

**STATE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS:
CALIFORNIA'S HIGH PRIORITY SCHOOL GRANTS PROGRAM**

Thomas Timar, Principal Investigator
Gloria Rodriguez, Co-Principal Investigator
Virginia Adams Simon, Research Assistant
Kim Ferrario, Graduate Research Assistant
Kris Kim, Graduate Research Assistant

University of California, Davis
UC Davis Center for Applied Policy in Education
Policy Analysis for California Education

September, 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Central to California's school accountability system are programs to engage low-performing schools in improvement efforts. One of these is the High Priority Schools Program (HPSGP), created by Assembly Bill 961 (Chapter 747, *Statutes of 2001*) to provide funds to the lowest performing schools in the state.

To be eligible for funding, schools must rank in the bottom decile of the state's Academic Performance Index (API). Priority for participation in HPSGP was given to schools ranked in the lowest decile on the state Academic Performance Index (API). Participating schools receive \$400 per pupil for a period of three years. Districts are required to match state funding with \$200 per pupil annually. Over the life of the program, this amounts to \$1,800 per pupil or \$1.4 million (including the local match) for a school of 900 students—the average school size in the HPSGP program. A few schools received over \$5 million. Over the three-year funding cycle—2002-03 through 2004-05—HPSGP allocations to districts were slightly over \$754.9 million. To be eligible for funding, schools must rank in the bottom decile of the state's API. In return, schools had to meet state benchmarks for improved student academic performance. Schools failing to improve face various sanctions and interventions, including state takeover and dissolution. HPSGP schools must also participate in a state-specified professional development program for teachers (AB 466), yet another for principals (AB 75), and must purchase state-adopted textbooks in reading-language arts and mathematics. Schools must also hire external consultants or “evaluators” and create “action-plan teams” to assist in developing a school improvement plan—the components of which are specified in state law. Finally, schools must comply with a long list of state requirements specifying parent and community engagement in the improvement process.

The magnitude of the state's investment in low-performing schools—nearly \$3 billion over a three-year period—raises the question of what difference that investment has made. This study does not attempt to answer that question on a systemic level.¹ That is, the study does not address the question whether schools receiving HPSGP funds did better as a group than those schools that did not.² Instead, it seeks to answer the question whether some schools participating in the state intervention program were more successful than others in meeting student achievement goals. Did schools that met their API growth targets each year and by all subgroups share common characteristics? Conversely, what did schools that did not meet growth targets have in common? As noted earlier, the legislation that created the HPSGP gives schools considerable flexibility

¹ American Institutes for Research has contracted with the CDE to conduct the state-wide assessment of the HPSGP. The case studies of schools' implementation of HPSGP were conducted in collaboration with this study, funded by the William and Melinda Gates Foundation.

² See Thomas Parrish and Jennifer Harr for an evaluation of the systemic effects of HPSGP.

in designing improvement strategies. While such flexibility is desirable, as it allows schools to tailor school improvement strategies to their particular needs and circumstances, it also creates the possibility that program funds will be mismanaged and wasted. The schools we studied exemplify both.

Research Questions

Specifically, our study set out to answer the following questions.

- How were HPSG monies spent by schools?
- On what basis were allocation decisions made, and who made them?
- How much flexibility and autonomy did schools have in developing action plans and allocating resources for their implementation?
- Given that The fact the HPSG funding stream is for three years, what is the long-term impact on school improvement? Do schools invest with an eye to sustainable improvement over the long term or quick fixes for short-term improvements in test scores?
- What changes in teaching and learning can be attributed to the use of HPSG funds?

Study Findings

There was not a great deal of difference among schools in how they spent HPSGP funds. Predictably, the greatest proportion of funding went to personnel costs. These included literacy and mathematics coaches; counselors, and administrative personnel. The next largest spending category was professional development followed closely by collaboration and planning.

The answers to the research questions was determined in large measure by organizational factors within the school and district Schools that were judged to be improving exhibited the following characteristics.

- Organizational stability and continuity
- High level of social capital and trust
 - Stable teaching staff
 - Stable and competent leadership
 - Focus on developing leadership for school improvement among teachers
- A focus on the school as the organizational unit rather than a collection of classrooms.
- Leadership and vision
- An strategic plan for improvement that is a working document that reflects ongoing strategic planning
- Organizational coherence
- Commitment to an improvement strategy
- Ongoing assessment and evaluation

- Collaboration and professional development
- External support
- Coherent program funding tied to strategic plan

Recommendations

- Short-term
 - *Oversight and accountability.* There is a need for oversight and accountability for how schools implement the HPSGP. There needs to be greater oversight for how schools spend HP monies and how districts allocate the money to schools.
 - *Duration of program funding.* Three years was insufficient for most schools, especially decile one schools, to develop the skills and capacity to successfully implement the HPSGP.
 - *Continuity of funding.* The need for additional resources does not go away after three years. Decile one schools, because of the learning needs of students in them, need more resources than the average school.
 - *Greater external support.* Schools benefited from ongoing external support from other agencies—mostly ongoing relationships with universities. District support was an important factor, but not as important as the former.
- Long-term
 - *Redefine the problem.* Rather than funding schools on the basis of test scores, HPSGP funds should be based on the learning needs of students. The program, as currently structured, tends to reward failing schools with additional funding. There are, however, schools that face the same challenges as decile one schools, but because they are more effective do not receive additional funds. A pupil-weighted formula based on English language proficiency, poverty, and the like would target ongoing funds to schools based on the learning needs of students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The study of California's High Priority Schools Grant Program (HPSGP) was supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The study being conducted in collaboration with American Institutes for Research (AIR) who have contracted with the California Department of Education to conduct an evaluation of the overall effects of the HPSGP. The Gates supported study has a much narrower focus than the AIR study in that it is concerned primarily with how schools used HPSGP funds. The collaboration benefits greatly from AIR's generously sharing their interview protocols, study findings, and assistance in arranging for the school site visits. I am especially indebted to Jenifer Harr, Tom Parrish, and Paul Gubbins for their assistance and support. The author is solely responsible for the observations and conclusions in this paper.

I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE “NEW” SCHOOL FINANCE AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Introduction: The Policy Context of the High Priority Schools Grants Program

In the days when there still was such a thing as a California Assessment Program (CAP), newspapers around the state routinely published school test scores. For those who kept track and cared, it was a disheartening ritual, mostly for its predictability. It was easy to predict a school’s scores from year to year, knowing nothing more than the previous year’s scores. And while there may have been some marginal changes here and there, yearly rankings were quite consistent. Schools at the bottom tended to stay there. What made bad news worse was the inexorable connection between the socio-economic status (SES) of a school’s student population and test scores. California has long since stopped administering the CAP, but low achievement among large numbers of students-- particularly those who are poor, do not speak English, and whose parents lack formal education--persists.

What has changed is how policy makers have structured the problem of persistently low levels of student achievement. The impetus for that change has been the enactment of state accountability laws (in combination with No Child Left Behind) and the development of curriculum and performance standards. As a result, it is now much more difficult, if not impossible, for policy makers, teachers, administrators, school boards, and the public to simply accept persistently low student performance as an unpleasant fact. Enactment of the Public School Accountability Act (PSAA) in 1999, created a massive and complex regulatory structure in the state that holds schools responsible for student achievement. A critical feature of the accountability system is a

variety of state interventions—a combination of technical support and sanctions—that are meant to force schools to address the problem of low student performance in their schools.

The year PSAA was enacted, there were roughly 1.2 million students in decile one through three schools. The average Academic Performance Index (API) of those schools was 473, with a low of 297 and a high 561³. Of those students, 79 percent were eligible for free or reduced meals, 45 percent were English learners, 67 percent were Hispanic, 12 percent were African-American, and 32 percent of students' parents had only a high school education while 38 percent of students' parents did not have a high school education.⁴ The characteristics of decile one schools in 1999 were similar though more pronounced. The average API for the 685 decile one schools was 417. Of those students, 75 percent were Hispanic and 13 percent African-American, 56 percent were English learners, and 86 percent were eligible for free meals. About one-half of the parents of children in decile one schools did not have a high school education.

In stark contrast to decile one schools, in 1999, there were slightly over 1 million students in decile eight to ten schools. The average score in these schools was 787. Among students in those deciles, 14 percent were Hispanic, 4 percent African-American, 8 percent English language learners, and 18 percent were eligible for free meals. Among the parents in this group, 35 percent were college graduates and 21 percent had graduate degrees.

³ The scale is from 200 to 1000.

⁴ The actual number of students is understated. While 94 percent of students in decile 1-3 schools were tested, in some schools, mostly high schools, just over 50 percent of students were tested. The percent of students eligible for free lunch is probably also understated since some students, mostly in high schools either don't eat in the school cafeteria or don't admit that they are eligible.

