformational leadership. Her words provided the encouragement that I needed to remain with the NSD upon her departure. I applied for the Director of Curriculum, interviewed, and received the promotion. This position allowed me to bring my transformational skill set, personal humility, and professional will to an important cornerstone of the district responsible for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

*Ethel Hedgeman Lyle Academy Charter School*

The Ethel Hedgeman Lyle Academy (EHLA) Charter School, one of the oldest charter schools established in St. Louis, Missouri in 2000, sponsored initially by Harris-Stowe State University, decided to dissolve its relationship with Imagine Schools, Inc. a Virginia-based for profit charter school Management Company at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The dissolution of their partnership allowed the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority to establish themselves as the Legal Education Authority (LEA). Missouri Baptist University assumed the sponsorship of the charter school and provided minimal assistance to the school in the form of a liaison person who received compensation from the funds allocated to the charter.

The EHLA Board of Directors moved to secure a location for the middle and high school students to relocate them from the Imagine School location. The EHLA Board settled on a building that needed renovation in order to accommodate students. The
EHLA Board of Directors initiated a search for a school superintendent. I applied for the position, however, they elected to retain a retired Superintendent to provide the leadership for the academy. The Superintendent placed a series of recruitment calls to convince me to serve as the Associate Superintendent. Again, as in the WSD, I accepted the position and brought my transformational skill set, personal humility, and professional will to the challenge of restoring EHLA.

Purpose Summary

This dissertation detailed my lived experiences in urban education as a way to teach, inform, validate, challenge, and sensitize the reader and educational practitioners who aspire to lead in an urban environment.

Purpose

I have come to realize that my lived experiences as a transformational leader can have a positive impact on current educational practitioners who also aspire to become educational leaders in an urban environment and beyond. I have remained engaged in all aspects of educational leadership (i.e. coach, mentor, educational grant writer, and consultant) in an effort to remain current with educational literature and trends. I have transitioned from being a building-level practitioner, principal, and senior level administrator into a doctoral student. William Bridges gave real meaning to transitioning from one job to another, and from one career to another: My transitions proved to be internal, personal, and private with psychological implications.6 This transition has been characterized as The Third Chapter of my life’s journey, and autoethnography will serve

6 William Bridges, Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1991)
as the vehicle to engage the reader around my lived experiences. The renowned sociologist Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot declared: “We must develop a compelling vision of later life, one that does not assume a trajectory of decline but recognizes this as a time of potential change, growth, and new learning, a time when our courage gives us hope.”[^7] I have identified my purpose for this research project with Erik Erikson’s theory of generativity which speaks to the impulse within individuals, like myself, to nurture and guide the next generation of educational leaders charged with increasing student academic achievement in the urban schools and beyond. For me, my purpose accomplishes ‘giving back’, ‘giving forward’, and ‘leaving a legacy’.[^8]

I bring a personal perspective to this research study as an ‘insider’. During my service as an educational coach, mentor, and interviewer of aspiring principals, I witnessed a paradigm shift of current public school leaders’ view versus a veteran public school leader’s views on leadership that impacts student academic achievement. The current leaders lacked the ability to listen and receive historical information/experiences relative to effective practical educational leadership. These interactions with youthful administrators armed me with the energy and purpose to understand that my work is incomplete. I am now challenged to share a wealth of educational knowledge and lived experiences that has proven to positively impact student academic achievement in urban public schools. The past has the ability to illuminate the future.

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Definition of Terms

*Autoethnography* – “highly personalized account that draws upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding”.

*Instructional Coordinator* – building-level administrator responsible for the coordination of the instructional program

*Missouri Assessment Program (MAP)* – the assessment instrument used by the state of Missouri to gauge student academic achievement

*Participant Observation* – the researcher is active in the scene.

*Thick Description* – explaining cultures and events using many details, commentary, conceptual structures, and interpretive meanings.

*Transformational Leadership* – is a style of leadership whereby the leader conceives a vision and uses it to inspire their subordinates to work beyond themselves for the best interest of the organization.

*Verisimilitude* – the writing is clear, engaging and full of expected ideas.

Significance of the Study

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Personal narratives regarding lived experiences are therapeutic and assists the researcher’s understanding of their unique story. These stories project storylines that grab the readers’ attention and disclose our social selves. My story is relevant to all persons who strive to lead in the educational environment. It uses story to outline leadership and management style, organization and structure, along with strategies utilized to raise student achievement.

Literature Review

This autoethnographic study will share my cultural experience as a transformational leader in urban education. Public education in large urban areas populated by poor minority students of color within the inner-city and inner-ring suburban districts has come to be known as urban education. Minority Black and brown children comprise 90% of the student body in these urban educational centers. This high ratio of minority students’ challenges public education to be different and demands massive changes in curriculum, instructional program, and teacher commitment. Children in urban education bring many issues to school with them as opposed to their white counterparts. They are plagued by poor health, inadequate motivation, malnutrition, and lack of basic learning skills. In any effort to address the inherent

issues/problems encountered in the urban educational environment, educational leaders must account for factors different from those outside of the urban educational setting. Higher standards and testing strategies implemented by the researcher demonstrated that schools serving highly challenged, high-poverty student enrollments, the kind of school for which the researcher provided leadership, and commonly labeled failed, succeeded in an urban environment. This success in an urban environment, led by the vision of a transformational leader, supported by data-driven decisions, and implementation of newly-framed expectations precipitated the need for organizational change.

Organizational change is a set of testable ideas and practices about how social institutions and school systems can produce individual satisfaction and sustainable organizational results guided by an integrated theory of practice aimed at increasing the effectiveness of organizations. Organizational change is a process of radically altering the organization’s strategic direction, including fundamental changes in structures, processes, and behaviors resulting from transformational leadership. A significant body of research has indicated that public school leaders can make change happen in their organizations. Researchers have determined that the implementation of planned change generally required that transformational leaders verify the need for change and persuade other members of the organization and important external stakeholders that the change is

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Researchers noted how public school leaders’ attempt to take advantage of mandates, political windows of opportunity, student data and external influences to verify and communicate the need for change. As a transformational leader, the researcher has created and lived through organizational change pursuant to the vision of all students achieving at high levels.

The St. Louis Public Schools district, a more diverse community of learners prior to the 1970s, transitioned to an urban educational school district. The school district began a gradual academic decline, loss of White student enrollment, and residential racial segregation continued containing Black students in their neighborhood schools resulting in overcrowding. This situation continued unchecked for years until the state of Missouri downgraded its accreditation status to provisional. A significant decrease in student enrollment, Black and White, school building surplus, and a looming budget deficit led the “St. Louis Board of Education to award a $5 million, 13-month contract to a private ‘turnaround’ company, Alvarez & Marsal, to run its urban school district (81% Black student enrollment).” Under this arrangement, William Roberti a nontraditional candidate and former executive with the Brooks Brothers clothing chain, became the

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interim superintendent.22 Sadly, accountability in the urban setting means simply coercion, control, and budget-slashing.23 The St. Louis Public School district, an urban public school district which encompasses the city of St. Louis only, became the first urban school district in the country involved in a nontraditional turnaround initiative led by a nontraditional superintendent supported by the mayor and the business community.24

The nontraditional superintendent also supported charter schools.

In the 1980s, Ray Budde introduced the concept of charter schools. Former president of the American Federation of Teachers, Albert Shanker, supported the charter school concept as a means of increasing choice options for parents. Charter schools can be perceived as private and or public institutions. Advocates of charter schools possess two unique viewpoints. One group portends that charter schools pave the way to a full voucher system of public education. Other supporters espouse that charters challenge public schools to reform to prevent a possible transition to a voucher system.25

In his book Managing Transitions, William Bridges (1991) distinguished between ‘change’ which he described as external, contextual, and public, and ‘transitions’, which are internal, private, and psychological. Change for individuals is easy as they simply make a shift in the environment—the new boss—the new policy—the new project—

22 “St. Louis Public Schools Board Hires Turnaround Company,” STLtoday.com, June 03, 2003.
whereas transitions, for individuals, are more emotionally demanding.  

My transition from career educator, to Grammy, to doctoral student is Erik Erickson’s description of adult development as an opportunity for growth rather than a loss of capacity. It is his penultimate stage of generativity that is most relevant to the learning and growth of people like me, the researcher, as I move into my ‘Third Chapter’. By generativity, Erik Erickson referred to the impulse within individuals to nurture and guide the next generation. 

The researcher’s goal as a career educator is to utilize the cumulative resources; educative skills, access to human capital networks, and effective leadership experiences for the benefit of the next generation of educators and the broader community.

The researcher will use the theoretical framework of transformational leadership and its impact on organizational change to provide the reader with specific details of transformational leadership that is essential in promoting and sustaining student academic achievement in urban education. Transformational leaders learn to balance change efforts while maintaining established school traditions. This autoethnography will encompass what thirty years of research tells us about the effect of transformational leadership on student achievement.

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Autoethnography

This approach challenges the traditional ways of doing research that is impacted by social constructs and politics.\(^{29}\) Autoethnography chronicles the personal experiences of an individual that is directly connected to the research process and uses two styles of writing, autobiographical and ethnographic. Ethnography is an intellectual elaborate venture of thick description.\(^{30}\) An “ethnographic autobiography is defined as a life story used in ways that implicate a sociocultural rather than a psychological interpretation.”\(^{31}\) Autoethnography captures the attention of the reader and causes them to think about their own personal conditions and interactions with others.\(^{32}\) I will share my personal experiences using autoethnography to identify relevant observations about my participation in the scene being discussed.\(^{33}\)

My study will invest in showing the reader encounters full of rich details. In retelling my story of lived experiences the reader is drawn into the story as a distant observer. The reader can therefore appreciate and understand my story as a potential eyewitness.\(^{34}\)


\(^{33}\) Darrell N. Caulley “Making Qualitative Research Reports Less Boring: The Techniques of Writing Creative Nonfiction,” Qualitative Inquiry, 14 (2008), 424-449

Ethnographies are a thick description of a culture. Autoethnographic narratives are personal stories about the author’s academic and personal life.

Personal narratives propose to understand a self or some aspect of a life as it intersects with a cultural context, connect to other participants as co-researchers, and invite readers to enter the author's world and to use what they learn there to reflect on, understand, and cope with their own lives.

Personal narratives have been found to be controversial research because autoethnography allows only for the perspective of the researcher.

In autoethnography, the researcher often changes names and places to achieve anonymity. For this study, as an autoethnographer, assuming the role of an autobiographer, the researcher has chosen to identify people, time frames, and places. Autobiographers share remembered moments that have significant impact on the course of an individual’s life. Arthur P. Bochner and Carolyn Ellis defined these moments as “epiphanies”.

Epiphanies may be identified as a transformative experience by some

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35 Bud H. L. Goodall, *Writing the New Ethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira, 2001).
36 Keith Berry, “Embracing the Catastrophe: Gay Body Seeks Acceptance,” *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13 (2007), 259-281; Bud H. L. Goodall, *A Need to Know: The clandestine history of a CIA family*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2006; Poulos, *Accidental Ethnography*
37 Ellis, *The Ethnographic I*, 46.
while others think of them as recollections, images, and feelings. As the researcher, I will produce a thick description of my lived experiences as a transformational leader. Thick description creates a vision of the story for the reader through repetition of feelings, incidents, and results. During times of existential crisis, individuals are forced to analyze and focus on their lived experiences. Reflections on my lived experiences, from the classroom to central office, have prompted me to share successful strategies that can be replicated, duplicated, and initiated in a way to help more students succeed academically in a world not designed for their success. It is this reflection that gave rise to this study.

An important concept in qualitative research is ‘thick description.’ The use of thick description is to thickly describe social action; to begin to interpret it by recording ‘lived experiences’. This interpretive characteristic of description makes details thick. Ethnography is an intellectual elaborate venture of thick description. It presents detail, emotion, and a web of social and professional relationships that join individuals to activities and professional outcomes. Thick description illuminates experiences and provides intimate details for person or persons connected with the historical experience.

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43 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Goodall, *Writing the New Ethnography*
48 Denzin, *Interpretive Biography*
This technique is essential, instrumental, and systematically used to convey to the reader the impact of my professional career on changing the trajectory of the urban educational organizations in which I had the privilege to lead.

*Transformational Leadership*

As the practitioner, I understood the importance of balancing my personal development and having the presence of mind to develop those with whom I served. This foresight sets the stage of inclusion where all stakeholders understood their responsibility for raising student academic achievement that ultimately benefited students. According to James M. Burns and Bernard M. Bass, transformational leaders identify a vision, convince followers to embrace the vision, and implement agreed upon strategies in the best interest of the organization. As the oldest sibling in the home, my mother relied on me for a small measure of support. She called me an ‘old soul’ as I paid attention and could look at my mom and determined she needed my support. I learned early to incorporate problem-solving strategies as a means of getting stuff done and because the family’s mere survival depended on the ability to simultaneously think and act under pressure. As a transformational leader, understanding my role, I chose to serve as coach and teacher for district leaders and staff members. That model evidenced itself throughout my professional career. It was incumbent upon me as the transformational leader in charge of engaging reluctant staff to participate in moving the school forward; I

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would use coaching and modeling strategies to inspire them, build their self-confidence, and instill an ‘I can do’ attitude. This process facilitated their execution of the assigned task. My staff and I received the reward of success during and upon completion of the task. Initial anxiety, reluctance, and fear transformed to excitement on a job well done. As the transformational leader in four urban educational organizations, I possessed the ability to facilitate professional educators to embrace the concept of educating at-risk students to high levels of academic achievement. Every educator possesses the ‘value-added’ capacity. I challenged the staff(s) to internalize valued outcomes and motivated them to establish collaborative teams negating thoughts rooted primarily in self-interest. Research has shown that women adopt democratic and participative leadership styles in education. In the context of transformational leadership, my leadership style encompassed these attributes; interpersonal-oriented, charismatic, democratic, sensitive, warm, tactful and expressive as outlined in studies regarding women in leadership positions.

Methodology

Research Design

I selected autoethnography as the research design, because it allowed me to use narratives to tell my story and convey my personal and professional experience as a transformational leader from the classroom to central office. As a method,
autoethnography combines characteristics of autobiography and ethnography. When writing an autobiography, an author selectively writes about past experiences. These experiences are assembled using hindsight. Ethnography is the kind of intellectual effort known to use ‘thick description’ while pursuing the systematic routines of data collection that lead to examples of shaped behaviors. As the autoethnographer and the researcher in this study, I will transport the reader via thick descriptions of past events into the actual moment of ‘happening’. Norman K. Denzin defined autoethnography as a methodological innovation characterized as recent ‘moments’ of qualitative inquiry.

**Autoethnography**

The purpose of this autoethnographic study is to provide thick descriptions of my lived experiences as a transformational leader, in a manner to engage the reader using the concept of verisimilitude, and allow the readers to reflect on their own professional educational careers and their personal impact on effecting student academic achievement. I will utilize a form of narrative inquiry, autoethnography, as the analytical tool to explicate the research in this study.

I will present a history of a self-related autoethnographic study that is directly driven by retrospection. As the researcher, I represent what Robert Merton termed “the ultimate participant in a dual participant-observer role.” I propose to include as a main feature

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56 Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*

57 Denzin, *Interpretive Biography*

complete member researcher (CMR) status, accompanied by analytical reflexivity and the narrative visibility of the researcher’s self. The researcher in this autoethnography uses reflexivity. Reflexivity is the use of introspection that allows the researcher to understand self as well as others’ role in the story. According to Paul A. Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, and Sara Delamont, as an autoethnographer/author, I presented myself as an integral part of the story I am telling.

Thick Description

Clifford Geertz argued that thick description is a process of writing to explain events, commentary, and interactions that have occurred in a natural setting using many details. The use of thick description will help determine the relationships developed between the researcher’s lived experiences, identified participants, and the readers. I will use my unique voice to develop an emotional connection that invites the reader to hear my story in a way that I choose to share.

Qualitative

The autoethnography is a form of qualitative research design that is descriptive, contextual, and allows each reader to gain insight into the historical context of my professional career as a transformational leader. According to Pamela J. Brink and

61 Paul A. Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, and Sara Delamont, *Key Themes in Qualitative Research: Continuities and Change* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2003).
62 Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*
Marilyn J. Wood, a qualitative study aims to understand the reasons behind a particular phenomenon constructed between participants and their lived experiences.\(^{65}\) The researcher’s recall of lived experiences forms the foundation of this autoethnographic study.\(^{66}\)

**Data Collection**

The recall of my personal story will comprise the major part of my data collection. The researcher’s lived experiences are authentic and can be verified using artifacts such as newspaper accounts, magazines, work-related emails, and congratulatory letters/personal emails.\(^ {67}\) This study will be conveyed to the reader, peers, and broader audience through the researcher’s reflective writing.\(^ {68}\)

Autoethnography places value on the researcher’s personal and professional experiences. The researcher’s experiences represent the core story. My retrospective account will include a collection of artifacts to support my professional lived experience.\(^ {69}\) The initial source of data will come from the researcher’s memory, an acceptable source in autoethnographic work.\(^ {70}\)

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\(^{68}\) Margot Duncan, “Principles of Hypermedia Design: An Autoethnographic Case Study” (Ph.D. diss., Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, 2000).


Data Analysis

I will use data analysis, an inductive process, to derive meaning from collected data in this study.\textsuperscript{71} Data analysis can be conducted at the same time that data is being collected. The data analysis will focus on the people, events, and cultural interactions within my lived experiences and detailed using thick descriptions.\textsuperscript{72} From a thorough reading and re-reading of the narrative, the emergence of recurring ideas, events, circumstances, and settings will be individually identified, catalogued, and coded into distinct categories/themes.\textsuperscript{73}

Research findings are not meaningful or consequential unless it can be used to assist others. “The process of research is incomplete until the researcher can communicate his or her understandings clearly, persuasively, and effectively.”\textsuperscript{74} The goal of my research is to reach, inspire, and inform an audience of aspiring and current school leaders of the impact of transformational leadership in urban education.

Chapter 2

St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS)

Pierre Laclede Elementary as Beginning Teacher

In the 1971-1972 school year, I started my career as a classroom teacher at Pierre Laclede, a non-integrated K-8 elementary school on the west side of the largest public


\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{74} Lee S. Schulman, \textit{The Wisdom of Practice: Essays on Teaching, Learning and Learning to Teach} (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 6.
school district. This once thriving community had become a crime-infested, gang-filled, illegal drug trafficked area riddled with vacant residences/businesses described by law enforcement as having the highest crime rate in the city. The high rates of crimes coupled with generational poverty adversely influenced many of the families of students attending the school, which became my first-year teaching assignment in the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) district. The SLPS district encompasses the city of St. Louis only.

My first class of sixth-grade students (32 students) filled the small classroom. I taught all subjects along with art, music, and physical education. One of my most striking remembrances is the style of leadership practiced by the building principal. As a novice teacher, not knowing the technical term, I can only say that she was a screamer. My classroom on the second floor of the building did not mute her booming voice. She ruled the school with an ironclad fist and did not allow the teaching staff to engage one another. The second floor teachers remained isolated from the first floor teachers. Teachers acquiesced to the inability to mingle. The school climate alienated staff, their voices muted out of fear of the leadership, which eliminated collaboration beyond the assigned floor. I later learned that this style of leadership is referred to as command leadership.  

My area assistant superintendent routinely made site visits and offered suggestions and recommendations to the two first-year teachers in the building, which included myself, and a female white teacher. He later shared that the real purpose for his

75 Blanken, “8 Leadership Styles,”
visits focused on determining why student behavior in my classroom differed greatly from my white colleague’s students’ classroom behavior. His experience in my classroom varied from his observation of my first year colleague, who struggled with discipline and classroom management. In the absence of discipline and classroom management, instruction lagged and time-on-task appeared non-existent in my colleagues’ classroom. My relationship with my students grew and continued to blossom with this first year assignment.

The personality and cultural background of the teacher has long been considered a critical factor in the urban classroom. 76 Teachers are cultural beings with their own beliefs, biases and assumptions regarding children of color. White teachers who decide to work with urban youth must articulate and examine the values implicit in the western, white middle class orientation of schools. My white colleague struggled due to her inability to display cultural responsiveness and acquire cultural content knowledge. 77

My relationship/connection with my students, a product of cultural connectedness, evolved naturally and with little effort. I came to my teaching assignment armed with a complete understanding and experience of being culturally responsive to urban youth. My cultural content knowledge learned growing up in an urban environment of home, school, and neighborhood eliminated any hint of fear, intimidation, and lack of understanding of the students’ daily challenges before reaching school. My mechanism for classroom management and discipline focused on maintaining a calm

voice, verbal and non-verbal communication, and zone of proximity without interrupting classroom instruction. The area superintendent recognized/noted during several site visitations my ability to organize, manage, and remain connected to students during classroom instruction. From that point, the assistant superintendent used me to model for my counterparts who struggled in his jurisdiction for what a first-year teacher could accomplish. Consequently, my classroom became an instructional laboratory for struggling first-year teachers. He inspired me to look beyond myself and work on behalf of others, which is one of the characteristics of transformational leadership.\textsuperscript{78}

My tenure at Pierre Laclede included moving from my initial sixth-grade classroom responsible for all subjects to an eighth grade cluster comprised of four teachers. At a grade-level team meeting, I suggested a plan that allowed each team member to become responsible for a specific content area. The content areas consisted of reading, math, science, and social studies. The grade-level team and the school leadership accepted the plan and I chose to teach reading. My embrace of transformational leadership grew out of this experience with my eighth-grade level teammates. I had created a vision, identified the need for change, and guided the change through inspiration, which are attributes of transformational leadership.\textsuperscript{79}

It became apparent that I needed to connect what my students learned in the classroom to the world of work, career possibilities, and future employment. That vision prompted me to connect my students with the broader community by inviting accomplished career-minded role models to share how school/education prepared them

\textsuperscript{78} Burns, Leadership
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.,
for their careers. The possibility of bridging students to accomplished professionals became the forerunner to the establishment of valuable community partnerships. The desire to connect the elementary school (K-8) to the broader community led to my association/recognition as the ‘Citizen of the Month’ presented by the local up-and-coming media personality Bernie Hayes. That friendship/association continues to this day.\textsuperscript{80} During this period, the SLPS district is embroiled in controversy relating to desegregation of the public school district.

In response to charges of intentional resegregation of the SLPS district in 1963, Board President Daniel L. Schlafly established a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to investigate and render a resolution regarding the charges of intentional resegregation of the district’s schools. The CAC recommended to the Board the integration of the teaching staff. Superintendent Phillip J. Hickey resisted the recommendation and recommended to the Board that the Board support his position, thereby allowing only voluntary transfers of teachers, rather than enforced transfers to achieve integration of the district’s teaching staff. The Board voted to support Hickey’s plan.\textsuperscript{81}

In 1974, a unique opportunity presented itself at a district-wide workshop. I took advantage of a collaboration between the SLPS district had with Northeast Missouri State University located in Kirksville, Missouri (now Truman State University). Selected SLPS district teachers could take masters level courses offered at a local St. Louis


metropolitan area location (St. Charles High School in St. Charles, Missouri) with the stipulation that six of the 30-hours requirement be taken on the campus in Kirksville, Missouri. The SLPS district supported/paid for the professional development opportunity to train future teacher/building leaders. I selected educational leadership as my focus. I earned my master’s degree in educational administration along with principal certification (k-8) in 1975.

The SLPS district continued to be plagued with the issue of segregation. With that issue as the backdrop, Minnie Liddell filed a lawsuit against the SLPS district for fair and equal education for Black students. The district elected to move teachers of color in an effort to balance the staff which in laymen’s’ terms means moving Black teachers from the non-integrated schools on the north side of the district to integrated schools on the south side of the district. As the school year ended in 1978, I learned as the teacher with the lowest seniority on the staff roster, that an involuntary transfer meant a relocation to integrate the school teaching staff on the south side of the district, a consequence of the ongoing litigation started by Minnie Liddell. The Board’s plan to integrate the teaching staff called staff balancing. I received my first reassignment from Pierre Laclede on the north to Mullanphy Elementary on the south side of the district.

*Mullanphy Elementary School as Teacher*

As summer 1978 passed, I began to experience anxiety building in anticipation of my new teaching position. Consequently, I reported early to Mullanphy to meet the building principal and get my room assignment. In his absence, the school secretary informed me of my classroom number and grade level (fifth grade). The principal had not been available for my early arrival. Several days later quite by accident, I
unknowingly met the principal. I stopped a gray-haired man, dressed in overalls, bandana tied around his neck, and smoking a pipe, that I mistakenly believed to be the building custodian to inquire about cleaning supplies, books, and other fifth grade materials. This man responded efficiently to my requests and returned to my classroom with the requested items that I used to begin assembling my classroom. At the close of the day, the school secretary informed me of my 9:00 am meeting the following morning with the principal. At last, I would meet the building principal.

Upon coming face-to-face with the principal, Acme Price, I could only gasp in sheer surprise that I had mistakenly believed this man to be the custodian. As we exchanged greetings, I shared my teaching experiences while he shared his expectations for me as a fifth grade teacher. I also learned in this meeting that he had retired from the military in a position where he honed his command leadership style. My first year under his tutelage taught me how to engage the staff in planning, encourage their ideas, participation, and create a positive learning environment for students. What I most admired about this principal: his position regarding any ideas or suggestions – is it good for children? The school year ended and I reflected on the most valuable lesson of all; the impact of leadership on teaching and learning. He practiced a different kind of leadership that encompassed several styles: at times, he displayed command, contingency and adaptive leadership styles. I had learned the theoretical framework of leadership in my master’s program. However, working with Mr. Price allowed me to see the practical application of effective leadership.

This experience changed my life in two significant ways: first, it strengthened my belief in the power of focused and consistent leadership. While the racial makeup of the Mullanphy staff, Blacks and white females became diverse, the principal, a man of color, did not scream. The second life-altering experience came when I began to work with white students unaccustomed to teachers of color. SLPS district policy allowed students to travel home for lunch. One white student, a male, complained to his parents regarding my level of classroom structure and accountability. The parents phoned the school principal and challenged the school principal to reprimand me regarding my interaction with their child. The complaint may have bothered me had not my mother instilled in me as a child that truth needs no defense. The parent, the child, and I resolved our cultural differences and he learned along with the other students that all people are the same and come in different shades.

I recognized during this teaching assignment under the mentorship of Acme Price that my purpose in education hinged on my ability to inspire others. This opportunity strengthened my belief in the power of a focused vision, consistency, and the ability to guide others. I would later learn that this type of leadership represented transformational leadership.83

The 1978-1979 school year ended uneventfully. The summer melted into August and it was time to return to work. In July, I discovered my pregnancy and wondered how pregnancy might affect my new grade level/classroom assignment: as the eighth grade-reading teacher. Mr. Price, however, congratulated me and insisted that all would be well. My position as the reading teacher, over the course of the school year interacting

83 Burns, Leadership
with my students, informed my decision to seek a reading certification (Kg – 12) by returning to Harris Teachers College, which had transitioned to Harris Stowe State College.

A challenge inherent in pregnancy surfaced. While I managed to arrive at the school each morning on time, on many occasions, I excused myself from the classroom to attend to morning sickness. During those occasions, my students embraced my condition, remained attentive to their assignments, and practiced self-discipline. My colleagues also rallied around my classroom absences and kept a watchful eye over the entire situation ensuring the safety of students. In addition, my students performed random acts of kindness such as carrying my book bag to the car and bringing in homemade lunch for my enjoyment each day. The care exhibited my students caused me to approach Mr. Price to request input regarding my replacement. I approached the principal to inquire about my replacement so as I could be an integral part of the transition. Mr. Price agreed to allow me to share/train my replacement on differentiated reading instructions utilized in my classroom. This interaction afforded me the comfortability that my replacement would provide continuity of instruction.84 Two weeks into my maternity leave, my only child, Olivia, entered the world. I remained on

84 For continuity of instruction see Patrick M. Shields, Daniel C. Humphrey, Marjorie E. Wechsler, L. M. Riel, Juliet Tiffany-Morales, Katrina Woodworth, V. M. Young, and Tiffany Price, The status of the teaching profession 2001 (Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, 2001) – an interruption in the consistent daily teaching routine negatively impacts the continuity of instruction; for differentiated instruction see Carol A. Tomlinson, “Differentiated instruction in the regular classroom: What does it mean? How does it look?” Understanding Our Gifted, 14 no.1 (2001), 3-6; differentiated instruction – strategies that, when implemented effectively, result in challenging and supporting all students within the regular, mixed-ability, heterogeneous classroom.
maternity leave through the end of the school year, and prompted by my job-related experiences in reading, I earned reading certification (kg-12) prior to returning.

I returned to Mullanphy for the start of the 1980-1981 school year. Upon my arrival, I learned that the district had reassigned my mentor, Mr. Price, to Williams Middle School as the principal. I lost my position as the eighth grade-reading teacher, leaving me without teaching duties. I reported to work every day, sat on the bench outside the principal’s office, where I remained for the entire school day. The newly appointed principal showed no interest or concern. This inactivity/lack of teaching assignment went on consistently for several weeks. I finally approached the principal and suggested that I could prepare the reading lab for students and serve as the teacher until the assigned reading teacher reported. The principal agreed and allowed me to proceed upon my recommendation. Of course, my recommendation grew out of my personal love of reading, my experience as the eighth grade-reading teacher, but most importantly my frustration with the laissez faire leadership style of the building principal.\textsuperscript{85}

\textit{Williams Middle School as Writing Enrichment Teacher}

I struggled with the fact that as a certificated teacher with experience, I had to insist that the principal deploy me within the school as a teacher. While I had prepared the reading room to receive students, I actually never had the opportunity to engage with them. I had subsequently received a placement notice from the SLPS human resources department. I could select a position for a newly created enrichment lab program. The focus of the lab could be writing, math, or science in one of three non-integrated schools.

\textsuperscript{85} Bass, \textit{Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations} – laissez faire leadership supervisors take a hands-off approach that essentially avoids leadership duties unless it is absolutely necessary.
This initiative provided additional services and funding for those schools that remained very non-integrated. The only school that seemed familiar to me happened to be Williams Middle where my former principal, Acme Price, had been transferred. I chose to teach writing enrichment at Williams Middle School. The decision to join Mr. Price’s staff came easily as I admired his respect for an inclusion of staff in decisions, his advocacy for children, and the fact that I had learned so much under his tutelage.

At Williams Middle School in my new position, I designed and implemented a writing curriculum in the absence of an established/written curriculum provided by the school district. It mattered to me to be able to provide a high quality instructional program, driven by hands-on engagement for my students. This experience prompted my return to Harris Stowe State College, for additional training in creative writing.

The enrichment lab staff consisted of a writing lab assistant, the classroom teacher, and myself. The design of the program mandated that the classroom teacher accompany and interact with their respective classes twice a week. The small space allocated for the enrichment lab, wedged between the principal’s office, assistant principal, and the counselor’s office began as a challenge for the six, seven, and eighth grade students. However, the limited space did not inhibit the students’ productivity, enthusiasm, and achievement. To enhance the instructional component, I connected the writing lab to the Jeff-Vander-Lou community center. A very non-descript building on Easton Avenue (now Dr. Martin Luther King Drive) housed a state of the art multi-media lab. The students learned how to operate a camera, take pictures, and develop those pictures in a dark room at the facility. Inspired by possibilities, the students and I replicated a dark room from a mop closet in the school building next to the enrichment
lab. In addition to writing, my students had also become photojournalists. Students wrote stories to accompany the photographs. I fully understood that the school community partnership is an essential component to promote students’ social, emotional, and intellectual development. Any opportunity to engage students in real-world experiences always extends their in-school learning. These connections of enrichment outside of the confines of the school building are invaluable.\(^86\) The ability to serve and transform students’ personal views on the values of education and its connection to future employment opportunities further cemented the power of my transformational leadership.\(^87\)

*Clay Elementary School as Preschool Instructional Coordinator*

I spent the next six years at Williams Middle School as the writing enrichment teacher until another opportunity presented itself when my curiosity led me to an advertised opening in pre-school as an instructional coordinator/parent educator. I applied and again, an interview committee selected me for the position. The Clay Elementary School served as the host site for the pre-school program. While I served as the pre-school instructional coordinator, the program design included two other staff members. One staff member served as a teaching assistant while the second staff member maintained all of the required documentation for the federally-funded program. The most critical document, an instructional performance checklist, identified student strengths and weaknesses. This document’s content served as the connection that guided


\(^{87}\) Burns, *Leadership*
the discussion between parents and pre-school staff when we made the required home visits. Both members of the team had prior pre-school experience before joining me at the Clay School. They did not extend themselves to offer any suggestions/recommendations to me as the neophyte around school operations. I had to prepare myself for the position by reading relevant early childhood literature, earn their support by identifying the needed change for our group dynamics, create the vision to guide the change, and execute the change in tandem with them (tenets of transformational leadership). 

With the pre-school team’s conflict resolved and moving forward without any additional missteps over its first 30 months of operation, I encountered another challenge. The building principal, Frank Muehlhauser, who had chosen to treat the pre-school operation as an unwanted entity within the Clay School building, rarely interacting with my staff, my students, my parents, or myself approached me with a request to chair, plan, and execute the elementary school’s promotion activity in tandem with the pre-school’s end-of-year program. I honored his administrative request, but I did not understand his rationale as my pre-school program stood in isolation to the rest of the school. His leadership style resonated with me as an example of command leadership.

My duties in the pre-school included four days of instruction for two half-day classes of three, four, and early 5 year olds. On Fridays, I visited the homes of my students to engage and provide their parents with instructional packets to be used with their child. Home visit programs are designed to increase and support parental

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88 Burns, *Leadership*
89 Blanken, “8 Leadership Styles,”
interaction with their children.\footnote{Monica A. Sweet, and Mark I. Appelbaum, "Is Home Visiting an Effective Strategy? A Meta-analytic Review of Home Visiting Programs for Families with Young Children," \textit{Child Development} 75, no. 5 (2004): 1435-1456.} My class composition included several instructional levels. Therefore, each child’s packet included educational materials to meet their specific skill needs. I wanted to create the kinds of school-family partnerships that raised student achievement, improved local communities, and increased public support for the children.\footnote{Larry Ferlazzo, "Involvement or Engagement." \textit{Educational Leadership} 68, no. 8 (2011): 10-14.} Larry Ferlazzo and Lorie A. Hammond reported that family engagement produced better results for students, for families, for schools, and for their communities.\footnote{Larry Ferlazzo and Lorie A. Hammond, \textit{Building Parent Engagement in Schools} (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009).} The level of parental engagement at the early childhood level cemented the trajectory that formalized my personal commitment to continue to include family and community engagement as an integral part of my educational tool kit ensuring academic success for all children.

While my pre-school program design targeted specifically disadvantaged early learners, age 3, 4, and early 5’s, who did not meet the requirements for entry into kindergarten, I dispelled the myth of low-income populations and their inherently low academic achievement.\footnote{Jean Anyon, \textit{Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform} (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1997); John L. Rury, “Introduction: The Changing Social Contours of Urban Education, in \textit{Urban Education in the United States: A Historical Reader}, ed. John L. Rury (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1-12.} The students whom I served in this program had simply not been exposed to resources and experiences that enhanced their vocabulary. Their responses on the diagnostic assessment instrument, used to determine their enrollment in the program, identified them as disadvantaged/learning delayed and in need of additional support services provided by the pre-school program. However, in my mind and in their
parents’ minds, their children were not disadvantaged but in need of a nurturing quality education complete with enrichment opportunities. After their students matriculated through my pre-school program, I encouraged parents to make application to the SLPS district’s magnet school program, which accepted them. Meanwhile, controversy continued to plague the SLPS district. During this period, I returned to Harris Stowe State College to earn the appropriate early childhood certification (birth to grade three).