School accountability and the sanctions associated with them raise the question of what to do about low-performing schools to help them improve. The Immediate Intervention/Under-performing Schools Program (II/USP) was the policy centerpiece for state intervention. Policy makers believed that a combination of discretionary funds, school-wide planning, and external technical assistance would coalesce into solid gains in teaching and learning in these schools. These programs were voluntary and only enrolled a fraction of eligible schools. In response to concerns that II/USP funding was too diffuse to be of much benefit, the legislature created the High Priority Schools Grant Program (HPSGP) to target decile one schools.

This study assesses state efforts to improve instruction in the lowest performing schools—those receiving HPSGP funds—by providing those schools with additional resources to engage in a three-year improvement effort. The paper first examines past strategies to address the problems of persistent low achievement in schools, a problem that is most acute among schools that serve large numbers of non-English-speaking, minority students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Second, it discusses the research on the relationship between resources and school improvement. Third, it presents the findings from our study of 15 HPSGP schools to address how some low-performing schools improved over the funding period. The fourth section is policy conclusions and recommendations.

Compensatory Programs and School Improvement

California's Public School Accountability Act (PSAA) signaled an important shift in how policy makers and practitioners think about the problem of low student performance. In theory, the change is away from a compensatory, regulatory model based

on categorical program support to a capacity building and accountability model. It is a major change in how the problem of low student achievement is defined and how solutions to it are structured. The most significant dimension of this change is that focus has shifted from *low-achieving children* to *low-performing school*. It represents a sea-change in education policy as it redefines roles, responsibilities, and professional relations in education.

The history of compensatory education is synonymous with the history of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A primary purpose of the law was to provide financial assistance to school districts that suffered from the adverse “impact that concentration of low-income families has on [their] ability ...to support adequate educational programs.”⁵ Its other purpose was to provide direct support to children by funding programs to meet their “special needs”⁶ In an effort to secure local compliance—to guarantee that federal funds were flowing only to eligible students—the U.S. Office of Education cast an ever widening regulatory net. While these efforts are well documented, it is important to note that regulations implementing Title I focused primarily on changing the legal and political organization of schools.⁷ The elaboration of substantive and procedural rights, the requirement for clear audit trails for local expenditure of federal dollars, federal and state sanctions for misuse of funds, the growth of a vast state and local bureaucracy to monitor local compliance, and the empowerment of local community groups as a countervailing force to local school authorities eclipsed the pedagogical dimensions of federal compensatory aid.

⁵ M. Yudof, D.Kirp, B..Levin & R. Moran (1992) *Educational Policy and the Law*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group/Thompson Learning. p. 699.

⁶ Yudof, Kirp & Levin, *ibid.* p. 699

⁷ F.Wirt & M. Kirst (2001). *The Political Dynamics of American Education*. Richmond, CA: McCutchan Publishing

The policy framework of Title I shaped behavior in schools in several unintended ways that, in the long term, inhibited organizational effectiveness. The preoccupation of policy with regulatory compliance denigrated instructional practice by undercutting professional judgment and authority and fragmenting both schools and students. Instead of focusing on the whole child, policy dissected children into disparate program targets. Though it seems naïve in retrospect, federal policy makers believed that stretching a regulatory net over schools could overcome the incapacity, ineptitude, or indifference of local schools serving poor, low-achieving students. While such strategies did force some schools to improve, it undermined those educators who were making good-faith efforts to serve those children.

State policies directed at schools serving disadvantaged students mirrored federal policy. The California's counterpart to Title I was Economic Impact Aid, funding targeted to low-income, minority students. At the end of the 1970s, the largest administrative unit within the California Department of Education was the Field Services Unit, which was responsible for monitoring and reviewing local compliance with federal and state compensatory programs. The state regulatory framework for education was rooted in distrust of the motives and capacity of local school officials. At the state level, officials came to share Washington's belief in stressing compliance as distinguished from assistance.⁸

The major difference between the compensatory, regulatory model and the accountability model is that under the previous model schools could be sanctioned for failing to follow rules, but they could not be sanctioned for not teaching students. Implicit

⁸ D. Kirp (1986) "Introduction: The Fourth R," in D. Kirp and D. Jensen (Eds) *School Days, Rule Days*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press. pg. 3.

in both federal and state policies was the belief that schools could develop effective programs for disadvantaged children without paying attention to the overall quality of the school. Simply put, they believed that good programs could trump bad schools.

The shift toward accountability and student outcomes began with the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments to Chapter 1 (which replaced Title I during the Reagan years) enacted in 1988. Among the many changes initiated by the legislation, the most important were those concerning program coordination, school-wide projects, school performance accountability, and parental involvement. The amendments marked a significant shift in Chapter 1 policy by emphasizing program effectiveness and accountability. Chapter 1 schools were required to develop student outcome goals and schools failing to meet those goals were required to develop school improvement plans. Congress also urged districts to adopt local standards and measures of student progress that were based on proficiency.

California moved in a similar direction. In part, this was due to federal requirements contained in the reauthorization of Title I. The law required states to develop performance standards and assessments as a condition of receiving federal funds. As the authors show, California was first among states to develop curriculum frameworks, academic content standards, and assessments. Enactment of the Public School Accountability Act (PSAA) in 1999 completed the shift to an outcomes-based accountability system in which schools, theoretically at least, were responsible for the academic progress of all students and instructional improvement superseded regulatory compliance.

The High Priority School Grants Program

Central features of California's school accountability system are programs to engage low-performing schools in improvement efforts. One of these is the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP). The other, the High Priority Schools Program (HPSGP) is similar, but targets decile one, rather than decile one through five, schools. While the two programs are structurally similar, the HPSGP places some additional requirements on schools.

The HPSG Program was created by Assembly Bill 961 (Chapter 747, *Statutes of 2001*) to provide additional funds to the lowest performing schools in the state. To be eligible for funding, schools must rank in the bottom decile of the state's API. Participating schools receive \$400 per pupil for a period of three years. Districts are required to match state funding with \$200 per pupil annually. Over the life of the program, this amounts to \$1,800 per pupil or \$1.4 million (including the local match) for a school of 900 students—the average school size in the HPSG program. A few schools received over \$5 million. Over the three-year funding cycle—2002-03 through 2004-05—HPSGP allocations to districts were slightly over \$754.9 million. In return, schools had to meet state benchmarks for improved student academic performance. Schools failing to improve face various sanctions and interventions, including state takeover and dissolution. HPSG schools must also participate in a state-specified professional development program for teachers (AB 466), yet another for principals (AB 75), and must purchase state-adopted textbooks in reading-language arts and mathematics. Schools must also hire external consultants or “evaluators” and create “action-plan teams” to assist in developing a school improvement plan—the components of which are

specified in state law. Finally, schools must comply with a long list of state requirements specifying parent and community engagement in the improvement process.

The structure of the HPSGP is such that schools receive funding for three years with the possibility of an additional year if they are making “adequate progress.” The implied rationale is that three years of funding will result in significant capacity building and sustainable organizational improvement. Whether schools are successful in sustained improvement is conditioned by several factors. First, it requires schools to take a long view. Rather than focusing on “quick-fix” solutions, schools must be willing to focus on building organizational competence. Second, it assumes that schools have the flexibility and autonomy to allocate HPSG funds in a manner that is consistent with reform priorities and objectives.

As a condition of receiving HPSGP funds, schools must also agree to engage in various activities. Teachers and administrators are required to participate in professional development programs.⁹ If they have not already done so, schools must purchase approved, standards-aligned textbooks in reading and mathematics if they do not already have them. Schools may apply for a \$50,000 planning grant to develop their actions plans. They must engage external consultants to assist in development of a school Action Plan. The Action Plan must be based on an initial needs assessment, it must be research based and data driven, and must encompass a strategic plan for helping low performing students. The legislation lists a number of options that may be included in the strategic plan. They include common planning time for teachers, support staff, and administrators; mentoring for site administrators and peer assistance for teachers, particularly new

⁹ Principals are required to participate in AB 75, Principals Training Program, and teachers in AB 466 mathematics and reading/language arts professional development program. The focus of both programs is to align instruction with state standards and assessments.

teachers; professional development activities, particularly in mathematics and reading and literacy; and incentives to attract credentialed teachers and quality administrators.¹⁰ External evaluators are required to engage parents throughout the planning process, and each school's site council is required to sign off on the school improvement plan.

While legislation creating the HPSGP provides a lengthy list of school improvement actions that schools may take, the legislation is, nonetheless, more permissive than prescriptive. Schools are required to address pupil literacy and improvement; quality of the staff; parental involvement; and adequacy of facilities, curriculum, instructional materials and support services. Legislation provides various examples of how schools may address those issues, but leaves it to districts to adjust the details to the specific needs of each school. More than anything, the legislation embodies a set of expectations for schools about how they might address instructional improvement. The bill's language places considerable emphasis on comprehensiveness, collaboration, planning, assessment, reading across the curriculum, community engagement, mentoring, professional development, and beginning teacher training. The measure delineates the essential components of a school improvement plan, but leaves schools considerable room to develop a plan that meets local conditions and needs.

In order to assess their progress in meeting academic growth in core curriculum areas and to monitor the efficacy of their school improvement plan, schools are strongly encouraged to revisit their action plans and to modify them as necessary.

After three years of participating in the program, a school that has not met its growth targets or has failed to show "significant growth," as determined by the State Board of Education, is required to enter into a contract with a School Assistance and

¹⁰ Chapter 749, *Statutes of 2001*,

Intervention Team (SAIT). Members of the SAIT are individuals who “possess a high degree of knowledge and skills in the areas of school leadership, curriculum and instruction aligned to state academic performance content and performance standards, classroom discipline, academic assessment, parent-school relations, and have proven expertise specific to the challenges inherent in low-performing schools.”¹¹ Finally, schools that fail to improve are subject to various sanctions. These include reassigning students to other schools, reassigning teachers, re-negotiating the collective bargaining agreement, reorganizing the school, and closing down the school.

The HPSGP and School Improvement

The shift from a school accountability system driven by inputs, regulation, and compliance to a system based on outcomes necessitates a major shift in the process of schooling and a new conception of the organization of schooling. One early study on the organization of schooling noted the prevalence of teacher autonomy, which is “reflected in the structure of the school system, resulting in what may be called their structural looseness.”¹² The literature on the organization of schools generally regards schools as a collection of classrooms. Teachers have considerable autonomy in what to teach and how to teach. More importantly, teachers are responsible only for their classrooms—for what goes on behind the classroom door. Organizational theories describe schools as “loosely-coupled organizations,” whose commonalities are anchored in “myth” and “ritual” that has little to do with the underlying technology of teaching.¹³

¹¹ See Education Code Section 52055.650. (1)(A)

¹² C. Bidwell. “The School as A Formal Organization” in James G. March (Ed.) *The Handbook of Organizations*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally (1965)

¹³ R. Scott *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, 3rd ed., New Jersey, A Simon & Schuster Company.

Organizational coherence was thought to be imposed by textbooks, the professional norms of teachers (in theory, inculcated by teacher preparation and professional development programs), and some level of supervisory oversight. Consistent with theories of “loose coupling” are school’s decision-making theories described as the “garbage-can” model. Instead of a coherently articulated model of decision making based on organizational goals and strategies to attain them, decision making in schools was best described as individuals reaching for readily available solutions to satisfy immediate organizational needs. Both the traditional school organizational model and decision-making model characteristic of schools are the antithesis of coherent, long-term, organizational planning.

Consequently, a central hypothesis of this study is that improving HP schools are ones that were able to transform themselves from collections of classrooms into coherent, purposive organizations. We assumed that this would occur as accountability shifts the focus directly on schools, by holding them accountable for the performance of their students. It does not matter if the first grade teacher is doing a wonderful job with her students if the other teachers in the school are not.

The need for organizational coherence and collaboration is all the more important in low-performing schools. As Table 1 shows, decile one schools serve large numbers of poor children, many of whom are English learners, and come from families lacking formal education. Unlike in high-performing schools that serve high SES students, organizational factors are likely to be much more important in schools that serve educationally disadvantaged students. As organizations, high performing-schools (largely because of their students) can continue to do what they were doing. Low-performing

schools, on the other hand need to learn how to do things very differently. Doing more of the same is unlikely to raise levels of student achievement.¹⁴

The importance of this point cannot be overstated. Decile one schools not only have the most challenging students to teach, but also must reinvent themselves in order to raise student achievement levels. Doing more of the same, or doing what one high school principal labeled “math louder” is not likely to have positive results.

The policy underpinnings of the HPSGP are that an infusion of money, external technical support, a comprehensive school plan, and the threat of sanctions for failure to perform will catalyze the kind of organizational transformation that turns low-performing schools into high-performing (or, at least, higher) performing schools. The policy assumes, moreover, that three years is sufficient time to build the necessary capacity in schools to affect those changes.¹⁵

Study Methodology and Conceptual Framework

The magnitude of the state’s investment in low-performing schools through the HPSGP—nearly \$3 billion over a three-year period—raises the question, what difference has that investment made. This study does not attempt to answer that question in a comprehensive way.¹⁶ That is, the study does not address the question whether schools

¹⁴ March differentiates, for instance, between organizational “exploitation” and organizational “exploration.” Exploitation essentially means doing what you have been doing, particularly if you are doing it successfully. Exploration, on the other hand, means finding new directions and new ways of doing things in order to be successful. See March, op. cit.

¹⁵ Several evaluations by American Institutes for Research of the II/USP and HPSGP have shown that the programs have either no or insignificant impact on student achievement. See C. Bitter et al. (2005) *Evaluation Study of the Immediate Intervention/Under-Performing Schools Program of Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999*. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research. Also C. Bitter & J. O’Day (2006) California’s Accountability System in H. Hatami (Ed.) *Crucial Issues in California Education 2006: Rekindling Reform*. Policy Analysis for California Education. School of Education, UC Berkeley.

¹⁶ American Institutes for Research has contracted with the CDE to conduct the state-wide assessment of the overall effects of the HPSGP. The case studies of schools’ implementation of HPSGP were conducted in collaboration with this study, funded by the William and Melinda Gates Foundation. This study focuses the impact of program funding on teaching and learning in a selected group of schools.

receiving HPSG funds did better as a group than those schools that did not.¹⁷ At the outset, the study sought to answer the question whether some schools participating in the HPSGP were more successful than others in the same program in meeting student achievement goals. Did schools that met their API growth targets each year and by all subgroups share common organizational characteristics? What did those schools do differently than other schools that did not meet growth targets? As noted earlier, the legislation that created the HPSGP gives schools considerable flexibility in designing improvement strategies. While such flexibility is desirable, as it allows schools to tailor school improvement strategies to their particular needs and circumstances, it also creates the possibility that program funds will be mismanaged and wasted. The schools we studied exemplify both. Specifically, our study set out to answer the following questions.

- How were HPSG monies spent by schools?
- On what basis were allocation decisions made, and who made them?
- How much flexibility and autonomy did schools have in developing action plans and allocating resources for their implementation?
- Given that the HPSG funding stream is for three years, what is the long-term impact on school improvement? Do schools invest with an eye to sustainable improvement over the long term or quick fixes for short-term improvements in test scores?
- What changes in teaching and learning can be attributed to the use of HPSG funds?

The study's research questions flow from two key features of the HPSGP. One was the amount of money it provided schools. Participating schools received \$400 per pupil for each of three years. For the average decile one school of 900 students, that meant over \$1 million, and some schools received as much as \$6 million over the three-year period. The fact that funding was limited to three years, became problematic for

¹⁷ See J.Harr, T. Parrish,, M. Socias,, P. Gubbins, & A. Spain. (2006). Evaluation Study of California's High Priority Schools Grant Program: Year 1. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research

most schools. Over the three-years that schools were in the program, they had to show continuous progress toward meeting API growth targets. If schools failed, they were subject to various sanctions, beginning with the assignment of a SAIT to oversee and direct improvement efforts. Additional sanctions could lead to reassignment of the teaching and administrative staff or, in the worst case, school closure. How these features play out in the program's implementation is discussed below.

Data for this study comes from school-site visits to 15 schools that received HPSGP funding. Of the 15 schools we studied, ten were high schools and the remainder elementary schools. Eleven of the schools were urban, while four were rural. The site-visits comprised structured interviews with principals, teachers, HPSGP and special program coordinators, and school-site council members. Interviews took place between February and May of 2006.

In the sampling process, out of 658 schools that received HPSGP funding, this study chose 285 pure HPSGP schools that only received HPSGP funding and exclude those schools that have received both HPSGP and II/USP funding. After excluding schools without all years of API and school characteristics information, our final sample consists of 211 schools. Then, we selected HPSGP schools that made or did not make their API growth target in making 5% improvement towards interim goal of 800, as well as AYP from 2002 to 2005.¹⁸ The California Department of Education assigned traffic lights to identify a school's AYP status. A green light indicates that the school met Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and the participation requirements; a yellow light indicates the school met AMOs but the percent of students tested fell short of the

¹⁸ California's public school students take part annually in statewide testing known as the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, and schools are assigned an Academic Performance Index (API) based on results from STAR testing. Under the federal law known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), from 2003 forward the API is also used to evaluate schools for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English/language arts and math.

requirements; and a red light means the school did not meet one or more of AMOs. In AMO, the state sets annual targets for how many students must test proficient or above in order to make AYP. For example, elementary schools have to meet 24.4% English/language arts and 36.5 math; high schools and high school districts (grades 9-11) should meet 22.3% English/language arts and 10.9% math; and unified districts need to meet 23.0% English/language arts and 23.7% math¹⁹. Each school and district must meet the AMOs in order to make AYP.