**Williams Middle School as Instructional Coordinator**

After three fulfilling years as the pre-school instructional coordinator, I returned to Williams Middle School as the instructional coordinator. The road back to Williams Middle School came via a job opening for instructional coordinator and a personal request for my service from my previous mentor/coach/principal. I experienced anxiety coupled with excitement at the opportunity to return to Williams Middle in a leadership capacity to enhance the teaching and learning process, which would ultimately affect student achievement in a positive manner. I made the decision to interview for the position and subsequently returned to Williams Middle.

During this transition, the SLPS district established a court-ordered quality education program, referred to as ‘School of Emphasis’ (SOE), for the all-black or nonintegrated schools designed to provide students in segregated schools with extra enrichment programs within their neighborhood schools. The SOE is a specialized focus decided at the school level to enhance instruction. The SLPS guidelines stated the SOE program should not be remedial, duplicate existing required programs, or focus on areas receiving sufficient curricula attention. The program provided additional resources and funding to assist in its implementation. While other SLPS schools selected themes
specific to reading, math, or science, I recommended that Williams Middle select a theme that would directly expose Williams Middle students to the world of work across the country. At the time, McDonnell-Douglas Corporation, headquartered in St. Louis, employed thousands of workers across the St. Louis metropolitan region and beyond. Armed with this insight, I mobilized and convinced the principal, Mr. Acme Price, and the Williams Middle School staff to accept and implement the specialized focus of aviation and aerospace, a new approach outside of their comfort zone.

Williams Middle School set a precedent with the selection/ adoption of my recommendation of aviation and aerospace as our SOE. The next step to the implementation of the SOE would be to convince the McDonnell Douglas Corporation to support and adopt Williams Middle School’s SOE. Williams Middle School became Williams Middle Aviation-Aerospace Middle School. In their investigation of the separate and unequal school situations in the SLPS district, Amy Stuart Wells and Robert L. Crain noted that Williams Middle School had established a sophisticated SOE program built around a partnership with McDonnell-Douglas Aviation Corporation. This collaboration afforded Williams Middle School students access to mentors, shadowing opportunities in the aviation/aerospace industry, and field trip experiences to their factory and corporate operations. McDonnell Douglas Corporation further formalized the partnership with Williams Middle School in the creation of an aviation/aerospace resource room at the Williams Middle school building. The resource center replete with

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94 Burns, *Leadership*
95 Burns, *Leadership*
donations of airplane parts, reading materials, furniture, lab coats, rocks from the moon, among other things.\textsuperscript{97}

The acceptance of my recommendation for the SOE at Williams Middle School validated my embrace of transformational leadership.\textsuperscript{98} As a transformational leader, who understood the implication of including opportunities for students to interact with community-based companies, organizations, and volunteers, who are willing, eager, and committed to the development of future competent workers, I transitioned to an effective educational leader who stood on the shoulders of my mentors, coaches, and colleagues to create, design, and advocate meaningful educational learning opportunities for all students within my sphere of influence.\textsuperscript{99} I fully understood that school/community partnerships are an essential ingredient to promote students’ social, emotional, and intellectual development. Any opportunity to engage students’ participation in real work experiences extends their in-school learning beyond the confines of the building, which is invaluable.\textsuperscript{100}

After a discussion with my husband regarding students’ interactions with a plethora of volunteers from McDonnell-Douglas, he recommended that I contact local members of the former Tuskegee Airmen. “The Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American military aviators in the segregated United States armed forces, served during

\textsuperscript{97} Wells and Crain, \textit{Stepping Over the Color Line} \\
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., \\
\textsuperscript{99} Mavis G. Sanders, “The effects of school, family, and community support on the academic achievement of African American adolescents,” \textit{Urban Education} 33, no. 3 (1998): 385-409. \\
World War II.”\textsuperscript{101} During the 1986-1987 school year, the chapter representative, Mr. Christopher Newman, interacted with the students sharing his life experiences, challenges of exclusion, segregation, and ultimate triumph over adversity. He detailed the many job opportunities available for students to pursue in the realm of aviation and aerospace.\textsuperscript{102}

The aviation/aerospace theme accorded students unique opportunities to visit, see, and experience the world of aviation beyond their neighborhood, but more importantly beyond the city of St. Louis. A Field experience has been considered a critical part of instruction that supported in-class lectures, group assignments, and homework.\textsuperscript{103} Field experiences were supported, expected, and encouraged by SLPS leadership. However, after a catastrophic field experience involving a student’s drowning at Meramec Caverns in May 1984, the St. Louis Board of Education declared a change in its policy regarding field experiences. The changes related to field trip experiences that hinted of being dangerous to the well-being of students. The district’s revised field trip policy specifically targeted and prohibited aquatic activities, amusement park visitation, the generic blanket field trip permission form (which in the past had been utilized to cover all expected field trip experiences for an upcoming year at the beginning of the school year), and the never-before requested airline travel-related activities.

I wanted to extend the SOE program to encompass unchartered territory in a way to inspire the students to reach beyond their circumstances and their daily challenges in a neighborhood infested with obstacles to their success. I lobbied the SLPS Board of


\textsuperscript{102} Rose, \textit{Lonely Eagles}, 45 for picture of Christopher Newman

Education to consider an exception to a reframed district field trip policy. The district had accepted and supported the aviation/aerospace theme, our partnership with McDonnell-Douglas, and the company’s endless stream of volunteers and mentors. I wanted to extend our SOE interaction to the McDonnell Douglas affiliates and subsidiaries beyond St. Louis. My ultimate goal for the students included a simulation of a flight of the space shuttle. I knew a field trip to the Johnson Space Center in Florida provided an intimate, interactive, and personal experience with the actual team responsible for the launching, monitoring, and safe return of the nation’s space shuttle. I petitioned the Board, presented the idea and rationale for student air travel. I awaited their review, input, and approval. With the Board’s approval, I identified the criteria necessary for student qualification/selection for this historic field trip opportunity. I solicited staff volunteers willing to travel along with students to the Johnson Space Center. Upon our return to St. Louis and school, I assembled the students to debrief our trip and begin to plan for our own simulated space shuttle launch.

The preparation for the simulated launch to be conducted by the students lasted six weeks. This project included establishing the control center (emulating the Johnson Space Center), staging the flight path, and illuminating the shuttle route with lights as it passed tracking stations. I engaged the school staff (industrial art teacher and the art teacher) to partner with the students in the project design, constructed with plywood and placed/exhibited in the gymnasium. The exhibit spanned the entire gymnasium. Earlier in my professional educational career under the tutelage of Acme Price, I marveled at his adaptive leadership style.\textsuperscript{104} I had experienced how he convincingly engaged and

\textsuperscript{104} Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, \textit{The practice of adaptive leadership}.  

encouraged staff to tackle challenges beyond their preparation. While I witnessed Mr. Price’s interchanging leadership styles and their effectiveness, I resolved myself to retain what worked for me: transformational leadership. The culminating project is shared with students, invited guests from central office, mentors and coaches from McDonnell-Douglas, and open to all who wanted to come and share in the event.

During the school year most evenings, I along with my colleagues (the school counselor and the assistant principal) at Williams Middle, spent hours after students departed the building for home to reflect on the day’s events related to the students and teacher interactions. The successful simulated shuttle mission provided for more discussion than usual. The overwhelming sense of accomplishment demonstrated by the collaboration of low-income minority students more than validated social scientists’ alternative interpretations of the interaction between student achievement, student family background, and students’ ability to rise to high expectations. These educational researchers concluded that the school’s leadership is the major determinant of achievement.

Williams Middle School as Assistant Principal

Shortly before the school year ends, I learned that Mr. Jesse James, the assistant principal planned to retire. In a discussion with the building principal, I learned of my

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pending promotion to the role of the assistant principal of Williams Middle School, responsible for building discipline, at the start of the next school year (1989-1990).

There are times, when aspiring leaders, transition into new positions. As I assumed the position of assistant principal, I literally felt the need to create a formalized discipline procedure for teachers and students. The goal of this procedure focused specifically on creating a calm school environment dedicated to foster student academic achievement. I wanted to build on the healthy, respectful, supportive and nurturing relationships that existed between teachers, students, and me. This working relationship, already present in the building, allowed me to proceed to develop and implement the template for change, guide its implementation and acceptance by all stakeholders.

The year I spent as the assistant principal at Williams Middle School working with middle-schoolers and their teachers taught me that even transformational leaders require a combination of knowledge and skills to understand when, where, how, and why to exercise leadership that can resolve conflict between student to student and teacher to student. I tracked the flow of discipline issues so I could determine the time of the infraction and the teacher responsible for randomly sending students to the office for disciplinary purposes. I used this data to develop a referral process as a mechanism to ensure continuity of instruction for students deprived of instruction and sent to the administrative office. I developed strategies for teachers to use with students prior to disciplinary action that required administrative intervention. The strategies included teacher-student conference, a student intervention plan, teacher-student/parent conference, and administrative classroom observations. The classroom observations

106 Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, “Balanced Leadership”
utilized the Gary D. Borich observational lens template with a focus on learning climate, classroom management, and examining student engagement.¹⁰⁷

The discipline process, when implemented held all stakeholders accountable, specifically students and teachers, strengthened our academic focus, and eliminated the enormous amount of instructional time lost to disciplinary infractions. I redirected teachers and students to a stronger focus on instructional time that is a correlate of Ron Edmonds effective and efficient schools’ movement.¹⁰⁸ I provided clear goals and the rationale for the reconstruction of the disciplinary procedure. Teachers questioned my authority, initiated inquiries to the principal, but my change effort launched a different way of evaluating the necessity of dispatching students from the classroom to the assistant principal office for disciplinary intervention. I assumed that certain members of the staff could not immediately accept change. However, the reframing of addressing disciplinary issues using Ron Edmonds’ effective and efficient schools’ correlates, proved to be the catalyst towards a much-needed organizational change at Williams Middle.¹⁰⁹

The chaotic environment had transformed by school year’s end, through the collective energy of the school staff and students. I entered the summer break excited about that accomplishment.

¹⁰⁸ Edmonds, “Effective schools for the urban poor,”
¹⁰⁹ Burke, Organization Change; Judson, Changing Behavior in Organizations
**Harrison Elementary School as Principal**

The area superintendent, Mr. Charles Simms, interrupted my 1991 summer vacation with a telephone call. He asked two questions. First, he asked did I possess principal certification. I responded with a yes. Second, he asked would I agree to become the principal at Harrison Elementary School. With little to no contemplation, I readily agreed to serve as the principal. He concluded the telephone conversation by informing me that the current assigned principal had just called his office to indicate his intention to retire effective immediately.

Mr. Simms selected and assigned me to the century-old Harrison Elementary School as building principal (my first Principalship). The sudden unexpected departure of the previously assigned building principal led to my selection. As a novice principal, I inherited a less-than motivated staff, an unclean building, along with a poorly written school improvement plan (SIP) two weeks before the scheduled opening of school. As a new principal, I received a mentor. However, my calls to the mentor for support and advice went unanswered. Determined to succeed, I recruited my own mentor, Jimmie Irons, principal at Farragut Elementary School. Mr. Irons provided emotional support, encouragement, friendship, effective advice, feedback on job performance, how to initiate and conduct staff evaluations.\(^{110}\)

I selected Mr. Irons as mentor for several reasons. He displayed a quiet confidence. He challenged positions that interfered with the smooth operation of school, he utilized the assessment results of his students (MAP), which proved his leadership

capabilities and in speaking with him, and he convinced me that we shared a common interest and belief in transformational leadership.\textsuperscript{111}

My prior practiced and witnessed leadership experiences of transformational leadership in the SLPS district prepared me, in spite of my internal turmoil and fear, to achieve collaboration with a resistant staff to garner their participation in designing the course the school would take (SIP).\textsuperscript{112} The push back I received from the Harrison staff, to my transformational leadership style, required me to incorporate in some instances directive, participative, authoritarian, and democratic leadership dimensions. These qualities are inherent in transformational leadership and uniquely used as dictated by the environment/situation.\textsuperscript{113} To address the poorly written SIP rejected by the area superintendent, I established the triple-A committees (attendance, achievement, and attitude) to solicit staff input and ownership for the smooth operation of the school. To ensure absolute inclusion of all staff, I selected staff randomly by assigning numbers one, two, and three for committee participation. I assigned ones to the attendance committee, twos to the achievement committee, and threes to the attitude committee. The general rule of leadership states that new administrators should allow existing structures to remain intact, observe the organization, and proceed with caution and patience before making any concrete changes to the organization. Faced with a series of challenges to my leadership, I remained focused on developing the school vision; transforming school effort, and purpose, while creating a working relationship with teachers and staff. I

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Burns, \textit{Leadership}
\item Burns, \textit{Leadership}
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decided quickly that certain procedures could not remain intact. The Harrison staff
consisted of a strong union presence, staff who had grown comfortable, and willfully
defiant toward building leadership. The staff had abdicated their responsibility to provide
proper supervision of students as detailed in the SLPS district’s policies and regulations.

I spent the first week of school observing flawed processes/procedures that I did
not support. Faced with a very personal moral dilemma, I began immediately to affect
large-scale change in my advocacy for the students. Armed with the results of my
weeklong walk-through, I called a staff meeting on the second Monday of the month
(September 1992) to deliver the state-of-the-school message. I used the most recent
assessment data to detail how I arrived at my decision to increase time on task/instruction
with the elimination of morning recess allowing instruction to occur consistently between
the start of the school day and lunch. This change in the daily schedule incited the staff’s
response of “how do you expect us to work with students without a break”? That
response revealed a flawed sense of entitlement whereby the adults had placed
themselves above the welfare of students.

In past years, the teachers did not supervise the playground in the morning:
movement into the building in the morning; nor did they supervise movement from the
classroom to the lunchroom; they provided no supervision in the lunchroom or on the
playground during lunch. When asked about their aversion to supervision of children,
they responded, “The principal performed all supervisory duties.” I consulted with my
mentor, Mr. Irons, regarding teacher supervision. He referred me to the SLPS policy and
regulations regarding teachers’ responsibilities for student supervision. I copied the
documents on supervision and provided individual copies to all teachers to read, signed,
and dated. I informed teachers that their failure to comply constituted insubordination. The distribution of the district’s policy regarding teachers’ supervision of students eliminated the overt resistance to my leadership directive. However, underground resistance remained.

Several points of contention detailed in my state-of-the-school message included the importance of introducing/supporting/extending instruction by including field experiences. Staff responded with a resounding opposition to field experiences. The union representative intervened to recant a story about teachers who warranted disciplinary action because a student drowned on a field trip experience to Meramec Caverns. I listened intently and responded with the question “Who is responsible for the supervision of children on a field trip experience”? I answered my question with “It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide adequate supervision to keep children safe pursuant to the SLPS policies and regulations. I further explained to the staff that I had faith in their professionalism and judgement that students under their care/supervision would enjoy this extension of the classroom. There are several ways that to overcome resistance to change.114

In those moments, I realized some questions did not require a response, because the response I wanted to give might create negative, insightful, and inflammatory perceptions. My goal in this organizational change is to move Harrison Elementary from its present state and toward a cohesive team with the ability to increase student achievement, even though my inherited team and I disagreed with the merits of my

organizational restructure. The educational environment is always changing and the school’s organization needed to adapt the internal forces in order to remain relevant and effective.\textsuperscript{115} Leadership and organizational culture collide in the process of organizational change.\textsuperscript{116}

I believed the change in schedule and the inclusion of all staff as a part of student supervision would settle the school and instruction in the classrooms more focused. I gradually eased into a routine of classroom observations, steady monitoring of student engagement, and on-task instruction. The consistent implementation of these strategies served to raise student achievement and validated the power of commitment and the will of the staff to embrace positive change. The first three months of my transition to Harrison had been fraught with personal turmoil caused by the confrontations with staff that resisted organizational change under my leadership. I reflected on leadership as an institution that has primarily two functions: first to provide direction and secondly to exercise influence in spite of all types of resistance.\textsuperscript{117}

Related to the building, I addressed the appearance, mainly cleanliness of the building and a timeline for completion of the cleaning with the head custodian. The head custodian provided a schedule, which I monitored daily. I also addressed the need for all classroom teachers to create a warm, welcoming, and print-rich environment. I modeled that expectation as I created print-rich hallways, which I lined with plants.

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The greatest challenge to my leadership at Harrison Elementary, my first Principalship, came in the form of recommending a 25-year veteran of the SLPS district for a 100-day probationary period up to and including recommendation for dismissal for failure to follow administrative directives, excessive tardiness, and failure to supervise students on a field trip experience. As the school leader, I knew that I had to be the primary catalyst for the organizational change to be positive and lasting. I followed the SLPS district policy, beginning with a notice of conference stating that inasmuch as the results of this conference reflected in his evaluation up to and including a possible recommendation for dismissal, the teacher could request union representation. Human Resources supported the documentation and the request for the 100 days of probation started.

My goal to bring about change by using processes for change (i.e., leadership, decision-making, and motivational strategies), while initially painful and challenging proved successful. The transformation of the Harrison Elementary School culture/dynamic/instructional focus reinforced the importance of my commitment to transformational leadership. Moral leadership, a tenet of transformational leadership, instills integrity, perseverance, stamina, and advocacy for children, which prompted my desire to seek and learn the proper procedures to dismiss ineffective and insubordinate

119 Szarlan, Singha, and Brown, Striving for Excellence.
120 Burns, Leadership
teachers. Notwithstanding the initial chaos, I had served as the primary catalyst for the change.

The Harrison staff’s embrace of the organizational change that I inspired, modeled, encouraged, and when necessary mandated brought the Harrison administration/staff to an acceptable level of trust. It enabled administration/staff to collaborate and embark on a joint endeavor to create and open a hands-on science laboratory and a ‘Discovering the Metropolitan Area Museum’ in spite of the earlier mistrust, conflict, and change in leadership expectations. Mr. Eddie Davis, a St. Louis Board of Education member and Community Relations Supervisor for Union Electric Company (the local utility), provided support for the science rooms through community outreach programs at his employment. “We are here today because of our commitment to our children,” said science project leader Ruth Edmonds, prior to cutting the ribbon string in the entrance to science room 207. “We also have Harrison’s Principal Joyce Roberts to thank, for it was her vision that turned what could have been an educational catastrophe, (the closing of four classrooms) into a blossoming resurgence of educational energy.”

Williams Middle School as Principal

In the middle of my second school year at Harrison Elementary, January 1993, I received a reassignment to my former middle school, Williams Middle, as the principal

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121 Greenfield, "Moral, Social, and Technical Dimensions of the Principalship,"
122 Fullan, All Systems Go
123 This support from Union Electric is an example of community partnership and teaching/learning. For artifact see Appendix 1 Item 17. Also see Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 5
replacement for Terrel Wayne. District leadership selected Mr. Wayne as the administrator to reopen the Northwest High School building as a newly created middle school. Within the first week of settling into my role as principal, it became apparent that the staff’s morale and job satisfaction negatively influenced under Mr. Wayne’s leadership. During my 14-month absence from Williams Middle, the hard fought battle that I waged to establish an instructional climate had deteriorated. Mr. Wayne had not maintained discipline expectations.\(^{125}\)

I observed the loud unruly behavior of the students, the off-task instruction in the classrooms, and the lack of student supervision. I recognized immediately that the staff expectations for students did not occur, students ignored school routines, and their behavior choices compromised the goal of a safe and orderly school. My onsite observations channeled my resolve to reinstitute accountability for all of the school’s stakeholders (i.e. students, staff, and parents) in alignment with my vision to increase student achievement in a safe and orderly school.\(^{126}\) My action plan for Williams Middle, fueled by the lack of student discipline, effective instruction, and lack of staff accountability led my efforts to reinstitute an organizational change. I began to establish processes that acted as pressure for change, which included communication, leadership, incentives, and motivational strategies.\(^{127}\)

In order to effect the organizational change, I had to develop a course of action for implementing the change and convince the Williams Middle staff of the need to retool


\(^{126}\) Szarlan, Singha, and Brown, *Striving for Excellence*

and lead them to create the change essential to restoring order and time-on-task instruction in the classroom.\textsuperscript{128} I presented a compelling vision for the change and began the process of convincing the staff to join me in this massive undertaking. I created an image of the future, communicated in simple terms, and the staff members found my narrative appealing.\textsuperscript{129} The transition of Williams Middle from dysfunctional choices on the part of students and staff gradually diminished because of the requirements and expectations put in place. I served as the stimulus of significant impact that encouraged the school stakeholders to accept and respect the organizational change as inevitable.\textsuperscript{130}

\textit{Pierre Laclede Elementary as Principal}

During the summer of 1993, I received a telephone call from the area superintendent, Dr. John Ingram. He scheduled a conference for me with Mrs. Joan Fisher, the instructional coordinator at Pierre Laclede Elementary. He discussed my promotion to the role of principal at Pierre Laclede Elementary. In that, same meeting the area superintendent approached me regarding serving as the school district’s principals’ representative at the Superintendent’s cabinet meetings. Considered an honor, I agreed.

Dr. Ingram’s message regarding Pierre Laclede Elementary still rings clear. Dr. Ingram reflected, “After following your career from years earlier as the preschool instructional coordinator at Clay Elementary and your transformational leadership at

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{128} Mark A. Abramson and Paul R. Lawrence, \textit{Transforming Organizations} (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).
\end{thebibliography}
Harrison Elementary, I have decided that you are the right person with the appropriate skills, qualities, and effective leadership with proven success to take a good school to the next level.”

Dr. Ingram served as a catalyst to integrate the male-dominated Principalship with capable women.

My mind flooded with my experiences of Laclede. I began my teaching career there and now I am returning as the principal. The core teachers that I left behind in the 1970s still served as anchors of continuity and staff stability that with appropriate leadership has the capacity to improve instructional quality. As a part of my transition plan for my new position as building principal, I contacted my former colleague and mentor, Carmen Charleston. She still worked at Laclede as the lab teacher for writing enrichment and still resided in the surrounding neighborhood. During our meeting, I learned that my predecessor, Mr. Buford, practiced command leadership. He assigned tasks to the staff and they completed them without question. Mrs. Charleston willingly shared that community partnerships and parental involvement did not exist under Mr. Buford’s leadership.

I continued the transition as principal of Pierre Laclede Elementary by meeting with Mr. Buford, receiving the building keys, and listening to his assessment/state of the school message. He shared compelling data: The stable staff had established a history of cohesiveness, exemplary attendance, and good base line student assessment results; all of

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133 Blanken, “8 Leadership Styles,”
which are prerequisite factors essential to providing quality instruction and raising student academic achievement. He finished by saying “My staff did what I told them to do,” a classic phrase/example of command leadership.\(^{134}\) I realized exactly what Dr. Ingram referenced in our conference. I had inherited a staff who believed in doing what they were told to do; thereby allowing the principal to receive the credit for the success of the school. However, Mr. Buford’s style of leadership conflicted with my core transformational leadership style. My challenge of leading a staff to the next level of competency accomplished through transparency, honesty, and inclusion of their ideas. Understanding Pierre Laclede to be a pilot school for Ron Edmonds’ Effective and Efficient Schools’ model, I aligned myself with the staff by displaying the correlates on my office door for all to see, which served to anchor the school prior to my leadership of the staff’s redevelopment of the SIP plan. The SIP development/plan served as Laclede’s guiding operational instrument conceived and developed with staff input. With that inclusion of staff, I influenced the path the school took to reach the next level of student achievement.\(^{135}\)

My journey as a transformational leader expanded as a building principal/lead learner at Pierre Laclede Elementary School. I had returned to familiar faces and to the school that launched my career as a sixth grade teacher. I experienced some trepidation returning to provide leadership to a staff where many had been a colleague and or mentor. The surrounding community remained virtually the same, as it existed in the 1970s. The school district had identified Pierre Laclede, as one of four schools, to pilot the Ron

\(^{134}\) Blanken, “8 Leadership Styles,”
Edmond’s Effective and Efficient Schools model.\textsuperscript{136} That model supported my belief about the role of building leaders in creating an environment that demands/supports high quality teaching and student learning. I always believed in highly qualified, competent staff, as essential to student academic success at every level of my career. Therefore, I worked incessantly to provide timely professional development to ensure teacher and staff success in the delivery of instruction.

Utilizing the information received regarding staff, students, and school dynamics from Mr. Buford as well as Mrs. Charleston proved invaluable in my approach to leadership in this organizational change. I initiated the change process by placing personal telephone calls to every member of the staff. I followed that interaction with the agenda for our first professional development meeting prior to the start of the school year in August 1993. I started the session with the song by recording artists Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. The key lyric in the song, “Wake up all you teachers, time to teach a new way” set the tone for the planned organizational change I anticipated for the 1993-1994 school year at Pierre Laclede Elementary. Conflict seemed inevitable as I planned to facilitate organizational change that would move the staff out of their comfort zone, away from command leadership, into a transformational leadership framework allowing collaboration and distribution of shared decision-making among the staff.\textsuperscript{137}

In my role as principal and instructional leader to make this organizational change a reality, I decided to re-culture the school and move away from traditional norms of leadership hierarchy. A review of the literature supports that principals are instrumental

\textsuperscript{136} Edmonds, “Effective schools for the urban poor,”
in making change happen in their respective buildings. I witnessed the direct impact of my transformational leadership style. Including the distributive leadership component created hope, optimism, and a resurgence of energy in the staff. They demonstrated acceptance of my mission, vision, and a renewal of their commitment to the students at Pierre Laclede. The confidence exhibited by the transformational leader energizes the people who contribute to the change process.

According to Douglas McGregor’s Theory X and Y assumptions, I identify as a Theory Y leader. I viewed my staff as honest, industrious, responsible, and willing to take initiative. That assessment allowed me to delegate authority, share responsibility, and enable staff to participate in making organizational decisions. I led Pierre Laclede without mandate, by inspiring teachers’ commitment to a shared purpose: raising student academic achievement.

I created a workable environment that empowered teachers to make key decisions, exert influence, and valued their wisdom on organizational change efforts. I envisioned their ability to move a good school to a great school; the next level of academic achievement. "Empowerment refers to the opportunities a person has for autonomy,

References:


responsibility, choice, and authority. Leaders who seek to empower their members create themes of goodness (school effectiveness) in their schools."^{142}

Goodness is what some social scientists describe as the school’s culture … It refers to the mixture of parts that produce a whole. The whole includes people, structures, relationships, ideology, goals, intellectual substance, motivation, and will … Goodness encompasses less tangible, more elusive, qualities discerned through close, vivid descriptions, subtle nuances, and detailed narratives that reveal the sustaining values of an institution.^{143}

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot used portraiture in education research to document the components of effective schools. “The portraiture methodology defined when a researcher wishes to produce a full picture of an event or person that tells as much about the subject as it does about the researcher or portraitist.”^{144} In portraiture, demonstrating how people work together to create moments of success and triumph defined as a search for goodness. “Goodness is a means to examine elements of strength and possibilities for success in various educational settings.”^{145}

In the midst of building leadership capacity within staff in the fall of 1993, I met Mr. Bill Green, president of Soil Consultants, a geotechnical engineering company, located in St. Peters, Missouri, in neighboring St. Charles County. I made his acquaintance through Mrs. Joan Fisher, the instructional coordinator at Laclede School.


^{143} Ibid., 13

^{144} Ibid., 13

Mrs. Fisher identified Mr. Green’s potential interest in collaborating with the school, a community partnership unsupported by the former principal. She scheduled a lunch meeting to introduce the two of us. However, her car broke down on the way and I proceeded without her. I began my interaction with Mr. Green with an introduction, a sharing of my background that included my first assignment at Laclede as a teacher, and returning to lead the school as principal.

I continued the conversation with my vision to provide an excellent education for the inner-city children in my care. He listened intently and posed the question, how can I help? My reading specialist training emerged, and I reflected on my personal commitment to create a print rich environment at the Laclede building. I requested beanbags placed outside of each classroom, freestanding library shelving replete with age-appropriate books, hats, coats, and gloves; as many children did not possess these items during the winter months. It is difficult to concentrate on learning in the absence of basic human necessities.

Mr. Green honored all of my requests and continued to provide additional resources over the next ten years. In support of the triple-A standard (Attendance – Attitude – Achievement a carryover of my work at Harrison Elementary), I sought a donation of ten bicycles with helmets and pads (girls and boys) sized pre-school through grade 5. My strategy to maintain near perfect student attendance each semester proved competitive and successful in ensuring students attended school every day. Students with perfect attendance for the semester knew that their name placed in a lottery drawing for a chance to win a bicycle. As an additional strategy to encourage staff to maintain excellent attendance, I asked Mr. Green if he would support the purchase of restaurant
gift certificates to award to teachers each semester. I understood the positive implications for attendance for students and staff (Student attendance in first semester 1996-1997 school year – 96.3% with Staff attendance at 99.58%). Student attendance served as an indicator of success on assessments as a part the Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP). The state of Missouri used the attendance data point to monitor the school’s adequate yearly progress (AYP). Continuity of instruction is critical to increased student achievement. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to be in their classroom each day of the school year. The incentives served as motivation to ‘BE THERE’ at the building. ‘BE THERE’, a district-wide initiative of the SLPS district and the Maritz Corporation, offered additional incentives for students and staff for perfect attendance.

I solicited the long-term United States Congressman, who represented the First Congressional District, the honorable William L. Clay, to honor the students’ enthusiastic embrace of Laclede School’s triple-A standards.

As a means to value student engagement beyond attendance, all students had the opportunity to be recognized as a recipient of most caring, most improved, student of the month, and honor roll with visible badges in the school’s colors of blue and yellow. Students wore these badges with pride. Mr. Bill Green provided the resources for the badge program, which boosted the self-esteem of students at Laclede School. Shortly,

146 See Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 8
148 “Attendance Boosts Aid for Schools City Students Fills Seats, Bring Bonus of $2 Million, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 11 July 1995.
149 See Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 6 for news article/photograph of William Clay, Joyce Roberts, and students
after engaging Mr. Bill Green as a community partner, the University of Missouri-St. Louis, a leading provider of teacher education, considered a partnership with Pierre Laclede Elementary School called professional development school.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) is located in Normandy, Missouri, which is a short driving distance from Pierre Laclede Elementary School. The SLPS central office point person contacted me indicating that Laclede identified as one of the four host sites to collaborate with UMSL as a Professional Development School (PDS), with the other three host schools located in the Parkway and Maplewood-Richmond Heights school districts. The PDS design identified teacher preparation essential to ensuring significant reform in schools. Teachers in PDS partnerships received ongoing professional development designed to enhance their teaching strategies.

As the partnership with UMSL progressed, I reflected back to my first year as a classroom teacher at Laclede. My area superintendent used my classroom as a learning laboratory/clinical experience for other first-year teachers to observe strategies for student engagement, discipline, and forge meaningful relationships with students. Now, more than 22 years later as principal of Laclede School, UMSL has identified my school as a learning laboratory/clinical experience for preservice and in-service teachers.

UMSL personnel, Tom Schnell, interim associate dean for research for the School of Education and head of the university’s PDS effort, along with SLPS administrators

determined that Laclede provided a great opportunity for preservice teachers to observe how professional teachers interacted with students. According to Tom Schnell:

Despite its location in a low-income area, Laclede is one of the most successful public schools in the city. It ranks third among city public schools in Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT) scores, standing only behind two magnet schools. Its attendance rate is remarkable as well: day in and day out, 96 to 99 percent of its students show up for classes ... Of most direct benefit to students, Laclede School will be able to utilize UMSL education majors to tutor its at-risk students and students who show difficulty with the SAT.152

In addition to tutoring Laclede students, I inquired about UMSL students’ availability to work as substitutes as they had established a working relationship with teachers and students. As UMSL benefited from the PDS partnership, I negotiated benefits for Laclede staff; continuing education credit (CEC) for PDS participation, access to UMSL library services, and its technology lab. Several UMSL education majors asked for consideration as candidates for any vacant teaching positions at Laclede Elementary upon graduation. Subsequently, I hired two UMSL graduates who had participated in the PDS program.

Traditionally, the recruitment of teachers resided in the domain of the SLPS Human Resources (HR) department. However, in this instance, I had observed, assessed, and determined that these preservice teachers had distinguished themselves admirably in the PDS program working directly with students and teachers. The experience of

recruiting and hiring new staff without the assistance of the SLPS HR department made school-based management (SBM) a reality. As a principal of a high-performing effective school, in a SBM model, I operationalized the authority and the accompanying responsibility to recruit and hire competent staff. From that point on, I decided to seek additional opportunities to recruit and hire staff independent of SLPS HR.153

In 1995, two years after I assumed the leadership position at Pierre Laclede, the building exhibited an aura of purpose, a feeling of commitment, along with high expectations anchored in a print-rich environment. Mr. Buford’s health had seemingly improved over the past several years and the staff indicated their desire to prepare a retirement celebration/event for Mr. Buford; an endeavor that I fully supported further solidifying the newly formed partnership created in my new assignment. The staff committee secured a venue and planned a program befitting a well-respected colleague and former 13-year leader of Pierre Laclede Elementary School. Horribly, during the presentation/event, Mr. Buford, fell unconscious, transported to a medical facility, and subsequently passed away on his birthday, April 1, 1995.

The next community partnership under my leadership emerged out of this tragedy. Unbeknownst to me at the time, Mr. Buford enjoyed membership in the oldest African American fraternity, Sigma Pi Phi, founded in 1904 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His fraternity brothers, the men of Eta Boule’ local chapter of Sigma Pi Phi, a low profile high prestige fraternity of Black professionals, contacted me to inquire how best to honor Mr. Buford’s memory at the Pierre Laclede Elementary School.154 The chapter’s

154 See Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 12 for history of the fraternity.
spokesperson, Mr. Julius Hunter, former teacher and one of St. Louis’ first Black anchor for KMOV channel 4, spearheaded the partnership. As a reading specialist, I quickly recommended that the men of Eta Boule’ chapters serve as ‘Book Buddies’ for every class, preschool through grade five. Mr. Hunter agreed on behalf of the organization to form the partnership that immediately began with participation of over 30 members coming to the school on a weekly basis without fail.

The men of Eta Boule’ ‘Book Buddies’ included a veritable Who’s Who in Black St. Louis. The participants included Dr. Henry Givens, President of Harris-Stowe State University, Jim Buford, President of St. Louis Urban League, and Dr. John Gladney (see Appendix 1 Items 9, 10, and 11 for Pierre Laclede School salute for Dr. Gladney’s 75th birthday celebration), the first African American to chair a clinical department at the St. Louis University medical school. Other ‘Book Buddies’ included Charles Shaw, federal judge, Julius Hunter, and Dr. Donald Suggs, oral surgeon and publisher of the St. Louis American weekly newspaper, along with a host of other prominent African American male professionals. The interaction with the Book Buddies segued to other community partnerships within the larger St. Louis community and Pierre Laclede Elementary School.

Pierre Laclede Elementary, an Ittner architectural wonder with its great hall, floor to ceiling windows that opened outward, hardwood floors, high ceilings, a grand library off the main entrance to the building, and its unique masonry exterior opened to students in 1915. This location at 5821 Kennerly is the fourth building location for the namesake

155 “Black Men lend a Helping Hand,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, October 30, 1995, xxxx. See also Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 1
156 “Eta Boule’ Hosts 80th Anniversary Dinner,” The St. Louis American, November 26, 1992, 7B.
Pierre Laclede within the SLPS district. William B. Ittner designed and credited with being the mastermind of early twentieth century public school buildings. In this architectural stimulating environment, innovative ideas continuously flooded my mind. I shared those ideas with the staff by telling them “I had another brainstorm and ask for their input.” I mentioned my idea of taking the dead space of the north side of the first floor great hall to create outdoor reading terraces. The terraces would be replete with indoor/outdoor carpeting, plants, patio umbrellas, tables, and chairs. I suggested that they close their eyes and imagine the possibilities. The staff responded in unison with a resounding yes. I took the idea to Mr. Green who agreed to make it a reality by collaborating with his friends at the Professional Business Leadership Council. The terraces dedicated in memory of my predecessor, Mr. Buford, in 1995. The men of Eta Boule’ along with SLPS district officials attended the ribbon cutting ceremony.