We defined *improving schools* as those that made AYP goals (green lights) and API growth targets for two years or more during the funding periods. We prioritized those schools that made growth during last two years of funding periods, since it takes time to reap benefits of HPSGP funding. Contrarily, those schools that did not made AYP goals and API growth targets for three years or more we defined as *non-improving schools*. Out of those 211 schools (183 elementary and 28 high schools), there are 116 schools (104 elementary and 12 high schools) defined as *improving schools* and 169 schools (171 elementary and 18 high schools) as *non-improving*. Comparing high schools in our sample, improving schools made average 134 API point gains during the funding periods, while non-improving schools made only 43 API point gains. Elementary schools in our sample exhibit similar patterns: improving schools increased on average 117 API points, while non-improving schools decreased on average -1 API points. As Table 1 profiles the schools in our study sample, improving schools and non-improving schools are comparable based on student, teacher, and school characteristics, and in most instances, improving schools have slightly higher percentage of minority students and students are eligible for free or reduced meals.

¹⁹ See Ed-data website: <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/welcome.asp>

Table 1
Comparison of Selected Characteristics of
Case Study Schools to all California Schools

School Indicators	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Enrollment	1400	~260	~5000
% English Learners	40	11	76
All decile 1 schools	46		
Improving HP schools	40		
Non-improving HPschool	40		
All CA schools	25		
% Free Meals¹	70	45	97
All decile 1 schools	80		
Improving HP schools	72		
Non-improving HPschool	70		
All CA schools	50		
% Minority²	92	69	100
All decile 1 schools	90		
Improving HP schools	92		
Non-improving HPschool	91		
All CA schools	64		
% Full Teacher Cred.	90		100
All decile 1 schools	88		
Improving HP schools	94	73	
Non-improving HPschool	83		
All CA schools	94		
API Base Scores 04-05			
Improving HP schools	650	578	726
Non-improving HPschool	564	531	626
Average API Gain (01-02 to 04-05)			
Improving HP schools	166	105	240
Non-improving HPschool	94	71	142
Ave. Parent Education³	1.97	1.3	2.7
All decile 1 schools	2.0		
All CA schools	2.56		

Source: CDE

1. “Free Meals” represents students who are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program; it is a proxy for poverty.

2. The “Minority” category comprises Hispanic and African American.

3. Average parent education is represented by values from 1 to 5 where 1 represents “Not High School Graduate” and 5 represents “Graduate School.”

The data in Table 1 reveal that the study sample of schools mirrors the general population of decile 1 schools fairly closely. It also shows that decile one schools generally—and it is certainly true for the schools in our sample—have a higher percent of

poor, non-English speaking students than the average school in the state. Parents of students in decile 1 schools and in our sample have lower levels of formal education than the state average. Roughly half of the parents in our sample have not completed high school. The average parent education level for all students, on the other hand, is to have completed some college. Parent education is particularly important in relation to student achievement due to the high correlation between parent education and student achievement as measured by the API. Nearly 50 percent of the differences in average school API scores are explained by differences in the average education levels of parents.

Initially, we thought that it might be possible to differentiate improving and non-improving schools by their test scores. While we classified schools as improving or non-improving in selecting schools for study, in reality, the classification was not clear-cut. The complicating factor is significant variation among both “improving” and “non-improving” schools. Some non-improving schools may have missed their targets by only a couple of points or may not have tested enough students. On the other hand, one school that was, by most organizational standards fairly chaotic and disorganized, had, in fact, raised test scores. Some of our non-improving schools were engaged in many of the same activities as our improving schools, yet API gains were quite different. The distinction that can be drawn based on test scores is not that significant given that all these schools entered the HPSGP as decile one schools. Our school-site visits, however, enabled us to identify some key factors that affected implementation of the HPSGP and to identify some of the key factors determining a school’s improving or non-improving status.

An important observation from our study is that relying only on changes in API base scores may not be a reliable basis for evaluating a school's success in meeting sustained improvement goals. As noted earlier, the definition of a "failing" school is simply too elastic to be useful in measuring a school's progress toward improvement. On the flip side, schools are regarded as "successful" if they make their API target goals. Current definitions of success are also too broad to provide schools, policy makers, or parents with meaningful information. How should one interpret a ten-point gain by a school on the API? What does that mean in terms of student subject matter mastery—not to even speak of the more elusive and difficult to measure goals of education? Consequently, while not abandoning the API as a measure of improvement, as a way of evaluating school improvement, we examine school improvement through a wider lens—the relationship between teaching and learning and organizational improvement.

Money, Capacity Building, and School Improvement²⁰

The policy discussion that this study informs is a variation on "does money matter."²¹ There is a long and ongoing debate whether giving schools more money will

²⁰ I am much indebted to Laura Goe for her review of this literature in "An Evaluation of California's Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) in Middle Schools." Doctoral dissertation, School of Education, UC Berkeley (2004).

²¹ See for example, W. Norton Grubb (2006) "What Should Be Equalized? Litigation, Equity, and the 'Improved School Finance.'" Paper prepared for the Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity project on "Rethinking *Rodriguez*: Education as A Fundamental Right. University of California, Berkeley. Betts, J. R., Rueben, K. S., & Danenberg, A. (2000). *Equal Resources, Equal Outcomes? The Distribution of School Resources and Student Achievement in California*. San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California; Brown, B. W., & Saks, D. H. (1987). The Microeconomics of the Allocation of Teachers' Time and Student Learning. *Economics of Education Review*, 6(4), 319-332. Dolton, P., & Vignoles, A. (2000). The effects of school quality on pupil outcomes: an overview. In H. Heijke & J. Muyksen (Eds.), *Education, Training and Employment in the Knowledge Based Economy*. England: AEA Macmillan. Ferguson, R. F., & Ladd, H. (1996). How and why money matters: an analysis of Alabama schools. In H. Ladd (Ed.), *Holding Schools Accountable. Performance Based Reform in Education*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute. Grissmer, D., Flanagan, A., & Williamson, S. (1997). Does Money Matter for Minority and Disadvantaged Students? Assessing the New Empirical Evidence, *Developments in School Finance 1997*. Grubb, W. N., & Huerta, L. (2000). *Straw Into Gold, Resources Into Results: Spinning Out The Implications Of The "New" School Finance*. Unpublished manuscript, Berkeley, CA. Hanushek, E. A. (1989). The impact of differential expenditures on school performance. *Educational Researcher*, 18(4), 45-

result in higher student achievement. Recently, the debate has been reshaped somewhat to look at school resources in a new way. Rather than looking at school resources in isolation, the “new school finance” seeks to assess how resources are actually used in the schools for purposes that will contribute to specific student outcomes.²² The debate over whether money matters continues, but it is certain that money cannot matter if it is spent without plan or purpose. More research about how schools use resources and how resources interact within schools is much needed. This study begins to address those questions.

The literature on the relationship between resources and outcomes is quite mixed. Some researchers argue that money may positively influence student achievement if it is used in concert with specific reforms.²³ Others argue that additional money is more important for minority or disadvantaged students.²⁴ On the other hand, some studies show that increasing funds to schools does not significantly raise student test scores.²⁵ In spite of the claims these studies make about outcomes and funding, they provide no evidence about why schools either succeed or fail in making money matter in terms of student achievement.

Another line of research suggests that funds are not optimally allocated for effective learning.²⁶ These studies suggest that more resources are not always necessary,

51. Hanushek, E. A. (1996). School Resources and Student Performance. In G. T. Burtless (Ed.), *Does Money Matter? The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement and Adult Success* (pp. xvi, 296). Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (1997). Understanding the twentieth-century growth in US school spending. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 32(1), 35-68. Nyhan, R. C., & Alkadry, M. G. (1999). The impact of school resources on student achievement test scores. *Journal of Education Finance*, 25(2), 211-228.

²² Grubb, N.W. & L. Huerta op cit.

²³ Murnane, R. & Levy (1996)

²⁴ Grismer et al. op cit

²⁵ Nyhan & Alkadry, op. cit.

²⁶ Miles, K. H., & Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Rethinking the Allocation of Teaching Resources: Some Lessons from High-Performing Schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 20(1), 9-29.

but a redistribution of existing resources may affect student outcomes in positive ways.²⁷

The Accelerated Schools Program is built on this theory and emphasizes redistributing existing resources to greater effect.²⁸ The key to these approaches is that resource redistribution must be connected to wider school reform efforts.