In addition to the establishment of earlier partnerships at Laclede Elementary and the regular mention of the school’s record of academic achievement in print media that brought countless resources to the school, I agreed to extend the Laclede school site to the state-sponsored Caring Communities Program (CCP), a wraparound services entity, under the leadership of Khatib Waheed. The concept of wraparound services emerged as a mechanism to scaffold under-served and underperforming youth. These additional community services served to bolster opportunities for students to succeed in school.

157 St. Louis Public Schools Archives hereafter [SLPSA], Building Descriptions
159 “Outside Reading Gets Fraternal Aid,” School & Home, October/November 1995, 4; “Press Release: Dedication to Honor Late Laclede Principal,” St. Louis Public School Office of Community Relations, 04 October 1995. For artifacts see Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 2 and Item 3.
CCP in St. Louis started at the Walbridge Elementary School and supported the integration of community resources dedicated to schools. The greatest impact this partnership had on Laclede included the funding, support, and establishment of a before and after school latchkey program. I determined and recommended that this collaboration staffed by Laclede teachers and parents. My vision accorded Laclede an extended learning framework for our students in need of additional instructional scaffolding beyond the normal school hours in alignment with the school’s triple-A cornerstone of academic achievement. I reimagined another opportunity to motivate and engage my students through gardening.

The community/school cabbage patch garden existed prior to my tenure as principal of the school. Mrs. Pauline Humphrey, a Laclede classroom teacher who resided in the community, lived behind the school on Maffitt Avenue, provided the impetus to establish and maintain the garden. At that time, the garden was Mrs. Humphrey’s classroom project for her 4th grade students. Initially, the garden did not have access to water; however, a neighbor who resided next to the garden allowed Mrs. Humphrey’s students to use her water hose to water the plants in the garden.

After my arrival and several inquiries to Mrs. Humphrey regarding the garden, I proposed several options, which would involve the entire Laclede Elementary School community; all grade levels within the school – not just Mrs. Humphrey’s 4th grade class, all individuals within the Laclede School attendance boundary, parents, and teachers.

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Mrs. Humphrey concurred with my proposal and I proceeded to contact the local Alderman to enlist the support of his office to eliminate/demolish the vacant/decaying building next to the original garden plot to expand the existing garden. I received the local Alderman’s support and commitment to demolish vacant buildings. Mrs. Humphrey followed through on my suggestion to solicit the expertise of Gateway Greening, a local agency that assisted organizations in the preparation of local community garden projects. Gateway Greening agreed to become a community partner in Laclede Elementary expansion of the Cabbage Patch Community Garden project.

Gateway Greening provided invaluable information regarding available grants to assist in the project. I contacted the local electrical utility and completed the grant application for electricity, and to include an outdoor pavilion classroom equipped with a demonstration table and student seating. I also completed a similar grant application and submitted to the state conservation agency requesting onsite access to water for the newly expanded garden. The agencies contacted approved the grants as requested. With the vision of the garden expansion realized, an integral hands-on instructional extended learning outdoor classroom supported the school’s continued commitment to enhanced student academic achievement.

The 1995-1996 school year began and the building (Laclede Elementary) exhibited an aura of purpose, a feel of commitment, and expectations realized in support of the triple-A standards. The community partnerships momentum continued with Dr.

161 For artifact, see Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 4.
William Yates (surgeon and chief of the trauma center at DePaul Hospital), an original Book Buddy and member of Eta Boule’. Dr. Yates is impressed with the Laclede students’ excitement with learning and expressed his interest in serving as a resource to improve the academic environment at the school. After meeting with Dr. Yates and discussing the school’s needs, Dr. Yates decided to donate $1,000 to the school to be used for designated projects that I and my staff deem as appropriate student incentives. My staff and I collaborated to use the funds to expand library holdings, provide weekly prizes for perfect attendance by class, reward honor roll and ‘most improved’ students with monthly luncheons, record student achievements on plaques to be displayed in the halls at the school, and purchase trophies and gift certificates to be given to the three top-ranking fifth graders.\textsuperscript{163} The impact of the Men of the Eta Boule’ on the boys and girls of Laclede School shattered traditional stereotypes, compelling Mrs. Janis Smith’s classroom, to recognize their Book Buddies’ efforts with the broader St. Louis community by sharing their sentiments in a letter to the editor of the \textit{St. Louis American} newspaper.\textsuperscript{164} This letter, published in the \textit{St. Louis American} newspaper, prompted a number of telephone calls from colleagues, friends, and potential benefactors.

I felt overcome with a sense of validation, accomplishment, and excitement upon receipt of a congratulatory hand-written note from a former well-respected colleague, supervisor, and mentor, Dr. Lynn Beckwith, Jr., the Superintendent of Schools – School

\textsuperscript{163} For artifacts see Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 6: “Press Release – Surgeon providing $1,000 in Grants for Laclede School” \textit{St. Louis Public School Office of Community Relations}, 09 February 1996; see also Appendix 1 Item 5 - letter from Dr. William D. Yates dated January 08, 1996, Appendix 1 Item 7 for photo of presentation at St. Louis Board of Education

\textsuperscript{164} See Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Items 13 and 14 for student recognition of Book Buddies as community partners
District of University City.\textsuperscript{165} Dr. Beckwith, who later became the E. Desmond Lee endowed professor of Urban Schools, requested that I make presentations regarding leadership to graduate students in his urban leaders’ cohort at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.\textsuperscript{166}

Shortly after the excitement of Dr. Yates’ philanthropy, I continued to engage in as many community partnerships as possible to enrich the lives of my students. I received two simultaneous notifications. First, the Assistance League of St. Louis/Operation School Bell provided school uniforms, socks, and coats to Laclede School students.\textsuperscript{167} The organization’s support allowed Laclede students to transition from street clothes to blue and white uniforms. Likewise, the staff and I followed the example set by the students and began wearing uniforms daily. Uniforms for public school students became a popular trend in the mid-1990s.\textsuperscript{168}

Second, Laclede Elementary had also been selected as one of five schools in the St. Louis area and one of 24 nationwide, to receive the Danforth Foundation’s first ‘Successful Schools’ program grant to support school-based educational reform.\textsuperscript{169} Laclede Elementary would receive $20,000 annually for three years, if the school demonstrated satisfactory progress in improving academic achievement, behavior, and attendance. I presented the opportunity to the staff and explained that we would continue our present path in support of the triple-A standards which aligned directly to the

\textsuperscript{165} See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 2
\textsuperscript{166} See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Items 3, 4, and 5
\textsuperscript{167} For evidence of the ongoing work of this community organization see Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 8: Operation School Bell
\textsuperscript{169} See press release on Laclede’s selection to Successful Schools Program in Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 16
‘Successful Schools’ standards. The Laclede Elementary family could just stay the course espoused by author Jim Collins in his book *Good to Great*; the Hedge Hog concept and the Flywheel concept.170

The ‘Hedge Hog’ concept described as follows: under the leadership of an individual who demonstrates personal humility and professional will, an organization can effectively generate and sustain its vision and passion while determining what it does well which creates positive results. For Laclede Elementary, positive results were consistent student academic achievement that attracted external resources and commitment.171 The Flywheel concept begins with identifying the goal, organizing with a purpose, continuous incremental work toward the goal, build on previous work, and then a realization of the goal. The ‘Successful Schools’ grant enabled Laclede Elementary to realize the Flywheel concept as a breakthrough/realization of the school’s goal of sustained academic achievement.

Participation in the Successful Schools program provided funding and feedback from programming consultants regarding school dynamics (i.e. grades K – 3 collaborated and provided a plethora of hands-on lessons, while grades 4 – 5 seemed more traditional and teacher-led). I recognized that Laclede’s participation in the Successful School’s program had created a ‘tipping point’. Tipping point is the name given to that one dramatic moment in time when everything can change all at once.172 As principal, I took

171 For evidence of existing student achievement at Laclede Elementary prior to Successful Schools Initiative, see “Successes Motivate School in North City: Report on Tests Fails to Faze Pierre Laclede,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 23 September 1996, 1B.
the feedback, shared it with the staff and proceeded to create a school of disciplined people, discipline thought, and disciplined action.\footnote{Collins, \textit{Good to Great}, 112} I also convinced the staff to embrace the school’s areas of weakness as identified by the consultants (too much teacher-directed instruction, too little student hands-on engagement) creating a sense of urgency for reform with a clear vision by eliminating tension between tradition and change.\footnote{Lawrence-Lightfoot, “On Goodness in Schools”} Armed with the feedback from Successful Schools, I reflected critically on the need for change and the strategy to gain support of the staff in our forward evolution that would move Laclede Elementary to the next level; from a good school to a great school. The challenge initially presented by Dr. Ingram to move a good school to the next level became more of a possibility through the infusion of additional funding provided by the ‘Successful Schools’ grant.

As a direct result of Laclede’s participation in the ‘Successful Schools’ initiative, I recommended to the Laclede staff that they consider the development of critical innovations designed to increase our teaching and learning efforts, specifically, student academic achievement. I identified (1) the development of grade-level assessments created in the image of MAP for Kg through grade 5, (2) the creation of an individual advancement plan (IAP) for every child in the building, and (3) the creation of job-embedded professional development.\footnote{See Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 1 for grade level assessment. See Appendix 2 Item 2 for Individual Advancement Plan (IAP)}

As long as I had been with the SLPS district, the only data received at the building level and used to inform instruction consisted primarily of historical MAP data.
In its initial format, only third grade communication arts and fourth grade mathematics served as benchmark data points. I decided to share a strategy/innovation to inform instruction within the first two weeks of the 1998-1999 school year. I facilitated the teachers in its creation and MAP-like format to provide students with practice on the new state assessment, (MAPAttack initiative is born). Thus, the grade level assessments for Kg through grade 5 became a reality. I determined and the staff agreed that we administer the assessment a minimum of three times throughout the school year. I also decided that the grade-level assessment be administered to any new student transferring into Laclede. I received confirmation from the staff on the merits of using grade level assessments in that manner. Absent student records, parents generally proffered that their child should be in a higher grade. In the absence of a child’s official records, I alerted parents to our standard process of administering and scoring the appropriate assessment to determine grade placement.

The grade level assessments also helped us to create the IAP for each child, which outlined their strengths, and areas of weakness based on the results of the grade level assessments. The teacher used IAP to inform individualized instruction during regular class time and in the before and after school latch key programs. A companion document, *Pierre Laclede Elementary School Student, Parent, Teacher, Administrator Compact*, outlined the expectation for all stakeholders. The grade level assessment produced another document specifically geared toward students in grades 2 through 5. The document identified students’ strengths (skills maintained) and areas in need of

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176 See Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 3
improvement (must teach skills for the teacher). The purpose of this document, placed in the hands of each student, gave them ownership of their learning. ¹⁷⁷

While the companion document specifically detailed the expectations for all stakeholders at Laclede School (student, parent, teachers, and principal), there still existed a need to strengthen staff accountability for teaching and learning, the top responsibility at the building. The feedback from Successful Schools’ Initiative (SSI) consultants validated my transformational leadership. The process re-energized my focus on the teaching and learning process. I resolved to spend most of my time in classrooms observing instruction and providing critical and timely feedback to the Laclede School staff. I created the Status Conference as an accountability tool. ¹⁷⁸ I conducted Status Conferences in the first month of school each year. The Status Conference challenged each teacher definitively respond to the following questions: As a classroom teacher, what is your personal goal for school attendance this year? As classroom teacher, what is your strength/value added contribution to Laclede School’s goal of increasing student achievement? As the classroom teacher, identify professional development that you would like to present to your colleagues? As a classroom teacher, identify professional development opportunities that you will attend to enhance your instructional delivery? Based on your review of longitudinal MAP data and the current grade level assessment,

¹⁷⁷ For artifacts see Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 3
¹⁷⁸ See Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 4
identify the students by name who are underperforming, progressing, and/or have achieved mastery.\textsuperscript{180}

I decided to redesign the reading specialist, the math specialist, and the resource teacher (special educator) traditional pullout programs to administer the greatest instructional impact in classrooms. I discussed the idea with the specialists involved for their input. I explained that I considered them master teachers capable of building capacity in their colleagues through job-embedded professional development by teaming with them in their classrooms. The process eliminated the traditional practice of students leaving instruction in their respective classrooms to join the specialists in a pullout format in another class environment; the specialist provided instruction directly to all students in the classroom with both teachers present that included job-embedded professional development to the regular classroom teachers.

The impact of Laclede School’s participation in the SSI prompted me to marvel at how well the staff emerged from the process even more focused and committed to student academic achievement. I reflected on the extraordinary work ethic exhibited by the Laclede staff. Some staff members came early to ease into the teaching and learning process each day. Other staff members formed a prayer group, others worked in the before and after school latchkey program, and still others monitored the free breakfast program. In spite of the various before school activities, the Laclede staff instinctively moved to the schoolyard to happily greet their respective students and lead them into the building.

\textsuperscript{180} See Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 4 for copy of this document (Status Conference) completed each year by staff members.
I invested in a transformational line I purposefully created to energize the Laclede staff. My mantra always began with ‘I am not thinking for everyone, it is the ‘collective mind that gets the work done. I developed a level of trust among the staff whereby they willingly identified with Laclede School, internalizing my expectations and values.\textsuperscript{181} As a result, I discovered the more that I delegated responsibilities to the Laclede staff, the more productive they became. Staff members once commented/joked to a newspaper reporter, “Once you work here [at Laclede], you leave only when you retire. They [teachers] credit that to an atmosphere of respect, a place where employees work as a team and a place where the principal allows teachers to try new things.”\textsuperscript{182} The staff, as individuals, began to exhibit leadership skills as they competently responded to any inquiries (school processes, instructional strategies, and budgets) raised about Laclede School from visitors, community partners, and fellow educators. I felt an overwhelming sense of pride while reading a letter from the William Woods University complimenting staff and students regarding their visit to Laclede School.\textsuperscript{183}

As a transformational leader, I balanced the development of my subordinates, thus raising the aspirations of the leader and the led in the process and myself.\textsuperscript{184} I encouraged my staff to hone their professional skills, build their self-confidence, and prepare to seek new opportunities. I provided letters of recommendation to all staff who requested my support. Some staff took positions within the building while others decided...


\textsuperscript{182} “No Goals Barred: Laclede Elementary Rises to the Challenge of Improving Student Achievement – then Surpasses it,” \textit{St. Louis Post-Dispatch}, October 28, 2002, B1.

\textsuperscript{183} See Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 15

to leave the Laclede School family. Mrs. Janice Stephens, a second grade teacher at Laclede, credited her development as a teacher to the leadership and supervision provided at Laclede School. At Laclede, I shared information, decentralized decision-making authority, and organized teams of teachers to increase their leadership capacity in the organization. The staff’s confidence began to manifest in the Laclede students, prompting me to establish the Laclede School student ambassadors. Students who exemplified the Laclede School triple-A standards of achievement, attendance, and attitude became potential candidates for the role of ambassador. The ambassador responsibility included accompanying guests around the building, answering school-related questions, and returning guests to the principal for a debriefing of the school visit. The 1995-1996 school year, while a tipping point for Laclede School’s continued academic success, evidenced by Laclede School’s selection to participate as a candidate in the Gold Star Schools program in Missouri. The community partnerships continued to grow and influence the school in a positive manner.

The growing number of community partnerships brought increased resources, media attention, and requests from other school districts to visit Laclede, tour the facility, and speak directly to teachers and me. Our continued academic achievement applauded by the local alderperson planned a special recognition. The honorable Irene J. Smith, alderwoman of the First Ward of the City of St. Louis, in recognition of my transformational work at Laclede Elementary, sponsored a unique recognition of the

185 See Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 7
187 https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=joyce+roberts+attendance+achievement+attitude
188 See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 14
school’s academic success with a proclamation presented to me as the school’s academic leader in the St. Louis Board of Aldermen chambers during the 1996-1997 school year. I humbly accepted the proclamation on behalf of Laclede Elementary students, teachers, parents, and community.\textsuperscript{189} Following the receipt of the St. Louis City proclamation, Laclede School’s consistent student academic achievement received the \textit{St. Louis American} community grant at the newspaper’s annual tribute to education at The St. Louis American Salute to Excellence Scholarship Awards Banquet on September 5, 1997.\textsuperscript{190} Later in October of 1997, the honorable Clarence Harmon, mayor of the City of St. Louis, congratulated the academic achievement results of the Laclede School students as well.\textsuperscript{191} Local print media continued to report Laclede School students’ academic success.\textsuperscript{192} As Laclede students continued to achieve, additional recognition and awards followed.\textsuperscript{193}

During the 1996-1997 school year, the district’s financially stressed status mandated the SLPS superintendent, Cleveland Hammonds, to challenge the district’s schools to decrease expenditures as a cost-saving measure. Decisions regarding budget predicated on the needs of students and staff to maintain and or exceed local state and national academic achievement targets. While student academic achievement is a priority goal, transformational leaders are also required to serve as stewards of the school budget. School budgets when utilized appropriately are significant. Confirmation that schools

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{189} See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 1
\item \textsuperscript{190} See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 15
\item \textsuperscript{191} See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 6
\item \textsuperscript{192} See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 7. See also Appendix 3 Item 8.
\item \textsuperscript{193} See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Items 9, 10, and 11.
\end{itemize}
use resources effectively provides relief to policymakers and the public.  

To comply with the superintendent’s directive, I decided to prioritize and maintain line item expenditures earmarked for instruction and curtail expenses in non-instructional areas. My ability to reduce the school’s budget garnered recognition and a monetary award from the superintendent’s office.

As the age of technology exploded into the educational workplace, Laclede School continued to flourish academically, exceeding expectations, but I struggled with the lack of access to technology for my students, staff, and me. I often asked SLPS officials when Laclede would get computers. The constant response from SLPS was schools that were not doing well academically would be the first to receive computers. I wondered why the district penalized Laclede. As principal, it is my responsibility to advocate for educational equity for my students. At the top of my ‘to do list’ for Laclede is gaining access to technology and training. The U. S. Government Record Center, located in St. Louis just north of Laclede School, maintained worldwide records of U. S. Military personnel and stayed abreast of technological advances by upgrading when deemed appropriate. In the 1998-1999 school year, the SLPS district received notification that the U. S. Government Record Center would purge outdated computers and donate the surplus machines to interested schools. I seized the opportunity to secure the computers for Laclede School in my quest for access to technology.

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195 See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 12
I realized the goal of computer training in a conversation with U. V. Hayes, my special education teacher, as she had discovered a free computer training resource in the community called Computer Village, sponsored by Don Holt, a retired IBM manager. I began attending the evening classes as an investment in learning technology. I knew the keyboard as a former typist and gradually learned the other necessary computer skills. Don and I spoke often after class. During these conversations, I provided Don with a strategy to keep his students engaged. That strategy, projects, kept his students engaged over time. He reminds me to this day how effective the use of projects motivated and retained student interest.196 My relationship with Computer Village and Don Holt helped to introduce, propel, and cement Laclede’s next partnership. I would realize the completion of my ‘to do list’ of gaining access to technology when I met Bonnie, Charlie, and Jorge.

Bonnie, Charlie, and Jorge, members of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, located at 110 North Warson Road in Ladue, Missouri, came highly recommended by Don Holt of Computer Village. I set a time to meet with them at Laclede to ascertain how they might assist the school. In our meeting, I discovered that they originally volunteered at another SLPS district school location. At that location, their desire to assist the school with their expertise did not materialize because of the inability of the principal to utilize their time and talents. Bonnie shared that they possessed an unbelievable abundant knowledge of technology. In that very short conversation, I quickly considered a project for them, gleaned, directly from my high priority ‘to do list’. With the outdated computers received from the government in the school’s possession, Bonnie assured me that she,

196 Leithwood and Steinbach, "Indicators of Transformational Leadership"
Charlie, and Jorge, could refurbish the computers to full capacity with a limited budget for parts and the three of them would donate their time and labor. In less than six months, the Laclede School enjoyed a computer lab of 30 fully functioning computers. The technology items on my ‘to do list’ became a reality in the spring of 2000. As a transformational leader, I demonstrated the value of strengthening the connections between urban school professionals, parents of low socioeconomic status, along with community partners improves students’ academic achievement.

As Y2K continued, an abbreviation for the year 2000, Laclede School continued its recognition as an urban academic achiever, visited by educators from across the St. Louis metropolitan region and in receipt of ongoing resources until my promotion to the SLPS central office in July 2003. I continued in amazement by the number of curious community people who came to Laclede School prompted by articles they had read in the newspapers. Two such people with the same last name, Baron, although unrelated as family or in their respective businesses, validated my accomplishments as a transformational leader. One man’s validation came in the form of monetary support for Laclede School; and the other’s validation came in the form of a compelling job offer.

One afternoon while preparing for school dismissal, an unassuming older man entered the great hall of Laclede seeking an audience with the principal. Coincidentally, I happened to be exiting my office. I greeted the man and inquired if I could be of assistance to him. He introduced himself as Charles Baron of the Mildred-Simon

197 https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=joyce+roberts+attendance+achievement+attitude
Foundation. I remembered the surname of Baron as I had recently met with Richard Baron of McCormack-Baron, real estate developers.

Mr. Charles Baron asked several interesting questions specifically regarding creating a successful elementary school. At the end of our amazing conversation, he asked why Laclede School did not possess a Waterford Reading Program (an individualized computerized intervention program for struggling readers). I indicated that the cost of the Waterford Program (computers, software, and teacher training) exceeded Laclede’s annual budget. Mr. Charles Baron encouraged me to visit two schools, one in SLPS and the other in the Ferguson-Florissant school district, to observe the Waterford Program in operation. Charles Baron and I agreed to reconvene later to discuss the Waterford Program’s merits. The site visitations proved invaluable. I exuded excitement throughout our conversation and delighted in his commitment to fund the Waterford Reading Program for Laclede School. Charles Baron indicated that the Mildred-Simon Foundation would donate $17,500 toward the cost of the Waterford Reading Program. I would be responsible for raising the balance.\footnote{Appendix 1 Community Partnerships Item 18}

I decided to write a personal letter to the president of Emerson Electric to enlist his support for the Waterford Reading Program. He had participated in an earlier community partnership program, Principal-for-a-Day, at Laclede School. He responded with a donation of $5,000 earmarked for the Waterford Reading Program. I also approached St. Louis Board of Education member, Bill Haas a proponent of early literacy, and explained my dilemma. Impressed by my presentation, he generously donated his Board of Education travel expense budget ($5,000). I received additional
support for the Waterford Reading Program beyond the initial purchase cost. The Waterford Reading Program had a great effect on teaching and learning at Laclede School.\textsuperscript{200}

Mr. Richard Baron had visited with me at Laclede School, invited me to lunch, attempted to persuade me to leave Laclede School, and become principal of Jefferson Elementary School in the SLPS district. Richard Baron had a vision of creating a community of mixed-income housing units (single-family dwellings and apartments) anchored by the Jefferson School under the stewardship of a proven transformational leader. According to Richard Baron, I met all of the requirements necessary to facilitate the academic success of a school to anchor his visionary community.

Richard Baron presented an amazing offer that included the job as Jefferson School’s principal and a home in the school’s community (attendance area). I contemplated the implications of leaving Laclede School and discussed the opportunity with my family. Instead of simply saying yes, I countered with a proposal for his consideration and the consideration of my SLPS supervisor. The counter proposal consisted of merging the two schools, creating two distinct elementary school campuses, and integrating the two staffs. My vision of combining the two schools under my leadership challenged the traditional concept of one school – one principal. Even though Richard Baron supported the idea, this concept did not receive the approval of my SLPS supervisor. Consequently, I decided to decline the offer. I believed that I possessed the capacity, vision, and staff (human capital) to provide transformational leadership in the two schools.

\textsuperscript{200} Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning Item 9
While I received recognition and awards as the transformational leader at Laclede, the time I invested in the process of shaping the work environment, evolving the staff into a cohesive instructional leadership team, and collectively determined to ensure student academic success, made all the accolades a reality.\(^1\) I continued to create organizational innovation by introducing new processes and systems into Laclede’s culture. Transformational leadership supports and promotes innovation, which in turn can ensure the long-term survival of a school.\(^2\) The culture of a school changes when new students and staff enter into an environment that is fully functioning at a higher level that is quite different from their previous school experiences. When that occurs, school processes are essential to maintain order, continue high expectations for student and staff, and provide the tools necessary for new students and staff to assimilate into the high-performing school environment. I designed intervention strategies to ensure students received coaching opportunities to adapt to Laclede’s way of doing things. A similar innovation occurred for new staff as well. Of course, these innovations could not have proven successful without the complete buy-in of the Laclede staff. Transformational leadership focuses on stimulating change through bottom-up staff participation.\(^3\) The following innovations grew out of the collaborative discussions, tweaking and implementation of the administration and staff members; Wise-Up, Respect Class, and Peer Instructional Observations.

In an effort to ensure a successful transition for new and returning students, the first month of school designated as Wise-Up. The collective school membership under the direction of classroom teachers, concentrates on setting the tone, expectations, rules and routines that govern the smooth operation of school. This process repeated intermittently throughout the school year as warranted for new students.

To limit loss of instructional time due to teacher referrals recommending out-of-school suspensions, I initiated another visionary idea dubbed Respect Class. My premise as a transformational leader involved challenging the school counselor to implement the counseling curriculum of conflict resolution, coping mechanisms, and character education directly into the classroom under the watchful eyes of classroom teachers. This process, designed to teach students good decision-making skills, also provided job-embedded professional development for classroom teachers. This intentional strategy helped teachers discover and engage their students around the positive implications of encouragement, acceptance of classmates, and teachers learn to interact more effectively with students exhibiting poor behavior. The Respect Class decreased the number of students recommended for suspension and armed teachers with additional intervention strategies to redirect poor behavior. However, some disciplinary infractions continued to merit out-of-school suspensions.

I designed and implemented the Peer Instructional Observations strategy to create opportunities for the teaching staff to observe their colleagues’ best practices, instructional strategies, and teacher-to-student dynamics. The staff member, self-directed, selected one planning period per month to visit each colleague’s classroom, formally observe instruction, and capture in writing a strategy that they would
incorporate in their instructional practice. I encouraged staff members to share their take-away with grade-level team members during their common planning period. This strategy is the deprivatization of practice.\textsuperscript{204}

As a transformational leader, I provided the impetus, strategy, and vision to cultivate the staff to fashion different ways to tackle problems; thereby endowing their sovereignty in problem solving. I personally demonstrated unwavering commitment to organizational objectives and then empowered Laclede staff to accomplish those objectives creating enhanced performance on their part.\textsuperscript{205} I realized the importance of providing individualized attention to the respective members of my staff based on their needs for achievement and growth, while serving as mentor or coach to develop their optimal potential.\textsuperscript{206} My efforts generated a ‘Teacher of the Year’ applicant. For the 2002-2003 school year, Audrey Ferguson, the Laclede School mathematics teacher, became the first African American recipient in the fifty-year history of the Missouri Teacher of the Year award.\textsuperscript{207} Mrs. Ferguson also represented the State of Missouri in competition at the national level for the Teacher of the Year.

Prior to receiving notification of Mrs. Ferguson’s selection as the Missouri Teacher of the Year, additional recognitions would be forthcoming. A communication received from the Superintendent’s office identified Laclede School’s administration and staff for an accountability performance award for student academic achievement.\textsuperscript{208}

\textsuperscript{207} “Teachers Should Figure into Reform Equation,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 13, 2003, C2; See also https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/FormerTOY.pdf
\textsuperscript{208} See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 16, 16b
Following this recognition, DESE recognized Laclede School as being in the Top 10 ‘most improved’ for increasing the combined percentage of students scoring in the Proficient and Advanced categories in Communications Arts, Grade 3 and Science, Grade 3. Laclede School’s administration and staff also received an invitation to make a presentation to the Missouri State Board of Education (DESE) detailing the strategies used to initiate, implement, and maintain high levels of student academic achievement. After the presentation, State board members said they wanted to learn from schools such as Laclede. Thomas R. Davis, president of the state board, said, “I would like to bottle what happens at Laclede and take it around the state. I encourage you to replicate it in your district, and I hope we can draw on what you do.”

Little did they know at the state (DESE), I had already independently started the replication process. I had responded to formal requests from the SLPS district, educational colleagues from the St. Louis metropolitan region and from educators across the state of Missouri. These requests scheduled site visits, discussions, and my presentations before various groups and organizations to share Laclede’s strategies for student academic success. Transformational leaders become role models admired, respected, and emulated by their colleagues.

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209 See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 17; “Schools are Recognized for Improvement in Student Scores on Standardized Tests, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 13, 2002, 12.

210 See Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item 18

211 “No Goals Barred: Laclede Elementary Rises to the Challenge of Improving Student Achievement – then Surpasses it,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, October 28, 2002, B1.

212 Avolio and Bass, Developing Potential across a Full Range of Leadership; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 1; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 2; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 3; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 4; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 5; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 6; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 7; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 8; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 9; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 10; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 11; Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 12;
I believed that the fast-paced environment of ending the school year (2003-2004) and gearing up for summer school would help to transition my mind, body, and spirit away from the excitement of success. I was wrong. I received a telephone call from David Flieg, the assistant SLPS superintendent, while literally standing at the secretary’s counter in the Laclede School main office. In a matter of fact tone of voice, he informed me of my selection as the executive director of middle school education. I quietly responded with “how could that be possible and may I call you back when I am in my office?” Meanwhile, many thoughts flooded my mind regarding the just-received information from a trusted source. One reflection surfaced and remained present. I had accomplished substantially more than I had anticipated in moving a good school to the next level.

Perhaps, now is the time that I should embrace this new opportunity for personal and professional growth to affect a greater number of students, staff, parents, and the broader community. I convinced myself to accept the new position of executive director of middle school education even though it meant leaving a successful school environment (competent staff, students who embraced learning and the support of parents in the broader community). A difficult choice to make, however, the right decision to make.

The school district, as a whole, had experienced gradual academic decline under the leadership of Dr. Cleveland Hammonds. This situation continued unchecked for years until the state of Missouri downgraded SLPS district’s accreditation status to provisional. According to DESE, provisional accreditation is a classification of the Missouri School Improvement Plan where a school district only earned 70 to 98 points of
a possible maximum 140 points (Accredited with Distinction) on its annual performance report. A significant decrease in student enrollment, school building surplus, and a looming budget deficit led the newly-elected four-member ‘4 Kids Slate’ to award a $5 million, 13-month contract to a private ‘turnaround’ company, Alvarez & Marsal, to run its urban school district. Under this arrangement, William Roberti, a nontraditional candidate and former executive with the Brooks Brothers clothing chain, became the interim superintendent.\(^{213}\) The St. Louis Public School district, an urban public school district that encompasses the city of St. Louis only, became the first urban school district in the country involved in a nontraditional turnaround initiative led by a nontraditional superintendent supported by the mayor and the business community.\(^{214}\)

Traditional educational turnarounds are necessary in schools where student performance has been chronically low and where incremental efforts to improve student academic results have failed. The newly-elected four-member ‘4 Kids Slate’, the voting majority of the St. Louis Board of Education, charged William Roberti to close the district’s budget deficit: he initiated a reduction in force (RIF), outsourced district-provided services (i.e. custodial and food service) and launched the sale of undersubscribed school buildings. Undaunted by the unsettling circumstances that the SLPS district faced, I accepted the position of Executive Director of Middle School Education.

This decision to accept the position of executive director of middle school education produced personal/professional apprehension regarding my potential successor.

\(^{213}\) “St. Louis Public Schools Board Hires Turnaround Company,” \textit{STLtoday.com}, June 03, 2003.
My unique understanding of the school’s context/culture, staffing dynamics, and myriad partnerships led me to seek a major role in the selection of my replacement. My intent to seek inclusion in the selection process reflected the importance of maintaining and/or extending Laclede School’s legacy of student academic achievement, which occurred over the ten years of my transformational leadership.

Mistrust permeated the SLPS district and my elevation to the executive director position from the elementary ranks initially caused a level of discomfort for the middle school principals under my supervision. The question arose how can she lead without any experience? A few of my most vocal detractors did not know my SLPS district experience included an immersion in the middle school configuration (i.e., teacher, instructional coordinator, assistant principal, and principal). I did not have to respond to the query as the answer came from knowledgeable colleagues.

With the credentialing and work-related experience set aside, I proceeded to establish my role as a transformational leader, introduce my expectations of performance, promote the concept of building principal as the chief educational officer of their respective school, and reiterate the principal’s obligation to students, staff, parents, and community.\footnote{Anthony S. Bryk, and Barbara Schneider. "Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform," \textit{Educational Leadership} 60, no. 6 (2003): 40-45.} As a former principal, I modeled my personal willingness to extend myself beyond the formal requirements of my new role. My action plan, designed to develop and sustain personal regard, accessibility, accountability, and trust became central to day-to-day interactions with principals that I continued to earn daily.
I knew I was initiating transformational change from the central office level by helping each principal to redefine their mission, vision, and commitment to restructure their professional approaches to reach the goal of student academic achievement.²¹⁶ A review of the longitudinal MAP data for SLPS middle schools detailed that students underperformed in all categories (Communication Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies). Based on this data, I determined middle school education needed revamping and that kind of organizational change is difficult to achieve. I believed that change needed to occur in the office of the principal.

Leadership in the context of transformational change requires that the building principal becomes the lead learner. As a transformational leader with proven results-oriented strategies that raised student academic achievement, my acculturation involved convincing the middle school principals that they could cultivate success by being proactive rather than reactive, claim empowerment, and involve their respective staffs in the school’s decision-making process.²¹⁷ I also encouraged each principal to improve the culture, climate, and their interpersonal relationships with school personnel as a collaborative mechanism for their school’s ability to ensure each student’s academic success. I challenged each principal to develop a school-based community that supported and motivated teachers as they worked to overcome obstacles to the teaching and learning process (i.e. time constraints, isolation, limited budgets, etc.). Under the

leadership of a transformational principal, teachers collaborate and put their collective energies into creating instructional strategies to support student learning.\textsuperscript{218}

Full of confidence and armed with the strategies and experiences of Laclede Elementary School, I created and distributed a performance expectation document challenging principals to move 20 percent of their students out of basic and progressing into proficient and advanced performance levels based on previous year’s MAP results.\textsuperscript{219}

“The MAP is designed to measure how well students acquire the skills and knowledge described in Missouri’s Learning Standards (MLS). The assessments yield information on academic achievement at the student, class, school, district, and state levels. This information is used to diagnose individual student strengths and weaknesses.”\textsuperscript{220} The performance expectations I created set a precedent in the SLPS district.

Following the performance expectation document, I tasked each principal to identify, develop, and present a data-supported best practice as the professional development facilitator/lead learner. A different principal led the professional development session with a different best practice example monthly. Sharing these strategies with their colleagues served to strengthen their instructional toolkits. Transformational leadership creates the incentive for teachers to seek improvements in their professional practices. Transformational leadership also focuses the principal’s


\textsuperscript{219} Appendix 4 Leadership Development Item 13

attention on first order changes (i.e. monitoring teacher and classroom work) which improves instructional activities of the school while serving as the lead learner. While I created a cohesive framework to support the middle school principals, they faced a daily barrage of uncertainties (i.e. budget reduction, staff reduction, school closings, and changes in curriculum) created by the non-traditional turnaround team. These issues affected teaching and learning throughout the SLPS district. The prospect of the departure of the non-traditional superintendent and turnaround team at the end of the 2003-2004 school year brought a modicum of temporary calm for the SLPS district employees. The SLPS is set to transition to a long-time district administrator, Floyd Crues, to serve as an interim traditional superintendent on July 1, 2004.

Superintendent Crues and I met during our tenure as building principals. He led Beaumont High School and I led Pierre Laclede Elementary. We traveled together as representatives of the SLPS district to several out-of-state educational conferences. Mr. Crues always engaged me in lively conversations detailing how I maintained high levels of student academic achievement. When he decided to accept the superintendent position, he told me that he established a position of assistant superintendent of priority schools, which reported directly to him. He convinced me to consider the new position. With little deliberation, I accepted the invitation to become assistant superintendent of priority schools.

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222 “Veteran Educator tapped as St. Louis Schools Interim Chief,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 09, 2004.
SLPS Central Office as Assistant Superintendent – Priority Schools

Priority schools, at that time, identified as among the lowest performing Title I schools in the state of Missouri.

The Title I program provides supplemental educational services so that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. Generally, to qualify for assistance under Title I, a student must reside within the attendance area of a participating public school located in a low-income area and be failing, or at risk of failing, to meet student academic achievement standards.²²³

The No Child Left behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 increased the testing requirements for states and established stringent accountability standards for all public schools. Faced with the demands of NCLB, building principals/staff left untrained and unfocused after the departure of the turnaround team, it became apparent that I needed a process to move priority schools forward in a seamless manner. I decided to create a movement led by my transformational leadership style. The movement to support principals and their staffs at the building level involved packaging with modifications of the successful strategies of MAPAttack that I used at Laclede School.

Previously, each school’s site-specific data inaccessible directly from their school’s website. The first transition in this implementation began by streamlining each school’s access to their respective MAP data. The initial access for data retrieval involved locating SLPS among the 526 school districts in Missouri on the DESE website.

Upon locating SLPS, the district’s code had to be entered. Once the DESE website accepted the district’s code, the principal then entered his/her site-specific location code allowing access to their school’s data.

My innovative contribution for data retrieval proved instrumental in eliminating the historic process of data retrieval of yearly MAP results in the SLPS district. I engaged the services of the Information Technology specialists to streamline the data retrieval process for each school under my supervision. This electronic access eliminated the cumbersome job of using DESE’s portal to access each school’s MAP results by placing a data portal on each school’s website. Included in the MAPAttack initiative, I also created a centrally located professional development center situated on the lower level of the central office facility dedicated to student academic achievement and the training of the educators charged with increasing academic achievement for the priority schools. As a motivational strand, I developed a monthly newsletter dedicated to sharing good news stories/best practices, professional development opportunities, and priority schools improvement efforts, along with the distribution of t-shirts for all adults in priority schools, embossed with the slogan ‘Priority Schools MAPAttack Ambassador’.

I identified the data lens process as a key component of professional development for principals/teachers to improve student academic achievement in priority schools. This process included categorizing student results on MAP into two distinct instructional line items. Those line items consisted of ‘must teach skills’ and ‘mastery’. Labeling skills in this manner helped to denote for the teacher the course of instruction. After analyzing the data, the teacher re-taught the concept, provided additional scaffolding, and partnered with before-and-after school teachers to give the student additional practice.
around the ‘must teach skill’ before retesting for mastery. The approach to scaffolding/re-teaching of ‘must teach skills’ manifested differently at each school depending on the grade level. Priority schools included elementary, middle, and high schools respectively. When the data revealed mastery of a skill, the principal required teachers to continue providing instruction to ensure maintenance of the skill already mastered. Principals and teachers in the priority schools embraced the principles/strategies of the MAPAttack initiative and modified the framework to meet their individual student and school needs.224

During the course of my responsibility for priority school education, I received a telephone call from Dr. Donald Suggs, president of the St. Louis American foundation and owner of the St. Louis American weekly newspaper. I learned that I would receive the 2004 Stellar Performer Award honoring excellence in education. This unexpected recognition highlighted my leadership abilities in another capacity within the SLPS district for doing the work I loved.225

In the midst of creating the MAPAttack movement, rallying the priority schools, and implementing ‘Data Saturdays’ (data analysis) professional development, superintendent Crues abruptly submits an extended medical leave of absence and the direction for priority schools abruptly stalls. As I reported to Superintendent Crues, my direct line of supervision ceased to exist. The incoming chief academic officer, a Broad Foundation graduate, Lynn Spampinato, and the fourth superintendent in two years, Dr. Craig Williams, established a new direction for SLPS district. The mission of the Broad

foundation focused on reforming K-12 urban public education through better governance, management, labor relations, competition, and the development of non-traditional central office leadership. The reform team led by Bill Roberti imposed two new district-wide instructional strategies, ‘Step UP to Writing’ and ‘Direct Instruction’, upon the SLPS district. Subsequently, the district leadership reassigned me as the assistant superintendent of professional development for the SLPS district.

*SLPS Central Office as Assistant Superintendent – Professional Development*

Consultants provided the district professional development with little input from my office. Other academic assistant superintendents assumed the supervision of priority schools. Within my limited scope, I proceeded to reorganize the professional development office. The reorganization included initiating a district-wide professional development training calendar, reassigning staff to manage specific schools, and providing easy access to all district employees’ professional development portfolio, which complied with a DESE mandate. These limited duties, fractured district leadership, and lack of focus at the district office level, informed my decision to retire from the SLPS district after 34 years of committed service effective June 30, 2005.

**Chapter 3 – Wellston School District**

*Introduction/Background/Setting*

The ‘home rule’ concept of the Missouri state constitution of 1876 enabled the incorporation of the Wellston municipality in St. Louis County zoned as an industrial

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226 For additional details on the Broad Foundation see [http://www.broadfoundation.org/about_foundations.html](http://www.broadfoundation.org/about_foundations.html)
area reflecting the same patterns of land use of the City of St. Louis, which it bordered.\textsuperscript{227}

St. Louis City exists as a hybrid entity that used the same ‘home rule’ concept to divorce/separate itself from St. Louis County in 1876. Since Wellston existed outside the City of St. Louis in St. Louis County as an industrial area and financially independent, it created, operated, and sustained its own public school district. With the flight of its White residents and several businesses, Wellston slipped into decay. The school district and neighborhoods suffered as a direct result of decline in its tax base.

Wellston, Missouri, a once vibrant community, a major transportation and shopping center had long since lost its appeal. Wellston, Missouri reduced to a haven of abandoned autos, tow companies, and poor housing stock with a majority of its citizens living in abject poverty. A mayor and city council serve as the political leaders of the community. Additionally, there are a large number of churches within its city limits but the community is without a public library.

The school district had long-standing and deep-seated problems as well. It had bounced between provisionally accredited and unaccredited status for more than 10 years. Many students had paid the price for the district’s inability to focus on its fundamental academic needs and priorities. Under Missouri law, whenever a school district is unaccredited for two successive years, “its corporate organization shall lapse.”\textsuperscript{228}

Finally, DESE made the decision to declare the Wellston School District unaccredited; the first school district to be declared unaccredited in the history of the state of Missouri. DESE based its decision largely because of low-test scores and other


\textsuperscript{228} Mo. Rev. Stat. § 162.081(1).
persistent accountability issues; the WSD became a ward of the state. Politicians, the Wellston community, parents, and school district employees challenged this action. There had been continuous requests for attendance documentation that is the DESE basis for determining budget allocations. All requests for attendance data met with delay after delay. The outgoing superintendent of 21 years, Ronald Stodghill earned one of the highest superintendent salaries in the state of Missouri while leading perhaps the smallest enrollment, refused to appear before DESE and respond to questions surrounding academic achievement gains. Again, the superintendent failed to respond. As a result, on June 30, 2005, DESE disbanded the WSD Board of Education and relieved the superintendent of his duties.²²⁹

DESE established a Special Administrative Board (SAB) to provide oversight. The members of the SAB included Dr. Charles Brown as its chair, who also served as WSD superintendent, deployed straight from his position as Assistant Commissioner at DESE. Two community residents, Garry Beals and Cassandra Hollins-Wallace, with children in the schools joined Dr. Brown to comprise the three-member SAB in a school district of a very small community that shares a border with St. Louis City, Missouri, population 2,546 citizens.²³⁰

Once DESE made the decision to provide oversight, the superintendent moved to select a person to oversee the instructional leadership of the district as the chief academic operating officer. The superintendent decided to seek the assistance of a career educator with a proven record of accomplishment. Before I could fully comprehend my retirement

²²⁹ Appendix 5 Wellston School District Item 1 and 2
²³⁰ Appendix 5 Wellston School District Item 3
ending my educational career in the SLPS district, I received a phone call from Dr. Charles Brown. Dr. Brown, a former SLPS district colleague, and Assistant Commissioner for DESE, recently selected, as a Special Administrative Board (SAB) member became the new superintendent of the WSD.

Upon receiving this recruitment phone call, I had only just retired from the St. Louis Public Schools district a week earlier without any plans for what would come next. Dr. Brown, unaware of my recent retirement, planned to persuade me to retire early from SLPS and join him in the WSD. I agreed to accept the position(s) – Chief Academic Officer/Chief Operating Officer (CAO/COO). I pondered the possibilities for the WSD and what I could do to help turn around the school district.231

Create the Path Forward

The initial lapse of the WSD district created an environment of uncertainty and anxiety for the employees and the only secretary at the district office had decided to take a job in a neighboring school district. A potential disaster dissipated as I secured the services of a woman, Ms. Taylor, who had recently been a victim of reduction in force. She possessed the skills I needed to move forward in crafting documents, action plans, and modifying the Title 1 schoolwide application for the WSD. She and I agreed upon appropriate compensation and I provided her renumeration personally for the first 4 months of her employment. Shortly thereafter, the WSD recognized her value and

231 “Wellston Embarks on a Quest for Excellence: Can Joyce Roberts’ Skills and Determination Reclaim a Discredited School District?” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, August 22, 2005, B7; “Retired Educator Pitches in to help Wellston’s Schools,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, October 18, 2005, B1, B8; Appendix 5 Wellston School District Item 4 Congratulatory Email.
decided to become her employer. Ms. Taylor’s presence, commitment, and loyalty stabilized the central office and allowed me to focus on the other critical issues.

The SAB did not provide a process or a blueprint to follow to reopen a failed public school district. I believed me to be the right person for the district and so did Dr. Brown, who determined the first day of school to be six weeks from my start date. I relied on previous leadership experiences in the SLPS district that allowed me to formulate guiding documents, ‘Wellston School District Blueprint for Success’, ‘Wellston School District Mission Statement’, and ‘Wellston School District Success Matrix’.\textsuperscript{232} I utilized these documents to direct all stakeholders in their roles to reestablish the newly formed Wellston School District. My entire educational career founded in transformational leadership informed my plans for the reconstituted Wellston School District.

After accepting the position in the WSD, I proceeded to tour the community at large and visit each of the four school sites: Wellston Early Childhood Center, Central Elementary School, Bishop Middle School, and Eskridge High School. Visits to the four schools revealed extreme physical neglect and decay. All of the buildings required interior and exterior paint, replacement of glass in the classroom windows, new window replacement/inserts, and immediate repair/attention to plumbing issues that allowed raw sewage backup on the lower level of the middle school prior to the start of the 2005-2006 school year. During the site visits, I met with the principal of Central Elementary School, a former SLPS colleague who also supervised the director of the WSD Early Childhood

\textsuperscript{232} Appendix 5 Wellston School District Item 5 Wellston School District Blueprint for Success, Item 6 WSD Mission Statement; Item 7 WSD Success Matrix.
Center, to gauge their capacity, commitment, and value added potential. Both administrators in our truncated conference convinced me that they possessed the ability/experience, willingness, enthusiasm, and self-confidence to lead their respective buildings during the transition of the WSD under my supervision as CAO/COO.

In my visit to the Eskridge High School, I met another glimmer of hope in Nirita Braford, the high school English teacher and team leader for her department. She became a key informant providing critical historic context for the Wellston School District. A key informant is an expert source of information.\textsuperscript{233} Impressed with her level of enthusiasm, knowledge, loyalty, and respect for colleagues and students, I recommended her for consideration for the Apple for the Teacher Award for fall 2005. Each year, chapters of the Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc., bestowed this award upon a deserving educator during American Education Week observance. As a former recipient of this tribute, in an effort to build relationships in the WSD, recommending Ms. Bradford seemed an appropriate enterprise.\textsuperscript{234} Based on the sorority’s criteria, her credentials, recommendations, and achievements within the WSD, Ms. Bradford received the prestigious award.\textsuperscript{235}

My next urgent concern focused on identifying, recruiting, and hiring for the two remaining principal vacancies at the middle school and high school. I recognized each administrative staff selection as critical to the accreditation health of the WSD as well as a personal benchmark for my vision for the district. Each new hire met the MSIP requirement of highly qualified with the appropriate certification. My experience in the

\textsuperscript{234} Appendix 5 Wellston School District Item 8 Apple for the Teacher Iota Phi Lambda Sorority
\textsuperscript{235} Appendix 5 Wellston School District Item 9
SLPS district helped me to amass colleagues, contacts, and resources to assist me in the ‘turnaround efforts’ in the WSD. I contacted, interviewed, and subsequently hired two highly qualified administrative leaders with experience in turnaround efforts: Robert Hudson for Curtis Bishop Middle School and Charles Shelton for Eskridge High School. The WSD turnaround leadership team at the building level is complete. Most turnaround efforts require capacity development on the part of the entire organization. The process begins with building principals committed to solving substantial problems associated with implementation of turnaround initiatives. My goal, to translate transformational approaches to leadership in WSD, included advocating productive practices under less than ideal conditions.236 Another test of my transformative leadership in WSD rested with my ability to motivate a beleaguered staff and community by inspiring their collective consciousness, will, and restoring a sense of hope: the true source of power to reform the school district.237

Hope theory is a positive state whereby participants harness their will to achieve an organization’s goals.238 The role of hope is instrumental in sustaining innovation during major changes such as educational turnaround efforts.239 Hope, a social influence process, is especially visible in the transformational leader. In the WSD, my leadership

required an interaction with my leadership team and staff that involved planning/implementing the restructuring of the WSD.

Much still had to be accomplished in preparation to meet the agreed upon opening date for the WSD. In addition to filling staff vacancies, ordering books and supplies, restoring in-house custodial staff and cafeteria workers which had been outsourced to vendors, planning professional development, engaging all stakeholders in the development of the WSD comprehensive school improvement plan, and the rewriting of the Title I school-wide application, all of which consumed enormous time and energy. However, a larger issue plaguing the district entailed negotiations with host district superintendents regarding transportation costs associated with disgruntled parents exercising the option to transfer from an unaccredited school district; a Missouri state law required that the WSD pay the tuition and transportation costs for any student who elects to transfer to an accredited public school district.240

In the meeting, August 2005, with district staff prior to the start of school, I proceeded to convince the staff of my confidence in their ability to succeed under seemingly impossible odds, obstacles, or events. I spoke to the immediate requirements of the WSD, elevated the staff by instilling in them a sense of purpose, of urgency, hope, and a belief that change possible through seamless, committed, and focused effort. My leadership appeared to motivate the staff awakening hopeful thoughts geared toward productive actions in the district in the quest to earn accreditation. Engaging the broader community would also be key to moving the district forward. The process of developing

240 Appendix 5 Wellston School District Item 10 DESE Unaccredited school district rules/law
community partners had worked for me throughout my career and Wellston would be no different.

Community Partnerships

To start the process, I engaged Liz Brown; a popular and well respected talk show host and radio personality who advocated for public education equity within the African American community. As an attorney and activist, her voice and message resonated encouraging her listeners to action. She allowed me to share my vision for the WSD, my belief that as a community the district could survive, and invited the St. Louis community to serve as mentors for every student in the WSD. Ms. Brown’s supportive attitude and willingness to participate with the district, allowing frequent airtime on the radio, raised awareness and served to support our efforts. One of the partnership opportunities introduced/discussed on her radio show at WG il showcased the ‘Gentlemen’s Club’ founded by Stephen G. Peters, a former classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, and director of secondary education in the state of North Carolina. Inspired by my personal interaction with Dr. Peters in the SLPS district, his message could create the impetus for WSD male students to understand and own their potential for greatness. I identified his book *(Do You Know Enough about Me to Teach Me? A Student’s Perspective)* as a must read for the entire district and charged each building principal to ensure implementation/compliance with this administrative directive. The major themes of the book provide a better understanding for educators of how the home/environment influences the types of students they are responsible for
educating, specific strategies to engage all learners, and how effective relationship building with children is fundamental for student and school success.241

Dr. Peters, a symbol of high hope, engaged the boys of the WSD in a workshop to initially introduce the gentlemen’s club expectation, format, and the conveyance of the ‘tie’ presented as an integral component of the initiation and commitment to the ‘Gentlemen’s Club.’ Dr. Peters, in a short time, served to challenge the students to be productive, created an arena of excitement, and demonstrated a personal commitment to their success.242 With the students won over to the Gentlemen’s Club idea, motivating, energizing, and enlisting the staff as volunteers to spearhead the clubs transcended their own self-interests in favor of the needs of the boys in the Gentlemen’s Club; an opportunity for collaboration that previously did not exist.243 On the days when the club met, the boys wore khaki pants, white shirts, and their ties. The opportunity to share ‘Wellston: Good News’ on the radio brought another community partner, Mr. Douglas McFarlin.

Mr. McFarlin, founder of the ‘Gift of Time Foundation’ and mentor to Mr. Leonard Little, St. Louis Rams professional football player/defensive end of the National Football League expressed a keen interest in becoming a part of the community effort to restore the WSD to full accreditation. Noting the interest of support from Mr. McFarlin and Mr. Little, I decided to frame a project that needed their energy and commitment. I

informed them that the Wellston municipality did not feature a branch of the St. Louis County Public Library and I wanted ‘literacy’ to be the cornerstone for the community at large. Both men agreed to support the idea of literacy and the Leonard Little Literacy Initiative (L3) evolved out of our conversation with Mr. Little funding the initial purchase of books.244

My next step entailed identifying a location to serve as a pseudo-public library/literacy site and convince the owners to allow me to establish a small ‘free’ book literacy center much like the ones placed at the entrance to Marrillac Hall on the south campus of UMSL and in community gardens throughout the metropolitan area. I convinced the owners of JJ Fish, a restaurant frequented by many of the WSD families, which inhabited the busiest corner in the Wellston municipality at Martin Luther King and Kienlen to become a viable, visible, and supportive community partner. After assuring the owners that my concept of a literacy center would not negatively affect their business operations, they allowed me to place a library/literacy center in the southwest corner of their restaurant. With space secured for the literacy center, I planned a ribbon-cutting ceremony formally introducing the literacy concept’s aid to the community and JJ Fish provided refreshments.

I made it a point to maintain relationships that I developed over the course of my career as a way of staying connected and to be able to call upon my contacts as needed. I met with a previous contact at Arches. Arches evolved from the Caring Communities Program that I hosted in Laclede School while principal. Mr. Perry Wilson, the founder

of the “If I Had a Hammer Program’ wanted the WSD to be the first recipient of this new initiative sponsored by Missouri Community Partnership for Greater St. Louis and Arches. The program taught students the practical application of mathematics through the construction of a house followed by twenty-one days of after school tutoring. My ability to motivate students, staff, volunteers, and community partners to energetically and enthusiastically to collaborate in support of the WSD goals is one of the benchmarks of transformational leadership. My ultimate intent in developing community partnerships centered on attaining the goal of accreditation for the WSD for the benefit of the students in a manner that provided opportunities for them to dream beyond their circumstance.

Over the course of the 2005-2006 school year, additional community partners committed to the WSD community partnership in an effort to restore full accreditation.245

My last partnership initiative for the 2005-2006 school year centered on providing a summer school experience that far exceeded the customary program planning limited to the district schools. The schools in the WSD did not have central air-conditioning, a major obstacle to learning during the hot muggy summers in St. Louis. I looked beyond the borders of Wellston to engage sponsors for host sites with the capabilities to add experiential learning beyond the textbook. I explored summer school hosting options with the Wellston Housing Authority, St. Louis Science Center, UMSL, Washington University, and the History Museum. All of the community agencies responded with a resounding yes and the students became the grateful recipients of their gracious

support/generosity. With the partnerships in place, I could focus my attention to designing professional development to expose the staff to the importance of using data to inform instruction in preparation for MAP assessments.

I relaunched the successful ‘MAPAttack’ initiative implemented at Laclede School during my career in the SLPS district. I determined the ‘MAPAttack’ concept’s usefulness to the staff and students of the WSD to be effective in its ability to improve students’ test results if properly implemented. MAPAttack exposed the staff to a systemic data analysis process that informed instruction in the classroom designed to meet individual students’ needs. The staff, committed to the implementation of the MAPAttack strategies, witnessed a detectable improvement in student academic achievement.

Shortly after the April 2006 meeting with DESE, I detected a change in the superintendent’s demeanor. I attributed these subtle nuances to the fast-paced 2005-2006 school year. With the end of the school year approaching, the hard-working employees of the WSD could look forward to rest, rejuvenation of the mind, body, and spirit over the summer break.

With the start of the 2006-2007 school year, the relationship between the superintendent and myself reached an impasse and began to deteriorate. I came to view the superintendents’ leadership style (transactional) as a way to use his position to control subordinates’ actions ultimately affecting their morale. His leadership style had lain

246 “Retired Educator Pitches in to Help Wellston’s Schools,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, October 18, 2005, B1, B8.
dormant during the early 2005-2006 turnaround efforts; however, it emerged at the end of the school year. There are instances in educational environments when leaders use their power with little regard for its impact on other members of the organization. The superintendent’s desire to amend strategic district plans created paradoxes in decisions already accepted and implemented by his subordinates.

I had earned the respect, admiration, and trust of the WSD staff because of my implementation of the positive/effective aspects of the turnaround efforts that included them. I interacted with them in a supportive, reciprocal, and trusting manner. Many individuals, within and outside the WSD, playfully referred to me as the superintendent of WSD, including the superintendent of the neighboring Normandy School District. While I dispelled that notion immediately, the WSD superintendent seemed to believe his leadership role diminished by this perception. I never accepted or acted on the comments made by others. I pledged my skills, energy, and passion to support the WSD superintendent in any way possible. I understood and accepted my role. My ability, to ignite my respective staffs to high levels of organizational performance in the face of adversity, reinforced my effectiveness as a transformational leader.

However, the superintendent’s limited administrative experiences restricted his capacity to provide visionary leadership to a failed school district. He had served as a long-time administrator in offices that supported the daily operation of schools/districts.

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248 Gardner, *On Leadership*
and had never served as a building principal. That limited scope clouded his judgement and created a feeling of inferiority and bias towards me, his subordinate. Instead of my talent considered as an asset to the organization, it seemingly posed a threat to the superintendent who lacked confidence and experience in his own abilities to move others to get the work done.

I determined that the impasse between the superintendent and me to have detrimental implications for the WSD. I would not jeopardize the WSD’s gains earned through motivation, mobilization, and accountability measures secured by working directly with me, nor would I compromise my ethical, personal, or moral integrity. Unable to thrive in that kind of restrictive environment and armed with the choice to leave, I chose to leave. WSD, given a second opportunity to create a model for other failing school districts to emulate, failed, and subsequently became extinct under state supervision.

I believed that I could make a difference in the lives of the WSD’s students, families, and community. However, my positive working relationship with the superintendent ended prematurely, before I could realize the complete transformation of the failed school district. With my abrupt departure from the WSD in October 2006, I never anticipated another chance to lead, support, and serve students, staff, or community again. Instead, I prepared to complete my doctoral degree, a well over do project that I could now give my full attention. Surprisingly, my talents, accomplishments, and transformational leadership allowed me another educational opportunity in the Normandy School District.

251 Burns, *Leadership*
Chapter 4

Normandy School District

*Effective Instructional Coordinator (EIC)*

Normandy School District (NSD) is a public school district serving 24 municipalities in northern St. Louis County, Missouri. The district operates one comprehensive high school, one alternative high school, one middle school, five elementary schools, and one early childhood center. The district is named for Normandy, Missouri, one of the primary municipalities served by the district. The provisionally unaccredited public school district borders SLPS district and the WSD.

My transition to the NSD had been at the discretion of the Superintendent, Dr. Connie Calloway. The first time I interacted with her followed a telephone call she placed to me while I served as CAO in the WSD. Dr. Calloway invited me to attend a luncheon meeting she would host with other women superintendents from across the metropolitan region. I explained my role of CAO, not superintendent, at WSD. However, she insisted intimating that she knew exactly my role.

The meeting accorded me the opportunity to meet Dr. Chris Nicastro, superintendent of the Hazelwood school district, who later became the Commissioner of Education at DESE for Missouri. They discussed the issues that plagued women
superintendents and the role of meeting monthly to serve as one another’s’ support system. Once she became aware that I no longer worked in the WSD, she directed the human resource department to locate and set a time that the two of us could meet.

The NSD superintendent indicated that she noticed that I did not attend a meeting with the WSD superintendent as customary and wondered if I would agree to join the NSD as an Effective Instructional Coordinator (EIC). I agreed to join the NSD. Dr. Calloway provided the leadership for the provisionally accredited NSD, comprised of 5,700 students. Upon my arrival to the district, I assumed the role of coordinating MAP strategies across the district in the curriculum department. A job description did not exist and so the day-to-day schedule followed a day-to-day format and or duties as assigned.

The curriculum office provided the district-wide professional development (PD) training. The high school served as the central location for every professional development training session. The director of curriculum determined the topics in isolation without input from the district principals, teachers, and support staff. At one of these professional development sessions, I designed a MAP presentation for the staff titled MAP: 39 days and counting. Immediately following the training session, the news media asked the superintendent to discuss next steps regarding additional MAP preparation. This interview earmarked one of the few times the media seemed interested in the NSD. The superintendent insisted that I go to every school and reiterate those strategies.

The one size fit all model of PD engineered discontent in the district. Principals wanted input into the decision-making process so that topic selections are relevant to their staff and school needs. Transformational leadership champions, supports, and
advances innovation at the price of confronting obstacles presented by organizational officials.\textsuperscript{252} However, my position, EIC, as a subordinate, under the supervision of the director of curriculum, created an inner struggle for me to contain my natural tendency to exercise transformational leadership, intercede on behalf of the principals, or even challenge the director’s leadership acumen. Additionally, the Board of Education in the NSD had been slow in deciding whether to extend the contract of the superintendent so she applied to an out-of-state district and received the position of superintendent of Detroit Public Schools.

The superintendent called all of the central office staff together to share that she would be leaving and if they had any questions concerning the academic health of the district, I would be a good resource even though my tenure in the district had been short-lived. The out-going superintendent, Dr. Connie Callaway, directed attention to competent leadership available within their midst. Her vote of confidence served to validate my leadership skills. She also insisted that I apply for the vacant superintendent position and shared that I displayed a great deal of humility for a person who consistently received a great deal of notoriety for increasing student achievement.

The 2006-2007 school year ended and I wrestled with the question of what had I really done to support Normandy schools. The 2007-2008 school year started in the same fashion as the previous year, lacking a cohesive instructional plan to improve student achievement. Instead of focusing on providing support and strategies for MAP preparation, I spent much of my time on off-task assignments. I decided to share with

\textsuperscript{252} Scott A. Shane, ”Are Champions Different from Non-champions?” \textit{Journal of Business Venturing} 9, no. 5 (1994): 397-421.
the acting superintendent that under the current configuration of the curriculum office, I would have to resign my position, as I did not feel that I could make a positive and productive contribution to the staff and students of the NSD. Ms. Sheila Williams, the acting superintendent, asked me to consider applying for the Director of Curriculum vacancy posted by the NSD human resources office. My application would place me in direct competition with the current interim director. I still chose to apply, interviewed, and received the appointment as director of curriculum and a member of the superintendent’s cabinet for the NSD. Meanwhile, the NSD board appointed Dr. John Wright as interim superintendent and Ms. Williams returned to the position of Assistant Superintendent.

Director of Curriculum

I served as the Director of Curriculum under the leadership of interim superintendent Dr. John Wright, while the NSD Board of Education proceeded to launch a nation-wide search for a permanent superintendent. The building principals received/acknowledged and congratulated my appointment as director of curriculum. I had previously nurtured a rapport with them through a variety of interactions and now possessed the authority to affect change in the organization.

As an EIC, I had provided professional development for the 2006-2007 school year, at the building level as determined by the previous interim director of curriculum. During that era, the principals had been unable to suggest relevant PD topics and the use of data to plan and determine appropriate development did not exist. Interestingly, I had met some of the NSD principals prior to my employment in the NSD. These principals had contacted me to conduct professional development in their respective buildings on
the topic of using data to inform instruction/MAP preparation while I served as principal of Laclede School. Some NSD principals attended graduate school at the University of Missouri-St. Louis educational leadership division where I served as a guest lecturer. In addition, while principal at Laclede School, I interfaced with Ian Buchanan, principal at Garfield Elementary as his daughter’s principal. So for many of the NSD principals, I had already articulated a vision of the future, fostered group-oriented work, set high expectations, challenged their thinking, supported their individual needs, and acted as a role model.253

Over the course of time and experiences, my transformational leadership cemented/ingrained the value of developing and maintaining high-quality leader-staff relationships in organizations.254 The ability to recognize emotion is important for building strong leader-staff relationships. According to Bernard Bass, transformational leaders make it a point to “meet the emotional needs of each employee” and Jennifer George contended “that creation of follower excitement and enthusiasm stems from appraisal of staff/followers’ authentic feelings.” Accurately recognizing emotion in others is critical to leaders’ capacity to inspire and build relationships. Transformational leaders, described as champions of change, manifest important social values. These leaders are also likely to utilize emotion to communicate vision and motivation to


followers.\textsuperscript{255} It also makes sense that transformational leaders who build strong relationships are charismatic.

Max Weber initiated the theory of charisma as stemming from subordinates’ perceptions that the leader possessed exceptional skills. In the sociologist Weber’s view, charisma is a result of a social crisis.\textsuperscript{256} Leaders with extraordinary appeal possess a vision that provides a solution to a social crisis, attracting followers who align themselves with the transformational leader and supports the leader’s vision. As a result, followers show a great deal of commitment and often display unquestionable commitment/loyalty to the leader.\textsuperscript{257} As a transformational leader, I sought to re-direct the NSD staff from the distraction of my previous achievements to directing their commitment and energies towards the NSD organization and its goals.\textsuperscript{258}

As director of curriculum, I acted literally as mentor to staff, administrators, and the members of the curriculum department.\textsuperscript{259} I continued to create an atmosphere motivating NSD staff/administrators to find fun in the work they were performing which created intrinsic motivation.\textsuperscript{260} Intrinsic motivation represents personal satisfaction derived from short-term tasks (i.e. establishing attendance targets, building level


\textsuperscript{258} Bass, \textit{Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations}

\textsuperscript{259} Bass, \textit{Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations}

\textsuperscript{260} Lawrence Kohlberg, Collected papers on moral development and moral education (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for Moral Education, 1976).
leadership teams, and data utilization). Stabilizing the district with a systemic jointly developed professional development agenda paved the way to engaging community partnerships to support the schools in the district.

I approached Tipton & Sons Towing, a local small business entity, with a proposal to support my attendance initiative in the district. Consequently, Tipton & Sons Towing became one of the first community partners to join the NSD team. Attendance is a key element in the state’s accreditation process. The state allocates points to districts that meet/exceed attendance targets. Mr. Bruce Tipton, sole proprietor of the business, agreed to sponsor/fund my inaugural version of the attendance initiative at the Garfield Elementary School under the leadership of Principal Ian Buchanan. Garfield students with perfect attendance at the end of each semester qualified for the opportunity to win a new bicycle. Mr. Tipton enthusiastically purchased the bicycles for the awardees and as a result, the student attendance at Garfield Elementary showed improvement. Since this incentive model based on a similar model at Laclede Elementary showed promising results, I planned to expand it to other elementary schools in the NSD.

Understanding the implications to address the issues of a provisionally accredited school district, I proceeded to launch another community partnership with the University of Missouri-St. Louis along with former well-respected district level administrators from the SLPS district to create the Instructional Technical Assistance Team (ITAT). The ITAT design had a dual purpose: support the building principals’ efforts as the instructional leader; bolster the instructional delivery of the district staff. There are

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numerous instances in educational settings in which poor performing classroom teachers’
challenged/hindered principals. Transformational leaders seek new ways of doing things
and create, shape an environment, and encourage followers to be a part of the change.263
Therefore, I recruited the ITAT, a group of trained observers to go into the classroom,
observe instruction, record the observation, and summarize the classroom teachers’
strengths and areas in need of improvement with the principal and the classroom teacher.
The immediate feedback substantially helped to develop trust, improved the leader-staff
relationship, and focused the instructional delivery presented by teachers in a meaningful
non-threatening format.264 Trust between school leaders and teachers improves the
routine of education. All participants (students, staff, parents, school leaders) in the NSD
needed to depend on each other to improve student academic achievement. Most high-
functioning schools and school districts have transformational leaders who shaped the
school/district’s vision, monitored learning processes within the organization, and
established a collegial culture that fosters teacher empowerment.265

My role as director of curriculum provided the opportunity to construct a new
direction for district PD. I engaged the district principals in a focus group to assist in the
planning. Unanimous in their collective response, the focus group determined
professional development must meet the needs of their respective buildings. My efforts
to revamp PD and my move to integrate other initiatives into the NSD proffered a note

263 Bass, Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations
264 Anthony S. Bryk, and Barbara Schneider, "Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School
Reform," Educational Leadership 60, no. 6 (2003): 40-45; Graen and Uhl-Bien, "Relationship-
based Approach to Leadership"
265 Karen L. Skalbeck, “Profile of a Transformational Leader: A Sacred Mission” (PhD dissertation,
University of San Diego, 1991);
from Carl Hudson, principal of the district’s high school. His note expressed appreciation for my leadership style. His words gave me pause and I reflected back to my mother’s exact words spoken so many years ago: ‘your words and actions must demonstrate truth – in other words do what you say you are going to do’. Mr. Hudson and my mother referenced what I later learned to be behavioral integrity. Behavioral integrity is demonstrated when a leader consistently makes good on promises and commitments. During the interim superintendency of Dr. John Wright, I recommended a number of initiatives designed to support principals and staff, improve student achievement outcomes, and establish a plausible return to accreditation.

The first initiative that I recommended to the interim superintendent, John Wright, concerned the establishment of a budget line item to support building principals’ reimbursement for their educational expenses incurred in returning to graduate school. The recommendation received approval. The first cohort of NSD principals took advantage of the partnership I established with Lindenwood University, under the leadership of Dr. George Edwards, a former SLPS principal. Lindenwood University established a satellite location for NSD district employees at Lucas Crossing Elementary School in the NSD.

This partnership with Lindenwood University provided a unique opportunity never before accorded to NSD building principals. Although unable to achieve tuition reimbursement for other district staff, the opportunity to avail themselves to course work

266 Appendix 6 Normandy School District Item 4
offered by Lindenwood University at the satellite location bolstered access to self-directed professional development in the form of higher education credits. The convenience of the principals and staff’s ability to attend classes geographically located within the NSD boundaries solidified the trust factor and credibility of my transformational leadership in this organizational change. Such relationships contribute to school effectiveness; support the purposes of the curriculum, professional learning, and the requirements for instruction.268

Another critical recommendation that I presented to Dr. Wright focused on the academic health of the NSD. I proposed the purchase of an assessment program designed to create MAP-like tests administered as a pre-test at the start of summer school 2008 followed by a post assessment near the end of summer school providing much needed baseline data. Assessment preparation had evolved into the digital age. Utilizing a district-wide assessment instrument allowed student exposure to much needed practice on sample items used in state assessments; It would equally expose district staff on how to effectively use data results to inform instructional delivery, identify students’ strengths and weaknesses, and inform the need to reteach specific skills ahead of the 2008-2009 school year. Neighboring school districts had demonstrated improvement in student outcomes using similar assessments. I believed the NSD could benefit as well with computer-generated test and scoring (ACUITY), eliminating the timely and cumbersome task of teacher-scored practice assessments. The benefits of a district-wide assessment

could have altered the eventual loss of accreditation. Unfortunately, for the NSD, Dr. Wright decided to leave that decision to the incoming superintendent.