The finding from traditional production function studies that the effects of resources are, more often than not, statistically insignificant is often interpreted as “money doesn’t make a difference” because of the relatively small and variable effects of school resources compared to the powerful and consistent effects of family background. These debates generally revolve around technical issues of model specification, sampling, and data analysis.

Other studies tend to treat education processes as a black box without paying attention to the conditions of teaching and learning. From the perspective of this study, it is important to know *how* schools use resources. Without knowing that, it is unreasonable to expect that increased revenues alone will increase test scores or any other outcome. Reducing class size, hiring more experienced teachers, purchasing new textbooks, instructional materials, and equipment are unlikely to have a *predictable* impact on student outcomes unless all of those factors changed the manner of teaching and learning in some significant way.²⁹

While this study does not attempt to answer the question, “does money matter,” it does provide insights into how and under what conditions money can matter. The study is intended to provide policy makers with a better understanding of capacity building

²⁷ Odden, A., & Archibald, S. (2001). *Reallocating Resources: How to Boost Student Achievement Without Asking for More* (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

²⁸ Levin, H. Levin, H. (1995). Raising Educational Productivity. In M. Carnoy (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Economics of Education* (2nd ed., pp. 283-291). New York: Pergamon/Elsevier.

²⁹ Grubb & Huerta, op. cit.

strategies that schools develop with the use of HPSG funds. The underlying logic of this funding is that additional funds will turn low-performing schools into higher performing schools. But even under the most positive scenarios, improvement may be short-lived. Much depends on the willingness and capacity of school decision makers to develop long-term strategies for improved organizational performance.

Posing the question, “does money matter,” as a one-dimensional problem has not been fruitful since the conditions under which money may matter is are well understood. On the other hand, modeling the relationship between resources and school improvement as a multi-dimensional problem may be a more fruitful line of inquiry. The next section proposes a conceptual framework for developing a better understanding of the relationship between resource use and school improvement.

II. STUDY FINDINGS

The HPSGP and School Resource Allocation

While just about everyone whom we interviewed in HP schools agreed that program funding “had made a difference,” what that difference was and what it meant varied widely. In some schools, it meant being able to “backfill existing needs.” In these schools, funding was regarded as a windfall to the school to pay for a long list of things that the school had not been able to afford buy out of its regular budget. In some instances it meant funding new administrative positions; hiring teaching coaches or other supplemental personnel; purchasing computers, software, and instructional materials; supporting a variety of professional development activities, including paying teachers’ costs to attend conferences; buying time for teacher collaboration; contracting for technical assistance; purchasing assessment instruments; and supplies.

One way in which schools differed in the way they used HPSGP resources was whether those resources were integrated into a coherent program of school improvement or whether they funded school's "wish list" of unmet funding needs. (It is worth remembering that in the initial years of HPSGP funding, the state had a serious budget deficit.) Schools that had already committed to a school improvement strategy generally regarded program funding as an opportunity to continue what they were doing, but with additional resources. Schools whose improvement strategy focused on improving literacy hired literacy coaches to work with each grade level in elementary schools or each department in high schools. Professional development activities focused on how to integrate reading and writing into all teaching and learning activities—including physical education at one high school. Regular assessments measured how well a school was doing in meeting its student achievement goals. The "wish-list" schools, on the other hand, had no coherent strategy for spending HP funds. Money was regarded as an opportunity to spend on unmet needs. Some schools had little or no idea of how much money they had from the HPSGP. In some cases, they were given a budget by the district and told to spend until they money ran out. In one very large urban, multi-track school, it was simply impossible to develop a coherent plan due to the school's size and organizational complexity.

How HP funds were used in a particular school had a great deal to say about the school's organizational culture. Schools that were collections of classrooms and teachers with minimal interaction, planning, or collaboration—in short, schools that were organizationally fragmented—used HP monies in a fragmented, opportunistic way. On the other hand, schools with a vision and a coherent plan tended to use funds in a

purposeful manner. Another way to explain differences among schools in resource use is along a continuum with program spending that is “need-driven” at one end and “goal-driven” at the other. Exemplifying the former, one school allocated its HP monies by categories: 25 percent to technology, 35 percent to professional development and supplemental instruction, 15 percent for materials, 5 percent for improving the school environment, and 20 percent for administrative services. According to those involved in developing the HP budget, the allocation ratios reflect the need to “give a little to everyone.” The principal was pessimistic about the benefits of additional resources, as he saw it was more money for “just doing more of the same.” Exemplifying goal-driven schools were those with highly focused strategies for changing teaching and learning. HP funding was allocated to support improvement goals. In the best of circumstances, this meant establishing school-wide instructional improvement goals based on needs assessments—the difference between current student achievement levels and target levels; developing program-and school-specific strategies for addressing the gap between current and desired achievement levels; determining the resources needed to implement strategies; and evaluating the effects of strategies in meeting desired student achievement goals. The allocation of resources, whether to hire teaching coaches, provide professional development activities, or buy time for planning and collaboration, was school-specific and goal-focused.

From the schools’ perspectives, there were several recurrent issues regarding HP funding. One concerns the duration of funding and the ability of schools to carry over unexpended funds. Everyone whom we interviewed was concerned about the termination of funding at the end of three years. Several interviewees noted that making decisions

about the use resources for school improvement is not something teachers, parents, and administrators have much experience doing. Implementing the HPSG program requires schools to develop new decision-making skills about the use of marginal resources to achieve specific education outcomes. In fact, there is very little research on the topic of how well-equipped or qualified school-site councils, teachers, and administrators are to make good decisions about the most effective and efficient use of resources.

Schools generally have not had large amounts of discretionary money. The usual practice is for principals to be given their annual budgets by the district office. The amounts are usually not significant and mostly for supplies and instructional materials. The idea that schools receive significant discretionary funding for school improvement is, for most schools, unknown. In high schools, department heads may have a budget for books or supplies, but those budgets are generally fixed by the district or principal.

Using HP monies for school improvement places entirely new demands on schools. School site councils, administrators, and teachers must be able to conduct needs assessments, develop multi-year improvement goals and strategies, evaluate progress to meeting those goals, and revise strategies as necessary. As noted earlier, to implement HP successfully, schools have to learn new skills and experiment with different strategies until they find those that work. This all takes time. No one person among those whom we interviewed thought that three years was enough time to develop those skills, much less be successful in applying them. Improving schools seemed to recognize this problem and solved it by hiring someone to coordinate and manage the improvement process. In non-improving schools, there was no organized process for managing improvement. It was

part of the principal's overall responsibility with minimal oversight from the school-site council.

Another question that guided our study concerned the process for deciding how HP monies would be spent. In some instances, spending decisions were made by the principal with the approval of the site-based committee. This tended to occur in schools in which the principal and a handful of people developed the school action plan and budget for HP. The approach was pervasive in those schools that regarded the HP program as a funding opportunity—just another categorical program. In other schools, planning and budget development were the products of ad hoc groups of teachers and administrators—whoever happened to be available in willing to work on the plan. In a large multi-track school, the HPSGP plan was developed by teachers who were not teaching. Consequently, the plan was developed by those teachers who happened to be available and who were interested in taking on additional work during their vacation time. There was no broad-based teacher involvement in the school improvement plan. As the principal noted, it was a document for getting money from the state, not a document for improving student learning. In the best situations, schools had leadership teams that conducted assessments, and worked with a competent external evaluator. In all schools, the planning process was guided by an external evaluator. Consequently, the process for determining how monies are allocated is an important variable. But, like other variables affecting HPSGP implementation, it was important in combination with other variables, not by itself. Schools that appeared to us to be making progress toward developing the capacity for substantial and worthwhile learning were the ones that used leadership teams to develop HP budgets and actions plans. They also tended to engage teachers, parents,

and had ongoing relationships with universities or other providers of technical assistance. The planning process was not just about allocating resources, but about how to most effectively use resources for school improvement.

As noted earlier, one issue raised by some school-level administrators and teachers concerns the lack of oversight and accountability for program expenditures. As long as schools are meeting their API growth targets, the state assumes that all is well. When they do not meet their growth targets and, say, a SAIT is assigned to the school, there is no review of how HP monies were used. In one school, computers that were purchased with HP funds disappeared, while in others, no one really knew how much money the school had, how it had been spent, or how HP monies were budgeted for the current year. Lack of budget records is particularly evident in schools that had administrative turnover. Some schools simply did not have the budgets for HP for prior years. Others show expenditures that had been charged against HP funds, but no budget to show how those monies had been allocated or how they fit into an overall program of school improvement.

Organizational Factors, Resources, and School Improvement and Their Relationship to Funding

In this section, we discuss the factors that either facilitated or impeded implementation of the HPSGP and its relevance to resource use. Figure 1 contrasts factors facilitating school improvement as opposed to factors impeding school improvement. As already noted, these do not map perfectly into improving and non-improving schools, but they do represent ends of a continuum for school improvement. This section focuses on what we consider to be the most important differentiating features of improving and non-improving schools.