I did not allow the disappointment of my failure to convince Dr. Wright of the urgency for immediate implementation of district-wide assessments, curtail my focus, energy, commitment, and vision to raise student academic achievement in the NSD. I forged ahead with my next challenge to revamp the existing NSD Career Ladder Program (CLP). The program, partially funded by DESE with matching funds provided by the NSD, with the goal to provide district staff with opportunities to design and implement after school programs to enrich the academic performance of district students, lacked oversight, academic focus, and accountability. In a bi-partisan fashion, I established a committee of teachers, principals, and representatives from the curriculum department to modify the CLP.

Their recommendations included the use of data to determine program design, a formal application process for the participating teacher, and a pre and post assessment to determine the program’s impact on student achievement. During this process, the NSD Board of Education identified Dr. Stanton Lawrence, who, at that time resided and worked in the state of Texas, as the permanent NSD superintendent. Dr. Lawrence came into the district with his transition team during the CLP overhaul. I presented background information on CLP along with a draft copy of the proposed changes to the program. Dr. Lawrence realized the implications for academic achievement and gave his approval of the direction the CLP committee had taken. Once the revised CLP received the NSD’s board approval, its implementation became district procedure.
Toward the end of the 2007-2008 school year, Dr. Lawrence entered into a relationship spearheaded by the Beyond Housing group to focus on bridging the governmental divide that existed between the leaders of the 24 municipalities with students in attendance in the NSD. As a result, this alliance known as 24:1; with a common interest focused on improving the student academic success within the NSD.

While the efforts to align the 24 municipalities proved laudable, from my vantage point, it appeared that the focus on student academic achievement and regaining full accreditation did not meet Dr. Lawrence’s priority threshold. Frustrated with Superintendent Lawrence’s course of action, I decided to tender my resignation. I targeted June 30, 2008 as my final day with the NSD and resolved to return to my doctoral project.

Prior to my transition to semi-retirement for the third time, the newly selected superintendent of the Ethel Hedgeman Lyle Charter School Academy (EHLA), Dr. Albert Harold in a telephone call, introduced himself followed by “I am recruiting you to join my leadership team understanding that you are currently employed in the NSD.” At this point, I did not share with Dr. Harold my plans to leave the NSD. Dr. Harold went on to say, “I know of your ability to transform education for young people.” Much like Dr. Connie Calloway and others, he too had followed my career. Dr. Harold, formerly superintendent of the Maplewood-Richmond Heights school district in St. Louis County (1997-1999), proved to be quite a salesman/recruiter. He initiated another opportunity for me to influence the educational lives of children free of solicitation on my part, should I decide to accept his offer. Is this coincidence, providence, or legacy? His telephone calls became a daily occurrence during my last weeks in the employ of the
Dr. Harold’s confidence and perseverance led to my acceptance of the associate superintendent position at EHLA.

Chapter 5

Ethel Hedgeman Lyle Academy (A Missouri Charter School)

Charter School Movement

Ray Budde, and Albert Shanker, a past president of the American Federation of Teachers, first articulated the charter concept. The educational concept of a ‘charter’ school allows groups to explore new instructional approaches.\textsuperscript{269} One view of ‘charter’ schools, identified them to be voluntary and innovative with reasonable oversight.\textsuperscript{270} In 1991, Minnesota opened the first public charter school in the United States.\textsuperscript{271} Missouri joined the ranks of states with charters schools in May 1998.

Missouri charter school law restricts charter schools to the St. Louis Public Schools district and the Kansas City Public Schools district. Thereby, limiting charter school possibilities to the large urban public school districts in Missouri, which service predominantly minority students in the state. In Missouri, a charter school receives the full public funding allotment associated with its student enrollment.

Ethel Hedgeman Lyle Academy School Operations

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (AKA), formed in 1908 by nine college women at Howard University in Washington, D. C., is the oldest Greek-Letter organization


established by Black women in America. Led by Ethel Hedgeman Lyle, a graduate of Sumner High School in St. Louis Missouri, this group formed a sisterhood that added new dimensions of national organization and perpetual membership focused on education. Omicron Theta Omega, the St. Louis local chapter of AKA, opened Ethel Hedgeman Lyle Academy (EHLA), the first charter school in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2000 named in honor of one of the founding members. The EHLA stressed academic excellence in a safe, orderly, and nurturing environment. The school’s leadership integrated a theme of mathematics, science, and technology imbedded into a basic skills curriculum designed to meet and/or exceed State of Missouri mastery requirements.

EHLA operated in partnership with several higher education institutions who served as sponsors along with several educational management companies from its inception until the end of the 2007-2008 school year. Charter school sponsors in Missouri are four-year universities with an approved teacher education program. Charters school sponsors articulate the rights and responsibilities of each charter school.272 In some instances, an education management company contracts to manage the day-to-day operations of a charter school.

I contacted Dr. Harold at the end of my last day in the NSD. To my surprise, he immediately set July 1, 2008 as my first official day with EHLA. In an effort to combat my unexpected anxiety of learning to report the next day, Dr. Harold indicated that he would share the full scope of my impending involvement with the charter school. He

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began our conference with some very important information regarding EHLA and the school’s former management company. Dr. Harold detailed that EHLA provided education for students in grade levels kindergarten through grade twelve in two separate facilities. The elementary location (kindergarten through grade five) housed on Washington Avenue and 15th street lay in the shadow of Windows on Washington (one of the premier St. Louis wedding venues) and the City Museum. The second facility housed a combination middle school – high school (grades six through twelve) uniquely located in downtown St. Louis. Dr. Harold continued to provide EHLA background information.

By the 2007-2008 school years’ end, a chasm between EHLA and Imagine, the charter school’s management company, reached irreconcilable levels. The school’s Board of Directors sued for redress in the court system. While awaiting judicial relief, the Board hired Dr. Harold who subsequently hired me to assist the newly identified leadership in the role of associate superintendent. The school’s Board proceeded to meet with Dr. Harold with the intention of moving forward as a school in spite of the pending litigation issues. The Board believed that the dispute with the management company would not interfere with the continuance of EHLA school operations. The Board’s displeasure with continual poor student academic performance and financial concerns had served as the catalyst/tipping point that prompted the dissolution of the working relationship with the Imagine management company.273

Little did the Board know at the time, Imagine would refuse to relinquish control of student records including report cards, furniture, books, library resources, and the

273 Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*: Tipping point is the name given to that one dramatic moment in time when everything can change all at once.
middle school – high school building. They relinquished control of the elementary facility. Imagine maintained complete control of the school’s (EHLA) infrastructure, however, it had to forego the EHLA moniker replaced with Imagine for their middle-high facility. However, the management company transferred the former school’s debt to the newly reorganized EHLA. Left without a middle-high facility, the EHLA Board moved quickly to secure a replacement site; a high rise office building in downtown St. Louis, Missouri, to continue EHLA school operations for the combination middle and high school. Throughout the legal proceedings, the sponsor, Missouri Baptist University and DESE continued to recognize the Imagine School and the EHLA Board. Both entities operated as charter schools.

After digesting the seemingly overwhelming information that Dr. Harold shared with me in our conference, I recommended that a division of labor could ensure that EHLA opened as intended in August 2008. Transformational leaders can see a vision for the future. Dr. Harold agreed and our plan began. Dr. Harold would focus completely on the renovations of the office building located at 18th and Pine, in downtown St. Louis, the new middle-high school location for the EHLA controlled by the AKA’s Board of Directors. He would also focus on the current operations budget, including past debts, levied against EHLA incurred under Imagine management in the prior year. In order to provide essential services for the 2008-2009 school year (i.e., bus, food, special education) in the new location, the school settled old bills.

My responsibilities included setting the tone and expectations, identifying and hiring staff, securing curriculum (the road map for instruction), books/resources to support curriculum, professional development training, responding to media inquiries,
hosting parent meetings, and other duties as required. While staffing could have posed a significant obstacle, I came to the task with previous experience in the human resources arena. I had participated directly with staff recruitment, interviewing, recommending, and hiring staff in my previous career positions in SLPS district, WSD, and the NSD. I utilized a twofold approach to the staffing process for EHLA. I began by identifying high energy, motivated, creative, diverse/culturally responsive individuals committed to the education of urban youth.

The hiring of staff posed a significant challenge that truly tested my ability to convince potential educators to accept a less than competitive salary to join EHLA. Several members of the Imagine staff defected to the newly formed EHLA under the leadership of Dr. Albert Harold in the midst of uncontrollable rumors regarding the financial stability of the new EHLA. Entry-level teachers (Teach-for-America) happily accepted base salaries and veteran educators with graduate degrees (those who followed me from the NSD and/or other educators who had worked with me in SLPS) received a slightly higher salary. Transformational leaders increase the possibilities for personal satisfaction; hence the contingent of individuals who agreed to join me at EHLA.274 This unique tapestry of like-minded individuals made it possible to open EHLA on time as they chose to come early and stay late, weekends included.

The second approach centered on the framework to guide the implementation of professional development for my newly assembled staff. In my early educational experience as a transformational leader at Laclede Elementary, I used job-embedded

professional development that allowed teachers to observe their peers’ classroom instructional delivery. My belief/expectation that all teachers are master teachers and can learn from one another supported the idea of implementing the job-embedded professional development module for the newly selected staff at EHLA. I later learned that the research literature identified this PD strategy as a tenet of Learning Communities. Learning Communities foster teacher collaboration and make practice public; teachers observing teachers in the classroom.\textsuperscript{275}

Transformational leaders play a primary role in establishing and developing trust among staff. To ensure the successful relaunching of EHLA, I focused on earning the trust of the staff to develop appropriate organizational behavior and commitment.\textsuperscript{276} My goal throughout this process included motivating the staff to perform beyond expectations, explaining the importance and values of our goal, while inspiring them to move beyond their self-interests for the good of EHLA.\textsuperscript{277} In spite of the roadblocks encountered at EHLA, I orchestrated the resurgence of the charter school. I delegated the responsibility for recruitment of students to the former staff members of Imagine. They maintained a respectful working relationship with staff who chose to remain with Imagine allowing them to secure student names and telephone numbers. In the absence of a custodial staff, the teachers banded together at the elementary school cleaning and organizing for the first day of school. As a transformational leader entrusted with the task to lead EHLA forward to rise like a phoenix from the ashes, I served as the common

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{275} Diane Wood, "Teachers’ Learning Communities: Catalyst for Change or a New Infrastructure for the Status Quo," \textit{Teachers College Record} 109, no. 3 (2007): 699-739.
\bibitem{277} Bass, \textit{Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations}
\end{thebibliography}
denominator bridging the divide between newly recruited staff, former Imagine staff, and those veteran professional educators who agreed to come aboard and serve with me at the new EHLA.

Confident with the staff in place, the preliminary interaction/orientation with the staff complete, and professional development portion of the action plan resolved, I proceeded to pursue the critical area of curriculum. Curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students must learn. The Imagine management company’s failure to provide access to any items of import, curriculum included (the roadmap to instruction) posed an extreme hardship. Spurred forward by what I believed to be an educational injustice against the students’ right to be educated by EHLA and challenged with time constraints for opening the school, I decided to approach Dr. Craig Larson, Superintendent of the Rockwood School District (RSD) with whom I had shared highly productive/valued interactions during my educational leadership career. Dr. Larson and I had spoken on several occasions so I felt comfortable in approaching him with a collaborative opportunity for EHLA to use the RSD’s model curriculum that had been highly touted by educational professionals including DESE. Initially, I met Dr. Larson while making a presentation to the St. Louis Metropolitan Superintendents Conference hosted by St. Louis University on Laclede Elementary School’s record of academic success. Pursuant to this presentation, I hosted a professional development workshop for Rockwood teachers to observe Laclede teacher engagement with urban youth, school climate, and tour the neighborhood of local students (enrolled in RSD) who took advantage of the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) program. The VICC program oversees the implementation of the metropolitan area desegregation program.
I disclosed as much relevant information to substantiate the need to use RSD’s curriculum. Dr. Larson supported my request and graciously extended access for EHLA staff to receive professional development training in support of the curriculum and provided the curriculum in digital form. Transformational leaders seek effective opportunities in the face of risk.278

The acquisition of the RSD curriculum significantly influenced the morale of the EHLA staff and brought about a sense of empowerment that served to anchor the upward trajectory of the new EHLA. However, shortly after securing the RSD curriculum, I faced a family/personal crisis that forced me to disengage from my work with EHLA. Failure to care for leadership succession could negatively affect the school. Andy Hargreaves has identified “change in leadership as one of the most significant events that occurs in a school or school district.”279

The sense of responsibility that accompanied my commitment to EHLA fostered my concern for its continued survival as a viable charter school. The school’s survival hinged on a comparable replacement. In my mind, my successor already worked at EHLA, which would allow a seamless transition to occur. Ultimately, the choice of my replacement centered on a colleague, that I mentored, coached, and who followed me from SLPS, to NSD, and on to EHLA. Continuity has the best chance of working when insiders follow their leaders’ footsteps.280 I reflected on the many looming challenges I confronted at EHLA in July 2008, but mitigated by November 2008. As I left EHLA, my thoughts turned to the impact of my transformational leadership on public education in

278 Bass, Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations
280 Ibid,
the SLPS district, the Wellston School District, the Normandy School District, and a publicly funded Charter School. I had served as a conduit that transformed people, organizations, and me personally and professionally.
Chapter 6
Discussion

My mother set the stage for what I would ultimately become many years before I embraced transformational leadership. She modeled the need for change in our family circumstances, the importance of vision to guide the change, and inspired me to persevere with the understanding that change is a collective effort. I did not understand at that time, but I would come to know the full measure and impact of her foresight. I decided then to become a teacher and many years later in quiet moments of reflection, understood that my mother had been instrumental in my early development of transformational leadership.

The inspiration to use autoethnography to share my career as a transformational leader evolved as I read educational literature identifying my style of leadership as transformational. In addition to the research literature, the writings of Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, Eric Erikson, and William Bridges also served as catalysts. The renowned sociologist Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot declared: “We must develop a compelling vision, one that does not assume a trajectory of decline but recognizes later life as a time of potential change, growth, and new learning, a time when our ‘courage gives us hope’. In his book *Managing Transitions*, William Bridges, explained that my transition out of the educational arena through retirement did not forecast the end, but heightened my feeling of dramatic change that he described as external, contextual, and public. Lastly, my transition from career educator, to Grammie, and on to doctoral student,

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282 Bridges, *Managing Transitions*
according to Eric Erikson only created an opportunity for continued development and
growth rather than a loss of capacity. His theory of generativity applied completely to
me. I still had the impulse within to nurture and guide the next generation. Generative
adults are individuals who work in the development of others and recognized as ‘keepers
of meaning’ according to George Vaillant.

I decided that my lived experiences as a transformational leader could have a
positive impact on aspiring principals and current practitioners who desired to be
educational leaders in urban environments and beyond. After I decided to share my
story, autoethnography became the appropriate vehicle. Autoethnography is a style of
research that highlights personal experiences that influences the research process.
Autoethnography is an intellectual elaborate venture of thick description. I wanted to
tell stories that I personally observed.

In the course of reconstructing my story using personal descriptive narratives, I
planned to show the reader an efficient way to convey information so that they could
appreciate and reflect on their own personal experiences without dialogue. My
personal narratives can also help readers to focus on their academic, research, and
personal lives in ways that initiate and encourage or validate their work in schools to
ensure student academic success.

Completed*.
284 Vaillant and Milofsky, *The Natural History of Male Psychological Health*
286 Caulley “Making Qualitative Research Reports Less Boring,”
287 Ellis, “There are Survivors,”; Ellis and Bochner, “Analyzing Analytic Autoethnography,”
288 Berry, “Embracing the Catastrophe,” Goodall, *A Need to Know*
Methodologically, doing autoethnography seemed to be a perfect fit for me. What a great opportunity to take events from my professional life and examine my lived experiences detailed through thick descriptions! While questions have arisen about how to validate autoethnography, Carolyn Ellis discussed how to authenticate such research.289 Stories and theories have different purposes. In the case of a story’s authentication, which is always questioned/challenged, one school of thought states that hindsight and recall are sufficient to validate autoethnography. However, in addition to hindsight and recall, I extended the autoethnographers’ validation to include authentication; artifacts (emails, photos, letters, handwritten notes), documents (newspaper articles), and public records.

Readers determine a story’s impact on them.290 Carolyn Ellis defined autoethnography as “research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political.”291

Telling my story, presented in the form of personal narratives, constituted the bulk of the data collection. Uwe Flick describes the process of data analysis as “the classification and interpretation of linguistic or visual material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it.”292 My lived experiences, scholarly and justifiable interpretations, authenticated through multiple sources of documents/artifacts. When I decided to use autoethnography for this

289 Ellis, *The Ethnographic I*,
290 Ellis, *The Ethnographic I*,
291 Ellis, *The Ethnographic I*, xviii
research study, it occurred to me to review the keepsakes and memorabilia that I maintained in my educational portfolio over the years. During this sorting and categorizing process, themes began to emerge. “The process of data collection and analysis is recursive and dynamic.”

Emergent Themes

As the autoethnographer, I used a general inductive approach that utilized a re-reading of the data that revealed consistent findings that I interpreted as themes in my data analysis. I began my story, an autoethnography, and allowed the themes to emerge from the data. I reread the study many times to identify themes and categories. After reading the research document repeatedly and sorting through possible categories, four themes emerged.

I sorted each unit of data in the transcript and recorded applicable items under the corresponding theme. I continued the coding process until no new themes emerged. With segments of the dissertation text coded, I analyzed the segments to identify the relationships between the data units (narratives) important to the research project to organize into a findings chart for relevancy. The following themes identified community partnerships, student achievement, teaching and learning, recognition and awards, and leadership development.

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Findings Summary

Autoethnography is suited to recognizing themes. The themes constitute the findings in this study. The findings that sustained student achievement, community partnerships, teaching and learning, leadership development, and awards and recognition, provided direct financial and/or human capital in support of teachers and students. For example, awards and recognition provided my leadership with external validation, but more importantly, they brought additional tangible resources and community support.
The themes are the outcome of this inquiry—what I learned and came to understand about the content of my autoethnography derived from my analysis of the data. The visual model displayed above shows the interrelationships and interconnectedness of the findings. The visual model is a direct result of the open coding process, which generated a constant comparative analysis between the data sources in this autoethnography (i.e., Saint Louis Public Schools, Wellston School District, Normandy School District, and Ethel Hedgeman Lyle Charter Academy).

The process of analyzing my raw data proved invaluable in identifying the major themes associated with my lived experience. The meticulous rereading of my story
helped me understand that these themes, interconnected and directly correlated to positive student academic achievement outcomes across each academic setting (i.e., SLPS; WSD; NSD; and EHLA), realized because of my transformational leadership. The student academic achievement served as the common denominator in all my leadership decisions.

*Community Partnerships*

The quintessential African proverb, it takes a village to raise a child, guided my early decision to include community partnerships as a viable option in my quest to be the best possible teacher leader at Pierre Laclede Elementary School. I reflected on my own neighborhood growing up as a child, and remembered how many neighbors played a significant role in my life. My first partnership with Mr. Bernie Hayes as a first year teacher, at Laclede, set my feet upon the path to identify as many human capital resources that I could use to impact the lives of students with whom I interacted. I amassed a plethora of resourceful partnerships that impacted students’ lives directly, remained relevant, sustainable, and played a significant role in student academic achievement.

Students are impressionable and have the tendency to emulate television personalities, rappers, basketball players, etc. I wanted to present students with my version of role-models, individuals who once lived in their communities, in some instances their next door neighbors (doctors, lawyers, dentists, other professionals), who left the neighborhoods for the suburbs so many years before their birth. I wanted them to be privy to the important role education had played in their lives, the struggles they encountered along the way and the sheer will they exhibited to claim success through access to quality education.
I learned the importance of visioning the result of each partnership’s impact on student academic achievement. I practiced restraint with some partnership opportunities, and there were several, that did not meet the threshold requirement of influencing student academic achievement. The partnerships’ design needed to provide a win-win scenario for the school, students, and staff as well as for the participants within each partnership. Every opportunity to interact with our supporters brought resources, mentors, coaches, tutoring, financial support, computers, and access to knowledge, with direct impact on student academic achievement. Overall, I attribute student academic achievement to my leadership, the school team, and the rich support by the many community partnerships. The community partnerships also served to strengthen the teaching and learning process, which in turn, affected student academic achievement.

Teaching and Learning

As a school leader, I decided to make school decisions in the best interest of students. One of the goals I established for myself meant tackling the daunting issue of teaching and learning. Teachers perform the most important work in education in classrooms everyday. Teaching and learning served as the catalyst that informed my decision to accept the community partnerships, the Successful Schools Initiative and the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) Professional Development School (PDS) collaborative. Each entity’s laser focus on teaching and learning enhanced staff performance and student academic achievement.

295 See Appendix 1 Items 16 and 16a
I created innovations to ensure success in teaching and learning that included routine peer-to-peer observations, status conferences, school assessment (MAPAttack), data analysis, and the students’ IAP before it became the standard operating procedure for the school district. Laclede earned an academic achievement record that drew countless district employees (teachers and administrators) to visit to witness best practices, requests from aspiring leaders from other school districts to serve as a presenter, and provided confidence-building support to substitute teachers encouraging them to return to school and complete their certification process. My consistent and targeted focus on teaching and learning elevated student academic achievement as the single most important priority for everyone and evidenced in the receipt of state and national recognition for student academic achievement. All of these startling results occurred right before my eyes and provided the impetus for me to continue leadership development whenever it presented itself.

Leadership Development

While I did not aspire to become a leader beyond the classroom, others in positions of authority, recognized a talent, leadership potential, which I could not see in myself. Internalizing their opinions, I continued my personal professional development, selecting educational administration as my area of focus in graduate school. I prepared appropriately for leadership opportunities by earning a graduate degree and securing administrative certification, qualifying me for promotions to leadership positions.

I understood the importance of balancing my personal development and having the presence of mind to develop those with whom I served. This foresight set the stage to challenge those under my leadership to develop to their full leadership potential. Guided
by the principles of transformational leadership, I envisioned the organization’s future and shared the vision with subordinates.\textsuperscript{297} I developed a process that enabled me to know my staff(s). The status conference document served that purpose. To interact more fully with staff, I collected personal and professional data to assist in setting personal and professional goals.\textsuperscript{298} Additionally, this interaction also provided support to staff with aspirations to become leaders. I provided opportunities for promotion within the building, and penned recommendations for staff seeking leadership opportunities in the greater educational community.

Leadership development also happened beyond the confines of the building(s) in which I served locally. Educators from across the metropolitan region and beyond made requests whereby I interacted with them and shared leadership strategies through site visits, as a speaker in their graduate classes, or as a presenter at conferences.\textsuperscript{299} I actively engaged with local and external staffs/leaders in such a way to raise their expectations of themselves and to higher levels of productivity that theoretically had the potential to improve student academic achievement.\textsuperscript{300} Serving as a mentor, coach, and supporter to my colleagues engendered a feeling of complete satisfaction.

\textit{Recognitions and Awards}

My focused leadership on teaching and learning culminated with the realization of sustained student academic achievement, which brought significant recognition and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Francis J. Yammarino and Bernard M. Bass, Transformational Leadership and Multiple Levels of Analysis, \textit{Human Relations}, 43(1990), 975-995.
\item Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning, Item #4, 4a, and 4b
\item Appendix 4 Leadership Development, Item #2, 3, 4, and 5.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
awards to the Laclede Elementary School family. Humbled by the accolades, but not distracted by them, I continued to maintain high levels of accountability required to sustain high levels of student academic achievement. Recognition and awards served to motivate students and staff to continue their commitment to student academic achievement by maintaining high levels of attendance. Showing up daily to school ensured continuity of instruction, a DESE benchmark that is essential to recognition as a successful school. Teachers and students received individual awards and recognition for perfect attendance at the building and district level.

The school’s success became a magnet. Recognition and awards served to capture the attention and imagination of potential community partners and contributors seeking to support a successful school, and playing an integral role in helping to move the school to the next level of student academic achievement. Recognition and awards brought President George W. Bush to a public, non-integrated, urban school in one of the most challenged neighborhoods as a part of his round-table discussion tour across the country to tout the merits of the NCLB legislation. These visible and tangible signs of success generated opportunities for me to interact with aspiring leaders and veteran administrators sharing successful strategies that I implemented and considered instrumental in the large gains in student academic achievement that met and exceed local, state and national standards.

Transformational leadership empowered me to tackle the important issue of teaching and learning and its related impact on student academic achievement. I married

301 Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards, Item #17, 19, 19a, 19b, 19c, 23, 23a, 23b, and 24
302 Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards Item #23, 23a, 23b, and 24
data analysis in an active collaboration with teachers to improve the impact of instruction on student academic achievement. I established a process to integrate the most critical strands essential in the education of urban students; community partnerships, teaching and learning, leadership development, and recognition/awards. When transformational leadership coexists with the realization of potential student academic achievement in any educational environment, the positive effects on school outcomes, as measured by the quality of instruction and the improved academic standings of its students, is inevitable.³⁰³ My story, written as an autoethnography, invites readers to reflect on their own professional lived experience, determine its potential impact on student academic achievement, and make a decision to incorporate some or all of these strategies (themes) into their professional practice.

My lived experiences details how I involved my respective staffs in sustained conversations and shared decision making about student academic achievement and other relevant educational matters. My story details how I engaged teachers and the broader community as equitable stakeholders in the quest to improve academic achievement of students in the urban environment while honoring their ability to recognize themselves as professionals who make a difference in the lives of students.³⁰⁴ My autoethnography contributes to the existing research literature on transformational leadership. Transformational leaders confront conflict during the process of leading change in schools. For the purpose of this narrative, I chose to focus intently on the themes that

made the goal of student academic achievement possible to empower aspiring urban leaders. It is important for the reader to understand that transformational leadership is not absent conflict.
APPENDICES
Black Men Lend A Helping Hand

By Julius Hunter

L

Louis Farrakhan would just love what’s going on right now at the Pierre Laclede Elementary School in north St. Louis. Ironically, so would most of his detractors.

On any given day, one can find classrooms of bright-eyed African-American children busily engaged in various activities. The school is well-known for its academic excellence and has produced many successful alumni. The school is currently led by Mr. Larry Jones, an experienced educator who has helped transform the school into a model of educational excellence.

The school — in a depressed neighborhood of gang activity, blight and boarded-up buildings — was turned around years ago by a new, determined, no-nonsense, law-and-order principal, Leonvia Bledsoe. It is now headed by an energetic, innovative and dedicated principal in Joyce Roberts.

Everywhere one looks in the classrooms and spiffy-clean corridors, there are colorful displays, posters, chalkboard drawings, lessons and books reviewing the pupils of their proud African-American heritage. They are taught every day in every way that their ancestors made brilliant contributions to our culture and society but are somehow left out of most of the standard history books.

Farrakhan would applaud these reminders of our past. But even the folks who don’t like what he says and how he says it can buy into substantive arguments with the new and improved history lessons at the Pierre Laclede School if they get.

The successful African-American men who have adopted Pierre Laclede School are my brothers in the local chapter of the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. Founded in 1964 at a time when African-Americans were blatantly excluded from the fraternities and sororities at most institutions in America, its the oldest black Greek-letter fraternity in the nation.

Some of the more than 50 members wouldn’t walk across the street to hear Farrakhan speak. But some of the frat members enthusiastically waged to Washington to be part of the historic Million Man March. Each time my frat brothers and I leave Pierre Laclede School to get back to our demanding jobs and hectic schedules, we are invigorated and filled with the hope of a new day dawning for our children. We think we can actually see our eventual professional replacements in the faces of the youngsters who now look forward to our visits. Our up-close and personal contact with these beneficent African-American children leads us to believe that they — with our help and your help — can achieve successes far beyond those the men of Sigma Pi Phi have achieved.

We cannot afford to sit idly while we debate the Farrakhan issue. There is too much work to be done with these African-American children. Can we go on and work with the kids while we continue the debate? We must.

Julius Hunter is a KMOV-TV (Channel 4) news anchor.
Outside Reading Gets Fraternal Aid

For many students an ideal relaxation may include spending time outdoors on a terrace with a favorite book.

Thanks to the Professional Business Leadership Council and the Members of the Eta Boulé Chapter, Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, this pleasant situation is now a reality for the students at the Laclede Elementary School.

The two groups joined forces to provide the students with reading terraces for the “Book Buddy” program. Part of the effort included contributions of carpeting, furniture, shelving and books from outside companies.

The partnership between the fraternity and Laclede started last spring when the members began a mentoring program which included reading to the students. This year the outside terraces were added.

“Our focus is trying to better the minority community,” said Jonathan Reed, Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity.

The porches were dedicated in an October ribbon cutting ceremony to the school’s former principal for 13 years, Lonzola D. “Bemi” Buford, who died in April 1995. Superintendent David J. Mahan commented, “Buford was an outstanding administrator.”

— Brandyce Briggs

BOOKING AN OUTING on Laclede Elementary’s new outside reading porches are several students. Adults who joined the dedication included, from left, David Flieg, executive director for elementary schools; Joyce Roberts, Laclede principal; Superintendent David J. Mahan; Chief of Staff Charles W. Simms; and Channel 4 anchor Julius Hunter.
DEDICATION TO HONOR LATE LACLEDE PRINCIPAL

Outside reading terraces at Laclede Elementary School, 5821 Kennerly Ave., will be dedicated at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11, as a memorial to the school’s former principal, the late Lonzola D. "Beau" Buford.

Before his death in April 1995 he had been a teacher and administrator in St. Louis Public Schools for 38 years, including 28 as a principal. He was principal at Euclid and Stowe elementary schools and for the last 13 years of his service at Laclede.

The reading terraces, over abutments on the building, have been carpeted, furnished and provided with shelving and books by outside companies and adult volunteers. Many supporters of the school have been invited to the dedication.

The terraces will be formally opened for use with a ribbon cutting by Superintendent David J. Mahan and John E. Ingram Jr., associate superintendent for elementary, middle and secondary schools.

For more information, call Principal Joyce Roberts or Instructional Coordinator Joan Fisher at 385-0546.

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Office of Community Relations & Public Information Services
911 Locust St., St. Louis, MO 63101   (314) 231-3720

CONTACT: Charles E. Burgess

St. Louis Public School
NEWS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 4, 1995

Appendix 1 Item 3
Maffitt Cuts the Red Ribbon

After years of hard work and perseverance, gardeners at the Maffitt Cabbage Patch finally have their outdoor pavilion, built by Dan Durbin Construction, up and running. Students at Pierre Laclede Elementary are using the new pavilion as an outdoor classroom, where they learn about the wonders of gardening.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was top notch. Cleveland Hammonds, Jr., the Superintendent of St. Louis Public Schools, commended the efforts of the school students and teachers. The Pierre Laclede Steppers performed the “Triple A Stomp”, a tribute to achievement, attendance, and attitude.

Following the spirited ceremony, all guests marveled at the Maffitt Cabbage Patch and cheered as Pauline Humphrey and other community leaders cut the red ribbon, officially opening the new pavilion.
January 8, 1996

Mrs. Joyce Roberts
Laclede Public Schools
5821 Kennerly
St. Louis, Missouri 63112

Dear Mrs. Roberts:

This letter is to express my keen interest in helping your school develop a strong academic base for our children. In visiting your school it was very obvious to me that the children are definitely excited about learning, and are on the right track, to becoming outstanding African American Citizens. I would like to be a resource to your school and to help even further improve the academic environment at your institution.

After giving the above much thought, I would like to discuss with you the following ideas. First of all, I would like to develop two five hundred dollar scholarships that would be given to the school every year. The one thousand dollars will be donated to the school to be used for a designated project/projects that you, and your faculty deem appropriate and would be most beneficial for the upcoming school year.

The awards would be given to the two students who have achieved the best overall average and the most improved student in the highest grade (6th) at the end of the school year. These two students would be judged by your faculty and given my approval.

Individual prizes for the students would be a one hundred dollar gift certificate to a restaurant such as the Olive Garden, Pasta House and also, a trophy for the child and family, as well as a plaque in the hallway individually recognizes each student which has excelled.
SURGEON PROVIDING $1,000 IN GRANTS FOR LACLEDE SCHOOL

A frequent visitor to Laclede Elementary School as part of a partnership program with a leadership fraternity has arranged to make grants totaling $1,000 to the school.

The award by Dr. William D. Yates, a surgeon and chief of the trauma center at DePaul Hospital, will be announced at a Feb. 13 Board of Education meeting and during an assembly at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, at the school at 5821 Kennerly Ave.

Yates said in visiting Laclede "it was very obvious to me that the children are excited about learning, and are on the right track to becoming outstanding African American citizens." He is making the financial grants "to help even further improve the academic environment."

Principal Joyce Roberts said the funds will be used to expand library holdings, provide weekly prizes for perfect attendance by class, reward honor roll and "most improved" students with monthly luncheons, purchase badges for the school's junior leader program, and record student achievements on plaques to be displayed at the school. Trophies and gift certificates will be given to most improved and top ranking fifth graders.

"The grants are important to the growth of achievement, attendance and attitude at Laclede," the principal said.

Yates began visiting Laclede during the fall as a member of the Eta Boule Chapter of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. The group of
black professionals began a partnership with Laclede in October to provide positive role model experiences for the students.

About 25 members of the fraternity are participating by visiting Laclede classrooms, a "reading buddy" activity, sponsoring special programs and field trips and providing rewards for student achievements.

For further information, call Laclede Principal Joyce Roberts at 385-0546.

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Appendix 1 Item 8

OPERATION SCHOOL BELL
SCHOOL DISTRICTS
2015-2016

St. Louis School District
Adams (320)
Ames (366)
Ashland (315)
Ford (301)
Hamilton (380)
Jefferson (245)
Lexington (350)
Meramec (250)
Peabody (225)
Pierre Laclede (250)
Patrick Henry (360)
Woerner (380)

Riverview Gardens - mandatory
Gibson (385)
Highland (354)
Koch (302)
LeMasters (275)
Lewis and Clark (188)
Meadows (250)
Moline (430)

Jennings - mandatory
Fairview (475)
Northview (563)

Normandy - mandatory
Lucas Crossing (926)
Washington (400)

Hazelwood - mandatory
Grannemann (438)
Keaven (400)
Larimore (428)
Twillman (325)

27 Schools Served

Revised: 5/27/15
Retired doctor turns mentor at model school

BY COLLEEN CARROLL
"Sharing a passion for black history"

The house at Lacledo Elementary School in St. Louis was greeting-card perfect.

Bodies big and small swayed rhythmically to the rhythmic sound of a muffled stereo. Singing with gusto, three-graders hugged their teachers and parents as they serenaded their birthday girl.

An afternoon of poetry, song and dance ended with an emotional sing-along. As uniformed students lined up to hug the star of their celebration, Dr. John Gladney, and his wife, Clarice, "I was gonna cry," said Rochelle Newton, 8, reflecting later on the tribute to Gladney, a volunteer at the school.

Standing in the hallway, Gladney seemed overwhelmed by the party. "I have not known many days that were more joyful than this," he said.

Teachers at Lacledo say they have not known many people more worthy than Gladney.