Figure 1

Factors Facilitating Improvement vs. Factors Impeding Improvement

Factors Facilitating Improvement	Factors Impeding Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational stability and continuity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -High degree of social capital and trust -Stable teaching staff -Stable and competent leadership -Focus on developing leadership among teachers -Focus on school as the organizational unit rather than collection of classrooms. • Leadership and vision • Action plan that is working/living document that reflects strategic planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Organizational coherence -Commitment to an improvement strategy -Ongoing assessment and evaluation • Collaboration and professional development • External support • Coherent program funding tied to strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational instability and constant change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Organizational fragmentation and individual isolation -Classroom rather than school centric focus -High turnover among teacher and administrators • Compromised leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of district support -High staff turnover -Lack of leadership skills • Action plan developed for funding purposes; ignored once funding approved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No coherent or consistent improvement strategy -No commitment to change • Little or no technical assistance or support • Program budgeting is opportunistic and ad hoc

Trust. A school is a cultural organization where relationships, trust, and mutual dependence form an organization’s vital architecture. Therefore, the organizational characteristics of a school—collegiality, leadership, and the relationships among staff and administrators--determine the culture of the school, which, in turn, is regarded by some researchers as critical dimensions of organizational capacity.³⁰ A school’s organizational characteristics influence its academic culture by causing it to function and react in particular ways. Some schools may engender a nurturing environment where children are recognized and treated as individuals; elsewhere, one finds authoritarian structures where rules are strictly enforced and hierarchical control is strong. Thus, the school’s cultural features construct social capital and condition a school’s capacity to improve. There were

³⁰ Bryk, A.S. & Schneider, B. (2002) *Trust in Schools: A course Resource for Improvement.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation

clear distinctions in the level of social capital between improving and non-improving schools among the schools we visited.

James Coleman addresses the manner in which social capital develops around sustained social interactions.³¹ At schools, social capital creates a community where there is a network built upon trust. Social trust in school communities turned out to be a key element to a school's progress. In one of the improving schools in this study, teachers trust each other enough to invite one another to come into classrooms to videotape their teaching in order to help improve pedagogical practice. Trust denotes not only interpersonal comfort and respect, but also the feeling of confidence in others: other members will carry out their roles successfully and responsibly in the organization. Teachers have confidence in their principal's ability to lead, and, in turn, the principal has confidence in his teachers' ability to provide substantial and worthwhile instruction. In other words, they trust that each person will take his job seriously and perform well. According to Bryk and Schneider, the presence of trust creates strong social bonds among members and a strong sense of identity with the institution. The findings of this study also show that improving schools create a culture in which teachers think of themselves as a team and a school, in which the classroom is an integral part of a larger organizational unit.

Several schools in our sample worked hard to build trust among the entire school staff, parents, students and the community. The school leadership team at one high school, for example, created a student mentorship program. Eleventh- and twelfth-grade students were trained during a two-week summer program to mentor ninth-graders who were

³¹ Coleman, J.S. (1988). "Social Capital and the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* 94:95-120.

coming into the school from junior high school. At the beginning of the school year, each mentor worked with a group of 9th-graders to help in the transition to high school. Based on the evidence collected by the leadership team, that transition was a critical point for many students, and how that transition was managed made a difference in how a student navigated the next four years of school. In one districts, the superintendent created a leadership program for teachers to provide teachers with the necessary skills for school-level decision making. In the final analysis, the schools that were on the road to improvement all had a strong sense of community. One high school not only would routinely turn out 1,200 parents for open house, but got parents actively engaged in the planning the event. This was particularly noteworthy since the parents were mostly Hispanic immigrants, many of whom spoke little or no English.

Schools in which there was a high level of trust and social capital evidenced a high level of commitment among teachers, administrators, and parents (and most likely students as well since they are the ones who make or break improvement goals). One of the consistent features of improving schools was a commitment and willingness of teachers to spend time before and after school, on Saturdays, or during vacations to work with students. In one non-improving school, the principal could only recruit a handful of teachers—out of a faculty of over 200—to provide instruction to students outside the regular school day even when it meant earning about \$1000 more per month.

Organizational stability and continuity. Without doubt, among the most significant factors facilitating school improvement are organizational stability and continuity. It is especially important in the context of trust. It is impossible to build organizational coherence, community, and trust when there is constant turnover of

faculty, administrators, and students. In interviews, teachers, program specialists, and principals talked about the importance of working together as a team. In one high school in particular—coincidentally the one with the greatest increase in API scores—teachers talked about how they not only enjoyed working together, but also socializing together. In addition to being colleagues, they considered many of their colleagues to be their friends. It should be noted that this was a fairly young faculty, with five or fewer years of teaching experience. Many had gone through the same master’s program in teaching at a nearby university, so had known one another from that program. Even though the school did not have a principal (two individuals served as acting principals), individuals whom we interviewed had a great deal of respect for their competence, dedication, and leadership. They trusted their professional judgments, regarded them as knowledgeable about school improvement, and looked to them for professional support.

The loss of a sense of community and lack of program continuity was quite apparent in a non-improving high school that had become a SAIT school. The school attendance area had changed within the past five years and students were bused in from another area as the high school there had been converted to a junior high. According to school staff, students did not feel connected to the school. There was a large turnover among students. According to teachers and the principal, high numbers of disciplinary referrals, frequent altercations among students, and a lack of respect for others became routine features of the school. When asked what seemed to be the major problems confronting the school, a parent who chaired the school site council noted the high turnover among staff and students. She did not see much incentive for teachers to stay in an underperforming school. As she saw it, there was little continuity from one year to the

next. She noted rather ruefully (and at times tearfully) that “we moved from years of having money—money that was well spent and helped kids—to SAIT, and now it’s as though it (the improvements) never happened. Teachers were excited about the professional development that they got. And now the state is here with its scripted learning. It’s really demoralizing for teachers.”

A consistent theme among improving schools was the importance of teachers taking responsibility and leadership for school improvement. This took several forms. One was a sense among teachers that school improvement is a collective responsibility and a cooperative effort. Common planning time, school or, in the case of high schools, department-specific and teacher-planned professional development activities were another. Teachers, administrators, and staff working together to achieve a common goal was a consistent theme that ran through the interviews in improving schools.

Leadership. The importance of leadership is closely connected to the importance of organizational stability and continuity and social capital in schools. In both improving and non-improving schools, leadership played a central role. Leadership played out in various ways: stability and longevity, expertise, collegiality, and authority. In improving schools, principals had been at the school for a number of years, and generally their tenure at the school preceded the school’s participation in the HPSGP. Some had taught at the school before becoming principal, while others had held various administrative positions.

The relative longevity of principals in improving schools contrast dramatically to the rapid turnover of principals and other administrative staff in non-improving schools. The most egregious case of leadership instability was in a school that, over a thirty-year

period, had had only one principal who was in the position for more than two years. One principal lasted for three years and was demoted in the middle of her fourth year by the board. The constant turnover at the school, moreover, mirrored the turnover of superintendents at the district. The school board hired and fired principals at will. In another district, a school had had six principals in eight years. The fact that it was a huge school with year-round attendance tracks made the need for stability and continuity even more acute.

Teachers and administrators in schools and districts with high administrative turnover and dysfunctional district leadership were generally operating in survival mode. As a result, there was little to no focus on school improvement. In such schools, most teachers soldiered on as best as they could, but were demoralized and seeking other jobs. In another school, teachers complained about the high level of fragmentation. Programs would get designed, but not implemented. Money for programs was non-existent; and teachers had no idea about what funds might be available for school improvement. According to teachers at one school, most school improvement programs like AVID, existed only on paper, not in reality. In this particular district, HP funds were controlled by the district and the principal had no idea that there even was an HP program at the school.

Leadership is about more than just continuity and stability. The principal's ability to help the school shape a vision for reform, guide development of a strategic plan, and elicit cooperation and support from the school community is another significant factor. The extent to which the school remained faithful to the goals guiding the action plan was largely attributable to the principal's leadership. While the principal's role in managing

improvement within the school is important, so is the principal's role in connecting the school to the community. In a rural elementary school that serves largely Latino children, the principal stressed the importance of providing leadership to the community. As a Latina, she emphasized the importance of being "a role model for girls so that they can see that they can have professional careers." In a school where 63 percent of students are English learners and 100 percent are eligible for free lunches, the principal believed that an important aspect of her job was to make the school a "community place." She herself knew the names of "99 percent" of the students. She made it a point to know students' families and to have dinner with them.

Leadership was the glue that held school improvement efforts together. It was the principal who helped shape a vision for school improvement, kept the school on track and focused, mobilized the necessary resources, and generally helped to shape the school's culture. Teachers in improving schools consistently raised the importance of leadership. They praised their principal for his or her dedication, hard work, and commitment to improvement. Among schools with the greatest improvement, teachers readily acknowledged the critical role played by the principal. "It would not have happened without her," and "her leadership and dedication were what has made the school successful" were common responses to questions about the principal's role in improving schools. Similar statements endorsing the importance of leadership were common in improving schools.

The Action Plan. All schools must develop action plans that detail their reform strategies over the course of the HPSGP. The plan must be approved by the school site council. Regulations related to the HPSGP require schools to contract with an "External

Evaluator,” who helps the school develop its plan. Schools were required to report annually to the CDE on their progress in meeting improvement goals that they had established in their plans. In addition, schools had to develop a budget that showed how program funds were connected to specific improvement strategies. On this dimensions of HP also, there were significant differences between improving and non-improving schools. The main difference was in what the document represented for the school.

In improving schools, the action plan tended to be a “living” document, one that mapped a strategy for school improvement. Action plans and the program budgets that supported those plans were reviewed on a regular basis. Plans in these schools stated measurable school improvement goals and benchmarks—based on state content and performance standards--that could be used to measure a school’s progress toward meeting its goals. If needed, strategies were changed and resources reallocated in order to meet improvement targets. The overall vision did not change, however. What changed were specific activities. In some schools, those in which improving student literacy was central to improving achievement for instance, the schools might change specific professional development activities or focus on different kinds of supplemental support if initial improvement goals had not been met. However, the focus on literacy as a school improvement goal remained constant.

In non-improving schools, improvement goals tended to be fragmented and expressed as disparate programs or activities. One school, for instance spent most of its HP funds in the first year on hand-held computers that students could use to help them with homework. For various reasons (according to some teachers, students simply got bored with them), the computers were not used and the program was abandoned after the

initial year. In non-improving schools, not only were action plans lacking a coherent, articulated plan for improvement, but also tended to be ignored after their initial submission for funding. A principal in one school, not only knew nothing about the school plan, but knew nothing about the HP program. The principal only learned of it two days before our site visit. The principal had been in the position for six months, taking over when the previous principal was demoted to vice principal. In other schools, the action plan had nothing to do with the school's improvement efforts or its budget for HP. It was submitted with the application and then shelved. The major difference between improving and non-improving schools regarding their action plans was that in improving schools the action plan was exactly what it was meant to be—a strategic plan for charting the course for school improvement. In one school in particular, faculty were surveyed each year to evaluate the school's success in meeting the goals in the action plan. If there were deficiencies in the action plan, teachers were asked how those might be remedied. In non-improving schools, the action plan existed to principally to satisfy compliance with the state requirements.

How the Action Plan serves as a document that guides improvement efforts is illustrated by several of the improving schools. In one school, all teachers and administrators in the school were surveyed each year to determine to assess the school's progress toward meeting the goals specified in the Action Plan. Teachers and administrators were asked to rate how well the school had met its various instructional objectives. Teachers were also asked to comment on the objectives that had not been achieved and what could be done to achieve them. The responses were discussed within each of the departments and school-wide. The next step was a process of revision of the

strategies. According the interviewees, the object of this exercise was not to change school improvement goals, but to revise the strategies to attain them. In another improving school, there was also a structured, annual process for reviewing the Action Plan. It was not as elaborate and detailed as the survey, but the school was much smaller—800 students as opposed to 2,400—and for that reason the school could get by with a less formal planning process. In the smaller, improving school, faculty, administrators, and the school advisory committee, which included parents from the site council, meet on a regular basis to review. The centrality of the Action Plan was strengthened in both of these schools by the fact that the principals had been at the schools for over eight years—although in one school the principal had been in the position for only four years, but had been at the school as a curriculum specialist for over 10. In the non-improving schools there was no plan to guide school decision making. In one of the worst cases, the principal had no knowledge of the HPSGP and knew of no current operational plan. She did manage to find plans for two years. However, because of the change in principals, those plans had been abandoned. Teachers whom we interviewed noted with some frustration the lack of program continuity. In another non-improving school, there was a plan, the leadership team was quite focused on it, but the plan lacked support among teachers and certainly among students. In one of the most promising improving schools, on the other hand, everyone, including students, was aware of the school’s improvement goals. In a biology class that we visited, the principal asked students what “the goal” was and they all responded in unison and without prompting-- “proficiency.”

Collaboration and professional development. One of the most striking features of improving schools is their attention to collaboration among teachers. In improving schools, it was a singular focus among teachers at each grade level or department level. To facilitate collaboration, school schedules were changed to leave a portion of one day each week for various activities such as program planning or peer coaching. In other instances, teachers would be paid to participate in various school-organized workshops held either on Saturdays or during summer break—often both. In improving schools, planning, strategizing, and evaluating activities were fixed features of a school’s regular schedule. They were ongoing and focused on the school’s improvement goals. Similarly, professional development in improving schools was not generic—that is, provided by the district or county or some other provider—but school specific. Professional development activities were an integral component of a school’s improvement goals.

Professional development activities in improving schools took various forms as they were tailored to school needs. Most common were peer and literacy coaching. It is worth noting, that all improving schools placed considerable emphasis on literacy and writing. (This is unsurprising, of course, since this is what is tested.) Most often, schools would hire literacy coaches to work on a regular, full-time basis with teachers across all subject areas with the goal of improving their students’ reading and writing skills. One high school had instituted a program of reading and writing across the curriculum so that students in all courses had regular reading and writing assignments. This included physical education courses: in dance classes, students read works of literature and had to discuss themes, movement, tone, and the like in the works and discuss how that might relate to choreography. In biology, students were taught to use the Cornell method of note

taking. In another school, peer coaching took the form of teams of four teachers engaged in year-long activities. They would meet regularly to discuss teaching and learning strategies, would video tape one another's classes to observe instructional strategies, and debrief on what they had learned from observing one another's teaching.

In non-improving schools, professional development was quite different. The most pronounced difference was the generic nature of those activities. Generally, they tended to be district sponsored, focusing on broad issues related to state content standards and assessments. Principals, for example, participated in the AB75 training, while teachers participated in AB 466 programs—both focused on aligning instruction with state standards. While standards alignment is important, but does not necessarily connect to higher student achievement. In non-improving schools, it was most often teachers, on an individual basis, who decided what professional development activities to attend. One non-improving school, for instance, allocated part of its HP budget for teachers to attend conferences on gifted and talented education programs.

External support. One of the chief factors facilitating school improvement among schools in our study was an ongoing relationship between the school and an external agency. The strongest and most enduring relationships were between the school and a university. One school had a seven-year collaborative relationship with a school of education in one of the CSU campuses. The school's participation in HPSGP was initiated by their university mentor, and university personnel assisted in the proposal's development and implementation. The university conducted needs assessments, helped the school identify the resources necessary to meet their improvement goals, develop program priorities, and assist in writing an action plan for the school. The collaboration

precedes and goes beyond the HPSG program. The university partners with the school in its teacher training program. Students in the teacher credentialing program are placed in the school for their practice teaching experience. In turn, new faculty are hired from this pool.

Another school had a close relationship with one of the University of California campuses. At the time of our study, the school had been open for about six years. Most of the teachers were young, and most had recently completed the master's program in teaching at the university. The university, in turn, relied on the school for its teacher training program. Teachers whom we interviewed all regarded the ongoing relationship with the university as a key feature of school improvement. The relationship also provided teachers with a professional anchor—a way to stay in touch with educational issues and problems beyond the immediate school setting.

In some instances, the external evaluator provided mentorship and technical assistance to the school. But, the role of the external evaluator as a source of support was quite uneven among our study schools. Some external evaluators helped schools to conduct needs assessments, assisted them with data analysis, guided development of school action plans, and continued to work with the school over the course of the HP program. Others would provide what seemed like an off-the-shelf action plan (in one instance the external evaluator had not bothered to change name of the school). There was little or no ongoing engagement or rapport with the school.

The specific source of technical assistance (whether it comes from a university, a non-profit organization such as WestEd, or a private consultant) does not appear to be significant. On the other hand, the level of engagement, the nature of the relationship

with the school and its faculty does. As discussed earlier, low-performing schools have tremendous challenges to overcome in order to improve. If schools already had the knowledge and skills to improve teaching and learning, it seems logical that they would do so. The fact is that they do not have the organizational capacity to turn schools around. They need assistance from an outside source willing to take time to understand a school's problems and is willing to put in the time and energy to develop strategies to overcome those problems.

It is evident from the case studies that factors like organizational stability and continuity, leadership, a strategic school improvement plan, professional development, and external support are closely related to the use of HP resources. Schools in which there was little stability or program continuity (high turnover) had little chance of affecting a long-term plan for change.

How Does Money Matter?