The retired physician — who turned 75 on Nov. 18 — is a book buddy at Lacledo, an all-black public neighborhood school at 5821 Kennedy Avenue. For three years, he has been reading to the children of Lacledo and sharing his passion for African-American history with them.

"It's important for them to know from whence they came and why their families are so disarranged," Gladney said. "They lap it up because it's history that they didn't know and that they're likely to be taught in other venues, though most black teachers teach it."

Gladney's love of history was instilled by his father, a mail carrier with a 16th grade education. Gladney, who grew up in Little Rock, Ark., recalls when describing the segregated South of his youth. Gladney left Arkansas for college in Alabama and never moved back to Little Rock.

Two wars and several degrees later, Gladney settled in St. Louis, where he became a prominent doctor, educator and member of the United Church of Christ.

But the sting of segregation still burns. Shortly before he retired in 1993, Gladney began to delve extensively into African-American history and books about slavery.

See Doctor, Page B3
Appendix 1 Item 9a

Doctor
Retired physician turns mentor at model school
Continued from Page B1

Now Gladney, a father of three, grandfather of five and great-grandfather of two, is writing a book on his life and the lives of his ancestors.

Gladney is one of nearly 20 book buddies and mentors who visit Laclede, an oasis of warmth and learning in a neighborhood plagued by boarded-up buildings, barred windows and rundown houses. The school has won national recognition and earned healthy test scores that outrank many other St. Louis public schools, including some magnet schools.

The wooden floors in Laclede gleam; the halls dance with color. Bright posters touting black history themes line the walls of Room 209, where Gladney spends each Tuesday morning.

"Michael Jordan is not the hero, as you notice," Gladney said, as he squired through Laclede's stairwell. Instead, he noted, the children are taught to emulate W.E.B. DuBois, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other historical black figures.

According to St. Louis television anchorwoman Julius Hunter, the children also admire Gladney.

Hunter and Gladney are members of Sigma Pi Phi, the oldest African-American professional fraternity in the nation. Hunter said about 45 fraternity members participated in Laclede's mentoring program when he started it about three years ago, but Gladney became an instant favorite.

"I got teary one day when I passed his room," said Hunter, recalling one of Gladney's storytelling sessions. "The children were nestled at his feet. This was like grandfather.

"Once he accepted death, four left," Gladney said. "You can kill me, he said to himself, but I won't be beaten anymore."

"Except for the girl who sucked on her necklace and the boy reminded by his teacher for fidgeting, Gladney's audience sat perfectly still. Like sponges, the children absorbed his every move. Tiny eyes traced the folds of his gray suit and burgundy cardigan. Little ears perked up as his voice waned and waxed. At the story's end, Gladney reminded them to keep reading.

"The students then shared essays with Gladney, historical accounts of the birthday party they had held for him a week earlier. When teacher Janis Smith asked the volunteers to read their essays, hands shot up in the air and waggled as if they were animals struggling to detach from the arms that held them.

"Do they get excited?" Smith exclaimed, laughing as she watched her students compete for Gladney's attention. "Oh yes! I have to hold them down. They like positive role models."

Smith, who wears traditional African clothing and a colorful headpiece, maintains strict discipline in her classroom. Children sit with hands folded and mouths closed. A few squirms escaped as the wagging hands failed to get their teacher's attention and students saw Gladney heading for the door, but Smith promised them that Gladney would return Tuesday. They can count on that.
The Gladneys

7361 Decatur Ave.
St. Louis, Mo. 63130
November 22, 1997

Mrs. Joyce Roberts, Principal
Pierre Laclede School
5261 Kennerly Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63112

Dear Mrs. Roberts,

I am writing to congratulate you on the wonderful atmosphere that is apparent in your school. When one hears so many negatives about the St. Louis public schools, it is a joy to see your school. The building was clean and neat, the children were well-behaved,

Appendix 1 Item 10a

The Gladneys

All of your staff were kind and loving and there was an overwhelming sense of caring and respect for the children.

Thank you and your staff for the wonderful 75th birthday party for my husband. He deeply appreciated the love and affection shown to him by the students, teachers and staff. Thank you for honoring him.

Sincerely,

Clare Gladney
November 19, 1997

Ms. Joyce Roberts, Principal
Laclede Elementary School
5821 Kennerly Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Ms. Roberts:

This is just a note to let you know how much I enjoyed myself at the "75th Birthday Celebration of Dr. John H. Gladney." It was an excellent program. Your staff, students of Room 209 and other persons involved in the program should be commended.

I want to especially thank you for being so gracious and understanding of my plight of not having lunch, and then being thoughtful enough to provide me with one. Please let me know from where you ordered the salad. It was delicious!

Again, I congratulate you on an exemplary program, and I look forward to future invitations from your school.

Sincerely,

Susan R. Dyer
Deputy Superintendent

dls
Appendix 1 Item 12

The Boule: Achievers only

By David M. Howard

For author Lawrence S. Graham, being initiated into Sigma Pi Phi, a law-professional, high-status fraternity of black professionals known as the Boule, had an unexpected twist.

"It gave me the sense of what it must feel like to have won a powerful court victory," said Graham, who is a professor at Howard University School of Law and a former student at the University of Pennsylvania.

The typical initiation ceremony includes a formal ceremony and a secret meeting at night. During the ceremony, the new member is presented with a set of letters that represent the initials of the fraternity's name: Sigma Pi Phi. The ceremony is usually attended by family members and friends.

"This is a moment of great pride and honor," said Graham. "To be welcomed into the Boule is a significant milestone in my career and personal life."

The Boule was founded in 1861 by a small group of black men who had been emancipated from slavery and were looking for a way to gain respect and recognition in their community. The Boule has grown into a national organization with chapters across the United States and around the world. It has a long history of service to the community, including support for education, healthcare, and civil rights.

The Boule's mission is to foster leadership and achievement among African American professionals. The fraternity's motto is "Building a Stronger Tomorrow." It is dedicated to the principles of excellence, integrity, and service.

The Boule today is comprised of over 400 chapters and 40,000 members. Its members include doctors, lawyers, professors, business leaders, and other professionals who are committed to serving their communities and making a positive impact.

"I am honored to be a part of such a prestigious organization," said Graham. "The Boule has provided me with opportunities to grow and develop as a professional and a leader."

The Boule also has a strong tradition of philanthropy and community service. It is involved in a variety of initiatives, including scholarships, youth programs, and community outreach.

"I am grateful to the Boule for the support and guidance it has provided," said Graham. "I am proud to be a member of this distinguished fraternity."
Students Are Grateful For Reading Buddies

Dear Mr. James Hunter, Dr. Henry Givens & Dr. Wally Washington:

This letter is being written to tell you how grateful we are to have had all of you as our Reading Buddies this school year. You all made it feel like precious gold. We are thankful for all the time that you have spent with us. You all are just outstanding and so loving in our hearts. Thanks for being so nice and kind and for spending time with us in the classroom. You made us feel so special.

Thanks Mr. James Hunter for all the help you give us. You never let us down. Thank you for bringing Food Boxes to our class. We enjoy her showing us how to read the maps and sharing information with us about her job as a meteorologist. Thank you for teaching us and telling us about your trip to Europe and about being an anchorwoman.

Thank you Dr. Wally Washington for loving us. We really enjoyed the stories that you used to our class and we also enjoyed hearing the stories that you love. We especially love about when you were a kid and how you had four new grandparents. We all love you and feel like we had four new grandparents. Thank you Dr. Henry Givens for being a great President at Harris-Brenn State College. Thank you for inviting our class to be your special guests at Harris-Brown. We also thank our staff and students for being so nice to us. We enjoyed the lunch and the tour. We loved visiting your college and will always remember that special field trip. Thank you. For all the gifts that you’ve given us, especially the Dr. Martin Luther King books.

We thank our reading buddies for being such a special bond, generation, and friendship.
March 28, 1996

Mrs. Joyce Roberts
Principal
Pierre LaClede Elementary School
5821 Kennerly
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Mrs. Roberts:

Enclosed are the tickets to the Gateway Classic Amateur Boxing Tournament for Friday, March 29, 1996 at 7:30 P.M. Please get these to Mrs. Smith. I hope my "reading buddies" and their families will be able to use them. You and Mrs. Smith are welcome to distribute them at your discretion.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Henry Givens, Jr.
President

HG:ls
January 28, 1997

Mrs. Joyce Roberts
Pierre Laclede Elementary School
5821 Kennerly Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63112-3821

Dear Mrs. Roberts,

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to work with our student teachers. You must be extremely proud of the hospitality and openness that both the staff and students at Pierre Laclede display. Each of our students left Laclede inspired in some way to make a difference in the life of a child.

I read several of the reaction papers that our students wrote. Nearly all them were greatly impressed by the bright, friendly and educational atmosphere inside the school when contrasted with the neighborhood on the outside. Many of the students noted that it is the principal of the school that sets the tone for the building and that you provided an excellent example for our student teachers (particularly the women) who aspire to administrative positions. The students were also greatly impressed with the respect Pierre Laclede School commands in the community and they now have a better idea of just how important school and community relations are.

Keep up the great work and please express my appreciation to Mr. Wise for visiting with us.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Pierrette Bentivegna, Director
Connections Project

c: Dr. Sherry Carter
5 SLPs SCHOOLS RECEIVE 'SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS' GRANTS

Four elementary and one middle school in St. Louis are among 24 nationwide to receive the Danforth Foundation’s first "Successful Schools Program" grants to support school-based educational reform.

The schools each will receive $20,000 yearly for three years, if they show satisfactory progress in improving academic achievement, behavior and attendance.

The SLPs schools are Laclede, Sigel, Shepard and Wyman elementary schools and Northwest Middle School. "These are schools that already have shown considerable progress in reform," said Brenda A. Hostetler, director of the Successful Schools Program for the Danforth Foundation.

The Successful Schools Program, which is in its first year, emphasizes the development of school improvement through partnership teams of teachers, parents, social service agency personnel and other professionals.

The St. Louis-based foundation provides technical assistance as well as funding to the participating schools. It is expected that the schools will serve as models to others in their districts, Hostetler said.

The schools accepted into the grant program prepared action plans for a three-year period. Besides the five in St. Louis, there are 10 elsewhere in Missouri and others in California, Florida and Ohio.

(more)


ADD 1 - 5 SLPS SCHOOLS RECEIVE 'SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS' GRANTS

The Danforth Foundation, established in 1927, is a national, educational philanthropy, dedicated to enhancing the humane dimensions of life. Activities of the Foundation traditionally have emphasized the theme of improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The Danforth Foundation serves the following areas: higher education through sponsorship of programs administered by the staff, precollegiate education through grant-making and program activities, and urban education in metropolitan St. Louis through grant-making and program activities.

Mr. and Mrs. William H. Danforth, who established the foundation along with their daughter and son, Dorothy Danforth Compton and Donald Danforth, maintained active leadership roles in the affairs of the Foundation throughout their lifetimes. Family members continue to be involved in Foundation activities through participation on the Board of Trustees.

###
December 10, 1992

Ms. Joyce Roberts
Harrison Elementary
4163 Green Lea Place
St. Louis, MO 63115-1046

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Let me commend you and your staff on an outstanding job of developing the discovery and hands on science rooms. It never ceases to amaze me, how professional educators of your caliber can do so much with so little. I was especially proud to visit your school today as a member of the St. Louis Board of Education. Please keep up the good work.

As promised, I am sending a package of energy related reference materials for you to incorporate in your science lab. The package includes a Teachers Resource Guide which outlines the materials and services that we have available for teachers in our area. Feel free to share this guide with the teachers of your school and encourage them to call us for any assistance they may need.

I have also forwarded a hand crank generator and electro magnet for you to use in the science lab. Hopefully this could be the beginning of a set of energy related hands on material for your school.

Happy Holidays,

Eddie G. Davis
Supervisor,
Community Relations
Appendix 1 Item 18

The Mildred, Herbert and Julian Simon Foundation
P.O. Box 78544
St. Louis, MO 63178
314-241-1716 (voice); 314-241-1568 (FAX)

February 20, 2003

Joyce Roberts
Pierre Laclede Elementary School
5821 Kennerly
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Ms. Roberts:

We are pleased to inform you that the Mildred Simon Foundation has approved a grant in the amount of $17,500 to be used for the purpose of assisting with purchase of the Waterford Early Reading Program for your school. The check will be mailed directly to Waterford from U.S. Bank. We understand that the balance of the program’s cost will come from other funding sources.

We will look forward to hearing from you when the program has been installed.

Sincerely,

Martin Mickey Rosen
Executive Director

cc: Mark Harrington

Steering Committee:
Charles Baen, Chairman
Lewis Charlock, Vice Chairman
Rudol Alvin Ruben, Administrator
William Kahn, Administrator
Martin Mickey Rosen, Executive Director
Appendix 1 Item 19

Black Americans In Flight
Appendix 1 Item 19a

Christopher Newman
10614 Fer. Stgdn.
WWII - Korea
4/18/1945
Appendix 1 Item 19b
Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning -
View videos at

Appendix 2 Item 0

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=joyce+roberts+attendance+achievement+attitude
Appendix 2 Teaching and Learning

Appendix 2 Item 1

Laclede School  Grade 2 - Fall Test

Student Assessment Report Form

Name________________________ Room________________

Date________________ Age________________

Reading

Grade 2

Language

Paragraph (1-4)_____

Math Skills

4/5 Number Concepts_____  

2/2 Story Problems_____
Appendix 2 Item 2

LACLEDE SCHOOL STUDENT INDIVIDUAL ADVANCEMENT PLAN (IAP)

NAME ______________________  Birthdate ______________________  AGE ______  GRADE ______  ROOM ______  DATE ______

Address: ___________________________________________________________  Parent's Name: ______________________  Tel. Number: ______________________

STUDENT NUMBER ______________________  ENROLLMENT DATE: ________  PREVIOUS SCHOOL ______________________

FALL - INTERVENTION PLAN SELECTION CRITERIA (Circle all that apply): MAP Scores  - Grade Level Assessment Tests
- Low Achievement  - Poor Attendance  - Poor Work Habits  - Behavior  - Other: ______________________

SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL: YES or NO / GRADE(S) RETAINED/DATES: ______________________

SPRING - YEAR-RND PROGRESS REPORT

ACHIEVEMENT: Good / Satisfactory / Needs Improvement / Poor
ATTENDANCE: Satisfactory / Fair / Poor - WORK HABITS: Good / Fair / Needs Improvement / Poor
SUMMER SCHOOL: Recommended: YES or NO / Attended: NO or YES (Year(s)): ______________________

ASSESSMENT DATA

1. FALL TERRA NOVA Percentiles: READING _____  MATH _____  SRI Level: Fall ______  Spring ______

2. MAP Levels: Year(s): _______  CA ______ SC ______  MA ______  SS ______

III. Grade Level Test Fall (Date): Overall Grade Level Test Performance Rating: Good / Fair / Low / Very Low

Grade Level Test Spring (Date): Overall Grade Level Test Performance Rating: Good / Fair / Low / Very Low

*** READING LEVEL: [HIGH]  [AVERAGE]  [LOW]  [VERY LOW]  Fall ______  Spring ______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING (+ Mastery  O Not Mastered)</th>
<th>Language (+ Mastered or O-Not Mastered)</th>
<th>MATH (+ Mastery  O Not Mastered)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPREHENSION  Fall  Sp</td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>Concepts/Place Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOCABULARY</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Addition Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOLCH WORDS</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Addition Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHONICS</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Subtraction Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORD ATTACK SKILLS</td>
<td>Sentence Form</td>
<td>Subtraction Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph Form</td>
<td>Multiplication Facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Primary Student:
Alphabet Letters  | Story Writing (Rubric 1-4)  SPRING  | Division Facts  |
Beginning Sounds  |  | Division Operations  |
Rhyming Words  | District's Writing Assessment Test  | Geometry  |
Writing Name  | Date  | Assessment Score  |
Knows Colors  |  | Measurement (Time & Money)  |
Follows Directions  |  | Story Problem Solving  |
Numbers to 10/Count  |  | Fractions  |

IV. Other Assessment Data (Writing, End of Book Test, Teacher Observations, Portfolio, Report Cards, etc.)

Report Completed by: ______________________
Appendix 2 Item 3

Pierre Laclede Elementary School
Student, Parent, Teacher, Administrator Compact

This agreement is a promise to work together to see that
does his/her best at Pierre Laclede School.

As a student, I pledge to:
* Work hard on my school assignments and finish my homework
* Tell my parents what I am learning in school
* Behave and show respect for myself and for others
* Ask my teacher questions when I don’t understand something
* Read books and limit my TV watching

Student’s Signature

As the parent, I pledge to:
* Be a Good Role Model
* Treat my child, other students and all school staff with respect
* Provide a quiet study place at home, encourage good study habits and have a definite study time
* Talk with my child every day about school
* Reinforce the St. Louis School Board Students’ Rights and Responsibilities related to conduct
* Follow my child’s progress by attending conferences, looking at work and responding to school contacts
* Encourage my child to read by reading to my child and by reading myself
* Limit my child’s TV viewing and help select appropriate, worthwhile programs
* Plan leisure activities that will allow me to spend quality time with my child

Parent’s Signature

As the Classroom Teacher, I pledge to:
* Be a Positive Role Model
* Treat all students, parents and other staff members with respect
* Provide motivating and interesting learning experiences in my classroom
* Try to find techniques and materials that work best for my students
* Improve my own teaching skills and broaden my knowledge so I can be the best teacher I can be
* Communicate and collaborate with parents to ensure each child achieves his/her best
* Explain my expectations, instructional goals and grading system to students and parents

Teacher’s Signature

As the principal and Administrator, I pledge to:
* Be a Positive Role Model
* Treat all students, parents and staff with respect
* Create a welcoming environment for students and parents
* Communicate to students and parents the goals and mission of the school
* Ensure a safe and orderly learning environment
* Support partnerships between parents, students and staff
* Guide and encourage the positive, creative efforts of staff, students and the community
* Encourage professional development by providing in-service opportunities for parents and staff

Principal’s Signature

*Most importantly, we promise to help each other carry out this compact.

Signed on this ___ day of ___________, 20___.
Appendix 2 Item 4

Pierre Laclede Elementary School
Status Conference 1

Teacher: ________________ Date: ________________
Grade level: ________________ Classroom Enrollment: ________________
Probationary: ___ Tenure: ___ Years of Service: ___

Directions: This document is to be completed prior to our scheduled conference. Sign up for your status conference in the secretary’s office on the calendar provided next to the staff’s attendance book. Thank you much and see you soon.

1. As the classroom teacher, what is your personal goal for school attendance this year?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

2. As the classroom teacher, what are your strengths/value-added to our goal of increased student achievement?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
Appendix 2 Item 4a

3. Identify professional development that you would like to present to your colleagues and/or attend to enhance your instructional delivery.
   - Presentation(s) to staff:

   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

   - Selected professional development to attend:

   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

4. Data Analysis: based on your review of the historical MAP data and the current grade level assessments, identify the students who are underperforming, progressing and/or have achieved mastery.

   Group 1 (under-performing)    Group 2 (progressing)    Group 3 (mastery)

   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
Appendix 2 Item 4b

Reviewed by:

_________________ (teacher)

_________________ (principal)
December 10, 1992

Ms. Joyce Roberts
Harrison Elementary
4163 Green Lea Place
St. Louis, MO 63115-1046

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Let me commend you and your staff on an outstanding job of developing the discovery and hands-on science rooms. It never ceases to amaze me, how professional educators of your caliber can do so much with so little. I was especially proud to visit your school today as a member of the St. Louis Board of Education. Please keep up the good work.

As promised, I am sending a package of energy related reference materials for you to incorporate in your science lab. The package includes a Teachers Resource Guide which outlines the materials and services that we have available for teachers in our area. Feel free to share this guide with the teachers of your school and encourage them to call us for any assistance they may need.

I have also forwarded a hand crank generator and electro magnet for you to use in the science lab. Hopefully this could be the beginning of a set of energy related hands-on material for your school.

Happy Holidays,

Eddie G. Davis
Supervisor,
Community Relations
CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM CLAY VISITED THE PIERRE LACLEDE SCHOOL ON FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 1994. He addressed the student body regarding AAA high attendance, positive attitude and outstanding achievement, all of which are goals of a school with high expectations. Congressman Clay entertained questions from the Primary, 2 & 3 pupils about his education, and work as a Congressman. Included in the picture with Congressman Clay are pupils from 2nd and 3rd grade. Seated in front of pupils are Joyce M. Roberts, principal - William Clay, Congressman & Joan S. Fisher - Instructional Coordinator, St. Louis Public Schools.

Photo by CARL BRUCE
July 13, 1999

Dear Mrs. Roberts,

I came by to see you and retrieve the rest of my personal belongings. I will be back next hour afternoon to get my bookshelves.

My summer school experience @ (Rickey was fine). I appreciate the opportunity you gave me to work. It did make me appreciate (Sickle) though. You are sorely missed!

The board of education approved my hiring last night. I will be assigned to 4th grade in a "school of opportunity." My new principal is a new principal and all of 33 years young. There is a lot of new staff and I already know one teacher who worked with me @ Barringer.

I'm already slated for a workshop and a retreat. It's going to be a new-type of challenge, since I will be part of an "accelerated school" which I don't fully understand. Sometimes being in a district labeled "high risk" makes me feel wonderful.
Appendix 2 Item 7a

training and more money. I look forward to letting you know of my
adjustment. It was really my
experience in the St. Louis Public Schools
that qualified me for this upcoming job.
Thank you for making me work
hard, supporting me and servicing
the children first. foremost, I held
you in the highest esteem along with
only two other principals I had during
the past 13 years.
I wish you the continued success
as already demonstrated here.

Sincerely,
Jamies Stephens
Appendix 2 Item 8

MID-YEAR CONFERENCE, 1996-97

Joyce Roberts, Laclede Elementary School

Laclede School's Spring 1996 SAT Basic Battery scores, grades kindergarten through five, range from a NCE low of forty-nine in grade four to a NCE high of sixty-one in kindergarten. The basic battery MNCE score has reached fifty-five. Writing assessment data indicated that grade three scored ABOVE the fifth grade city-wide average of 2.63 grade four scored ABOVE the fifth grade city-wide average; grade five scored FAR ABOVE the fifth grade city-wide average. Mrs. Roberts and staff are to be commended for the excellent student achievement outcomes.

Student attendance, as of December 13, 1996, was 96.3% which falls into the Elementary School Education Office's SUPERIOR category. Staff attendance, as of November 22, 1996, was 99.58% which also falls into the Elementary School Education Office's SUPERIOR category. Mrs. Roberts was absent 1 day during the first semester.

At her mid-year evaluation conference, Mrs. Roberts ably documented her instructional management skills. This documentation, along with school observations by the executive director and student achievement results, indicate that Mrs. Roberts' instructional management skills are SUPERIOR. Laclede School is either at or above the national norm each year on standardized tests. Mrs. Roberts exceeds the Elementary School Education Office's standard in terms of the quality of her instructional management skills.

Mrs. Roberts describes Laclede School in the following way, "A non-integrated neighborhood school whose mission is to effectively work with every student to raise achievement levels. The basic curriculum is supported by a broad based community involvement component." To this end, Mrs. Roberts and staff are succeeding.

An area of note is Laclede's goal to foster staff development. Activities are held weekly. The administrative team, consultants, University of Missouri - St. Louis staff and Laclede teachers serve as presenters on a variety of topics identified by staff on curriculum surveys. Mid-year conference feedback forms, which are attached, show the wide range of activities held.

An emphasis at the Laclede School is the collaboration between the school/home/community. This continues to grow. A number of activities are held. They include:

- Book Buddy Programs
- Successful Schools Initiative - Danforth Foundation
- The Professional Development School Collaboration - University of Missouri - St. Louis
- Caring Communities
- Soil Consultants
- Professional Leadership Conference
- Operation School Bell
- Donations by Contemporary Carpets
Joyce Roberts, Laclede School

A police sub station at Laclede is available to all officers in the area. A parent resource room is also maintained. There are a number of other community organizations and resources which collaborate with the Laclede School. These are too numerous to list but are attached with the mid-year conference feedback forms.

In other areas evaluated, Mrs. Roberts is above average. Reports are submitted in a timely and accurate manner. Very few parent complaints/concerns are recorded. Mrs. Roberts processes these satisfactorily at the building level. Student discipline at Laclede is excellent. Mrs. Roberts is fair and consistent in this area. Mrs. Roberts is fiscally responsible. No audit exceptions have been recorded.

Overall, Mrs. Roberts demonstrates OUTSTANDING skills as an elementary school principal.

DAVID G. FLIEG
Executive Director
Elementary School Education

Principal’s Signature Date

DGF/dp
Joyce,

Thank you for being such thoughtful supervision to all of us.

Use this check for anything you decide. In my mind it goes toward Watford. If it would be beneficial to make the check payable to another entity, tell me and I will do so.

Thank you.

Bill Westphal
A New Lesson Plan For Teachers

Laclede School is one of four St. Louis area sites selected to be a Professional Development School (PDS), which takes college students out of University classrooms and puts them into elementary or middle schools where the students and faculty observe professional teachers and work directly with students. The other schools are in the Parkway and Maplewood-Richmond Heights school districts.

"The PDS program grew out of the education reform movement and was instigated by the Holmes Group, a consortium of research universities," explains Tom Schnell, interim associate dean for research for the School of Education and head of the University's PDS effort.

"It takes the University to the school by putting methods courses into the elementary or middle school classroom, rather than on the college campus," he says. "Our students gain by being able to use that setting as a laboratory to see how things are implemented; it allows an important mix of theory and practice."

UM-St. Louis students spend two mornings a week at Laclede—three observing in a classroom or
Appendix 2 Item 10b

working directly with Laclede students and one day meeting to discuss what they’ve seen or done.

“POS gives our students a certain confidence for when they go into the classroom for their student teaching experiences,” says Renee Campos, UM-St. Louis liaison at Laclede School. “It allows them to see how the theory they learn in their textbooks and lectures can actually work in a classroom. It’s a far more satisfying experience for them. For example, in a methods class, a student puts together a lesson plan. In a more conventional setting, it’s pretty much an academic exercise. They do it and turn it in to their teacher. In a POS setting, they put together a lesson plan, but then have the opportunity to try it out on students. They can see in a concrete way what works and what doesn’t work; that’s something that can’t be replicated in a traditional college course.”

Cindy Searcy, the UM-St. Louis lecturer who teaches the language arts class at Laclede, agree with Campoy’s assessment.

Students find that a POS experience validates what they’ve learned in their courses,” Searcy says. “I think in a more conventional course, students often have the feeling, ‘Yes, this is good, this is textbook, but what’s the world really like?’ They look at their professors and say, ‘Well, you’ve had this experience and this or that has worked for you, but will it work for me? POS shows that, yes, it will.’”

Laura Bretz, a UM-St. Louis student who has participated in the POS at Laclede, says she has gained valuable experience from the program.

“It was a good opportunity to get into a school and see, first hand, how someone handles a class,” she says. “I’ve especially learned how important it is to be flexible when you’re teaching, when something you’ve planned doesn’t go right; I’ve had a chance to see how teachers care to the children and what they need, as opposed to concentrating exclusively on a lesson plan.”

POS programs also benefit the University and the schools in which they’re located.

“We really need to be more involved in collaboration with the public schools,” says Schnell. “In the past, we’ve had our differences. Public school teachers and administrators have viewed colleges as being ivory towers with no sympathy for life in the trenches, and colleges have viewed public schools as being practitioners with no appreciation for innovative theory.

“For the most part, it’s a false dichotomy, and the POS program will go a long way toward bridging that artificial gulf between us.”

“It also enables us, by our students’ presence, to have the opportunity to change some practices, to help better prepare the next generation by introducing new methods of instruction. For example, in one of our other Professional Development Schools, our students are working with math classes, and we feel strongly that elementary students learn best by using manipulative materials, rather than merely using worksheets. We’ve been able to introduce some of those materials into the school there and the students have benefited.”
For Lacledo School, the PDS provides some fairly concrete payoffs.

Despite its location in a low-income area, Lacledo is one of the most successful public schools in the city. It ranks third among city public schools in Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) scores, standing only behind two magnet schools. Its attendance rate is remarkable as well: day in and day out, 96 to 99 percent of its students show up for classes.

UM-St. Louis PDS program may enable the school to build on that impressive record.

Of most direct benefit to the students, Lacledo School will be able to use UM-St. Louis education majors to tutor its at-risk students and students who show difficulty with the SAT.

For Lacledo teachers, UM-St. Louis will provide inservice sessions in teaching and advising skills in science and language arts. The University will also offer on-site professional development opportunities for Lacledo teachers and administrators, who will be able to gain graduate credit for courses or research done at Lacledo.

The University will also supply teachers with information about innovative instructional materials and will provide Lacledo teachers with access to the UM-St. Louis library and computing facilities.

“I see only good things coming from this,” says Joyce Roberts, principal at Lacledo School.

“On one level, it allows our students to have a multicultural experience. We’re not an integrated school—16 percent of our students are African-American—and this program allows them to interact with people of different backgrounds.

“For our teachers, the program will give them some new perspectives; it will help them grow as professionals.

“But we’re also excited about this program for what it means to the future of education. We see that we have a chance to have a real impact in the shaping of the next generation of teachers. That’s important to us.

“PDS is one of the most exciting education programs I’ve ever seen; I wish every school could participate.”

Renée Campoy, PDS coordinator at Lacledo School, confers with classroom instructors.

Cindy Soancy, UM-St. Louis lecturer, provides caring advice.
Appendix 2 Item 11

A Peep Into My Story... The Influence of Mrs. Roberts

As I reflect on my life and all the blessings God has bestowed upon me, I say, “thank you”. I’m thankful for the challenging and rewarding experiences that have shaped my life. The following words are a peek into my story, a reflection of selflessness, and a beacon of hope for the future.

Growing up in the inner city of St. Louis, Missouri in a neighborhood infested with poverty, drugs and crime my outlook on life was greatly impacted. My home environment consisted of a very loving mother although hooked on crack cocaine, constant traffic in our home, and at times people drinking/drugging, amongst other things. My father, who was outside of the home but very present in my life, was also using crack cocaine at the time, and appeared to be searching for the right woman to bring into our lives, in an attempt to make a better life for us. Although my parents raised me in an undesirable environment, they always managed to show me love even though they were dealing with addictive behaviors. Over the years, I came to realize that my parents had lost their way in this journey of life.

The thought of entering Middle school was a little scary for me. This was because I did not have the latest fashions and feeling dumb at times due to my difficulties with reading. Life was unstable and after attending 7 or 8 elementary schools I was exhausted with meeting new teachers and making new friends. I became accustomed to moving around and the lack of stability.

When it came time for us to move as I was approaching middle school, I was saddened that I had to make another transition. The neighborhood we moved to was zoned for Williams Middle School, this transition, became my life changer. To my surprise, I met children who had a desire to achieve. The desire to learn and competitive atmosphere with my peers, encouraged me to strive for success. Dedicated staff and administration took a liking to me, which I never understood because I was not the cleanest, cutest, nor the smartest child. I’m sure they did not realize the overwhelming impact that they had on life. The genuine love, concern and belief in my ability carried me through the hardships I dealt with at home. The students, teachers, and staff’s belief in me, made me start to believe in myself. At this point in my life this was the only school I stayed at more than one school year.

I had a great 6th grade year at Williams Middle School. My confidence in myself increased, grades elevated from C’s and D’s to A’s and B’s. I was on
the winning team for the Black History competition and I was appointed to help with numerous school projects and initiatives. I took pride in my involvement. At first, I was hesitant to get attached. It was difficult to get comfortable because I knew it would be time for a move, soon...and sure enough it happened. The summer before 7th grade, we were evicted from our apartment due to nonpayment. I had to move in with my grandmother and my mom moved with my sister. My grandmother told me that I would have to get transferred to another middle school because Williams Middle School was too far for her to transport me each day. Although I was disappointed, I understood and had already prepared myself for this.

As I walked through the doors of Williams Middle School on the first day of school, I was greeted by Mr. Wayne, the Principal, who was always happy to see me, he said, “Welcome back Keely, you are in Room 207.” Sadly, I replied, “I’m not staying long, I have to leave.” He directed me to go to class and stated he would speak with my grandmother. All the way up the stairs, I was thinking to myself, “he doesn’t know my grandma”. I also thought, “she is not going for it”. I stayed that day, that year, and even finished my 8th grade year!

The staff kicked in and took turns taking me back and forward to and from school for two years. This level of support was unimaginable. I praise God for them all, however, I have to give recognition to one person in particular, Mrs. Roberts. This phenomenal woman, picked me up each morning and took me home each afternoon. When she was not available, which was not often, other staff members provided transportation. They never inquired about my home environment, the focus was solely on me and my need for stability.

Mrs. Roberts never appeared to be frustrated with me or made me feel like I was an inconvenience. Instead she was so soft spoken with such a pleasant spirit. I can remember the song that she played at least once or twice a week while riding home, “Get Here When You Can”, by Otis Adams. She would sing that song in her lone tone and it became one of my favorite songs still to this day. Come to think about it, it may have been a tape. If it had not been for her selflessness and the love from Williams Middle School, I would not be who I am today.

Some will view my interactions with Mrs. Roberts as just a ride to and from school. However it was so much more. She was the example of a successful
black woman with a family and a stable life. I witnessed the love Mrs. Roberts had for her daughter and her husband. She showed me a true example of what it is to be active in your child’s life, have a stable job, and nurture a healthy lifestyle. I admired and longed to have all of that one day.

Mrs. Roberts helped me realize: what I thought was impossible can be achieved. I was able to see her balance both work and home life responsibilities. Her “norm” was a possibility of an actual reality for me. Now, 24 years later, I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, working full-time as a Behavioral Health Specialist and part-time as a Therapist in my own private practice, and a full-time mother. I am committed to doing what I can to pay it forward and let others see... what they think is impossible is very much possible.

I am living proof that sometimes all it takes is someone to believe in you. I always use my middle school experience as an example of planting seeds. Even if a person is not around to see the seeds blossom immediately it does not negate the impact of planting the seeds. God has blessed me with a daughter of my own and I have done my best to mimic the qualities I witnessed in Mrs. Roberts, along with examples from other positive women in my life. I continuously strive to be the best mom and example for my daughter to follow. Because Mrs. Roberts and other staff members at Williams Middle School cared enough to give a few hours of their day, I was able to survive the hood, escape poverty, and pay it forward to others.

Kesley Fennessy 8.20.16
Appendix 3 Recognitions and Awards

Appendix 3 Item 1

Resolution Number 264

WHEREAS, Pierre Laclede Elementary School is a non-integrated neighborhood school located in the
First Ward which provides educational and community-based services to approximately four hundred students;
and

WHEREAS, educational services are provided to students in pre-school, special education, and
kindergarten through grade 1. The school’s basic curriculum is supported and grounded in the Effective and
Efficient Schools correlations; and

WHEREAS, Pierre Laclede emphasizes and seeks to achieve excellence, attendance, attitude, and
parental/community involvement; and

WHEREAS, despite the fact that Pierre Laclede Elementary School is located in an area that has the
highest juvenile delinquency rate in the City and is located among many deteriorating structures, its
students perform at or about the national norm on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), its student
attendance is over the District’s goal of ninety-five percent and its staff and teacher attendance is ninety-eight
percent; and

WHEREAS, the school is involved in a number of dynamic partnerships designed to serve as
additional resources for the children. Among the resources are:
• Professional Development School in collaboration with CMSL.
• Successful Schools Initiative - a school reform program designed to generate change through
collaboration between teachers, parents, and community resources.
• Caring Communities Program - a family intervention program.
• Bank Buddies Program on cultivating array of professional men who are members of Elks
Boule Chapter of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity who read and share books and personal
experiences with students.

WHEREAS, in recognition of the dedicated principal and teachers of Pierre Laclede Elementary
School who continue to exude a creative energy toward providing a learning environment wherein high moral
standards are taught, lived, and extended into the total community; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the citizens of St. Louis who have been educated at Pierre Laclede
Elementary School and now contribute to the City’s integrity, growth, and rich heritage through service.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we
pass in our deliberations to recognize and acknowledge the dedicated principal, teachers, parents and citizens
who have made Pierre Laclede Elementary School a cherished example of a non-integrated neighborhood
public school:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we the St. Louis Board of Aldermen extend our heartfelt thanks
to the principal, teachers, parents and citizens that contribute their time and effort to Pierre Laclede
Elementary School, and we further instruct the Clerk of this Board to spread a copy of this Resolution across
the minutes of this proceeding and to prepare a commemorative copy to be signed by the Principal, Joyce M. Roberts at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Adopted this 7th day of February, 1997 by:
Honorable Irene J. Smith, Aldermanwoman 1st Ward
Honorable Yvonne Guise Bailey, Aldermanwoman 13th Ward
Honorable Sharon Year, Aldermanwoman 20th Ward
Honorable Irving C. Clay, Jr., Aldermanwoman 26th Ward

Adopted this 7th day of February, 1997 as submitted by:

Fred F. Strick
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Francis G. Shag
President, Board of Aldermen
Dear Joyce,

Congratulations on the attached fine article about the Laclede School. I am justly proud of all of your fine work as Principal.

Keep on keeping on!

Sincerely,

Lynn
Joyce M Roberts

From: Beckwith, Lynn L. [beckwithll@marc.umsl.edu]
To: Joyce M Roberts
Cc: 
Subject: Congratulations
Attachments:

Joyce, congratulations on the fine article in the Post Dispatch today about the LaSalle School. I continue to be very proud of you. I will be using the article this week in the two classes I teach this semester as I discuss the concept of leadership.

I look forward to your interacting with us at the Vashon Compact Principals dinner meeting in November.

Lynn

https://mail.alps.org/exchange/JRoberts75542/Inbox/Congratulations.EML?Cmd=open

11/6/2002
November 21, 2002

Vashon Compact Principals’ Initiative Dinner Meeting

Agenda

1. Introductory Remarks

2. Presentation and Interaction with William Carson

3. Presentation and Interaction with Joyce Roberts

4. Other Business
Joyce M Roberts
From: Lynn Beckwith Jr.  Sent: Tue 9/16/2003 11:57 AM
To: Joyce M Roberts
Cc: 
Subject: Classroom Presentation
Attachments:

Joyce, I was very proud of you last night. Your presentation to my class was direct, informative and meaningful. You also responded well to questions. I am pleased to have touched your career along the way. Thanks so much for taking time from your busy schedule to interact with my class. I am appreciative.

Lynn

P.S. Joyce, I continue to get calls on my 4557 extension here from volunteers in the schools who worked with the Division of Volunteer Services, which is no more. Do you have any idea to whom I should be referring these calls?

October 16, 1997

Laclede School
5821 Kennerly Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Faculty and Students:

Congratulations for being recognized by the St. Louis Board of Education at their October 14th meeting. I noted with pride that your students performed above national norms at every grade level and achieved SAT basic battery at 50 NCEs or above. That significant achievement can only be accomplished by excellence in leadership and teaching and dedication to learning by your students.

You are also commended for achieving outstanding attendance above 94%. We recognize that developing a student’s habit to “Be There” translates to life long success not only in school but also in job performance and achieving any endeavor.

The future of our city is dependent on the excellence of our schools. You are an inspiration to all schools.

Sincerely,

Clarence Harmon
MAYOR

CH/MS/cas
The city schools

The powers that be must remember:
Education is first

I owe the St. Louis public school system a great deal. It's through that system that I learned much of what I know today.

I had great teachers. They were concerned about their students, and they made sure that we got the knowledge we needed, whether we liked it or not. Teachers like Miss Perkins, Mrs. Nance, Mr. Cotteret, Miss Darden, Miss Day, Mrs. Boulding, Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Mitchener were only some of the fine teachers I had. It’s because of them and other teachers that I was able to succeed in life.

So it saddens me when I look at the problems the city public school system faces today. Test scores that are regularly below par, occasional outbreaks of violence, students who seem to get lost in the system and a general sense that things are not going well—all are distressing.

There’s a feeling at times that some think the most important thing about the Board of Education is its ability to employ people, not its ability to educate students. Some politicians become more upset when a person in a key position in the school system is reassigned than when a student fails to get the education we taxpayers are paying for.

Don’t mistake this for a blanket indictment of the entire system. The magnet schools seem to work reasonably well, and some schools—like Pierre Laclede Elementary School in north St. Louis, for instance—have superior teachers and administrators, whose hard work pays off in students who perform well.

Still, they tend to be the exception, not the rule. Until they become the rule, our system will remain a failure.
Appendix 3 Item 7a
It's perhaps surprising that more parents aren't outraged about what's going on.

But the fact is, many parents of city school students these days are poor and are dealing with multiple challenges. While it's easy for us to say that their children's education should be priority No. 1, we've got to deal with the fact that that's not always the case. That's not an excuse for those parents, just the reality.

The issue of quality education for our kids is one that has to be resolved.

Obviously, our society is hurt when students don't learn.

When they're passed on from one grade to another without ever learning to read, for instance, a problem is created that we will all eventually pay for, whether it's through the criminal system — because a frustrated person who never learned to read found crime the only way to make a buck — or for remedial programs for adults who didn't get what they should have gotten in school.

For those interested in the renovation of the city, or those who hold on to the hope that St. Louis will someday be able to boast of an increase in population instead of a decrease, what happens in the schools should be a major concern.

Perhaps the greatest reason for the city's population decline is its school system.

How many parents have moved into the city, only to leave when their children become school age?

How many have considered moving into the city but decided against it after considering city schools?

Downtown St. Louis can be renovated beyond all expectations, the city's neighborhoods can be cleaned up and rebirthed, and crime can continue to drop at a phenomenal rate, but if the schools can't be improved, all the other efforts will be for nothing.

In the next few months, we're likely to see lots of different proposals to change the school system. Without a doubt, our system needs a significant shaking up. What's in place now clearly isn't working well.

But as the School Board, the mayor, the Legislature and others consider new ideas this year, let's hope that they remember that after all the money has been spent, after all the arguments have taken place, after all the political battles have come to an end, the bottom line must be improving the education of our kids.

Everything else is secondary.

Appendix 3 Item 8
SLPS News

Farragut Accelerated Elementary

By Chester A. Edmonds

Farragut Accelerated Elementary School is located in north St. Louis, at 4025 Sullivan Ave. Its staff of 47 certified and non-certified professionals works directly and indirectly with 345 preschool-fifth grade students.

According to Principal Jimmie Irons, his students performed well in two recently administered achievement tests. They ranked 13th among the city’s elementary schools on a 1997 test and 9th on a state-sponsored one taken in 1996. The school received the 1997 Distinguished School Award from the Missouri State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

It is interesting to note that Irons has served as the school’s principal for almost three decades. He involves his students and staff in many activities that support academics, including the Accelerated School Initiative, a school of emphasis program that focuses on journalism and most other programs offered by the district.

To gain more information or to schedule a visit, call Irons at 531-1198.

Garfield Elementary School

Steven Langhorst, principal of Garfield Elementary School, is very proud of the recognition given to his students and staff for their hard work. District administrators presented them with an Outstanding Academic Achievement certificate for making significant gains on 1997 S.A.T. Achievement Tests. They were also recognized as the only school who improved S.A.T. scores at every level. Finally, they were praised for improvement in student attendance.

This school is located at 2612 Wyoming Ave. It has 354 students in kindergarten through the fifth grade, and a staff of 34 professionals, including teachers, administrators and support personnel.

If you are interested in learning more about this improving school, call Langhorst at 770-3717.

Laclede Elementary School

Almost every year, Laclede Elementary School is singled out for its academic excellence. Preschool through fifth grade students attend classes at this school, located at 5821 Kennerly Ave., in northeast St. Louis. They achieve extremely well when compared with their local and national peers. All grade levels performed at or above the national norms on the 1997 Stanford Achievement Tests.

When asked, Principal Joyce Roberts modestly points to other accomplishments as well. She relates on the high student and staff attendance, good parental involvement and interest, several grants for special projects, and collaboration with community members and institutions.

You may call Roberts at 360-0546 for additional information.
September 18, 1997

Joyce Roberts, Principal
Laclede Elementary School
5821 Kennerly Arlington Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Thank you for your willingness to let SRA consultants work with the EMH teachers at Laclede Elementary on Friday. Because of your advance preparation, we found that teachers and students were ready for our visit.

Since everything was well organized, we were able to demonstrate lessons from Reading Mastery and Distar Language with students who will be in the programs. We also had time to discuss placement of children based on their ability to complete lesson tasks and to respond to questions and concerns raised by teachers. The experience was valuable for SRA's consultants, who are working to improve their teaching and coaching skills, and was well-received by participating teachers.

If anything one thing stood out during the classroom visit, it was the desire of children to join in the demonstration lesson. The pride they showed when they were able to complete an activity told us that your students are very motivated to learn. I know you will see many students making great strides this school year.

Please thank your staff for making us feel so welcome. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Karen Sorrentino
Marketing Manager
Appendix 3 Item 10a
This has truly been a rich experience. If you should have any questions, you can reach me at 867-9049. Take care, and have a safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

Halcyone H. Brown
Associate Program Coordinator
Missouri Historical Society
Ms. Joyce Roberts
Pierre Laclede Elementary School
5821 Kennerly Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Thank you so much for allowing me to come and visit the fifth graders at Pierre Laclede School on February 5. I was impressed by their good behavior and excellent level of participation in the mathematics lesson I presented to them.

I had the opportunity to share my experience with a group of minority professors at the Seventeenth Annual Research Association of Minority Professors later that afternoon. Dr. Hammonds, the superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools, was present. He also had positive things to say about Laclede.

I commend you, Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Robinson for the wonderful job you are doing with our children.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Leonard, Ph.D.
CLEVELAND HAMMONDS JR., Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 25, 1997

Dear School Administrator:

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your staff for having satisfied the criteria for the 1996-97 Budget Incentive Program. Through your actions, you have distinguished yourselves by further underscoring our district's commitment to improving the "financially stressed" title which has been associated with our district for some time. You have truly earned your "Passport to Excellence."

As forerunners in the area of creative budgeting, you have given the district additional funds during a time when revenues have not grown at the same level as expenses or demand for additional services. You have shown all of us how tenacity and diligence can yield positive results.

As we all prepare for a new and exciting school year, we should use this accomplishment as the cornerstone of great things to come.

Thank you once again for your efforts.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Cleveland Hammonds Jr.
Superintendent of Schools
Appendix 3 Item 13

SLPS BUDGET REDUCTION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Pay to the
Order of: Lucille Elementary

Two thousand thirteen Dollars
Dollars

St. Louis Public Schools
911 Locust Street

check not intended for distribution

Cleveland Hammonds Jr.

0097 4544 4221 6743 55545 54562 9057 2

August 25 1997

$2,613.00

non-negotiable
Appendix 3 Item 14

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Mercantile Bancorporation Inc. of St. Louis hereby recognize

Pierre Laclede Elementary School
St. Louis Public Schools

for efforts to provide a quality education for all students and for documenting those efforts as a candidate in the 1995-96 Gold Star Schools of Missouri program.

Presented January 1996

[Signatures]

Joan M. Solomon
Coordinator, Gold Star Schools Program

Robert E. Bryant
Missouri Commissioner of Education
Appendix 3 Item 15

1997
THE ST. LOUIS AMERICAN
SALUTE TO EXCELLENCE
SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS BANQUET

Friday, September 5, 1997

Pre-Banquet Reception
5:45 P.M.-7 P.M.

Banquet/Awards Program
7 P.M.-9:00 P.M.

Post-Banquet Aftersets
9:00 P.M.-12 A.M.

America's Center
America's Ballroom
801 Convention Plaza

General Chairperson
Eddie Davis
President of The St. Louis Minority Business Council

Co-Chairperson:
Dorothy White-Coleman
David Stewart

Honorary Co-Chairs:
Clarence Harmon
Mayor of St. Louis

William L. Clay Sr.
Member of Congress

George “Buzz” Westfall
St. Louis County Executive

********
MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

Pre-Banquet Reception
Phat Williams Quartet

Banquet Entertainment
Jazz Edge
featuring
Kimm Covington & Larry Hamilton

Post-Banquet Music Aftersets:
Jazz Venue
Jazz Edge Quartet
with WSIE-FM 98.7’s LaVonne Holloway as M.C.

Old School/Hip-Hop Dance Party
with Majic 105’s Marc Clarke as M.C.

********

Music entertainment for both Post-Banquet Music
Aftersets is being underwritten by
Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.

Music for the Pre-Banquet Reception/Banquet
Entertainment is being underwritten by
McDonald's of St. Louis & Metro East

Video sponsors of the 1997 Salute to Excellence:
KSDK NewsChannel 5
**1997 St. Louis American Foundation Scholarship Grants:**

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<td>1997 Morris G. Suggs Scholarships</td>
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<td>1997 Kennedy and Associates Scholarship</td>
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<td>*UMB Bank of St. Louis</td>
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**TOTAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS $18,850**

**St. Louis American Community Grants:**

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**TOTAL FOUNDATION COMMUNITY GRANTS $9,000**

**Boeing Corporation Scholarships** $5,000

**GRAND TOTAL 1997 COMMUNITY GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS $32,850**

* Accepting Applications

**Gold Sponsors**

- Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.
- McDonald's of St. Louis and Metro East
- KSDK-Channel 5
- BJC Health System
- TWA
- American Equity Mortgage
- St. Louis Rams
- The Boeing Company

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- St. Louis Dental Services
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- St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission
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- Southwestern Bell

**Bronze Sponsors**

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- Missouri Botanical Garden
- Barry Thompson
- Gateway News
- Dr. Larry Jones
- Armstrong, Trudell, Schill and Davis
- Washington University School of Medicine
- Forest Park
- LaGold Gas
- Hearing Corp
- Gavis Farms
- MBI
- President's Cuts
- Missouri Hilltop
- Commerce Bank
- McCormick Baron
- Metropolitan Bank
- Hopewell Center
- First National Bank
- Family Constructions Inc.
- Lincoln University
- IDEC
- University of Missouri Columbus
- Food Jones
- Dr. Frances J. Goodman
- Enterprise News
- KMOV
- St. Louis Public Library
- Cenlinc
- Southeast Missouri State University
- MISS 10
- MAGIC 10
- Magna Bank
- Monsanto
- Committee to Save Darlene Green
- St. Louis 2004
- Missouri Black Caucus Foundation
- ZOOGM Chad
- St. Louis Art Museum
- Blue Cross
- John J. Cieselski
- Ren daughters
- Dress Financial
- Hafiard Bank
- Bank of America
- Service Center
- UMB Bank of St. Louis
- White, Olfen, Watson Law Firm
- Magna Bank
- Bank of America
February 6, 2002

TO: Principals
FROM: Chester A. Edmonds
RE: Accountability Program’s Performance Awards

At the St. Louis Board of Education’s meeting on February 12, Superintendent Hammonds will seek approval of an appropriation to fund the district’s Accountability Plan for performance during 2000-2001.

Teachers at 14 schools will be eligible to receive additional compensation. Five schools will receive $1,000 per teacher and an equal amount for supplies. The remaining nine schools will receive $500 per teacher and an equal sum for supplies.

- LaClede Elementary School
- Sherman Elementary Community Education Center
- Metro Academic and Classical High School
- Ford Elementary Community Education Center
- Baden Elementary School

- Busch Academic and Athletic Academy
- Buder Elementary School
- Carnes Visual and Performing Arts Middle School
- Gateway Elementary School
- Kennard Classical Junior Academy
- Mark Twain Elementary School
- Scruggs Elementary School
- Walbridge Elementary Community Education Center
- Waring Academy of Basic Instruction

Principals and teachers from these schools are encouraged to attend the Board meeting at Carr Lane VPA on February 12 at 7 p.m.

Superintendent Hammonds will provide more information on how these schools were determined at the Board meeting and at the principals’ meeting at Metro Academic and Classical High School on February 21 at 9:30 a.m.

cc: Dr. Cleveland Hammonds Jr.
     Dr. Charles R. Brown
March 12, 2002

Ms. Joyce Roberts
Principal
Laclede School
5821 Kennerly Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Your school, with your leadership, has placed you in Level 4. This ranking is based upon where your school ranked for the accountability awards and your school’s ranking over three years for the most improved MAP scores. Your score may reflect additional credit for steady progress over three years:

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This entitles you to a $3,000 award.

Since this is the first year, we did not include student or teacher attendance. We plan to include those factors next year.

Sincerely,

Cleveland Hammonds Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: David Flieg
    Dori Freelain
    801 N. 11th Street
    St. Louis, Missouri 63101
    p. (314) 231-3720
Appendix 3 Item 17

D. Kent King  
Commissioner of Education

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
— Making a positive difference through education and service —

P.O. Box 480  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480  
573-751-4408

April 3, 2002

Mrs. Joyce Roberts  
Principal  
Laclede Elementary School  
5821 Kennerly Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63112-3821

Dear Mrs. Roberts:

In education we constantly challenge schools to perform better. This includes administrators, teachers and, of course, students.

In reviewing data from the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), we have identified school buildings with the largest net increase in the combined percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the Mathematics, Communication Arts, Science, and Social Studies assessments. To determine the “most improved” schools, we looked at the increase in scores from the first year the assessment became mandatory in 2001. School buildings were grouped in three categories—buildings with less than 250 students, buildings with 250 to 500 students, and buildings with more than 500 students.

We are pleased to recognize Laclede Elementary School as being in the Top 10 “most improved” for increasing the combined percentage of students scoring in the Proficient and Advanced categories in Communication Arts, Grade 3 and Science, Grade 3. A complete list of school buildings in the “most improved” category in all content areas and grade levels is enclosed.

We know the instructional leadership of the building principal makes a significant difference in student performance. On behalf of the State Board of Education, we congratulate you for providing that leadership. I know there are many people in your building, as well as across the district, who have also made a significant contribution to the improving scores. Please extend our congratulations to those people.

Shortly, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will share this information with all Missouri schools. I would anticipate that you or your superintendent may be receiving calls from other districts inquiring what your building did to earn this recognition. You are encouraged to visit with your staff to summarize what you have done to focus on student achievement and share that with those who inquire.

Sincerely,

D. Kent King

Enclosure  
e: Cleveland Hammonds, Jr.
October 11, 2002

Dr. Cleveland Hammonds, Jr.
Superintendent
St. Louis City School District
801 N. 11th Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63101-1401

Dear Dr. Hammonds:

Congratulations to you and the St. Louis Board of Education for all of your hard work to improve student achievement in the St. Louis Public Schools. The selection of Mrs. Audrey Ferguson as Missouri’s Teacher of the Year is a testimony to your efforts in this regard.

This letter is to confirm our invitation to you and the Laclede Elementary staff to make a presentation to the State Board of Education on Thursday, October 24, 2002, at 1:00 p.m. in the State Board meeting room on the 6th floor of the Jefferson State Office Building, 205 Jefferson Street. The presentation should be no longer than thirty-five (35) minutes and participants might include: the principal, one or two teachers with at least one of them being a regular classroom teacher, and a student. The focus of your presentation should be student achievement and how Laclede Elementary, in particular, has made significant improvement in this area.

Again, congratulations, and we look forward to your visit. If you have any questions, you may call me at (573) 751-2931 or (314) 340-3694.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Charles R. Brown
Assistant Commissioner
Teacher Quality & Urban Education
Appendix 3 Item 19a
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Appendix 3 Item 19c

The school’s parent liaison, counselor, and social worker also make home visits to support families with irregular attendance patterns. For students who come to school, but are not ready to learn—hungry, tired, or in need of clothing—Ladeste’s parent liaison maintains a collection of non-perishable food items and a closet of clothes, shoes, and other personal items. Local businesses encourage excellent attendance by offering students incentives such as tickets to sporting events. Collectively, these efforts have resulted in an average daily attendance rate of 82 percent.

“A” is for Achievements

Pam Laclede’s vision is for students to be performing at the proficient and advanced levels in all core curriculum areas. To target areas of strength and need for each student, grade level teams of teachers designed assessments aligned to the Missouri Assessment Program that are given during the first two weeks of each year. The results of these assessments form the basis of an individual achievement plan (IAP) for each student. Teachers consider student aptitude in groupings homogeneously with the anticipation that they will move in and out of groups with skill mastery. “Class-within-a-class” teams select educators and regular educators and teachers to involve all special needs students in regular classroom. Laclede’s has special needs pull-out programs.

Each classroom at Laclede exemplifies a rich, literacy and work-centered, high expectations/low excuses learning environment. Laclede’s curriculum is aligned with Missouri’s Show-Me Standards, goals, and benchmarks; much of the instruction is interdisciplinary. A particular “shining star” in Laclede’s academic program is the instructional position in their nationally recognized outdoor classroom located in Laclede’s Moffett Cabbage Patch Garden. In this community garden, students engage in extra-curricular hands-on learning activities covering all aspects of gardening and plant life. Their effort subsists in sharing vegetables and fruits during harvest time.

Laclede is proud to be recognized by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as one of the top ten “Most Improved Schools in the State.”

“A” is for Attitude

Pam Laclede staff cultivates an attitude of respect for self, adults, other students, and school property. Laclede is a tight-knit, violence-free, drug-free, and gun-free school. Through the character education program, students are consistently reminded to “stay in the learning zone” on their “brass edge,” making “good decisions.” Extracurricular activities such as the Laclede Steppe’s all-boys, the Friendship Club, and the Young Entrepreneurs help students develop positive attitudes toward themselves, form positive interpersonal relationships, and enhance their lifestyles. Students learn to value themselves and to reach out to others, as well, through school community service projects. Laclede students’ pride and positive attitudes aims as student growers and activists welcome visitors from throughout the metropolitan area and field-guided tours of their school.
Appendix 3 Item 20

Joyce M Roberts

From: William W Schicht
To: Joyce M Roberts
Cc: 
Subject: RE: How did it go?
Attachments:

Joyce, I was so gratified to hear about Friday, and the fact that you're on a first name basis with Kit, the site reviewer (this cannot hurt your cause). Too bad that she could not also have been at the DDOIP ceremony at 801 N. 11th on Friday to hear Valerie Harvey ask, "is Joyce here today... we need to present her with a plaque to commemorate the fact that we modeled the entire program around what she does in her school, and for all her help in getting us started right." (or words to that effect). All this recognition for you and your school is so appropriate and warranted, because you and your staff have built Laclede into a true model of which this district, city, state and the entire nation can be proud. It is the culmination (but by no means the end) of your career of service and devotion. I hope that you relish every moment of the experience, an experience of such magnitude that it is earned by only a few. And, please know that I'm your biggest fan. P.S. check for Maurice's tribute at graduation is in the mail as of tonight. Gosh, I do hope that we manage to keep him in our city schools come next year! He'll be fine, whenever he lands, but it is our schools I'm thinking about! P.S. I'm out of town in Atlanta, at a meeting of evaluators of NSF projects, from Thursday through Saturday. So, I hope to see you sometime next week to discuss our article, if that is convenient for you. P. S. S. I "loaned" my copy of the Laclede tape temporarily to JoAnne Vasquez, who I believe also wants to see you during her next trip into town, tentatively some time in August. All the best, and much congratulations! "Friend" Bill.

---Original Message---
From: Joyce M Roberts
Sent: Monday, June 02, 2003 5:06 PM
To: William W Schicht
Subject: RE: How did it go?
Importance: High

Friday was an incredible day. I picked Kit up from the Marriott and showed her the attendance area of the school. Within 15 minutes she indicated that her job takes her in and out of schools all across the country and she had never been in a school quite like Laclede. She had an opportunity to meet students, parents, teachers and community persons. She observed a reading and math class which served as the basis of the selection criteria. She visited the garden, observed the reading terraces, viewed the videotape and requested a copy. She also carried away with her copies of the articles in the Post and St. Louis American. I'm confident about the results. Maurice would certainly appreciate your generosity and a tangible amount of $25.00 dollars would be appropriate. You have already been so supportive. Just a recommendation. I suspect that the results will be posted sometime in Sept. You are now a fullfledged member of the Laclede family and I am also proud to call you friend. Take care...

---Original Message---
From: William W Schicht
Sent: Mon 6/2/2003 10:52 AM
To: Joyce M Roberts
Cc: 
Subject: How did it go?

Joyce, I've been wondering (and hoping) all weekend if the rest of Friday's visit went as well as its start. And, another thing that crossed my mind, would you mind if I supported Laclede to acquire a small token of appreciation to give to Maurice McDaniel on the occasion of his graduation from 5th grade? Perhaps a $100 savings bond? Let me know if you think that this would be a good idea, or not. I'll support with another check anything that you wish to do as far as Maurice is concerned. Bill.

June 3, 2003

Dear Mrs. Jones,

Thank you so very much for an especially informative and rewarding visit last week. I greatly enjoyed meeting members of your staff and faculty and your students, and appreciated in terms of the community and the time that you personally spent with me during my visit. Thank you all for your graciousness, openness and hospitality.

While many share my goal of getting all children to reach academic levels, regardless of the obstacles, you and your staff are making that happen right off to all of you.

My very best wishes for your continued success.

[Signature]

Appendix 3 Item 20a
Joyce M Roberts

From: WPurdy1001@aol.com
To: Joyce M Roberts
Cc:
Subject: Laclede Elementary gets 'Blue Ribbon'
Attachments:

Joyce:

Congratulations! Your leadership is outstanding and I am proud to know you. Best Wishes,

Bill Purdy

Laclede Elementary gets 'Blue Ribbon'
By Jodi Massa
Post-Dispatch
09/15/2003

Laclede Elementary School at 5821 Kerberly in St. Louis was named this morning as one of 219 Blue Ribbon schools in the country.

The Blue Ribbon designation has recognized outstanding schools in the country for many years, but this year the criteria was changed under the federal No Child Left Behind act.

Laclede, long considered an urban overachiever, was recognized for dramatically improving test scores with a student body comprised from low-income families.

"It is exactly what I expected," said Joyce Roberts, the former principal at Laclede. "Hard work, putting effort in -- you can plan to be successful."

Roberts was the principal at Laclede until this summer when she was promoted to a district-wide position.

The Department of Education will announce the rest of the Blue Ribbon winners today and tomorrow in ceremonies across the country.

Get more on this story on STLtoday.com later or in Tuesday's Post-Dispatch.
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of the Secretary’s Regional Representative – Region VII

November 5, 2003

Ms. Joyce E. Roberts
Principal
Laclede Elementary School
5821 Kennerly Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63112-3821

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Congratulations on your school’s selection as a 2003 No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon School. No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools are models of both excellence and equity. This award spotlights some of the nation’s most successful schools that are meeting the mission to ensure every child learns, and no child is left behind. It was refreshing to hear of the outstanding work you, your staff, and your entire school community are doing to achieve this distinct honor.

I hope the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., was a memorable event. Not only did it showcase your school as one of our nation’s best schools, but I hope this ceremony provided an opportunity for you to visit with other outstanding schools receiving this award.

Please extend my best wishes to the entire Laclede Elementary School community and thank you for a job well done. I look forward to hearing of your school’s continuing success in providing our youth with an outstanding education. If I may ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mary Davidson Cohen, Ed.D.
Secretary’s Regional Representative

cc: Int. Superintendent Wm. Roberti
Remarks in a discussion at Pierre Laclede Elementary School in St. Louis, Missouri. (Week Ending Friday, January 9, 2004)

From: Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents | Date: 1/12/2004

January 5, 2004

The President. Well, I'm glad to be here, Madame Principal. [Laughter] One of the things you find in a successful school is a strong-willed, smart, capable principal. And that's obviously the case here, and I appreciate your hospitality.

I'm here at Laclede because this is a school that has defied expectations. It's defied expectations by raising the bar and believing that every child can learn. That's not the case in some parts of our country, unfortunately. In some parts of the country, schools just shuffle kids through, and that's not right. That's not the American way.

This school is a school that has performed, you have to say, brilliantly. Since 1999, 7 percent of the kids could read, and now 80 percent can read at grade level in the third grade. That speaks to strong principals; it speaks to really good teachers. It says this school has got teachers that believe in the capability of every child. It says the school has raised standards and is not afraid to measure.

And so, one of the things I'm here to talk about is the No Child Left Behind Act. Laclede has been named a No Child Left—Blue Ribbon No Child Left Behind School. And the—inherent in this No Child Left Behind Act is the desire to spend Federal money and spend it wisely. We've increased budgets. The Title I money is up 43 percent since 2001–41 percent. The teacher training money is up. The reading program money is up by 4 times. But finally, the Federal Government has said, "Why don't you show us whether or not that money is being well-spent. Show us whether or not you believe every child can learn. Show us whether or not objectives are being met."

And this is exactly what's happening here at Laclede. As I was reminded, Laclede was doing this before No Child Left Behind Act was passed. Joyce was quick to point it out. [Laughter] She may point it out again. [Laughter]

But the important thing is, inherent in the No Child Left Behind Act was not only the desire to measure, the need to measure, the need to show, the need to track each child, but it's also the trust of local people to make the right decisions. See, you can't have a system that is—meets objectives if you're hamstringing by Federal rules and regulations. And so, inherent in the No Child Left Behind Act is trust, trust of the principals, trust of the teachers, trust of the parents, trust of the local officials, like Speaker Hanaway and Peter Kinder from the State house and State senate who are with us. I want to thank you for coming, by the way.

I appreciate all the State officials who are here. I know we've got some school board officials. You've got the ball in our—in terms of how to achieve excellence. It's up to you. The Federal Government is a source of money. It's now a source of inspiration. It's a source of measurement. But it's up to the local people to really make it work.

I also appreciate so very much that Senator Jim Talent is with us. Senator, thank you for coming. Congresswoman Jo
Ann Emerson and Kenny Hulshof, and of course, Congressman Lacy Clay, whose district we are in. Congressman, thank you very much for joining us today.

I went into a classroom of fourth graders. I asked this question, I said, "How many of you are going to go to college?" You’ll be happy to hear that every hand went up. That’s a good sign. They were also doing something that was fundamentally important. They were practicing their reading. I also asked the question, "How many of you read more than you watch TV?" About 50 percent of the hands went up. [Laughter]

But what’s important is for schools like—around the country to understand what’s happening here, and that is that the people here use reading programs based upon what works, not what sounds good, reading programs based upon the science of reading. And it’s working.

And so I’m here to congratulate this school and to really hold you up for the Nation to see what is possible when you raise the bar, when you’re not afraid to hold people to account, when you empower your teachers and your principals to achieve the objective we all want. And that’s to make sure no child, not one single child in America, is left behind.

I’m honored to be here at the Blue Ribbon School. And I appreciate your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

At this point, the discussion continued.

The President. Yes, you are. Listen, one of the things you hear, of course, is that you can’t test kids, see. You can’t test. You test too much. Now do you know if a child isn’t reading if you don’t test? How do you know who needs help? I mean, if the idea is to make sure not one child is left behind, you better test.

The test isn’t a punishment, you know. It’s not to punish anybody. The test is to determine who needs extra help. And that’s exactly why Laclede is doing well, I’m convinced, or one of the main reasons why. They’ve got a book here that says, “Every child matters. Every child can learn, and therefore we’re going to measure as to whether or not we’re meeting expectations for every child, not a few of the children but every child.”

And so when you hear this talk about testing, testing is bad, testing is—you know, teach the test, what testing is—what testing does and what measuring does is determines whether or not every child is learning, and if not, whether that child is getting the help he or she needs early, before it is too late.

We’ve got to stop this business about just shuffling kids through the schools in America. We’ve got to stop social promotion and focus on whether or not each child is getting the instruction he or she needs, and that’s exactly what this book says, and that’s why I’m here at Laclede to tout this program, because you’re making great sense.

The discussion continued.

The President. Yes, I think it’s important. The Federal Government can help, and we have. I think we’ve increased the teacher training and recruitment budget significantly, like by about 40 percent since 2001. And that’s important to make sure teachers have the skills necessary to be able to teach. I mean, it’s one thing to have a good heart; it’s another thing to be able to have the skills necessary to put—to match the good heart with the capacity to pass on knowledge.

And so the Federal Government is helping on teacher recruitment, teacher training, and that’s an important aspect of the No Child Left Behind Act. It’s essential that we continue to monitor what works, whether the curriculum you’re using makes sense—that’s what measurement helps a school to understand—and whether or not a teacher needs a little extra help in order to be able to impart the knowledge that he or she is desirous of giving.

I know we’ve got a parent here. By the way, the first teacher of any child is a mom and a dad. And it’s—a parent right here is a good teacher. Thank you for being here.

The discussion continued.

The President. Speaking about volunteers, one of the really true strengths of our country is the heart and soul of the American people. Today with us—I met a fellow at the airport who is now with us here today. His name is Jeff Tank. Probably never heard of Jeff. He is a volunteer with Big Brothers and Big Sisters. January happens to be National Mentoring Month.


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Where are you, Jeff? There he is. Jeff, by the way, when I went to the airport, he said, "This isn't about recognition, recognizing me." I said, "Yes, it is, because you represent a lot of other good people who are taking time out of your lives to make a difference in a child's life."

Schools need volunteers. Schools need mentors. Big Brothers and Big Sisters is a fabulous program that provides that kind of—what provides that kind of mentoring and help. Whether you're the superintendent of schools or the chairman of the school board or the President, we all need to be out encouraging people to volunteer.

I always say that part of ushering in a era of personal responsibility means that people have to be responsible for the communities—for the schools in the community in which they live. You just can't trust that some faraway Government is going to make the correct decisions for the local communities. And if you're interested in the quality of education and you're paying attention to what you hear at Ladelle, why don't you volunteer? Why don't you help and mentor a child how to read? Why don't you join us all in changing America one child at a time?

And so, Jeff, I want to thank you for coming. I want to thank you for the example you have set for others in the community of St. Louis, and hope that others will follow your example. And a great place to start to volunteer is to show up at a local public school and ask the principal what you can do to help change a child's life.

So thank you for reminding me about the importance of being a good mom and a great volunteer as well.

Listen, making sure every child learns to read and making sure every child is educated is a—the number one domestic priority of this country. It is essential we get it right.

Ladelle Elementary School shutters stereotypes. It shows that we can have excellence in every single classroom across this country. That's not just suburban America where we find excellence. You can find excellence in inner-city America. You find excellence in rural America. You find excellence where you've got great principals and teachers and leadership willing to raise the standards, willing to challenge every child, because you believe in every child. You find excellence where you're willing to measure and then correct when things aren't going the way they should. You find excellence when you've got skilled teachers carrying around a book that measures the ability of each child, not a collection of children but every child, and so that you can then qualify the curriculum to meet the needs of that child.

And I am here for the simple reason to show what is possible all across America. And what is possible is to take reading scores from 7 percent to 80 percent in places like St. Louis, Missouri, and elsewhere. I want to congratulate you for setting the standard. And keep raising the bar. Make sure that other 20 percent gets up to grade level at third grade—I know you will—and you will have done your duty as educators and Americans to make sure that our children, the very future of the country, have got the capacity to succeed in the greatest land on the face of the Earth.

Thank you all for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Yolanda Moos, principal, and Regina Davis, parent and volunteer, Pieee Ladelle Elementary School; Joyce Roberts, executive director, Middle School and Priority School Education, St. Louis Public Schools, and former principal, Pieee Ladelle Elementary School; Catherine Hanaway, speaker, Missouri State House of Representatives; and Peter Kinder, president pro tem of Missouri State Senate. He also referred to Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103-382), which amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89-10).


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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 16, 2004

Mrs. Joyce Roberts
Executive Director
Middle School and Priority School Education
St. Louis Public Schools
801 North 11th Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

Dear Joyce:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me about the No Child Left Behind Act during my visit to Pierre Laclede Elementary School. I enjoyed our discussion and appreciated hearing your thoughts and experiences.

I applaud your efforts to make Laclede a Blue Ribbon School. By raising expectations, you are helping your students reach their full potential.

Best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush
Appendix 3 Item 25

2003 Gold Star Schools Forum
A Celebration of Excellence

May 7, 2003
Capitol Plaza Hotel
Jefferson City, Missouri

Sponsored by
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
and State Farm Insurance Companies
Appendix 3 Item 25a

2003 Gold Star Schools

Alice Pittman Elementary School, Springfield R-XII School District
Principal: Gary Tew

Bryant Elementary School, Independence School District
Principal: Dr. Jonathan Pye

Columbia Elementary School, Joplin R-VIII School District
Principal: Lori Musser

Commons Lane Elementary School, Ferguson-Floissant School District
Principal: Dr. Barbara Wright

Conway Elementary School, Ladue School District
Principal: Dr. Lane Narvaez

Eugene Field Accelerated School, St. Joseph School District
Principal: K. Jo DeShon

G.M. Coleman Accelerated School, St. Joseph School District
Principal: Molly Pierce

Graden Elementary School, Park Hill School District
Principal: LuAnn Halverstadt

Kennard Classical Junior Academy, St. Louis Public Schools
Principal: Gloria Shelton

Lincoln Elementary School, St. Charles School District
Principal: Kristin Denbow

Pierre Laclede Elementary School, St. Louis Public Schools
Principal: Joyce Roberts

Pond Elementary School, Rockwood School District
Principal: Clare Maguire

Procter Elementary School, Independence School District
Principal: Deborah Marlowe

Wanda Gray Elementary School, Springfield R-XII School District
Principal: Carol Plumley

Wild Horse Elementary School, Rockwood School District
Principal: Dr. Karen Hargadine
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January 24, 2003

Mrs. Joyce Roberts
Principal
Laclede Elementary School
5821 Kerney Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63112

Dear Mrs. Roberts:

Congratulations! The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has nominated Laclede Elementary School for recognition in the U. S. Department of Education’s 2002-03 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Schools that are eligible for the new program must be highly successful schools and meet one of two assessment criteria:

1. The school must be dramatically improving and have forty percent or more of its students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Such schools must show dramatic improvement over the past three years in reading and mathematics to high levels (at or above the 55th percentile) on state assessments (i.e., the MAP in Missouri). At least one-third of the nominees must be from this category.

2. The school must be performing in the top ten percent of all schools on state assessments (i.e., the MAP in Missouri) in reading and mathematics. Schools may be nominated in this category regardless of their demographics.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has decided to continue the tradition established by the original Blue Ribbon Schools Program of recognizing elementary and secondary schools in alternating years. The 2002-03 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, therefore, will be an elementary recognition year in Missouri.

The U. S. Department of Education has indicated that on February 20, 2003, the Secretary of Education will send letters of invitation with applications to the schools recommended by each state. These applications are to be completed by the schools and returned to the U. S. Department of Education by April 2, 2003. Section IV of the application deals with Indicators of Academic Success. Members of my staff will help you complete that section using the same data and methodology that were used to determine eligibility for the program and levels of performance and improvement. When you receive your application,
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Mrs. Joyce Roberts  
Page 2  
January 24, 2003

please contact Joan Solomon, Coordinator of School Improvement Initiatives, who coordinates the No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Mrs. Solomon will provide you with the information you need to complete that section of the application. Her telephone number is (573) 751-3168, and her e-mail address is jsoomon@mail.dese.state.mo.us.

After you submit your application to the U.S. Department of Education, it will be reviewed along with those submitted by all of the states. The Secretary will announce the No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools on September 8, 2003. A ceremony honoring the schools will be held in Washington, D.C., later in the fall.

I invite you to also apply for recognition through Missouri’s Gold Star Schools Program. You will learn more about this program and an upcoming meeting in a separate letter, which you should receive shortly.

Again, I congratulate you for the high quality educational program you have that makes your school qualify for the No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program.

Sincerely,

D. Kent King

c: Cleveland Hammonds  
   Bert Schulte  
   Joan Solomon
Appendix 4 Leadership Development

Appendix 4 Item 1

Joyce Roberts, Principal
Laclede Elementary School
October 15, 2002
8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

An informal observation was completed at the Laclede school. The executive assistant scheduled a meeting for the 2002-2003 newly appointed District elementary principals. The purpose of the meeting was to give the principals an opportunity to review the operations at a highly successful school. An additional opportunity was to converse with the principal of the school, Ms. Joyce Roberts.

The meeting began at 8:30 a.m. in the school library. Ms. Roberts served refreshments. The executive assistant discussed evaluation processes for the first year principals. Laclede students were in the library practicing for a ceremony to dedicate the new pavilion to be held the next day.

After the meeting, the group was led by Ms. Roberts up the street to where the Laclede School’s community garden is located. Once there, Ms. Roberts was able to review the history and the purpose of the Cabbage Patch Garden. She also had the opportunity to explain that a brand new pavilion, with lighting, was to be dedicated on the next day. A lot of work and effort have gone into making the community garden a success. It is actually located on 3/4 city lots.

After the tour of the garden, the principals walked back to the school to tour the entire facility. Laclede is a child centered school with student work and very attractive displays throughout the building. Principals were able to observe Laclede teachers doing actual instruction. Every staff member was actively engaged.

After the walk through, an exit conference was held with principals being invited to ask Ms. Roberts questions regarding school processes.

Overall, this observation is excellent.

David G. Flieg
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Please sign and return to David G. Flieg
Prepating Urban Leaders For Urban Schools Program

Service Agreement

The Preparing Urban Leaders For Urban Schools Program will engage the services of Joyce Roberts as a principal leader facilitator at the Urban Leaders Retreat:

Other stipulations are as follows:

The amount of payment for these services is $100.00

The date and time of the services are:

Saturday, December 7, 2002 from 8:15am until 11:45am.

Signature of facilitator

Address

Social Security Number

Agreed to by:

Lynn Beckwith, Jr., Ed.D. or John E. Ingram, Jr., Ph.D.
Co-director

Please print
Appendix 4 Item 3

Cleveland Hammonds Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

December 18, 2002

Joyce Roberts
Principal
Laclide Elementary School
5821 Kenmore Ave.
St. Louis, Missouri 63112

Dear Joyce:

As a crucial next step of our leadership development initiative we will begin a research based study to gain a greater understanding of the core competencies and characteristics of highly effective SLPS principals and the conditions that contribute to their effectiveness. Based on a review of three years of data, you and your school have been selected to be a part of this district study.

This study will include a team coming into your school for a 2-3 day in depth look at leadership and its linkages to learning. Interviews with you, your staff and students will be conducted. Based on the findings of the study, interventions will be designed to better identify aspiring school leaders, and support the development of highly effective principals as we seek to expand the leadership capacity in the district.

To kickoff this process, we will be hosting a luncheon meeting on Wednesday, January 8, 2003 from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM at the Board Office. Key elements of the study will be reviewed and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you might have. Please contact Madye Henson at 345-2367 in the LEAD office to confirm your attendance at the luncheon.

Again, we look forward to your participation and contribution in this important study for the district. Have a wonderful Holiday!

Sincerely,

Cleveland Hammonds, Jr.

cc: Madye Henson
Joyce M Roberts
From: Barbara Kohm (bgkohm@yahoo.com)
To: Joyce M Roberts
Cc:  
Subject: Thank You
Attachments:

Joyce,
Thank you so much for sharing your outstanding work with the Parkway Principals this morning. We'd like to say thank you in a more concrete way by donating one or two books to your student and/or professional development libraries. Please let me know some titles your students and staff would like. Your philosophy, practice, and strong focus on student achievement were inspirational and I think will be translated in some form to many of the Parkway Schools. Please know the time you spent with us this morning will benefit a whole new group of students.
Barb Kohm

Joyce,
Thanks so much
for the time you spent
with us.
You are all an inspiration
that will help us do
our job better.
Please find two books
we have found
useful and hope
you will as well.
Sincerely,
Barb Kohm
Principal
Parkway
From: TIM MAJERUS [TMAJERUS@columbus.k12.mo.us]
To: Joyce M Roberts
Cc: 
Subject: RE: MAP questions

Joyce,

Thanks for your note. I want you to know that I've talked about your school to many, many people in the last 10 days. Jenny and I were so impressed by everything we saw at Laclede. I'm trying to put together how Blue Ridge can make the improvements necessary to have the type of achievement gains that you have seen at Laclede. You are truly an amazing principal! Thanks so much for sharing your knowledge with us. Hope you're having a great week and avoiding the ice!

Tim
(27 days until our MAP!) - our sign is now up!

>>> "Joyce M Roberts" <joyce.roberts@slps.org> 02/28/03 04:04PM >>>

Happy Friday Tim,

Take heart I have not forgotten your requests. We have hosted other colleagues this week as well with similar request for instruments. Your packet will be in the mail by Monday. Take care...

--Original Message--
From: TIM MAJERUS
Sent: Thu 2/13/2003 3:44 PM
To: Joyce M Roberts
Cc: 
Subject: MAP questions

Dear Mrs. Roberts,

My name is Tim Majerus and I am the principal at Blue Ridge Elementary School in Columbia. I am writing to you because after researching MAP scores throughout the state, I noticed that your school has done a tremendous job of increasing its scores in recent years. I was looking for schools which had a high minority population, a high free and reduced lunch population and raised scores. According to Doug Reeves' EdTrust website, years school has a population of 99% minority students and 81% free and reduced lunch students. We have about 50% minority students and 65% free and reduced lunch. Sometimes I think our teachers think our scores cannot be raised significantly because of our population, and it is refreshing to see schools such as yours who can serve as examples that it can be done.

We raised our scores somewhat last year, but we still have a long way to go. Our 3rd and 4th grade teachers and students are working hard to prepare for April's tests. I was hoping you might be able to offer suggestions or ideas of what you and your staff did to help raise your scores. I am obviously looking for things that might raise this year's scores, but I am also looking for long-term ideas. Thanks for your time and help. (P.S. - I contacted Rita Holmes- Bobo (sp.) and received permission to contact you regarding this matter.)

Tim

Parkway Staff Development

“Our greatest contribution is to be sure there is a teacher in every classroom who cares that every student every day learns and grows and feels like a real human being.”

-Donald O. Clifton

March 5, 2003

Ms. Joyce M. Roberts, Principal
Pierre Laclede Elementary School
5821 Kennerly
St. Louis, Missouri 63112

Dear Joyce:

I so appreciated the opportunity to visit Laclede School on January 28, 2003. You have so many incredible procedures and practices in place to enhance the achievement of all your children. We are working hard in Parkway to close our achievement gap, and I picked up many wonderful ideas. Your students who led the tours were articulate and enthusiastic; your teachers were extremely invitational; and the wisdom you shared with our elementary principals was priceless! Everyone in our group so appreciated the time you spent with us.

I have great respect for your leadership and what you are accomplishing at Pierre Laclede. I hope to see you again. Thanks so much and take care.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jan Mourning
Coordinator of Staff Development
Appendix 5 Wellston School District

Appendix 5 Item 1

The scoring of students in the state test results of Wellston High School has caused concern among parents and educators. The district's superintendent, Ronald Stodghill, expressed concern during a recent meeting about the need for improvement.

"We are working on it," Stodghill said. "Although we have made some progress, we still have a lot of work to do." The district has implemented new strategies and plans to improve the test scores.

State education officials have praised the district for its efforts and have noted that the district remains unaccredited. However, the district remains committed to improving the test scores and making Wellston a better place for students.

The district is working with local community members to develop strategies and plans to improve the test scores. They are also working with parents and educators to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

The district has received support from local businesses and community members who are willing to help improve the district. They have offered to provide resources and support to help improve the test scores.

The district remains committed to improving the test scores and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed. They are working hard to make Wellston a better place for all students.
Appendix 5 Item 1a

all the state's school districts, whether rich or poor, urban or rural, big or small.

The board is expected to vote June 23 on whether to keep Wellston unaccredited or restore accreditation.

Should the district remain unaccredited, officials could appoint a special administrative board to operate the district in place of the Wellston School Board. They also could attach the district to another school district or break the district into smaller parts.

Wellston is a small district with about 600 students, many of them low-income. It graduated 27 seniors recently.

Despite Wellston's small enrollment, Stodghill remains one of the region's highest paid superintendents. After 21 years as Wellston's superintendent, he earns more than $183,000 a year. Stodghill, who turns 65 at the end of the year, has two years left on his contract. But he said he might decide to leave earlier.

St. Louis County Executive Charlie A. Dooley, whose son recently graduated from Wellston's high school, said there had been problems but the district had come a long way, hiring new teachers.

Several high school students, including James Sims Jr., who will be senior in the fall, talked about how their school was like family.

"Just because we are not as fortunate as other schools, we still want to learn," Sims said. "We never cheated."

June Bourque, a biology teacher who came to the district two years ago after two decades in business, said at the hearing, "Every student deserves the same quality education no matter where the student lives. Just because a student is black, just because a student is poor doesn't mean a student gets leftovers for a teacher."

Brian Sorgea, a social studies teacher, said, "Our students are succeeding and you are going to tell me we've got to close our district down?"

Anderson, the principal, got a standing ovation when he said, "We have a team at the high school. Give us a chance to continue the forward momentum."

Bertha Wilson, whose children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have attended Wellston schools, did not speak. But as she left the forum, Wilson said she favored keeping the schools open with new management.

Alesha Sildham, a parent, said: "I was for closing schools, but coming here changed my heart. I did not know so many people care."

Reporter Carolyn Bower
E-mail: cbower@post-dispatch.com
Phone: 314-369-1245
News Release

Vol. 39, No. 16
June 23, 2005

State Denies Accreditation for Wellston School District; Prepares to Take Over Operation of the District

The State Board of Education today rejected pleas to grant provisionally accredited status to the Wellston School District, a small district in St. Louis County that has been unaccredited by the state since June 2003.

As a result of the board's decision, the Wellston district remains unaccredited and, according to state law, will "lapse" (close) next Thursday, June 30.

The district's failure to regain accredited status sets the stage for the first-ever takeover of a Missouri school district by state education officials.

"Although we do not relish the idea of taking over a school district, it is clearly time for some changes in the Wellston schools," said Commissioner of Education D. Kent King.

"This school district has long-standing and deep-seated problems. It has bounced between provisionally accredited and unaccredited status for more than 10 years. Too many students have paid the price for the district's inability to focus on its fundamental academic needs and priorities. I hope we can make a difference for Wellston students and the Wellston community," he said.

The State Board of Education plans to hold a special meeting next week during which it will consider the appointment of a "special administrative board," a three-person panel that is authorized by state law to govern the Wellston district on an interim basis, beginning July 1.

The special administrative board will replace the local board of education, but answer to state education officials. The board will consist of a paid chief executive officer, who serves as chair of the board, and two unpaid members who must be residents of the school district.

In 2003, Wellston earned 22 out of a possible 100 points according to the state's accreditation criteria, which evaluate districts on the basis of test scores, graduation rates, attendance, and other factors. It needed at least 46 points to qualify for " provisionally accredited" status.

Based on the state's most recent review, conducted in February, the district earned 39 out of 100 possible points in the area of academic performance -- still short of the 46 required for provisional accreditation.

State education officials did not award the district any points toward accreditation in two areas -- high school MAP test results and high school dropout rates -- because of doubts about the reliability of the district's data for these two indicators.

Wellston is the only unaccredited district among the state's 524 public school districts. It currently enrolls about 700 students in grades K-12. About 100 Wellston students have been attending school in other districts since the district became unaccredited in 2003. Under the law, the district is required to pay tuition for students who transfer to other accredited districts.

Resolution for the Appointment of a
Special Administrative Board

WHEREAS, Article IX, Section 1(a) of the Constitution of the State of Missouri requires that a free public school system provide for the gratuitous instruction of all persons in this state under the age of twenty-one years; and

WHEREAS, Article IX Section 2(a) vests the supervision of instruction in the public schools in the State Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, Missouri Law, Section 162.081 (RSMo 2000), provides that the corporate organization of any school district that remains classified unaccredited for two successive school years by the State Board of Education shall lapse; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education on April 16, 2003, classified the Wellston School District as unaccredited, to become effective June 30, 2003; and with the lapse of the Wellston School District's accreditation mandated to occur on June 30, 2005, unless the school district is returned to accredited status in the intervening time period; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education on June 23, 2005, reviewed the Wellston School District's accreditation status and voted to continue the classification of the Wellston School District as unaccredited, with the effective date of lapse to occur on June 30, 2005;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the members of the State Board of Education, by virtue of the powers vested in this Board by the Constitution and Laws of the State of Missouri, do hereby create and establish the Special Administrative Board for the Wellston School District, and do hereby direct as follows:

1) That, pursuant to Section 162.081, Dr. Charles Brown is appointed to serve at the pleasure of the State Board of Education as the Chair of the Special Administrative Board created hereby, with compensation and other benefits to be set by the Commissioner of Education.

2) That, pursuant to Section 162.081, Garry Beals of Wellston, Missouri, is appointed to serve without compensation at the pleasure of the State Board of Education as a member of the Special Administrative Board.

3) That, pursuant to Section 162.081, Cassandra Hollins-Wallace of Wellston, Missouri, is appointed to serve without compensation at the pleasure of the State Board of Education as a member of the Special Administrative Board.

4) That, pursuant to Section 162.081, the Special Administrative Board is authorized to retain and exercise all authority granted to the Wellston Board of Education, and to take actions necessary for the operation of the Wellston School District. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:
a) Hold title on behalf of the State of Missouri to all school facilities and school property previously held in any capacity by the Wellston School District or the Board of Education of the Wellston School District, and operate such facilities and property for school purposes.
b) Adopt all needed rules and regulations for the organization and governance of the school district, with such rules taking effect when signed by at least two of the three members of the Special Administrative Board, and with said rules to be amended or repealed in like manner.
c) Prepare an annual calendar for the school term, specifying the opening date and providing a minimum term of at least one hundred seventy-four days and one thousand forty-four hours of actual pupil attendance.
d) Enter into contracts for teachers and other instructional personnel as provided by law for seven-director districts.
e) Enter into contracts for goods and services as provided by law for seven-director districts.
f) Submit quarterly reports to the State Board of Education, in a form specified by the Commissioner of Education.
g) Carry out the duties and authority of the board of education of a seven-director district, as provided by law, unless otherwise directed by the State Board of Education.

5) The authority of the Special Administrative Board shall expire on June 30, 2008, unless extended by the State Board of Education prior to that date.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and caused to be affixed the Seal of the State Board of Education, in the City of Jefferson, on this 29th day of June, 2003.

Thomas R. Davis, President
State Board of Education

ATTEST:

Jeneane Kujath, Executive Secretary, State Board of Education
Joyce Roberts dropped an armful of posters into the trunk of her silver SUV.

It was 8:30 a.m., four hours into her day, and Roberts planned to pass out the posters as she visited students, teachers, principals, business people, community leaders and parents in Wellston - Missouri's only unaccredited school district.

One poster unfurled to show these words: Academic, attendance, attitude, parental/community outreach.

Those things became hallmarks of Roberts' efforts to turn Laclede Elementary School in St. Louis into a nationally recognized school of achievement. Now Roberts has come out of retirement to be Wellston's chief academic officer and to help turn around that district.

Roberts and more than a half-dozen other former St. Louis Public Schools administrators have been brought on board in Wellston by Charles Brown, the district's new superintendent. Brown is an assistant Missouri education commissioner and a former deputy superintendent in St. Louis.

The state appointed a panel in June to oversee Wellston, after finding that dramatic increases in some district test scores were not credible. The district became unaccredited two years ago, largely because of low test scores. The district faces another performance review a year from now.

"Consistent high scores over time will let people know we have found the right formula," Brown told more than 60 people at Monday night's School Board meeting. "That formula is: the parents, the schools and the broader community."

Plenty of people have stepped up to help.

School officials plan to announce today a partnership with St. Louis Rams defensive and Leonard Little and the Gift of Time Foundation to offer incentives to promote student attendance, attitude, achievement and literacy.

Companies and organizations such as Boeing, the University of Missouri, Alberici Constructors, Washington University, the Wellston Housing Authority, Regions Bank and the St. Louis Science Center also have offered support.

Wellston has about 640 students, up from the 435 who attended the first day.

Roberts and other Wellston leaders are looking for ways to support those students. School officials have started a literacy program for children and their families. Roberts has placed dozens of children's books in the School Board meeting room for parents to borrow and read to their children.

Wellston leaders want to pair each student with a mentor, offer after-school tutors and arrange activities such as computer training, boxing, jazzercise, yoga, sports and cheerleading.
Appendix 5 Item 5
INTRODUCTION

The reform effort in Wellston School District will be driven by a strategy of identifying system-wide priorities, for example, instructional needs and then aligning resources, organizational structures and policies to address them. Similar to San Diego California, the focus will be Prevention, Intervention, and Retention. The State Appointed Board, district leadership, staff and parents are committed to improved student achievement, fiscal responsibility and parent/community engagement.
THE BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

- Prevention: collective responsibility to plan, implement and evaluate our schooling efforts to prevent failure.

- Intervention: identifying strategies (such as tutoring, mentoring, differentiated instruction, counseling and health services, etc) as value added to help students stay focused on their academic success.

- Retention: If a student is identified as a candidate for retention that should occur at the entry grades (example, grade 1, grade 6) after we have exhausted all avenues (i.e. summer school, after-school tutoring etc.)
WELLSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT SUCCESS MATRIX

It is critical that the blueprint used to structure improvement be clear, manageable, precise and effectively communicated to all the stakeholders. The components of the Wellston School District Success Matrix are focused on improving Student Academic Achievement.
Appendix 5 Item 5d

WELLSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT SUCCESS MATRIX (cont.)

There are ten (10) components that are outline in the success matrix: In order to enhance implementation it is important and vital that we have a common vocabulary

- **Curriculum**: road map for instruction.
- **Instruction**: process for imparting knowledge
- **Comprehensive School Improvement Plan**: (CSIP) : district level planning document
Appendix 5 Item 6

WELLSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
MISSION STATEMENT

The Wellston School District, as the legally designated educational agency for the Wellston and Hillsdale communities, will provide the highest quality education for all of its students and prepare them to become productive members in our global society.

Joyce M. Roberts
Chief Academic/Operating Officer

Dr. Charles R. Brown PhD
Superintendent
Appendix 5 Item 7

Wellston Public School District Success Matrix

Professional Development

Community Engagement

Resources

Reorganization

Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (District CSIP)

Student

Academic Achievement

Program Evaluation

Parental Involvement

Curriculum Instruction
Appendix 5 Item 8

Business Women: The Link to Global Leadership

The President Speaks...

Mrs. Marcella L. Morrison
National President, Chicago, Illinois

Mr. Dear Sorors,

Iota's current theme, Business Women: The Link to Global Leadership, is appropriate as we prepare to enter a new millennium in the year 2000. As an organization established by and for business and professional women, we must accept and look for diversity among our members. For collectively, when unique and diverse talents and skills kind come together and are expressed with love and kindness, a bond is formed enabling all to accept the numerous and diverse roles associated with global leadership in this ever-changing and shrinking world.

When working with the Gems, FIGS, and FIALS keep in mind that people will have no boundaries. Via mass communications and limitless travel opportunities, tomorrow's leaders will not talk about the states they have visited in the past; they will talk about the countries/continents. Many have done it and others will follow. Possess passports and plan to travel or else risk viewing the world in a broader perspective than we ever could have imagined at their ages. Yes, when considering today's youth we often see two pictures, those with and those without. After viewing the pictures there is only one mandate for this great sorority. As in the past, Iota will continue with its fine programs and projects ever expanding them and reaching those individuals sometimes written off as unreachable. We cannot live in the past, but must accept the responsibilities associated with today, and be prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

As Black American Women we must not overlook our sisters and their children in Third World Nations. Taking to heart, their plight in getting things we have long taken for granted—public education, housing, medical care, employment, and a standard of living envied by many.

As we accept our roles as leaders, the journey will have obstacles, detours, roadblocks, and other hindrances. To overcome them, we will have strategies, good maps, bountiful resources, faithful companions, and confidence God will provide the direction. Iota Phi Lambda Sorority needs all of its members and its auxiliaries on this journey; it is sincerely hoped, the National Executive Board and I can count on you, as faithful companions, elevating the works and good deeds of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority.

Sisterly,

Marcella L. Morrison
National President

Upward and Onward in Efficient Service
American Education Week Observance
Theme: Good Schools Are A Great Investment

Each year Chapters of Iota observe American Education Week (AEW) by paying tribute to educators and holding forums assemblies, panels, essay contests and varied activities centered around the NEA theme.

Central Region
The Chicago Graduate Chapters: Alpha, Alpha Beta, Alpha Lambda, Alpha Tau Chapters participated in a joint affair at the Montgomery Place on November 18, 1995 in observance of American Education Week. Soror Willie Crittenden, Principal of Julius Bond High School was the guest speaker.

Certificates were presented to the speaker and prior scholarship recipients. Music was provided by Soror Karon Alexander Charles and her daughter. Alpha Chapter coordinated the event.

Alpha Zeta Chapter
The National President, Marcella L. Morrison brought greetings to more than 400 attendees and 26 Apple For the Teacher Awardees on Alpha Zeta’s 14th Annual Awards Luncheon, November 19, 1995 at the Airport Hilton Hotel.

The FELS, FIGS, and Gems played an active role throughout the afternoon from escorting to speaking, singing and passing out tokens of appreciation to past honoree and brass apples to honorees from Mr. Leroy Grant of Southwestern Bell Telephone.

Sorors Magdelene Moore chair-
man, and co-chairs Elaine DuBose and Flossie Henderson did an outstanding job involving all sorors and Lambda James Moore and Acme Price of the Men’s Auxiliary. A video presentation by Soror Flossie Henderson spotlighted each honoree in action at their respective schools. Captivating!

Eastern Region
Beta Phi Chapter observed American Education Week by hosting its 4th Annual “Apple for the Teacher” Award Program, as a tribute to Buffalo Public School teachers. Co-Chairs Cordelle King, Rose Mary McKeller and committee orchestrated a memorable afternoon for 13 educators and their guests. The program was dedicated to retiring Superintendent Albert Thompson. FIGS and Gems were in attendance. Beta Phi closed the program with the sorority song accompanied by Soror Ruthetta Smikle. A reception was given for the 13 educators in mid September.

Lula Hall, Chapter President making presentation to Joyce Roberts, honoree assisted by Marcella Morrison, National President
Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc.
Alpha Zeta Chapter
www.iota-stlouis.org

24th Annual
“Apple For The Teacher”
Appreciation Luncheon

A Strong America Starts With Great Public Schools

Saturday, November 19, 2005 – 11:30 AM
St. Louis Frontenac Hilton Hotel
1335 South Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, MO

Iota’s Theme: Empowered Business and Professional Women Making a Notable Difference

Mrs. Lola Mercedes Parker, Founder
Mrs. Charlotte M. Maull, National President
Mrs. Stephanie Dilworth, Central Regional Director
Mrs. Robertene C. Price, Alpha Zeta Chapter President
CONGRATULATIONS
Lady NiRita Bradford
From the
Top Ladies of Distinction, Incorporated™
For receipt of the
Distinguished Educator Award
Lady Hannah Brown, President
Lady Mary L. Davis, 1st Vice President
Lady Mabel Relford, 2nd Vice President
Lady Peggy Lewis LeCompte,
10th National President and Chapter Organizer

Ni-Rita Baker-Bradford
Congratulations,
Distinguished Educator,
From your #1 Supporters!
Herman Lee White
Councilwoman Gracie White
Cassandra Griffin
Gwendolyn Hite
Joy Bryant
Vaughan Morrill
Carol Pratzel
Van Flowers
Brittney Ford
Lydell Patton
Steven Phillips
Lasheeka Wilson
Ni-Rita Baker-Bradford

Congratulations
To
a distinguished educator, soror, and life long friend!

We are so proud of your accomplishment!
The field of education is fortunate to have a teacher who is instructing posterity, and shaping their minds to become productive citizens!

Love ya!

Soror Sheri Lee
Soror Allyynson Matlock
FIL Lauren Lee
What Happens When a School District Becomes Unaccredited?

Frequently Asked Questions

Under state law (Section 161.092), the State Board of Education has the authority to classify (accredit) public school districts. Under the standards of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), a school district may be given one of three ratings: Accredited, Provisionally Accredited, or Unaccredited. State law defines the penalties that may occur when a school district becomes unaccredited. (A "provisionally accredited" district is still considered to be "accredited" and is not subject to penalty.)

May students transfer from an unaccredited district to another district?

Yes, if another district will accept them. According to state law (Section 167.131), students in an unaccredited school district are eligible to transfer to an accredited district in the same or an adjoining county. Accredited districts, however, may accept or reject transfer students from an unaccredited district.

An unaccredited school district must pay the tuition and transportation costs for any student who elects to transfer to an accredited district. The unaccredited district may designate a single district to which students will be transported at its expense. Students who transfer to other districts would be responsible for their own transportation, but the unaccredited district would still be obligated to pay their tuition.

The student-transfer provision is one of the most serious consequences for a district that becomes unaccredited. If a significant number of students transfer to other districts, the cost of tuition and transportation could be devastating for the unaccredited district.

Does unaccredited status affect students’ diplomas?

This issue is not addressed by the law. Students who graduate from an unaccredited school district still receive diplomas. Presumably, they will have completed the coursework required by the state and met the local district’s requirements for graduation. As far as state education officials are concerned, the diploma of a student who graduates from an unaccredited school district is valid.

What about admission to college?

This issue is not addressed by the law. The unaccredited status of a school district should not have a negative impact on a student’s admission to a college or university. Higher education institutions typically consider multiple sources of information (transcript, ACT/SAT score, portfolio, recommendations, etc.) when determining whether to admit a student or award financial aid. Therefore, the fact that a student graduates from an unaccredited district should not disqualify the student from consideration.

However, higher education institutions set their own policies and criteria for admissions and awarding financial aid. Students who graduate from an unaccredited school district might face an obstacle when applying to some institutions.

What about eligibility for scholarships?

This issue is not addressed by the law. Students who graduate from an unaccredited school district should still be eligible for any scholarship for which they would otherwise qualify. An unaccredited rating reflects the
Appendix 6 Item 1

Joyce Roberts

From: WILEY.JANIS@aol.com
Sent: Friday, September 07, 2007 8:25 PM
To: jrobert@normandy.k12.mo.us
Subject: (no subject)

Thank you for your continued thoughtfulness and guidance—please know that I am very appreciative and do not take such a moment for granted. I am inspired by your vision and commitment and thank you for the opportunity to learn from you. Love to you, my friend and many thanks, Janis

Not only is another world possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing. Arundhati Roy

This message (including any attachments) may contain confidential information intended for a specific individual and purpose and is protected by law. If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message. Any disclosure, copying, or distribution of this message, or the taking of any action based on it, is strictly prohibited.

See what's new at AOL.com and Make AOL Your Homepage.

9/11/2007
Appendix 6 Item 2

Joyce Roberts

From: buchanan@normandy.k12.mo.us
Sent: Tuesday, August 21, 2007 4:10 PM
To: Joyce Roberts
Subject: Re: Today!
Importance: High

Mrs. Roberts-

I’m pleased that you were able to visit us and see the dedicated team we have. We have come a loooong way, and I’m proud of their work ethic and commitment. I had an opportunity to scan your comments/notes, but I will review them in more detail tomorrow.

I greatly respect you, and I appreciate all of your honest input/feedback.
As you probably know, I am not comfortable with mediocrity, so I am committed to working hard to be like my role model, Ali, “the greatest of all times.” Hang with me and help me along my journey. I’ll contact you either tomorrow or Thursday to debrief. Again, thanks.

FBR
8-21-07

> Mr. Buchanan,

> I am extremely proud of the way you set the tone for the meeting. You clearly articulated how pleased you were with the effort put forth in preparation for the NAP, you congratulated the staff that based on the results made great gains. But you also challenged the staff to work smarter, utilize the data to redeploy their time, effort and resources.
> The sixteen! member team present on a non-work day is evidence of your leadership. The time spent on reporting out is vital. As a follow-up as the recorder for each group get the notes typed and submitted for inclusion in the transformation binder (just a thought!), I was honored to be asked to participate on your journey from good to GREAT!

> p.s. Let me know when you are ready to debrief. Keep all communication in your portfolio to be used when you apply for a superintendency.

> Joyce M. Roberts

>
Appendix 6 Item 3

Monitoring Procedures Implemented to Boost Student Attendance Rate

If your child has missed school, you have received a call from the school’s attendance clerk confirming the child’s absence and giving the reason for that absence. That is at the beginning of the school year. Thank’s to modern technology and the use of the district’s new School Counselors automated calling system, you are now receiving an automated call, asking you to punch the corresponding number for your child’s absence.

“We are using this data to analyze whether or not there are any overriding issues concerning a child’s attendance,” said Sheila Williams, executive director. If your child has missed school, you have received a call from the school’s attendance clerk confirming the child’s absence and giving the reason for that absence. That is at the beginning of the school year. Thank’s to modern technology and the use of the district’s new School Counselors automated calling system, you are now receiving an automated call, asking you to punch the corresponding number for your child’s absence.

“We are using this data to analyze whether or not there are any overriding issues concerning a child’s attendance,” said Sheila Williams, executive director.

Appendix 6 Item 3a

As phone-calls are being made to the homes, one of the challenges discovered is the amount of incorrect phone numbers in the district’s data base. “Not only it is important for us to have correct numbers to communicate attendance but we are also concerned about the safety of the children,” said Williams. “There have been instances in which we’ve had emergencies with children and could not reach their parents because of an incorrect number.” She encourages all parents to assure the correct number is listed in their child’s record by immediately updating the information when there is a change.

In addition to districtwide efforts, individual schools have started incentive programs to get students in school everyday. At Normandy High School, students were awarded incentive tickets which they could submit to a drawing for prizes like MP3 players. Principal Carl Hudson says he is looking into other incentives for this school year. At Garfield, business owner Bruce Tipton has committed to providing 76 bikes and helmets to students with perfect attendance. And, on a district wide level, all students who maintain perfect attendance the entire school year are given one ticket to Six Flags.
Joyce Roberts

From: Joyce Roberts [jroberts@normandy.k12.mo.us]
Sent: Thursday, September 06, 2007 1:20 PM
To: djwright@normandy.k12.mo.us
Cc: jroberts@normandy.k12.mo.us
Subject: Good News!
Importance: High

Good Afternoon,

I am excited to share that I have been able to secure a sponsor the Attendance Initiative for the students and staff of the Garfield Elementary School. Mr. Ian Buchanan is the principal. There are nineteen classrooms at Mr. Bruce Tipton (sponsor) has graciously agreed to purchase a bike for each classroom. The students who have perfect attendance for the first quarter will have the option to participate in a drawing to hopefully have his/her name pulled and named the recipient of the bike for that quarter. The process will be repeated each quarter throughout the year. Additionally, staff members with perfect attendance for the quarter will receive a gift certificate for the movies, spa, dinner, etc. This was just too wonderful to keep to myself. Should have any other suggestions and/or questions, please feel free to contact me.

Joyce M. Roberts
Effective Instruction Coordinator
453-0146

9/6/2007
Joyce Roberts

I have learned that you are a professional in what you say, write, and do. Your focus on students and how VSDB can improve student performance is an example for all to emulate. May the good work that you are doing be recognized, appreciated, and substantiated.

I look forward to working with you in the future. Call on me whenever I can assist.

Carl
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