Money matters, but not in the way that past studies have generally sought to answer the question. As we noted earlier, there was general agreement among all those whom we interviewed that HP funding “made a difference.” As we also noted, what that meant varied widely. The question for this study is whether the additional funding schools received from the HPSGP, made a difference in teaching and learning. Did it build capacity—that is, did it produce substantial and worthwhile instruction? The answer to that question is that in some circumstances it did, but in a rather indirect way.

Simply buying more professional development, planning and collaboration time, instructional coaches, white boards, computers, or LCD projectors, or any other of the numerous things that HP monies bought had, by themselves, little or no effect on school

improvement. Teachers, administrators, and students may be happier for having some of the things that HP monies buy, but happiness does not translate into meaningful learning. If resources are regarded as ends in themselves—e.g. having more professional development, planning time, or instructional coaches—they tend to stay on the organizational margins of schools.

The relationship between the HPSGP and school improvement becomes clearer when viewed through the lens of the “improved” school finance.³² The focus on individual resources—e.g. capital outlay per student, average years of teaching experience in the school, spending for professional development, the number of administrators or counselors, class size--has been the basis of most school resource allocation studies. These kinds of resources are what Grubb refer to “single resources.” While most research and policy has focused on single resources, he notes that “there is no strong *a priori* reason for thinking that simple resources have the hypothesized effects on outcomes. If instructors continue to teach in the same way in smaller classes, class size reduction will have no effect. If some experienced teachers become skilled while others are burned out, then experience will have no effect on the average.”³³ This, he suggest, explains why studies that assess the impact of simple resources find either insignificant or no effects.

The focus only on single resources ignores or obscures the effects of what Grubb calls “compound,” “complex,” and “abstract resources.” Compound resources are those where joint effects are necessary. For HP schools that might mean not just more hours of

³² Grubb, W.N. (2006) Multiple Resources, Multiple Outcomes: Testing the “Improved” School Finance with NELS88. Unpublished Manuscript. Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley. Also Goe, L. (2006) Evaluating State-Sponsored School Improvement Programs through An Improved School Finance Lens. *Journal of Education Finance*. 31(4): 395-419.

³³Grubb op. cit. pg. 5

staff development, but staff development that combines with a targeted plan for the specific needs of different classrooms or knowledge about the dispositions and attitudes that students bring with them to school. It is not just more time spent on math and reading, but more time combined with various instructional approaches with other plans and considerations. Complex and abstract resources are difficult to quantify because they include variables like teachers' experience at a school, knowledge of a particular community, organizational stability and program continuity, and teacher commitment and instructional leadership.³⁴ Complex and abstract resources may be the critical factors in school improvement, they are also are the most difficult for policy makers because they cannot be mandated or readily monitored. Compound, complex and abstract resources are not easily distinguished in expenditure documents, nor discussed in school budgets because they are difficult to isolate. Yet these are found to be the most influential resources in school improvement.³⁵

The difficulty of mandating and monitoring the kinds of resources that really matter in schools explains policy makers' reliance only on simple resources. The School Accountability Report Card mandated by Proposition 98 to assure that state monies are well spent by school districts requires schools to prepare annual reports where they enumerate a mind-numbing number of details about the school. The assumption is that more credentialed teachers, more experienced teachers, more days of staff development, more hours of remediation, and the like will result in higher quality education. As more and more of these supposedly "good" things come together, school improvement will follow.

³⁴ Ingersoll, R. (2001) Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortage: An Organizational Analysis. *American Education Research Journal* 38 (3): 499-535

³⁵ Grubb op. cit. page .

The instrumental nature of resources may explain some of the findings from our study that were initially perplexing. It was puzzling why two schools with very similar demographic characteristics that engaged in similar improvement activities--allocated HP resources in similar ways--had very different outcomes: one school was a poster child for improvement, the other a poster-child for frustration. The answer lies in the differential ability of the two schools to use resources instrumentally—the difference among schools to use resources in ways that improve teaching and learning.

Another way of understanding the interaction effects of school improvement, external intervention (such as the HPSGP), and resources is a theoretical framework proposed by Cohen and Ball.³⁶ They argue that intervention efforts share common characteristics. One is that “they envision a much more comprehensive change effort than those of the past. A second is that, one way or another, they all seek to improve teaching and learning, and they all focus on students who have been poorly served by schools. A third is that they work from a position external to schools to improve what is inside.”³⁷ They argue that the possibilities for intervention must take into account the factors that shape instructional capacity, which they define as “the interactions among teachers and students around educational material, rather than seeing teachers alone or curriculum materials alone as the main source of instruction.”³⁸ For teachers, the critical dimensions include how they apprehend, interpret, and respond to materials and students. That in turn depends upon “teachers’ conceptions of knowledge, understanding of content, and flexibility of understanding; acquaintance with students’ knowledge and ability to relate

³⁶ Cohen, D.K. & Ball, D.L (1999). *Instruction, Capacity, and Improvement*. Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.

³⁷ p. 2

³⁸ Op. cit. p. 2

to, interact with, and learn about students; and their repertoire of means to represent and extend knowledge, and to establish classroom environments.”³⁹ For students, it means a set of dispositions, “experience, prior knowledge, and habits of mind.” Finally, they argue that “interventions are more likely to be affective if they target more interactions among more elements of instruction rather than focusing on one element in isolation from others. Interventions that focus not only on particular elements of instruction, but also on their interactions are more likely to improve capacity.

In order to better understand how money can matter—and specifically how HPSGP can matter—one needs to look to the kinds of interactions that Cohen and Ball propose. Unless interventions are converted into resources that improve teachers’ capacities to understand instructional content, use instructional materials in ways that are accessible to students, and engage students as participants in their own learning, school will continue to welcome additional dollars, but it is doubtful that those dollars will have significant and sustained effects on teaching and learning.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on our study schools, participation in the HPSGP has somewhat mixed results. While some schools were able to benefit from the program and regarded the program as an opportunity to transform the school into an effective organization that serves the educational needs of its students, others regarded the program as a financial windfall and an source of discretionary funding. The difference in how the program was regarded is largely attributable to the commitment that teachers and administrators in the school made to school improvement.

³⁹ Op. cit. p. 3

One of the features that sorts schools in our study is why they chose to participate in the HPSGP. As already noted, some participated because they saw it as an opportunity for discretionary resources. Some schools did a quick calculation and realized that HPSGP funds could bring in as much as \$4 or \$5 million over three years. Even for the average-sized school, the HPSGP generated about \$1.4 million over the course of the program. Some interviewees frankly admitted that the HP funds were the only source of “new” money available to schools and they applied just for that reason. For these schools, program participation was opportunistic. They tended to be the schools that exercised little accountability over HP funds, shelved the action plan after it was written, and used funds as spending needs arose. At the other end of the continuum were schools that viewed HP funds as an integral part of their vision for school improvement.

On the other hand, there were a group of schools in our study that were thoughtful, purposive, and strategic in their use of HPSGP funds. These schools worked at developing a coherent, integrated school improvement plan which they revisited on a regular basis. For them, the HPSGP was not just a new revenue source, but an opportunity to engage teachers, administrators, students, and parents in a process of school improvement. In order to take the long view and to develop a thoughtful, purposive plan with concrete strategies for its attainment, presupposes organizational continuity, stability, and effective leadership.

In the short run, if state policy makers continue funding future cohorts of decile one schools through the HPSG program, there are several modifications that they may want to consider. In the long run, improving low-performing schools may require rethinking the funding and governance structure of K-12 education in California.

Oversight and accountability. Nearly all individuals whom we interviewed argued for greater external oversight and accountability for schools' and districts' use of HP funds. While HP funds are intended to flow to schools, some schools complained that their district controlled the funds. At the school level, there was little accountability for how schools spent funds once they received them. Schools that were committed to a reform agenda used the funds as they proposed in their school action plans. They reviewed the action plans at least annually to see what modifications were needed. In those schools, program expenditures were guided by an improvement plan. The school site council was not an effective means to exercise oversight. Often the school site councils themselves had little or no knowledge of the HP program other than it provided a resource stream to the school.

Duration of program funding. Three years is not sufficient time for most schools, especially decile one schools, to develop the skills and capacity to successfully implement the HPSGP. Some of our interviewees suggested that \$1200 per pupil that schools received over three years should be spread over a five or seven-year period. As noted earlier, some schools needed three years just to develop the organizational skills to learn how to do needs assessments, identify student learning needs, determine which resources would be most affective in addressing those learning needs, establish goals and objectives for the use of those resources, measure progress to meeting those goals, make the necessary changes, as needed, if goals are not met. Individuals in most schools simply lack the skills to engage in these activities with predictable rates of success. In James March's terms, most schools lack the organizational intelligence to undertake

those tasks. This does not mean that they cannot develop the necessary intelligence. But, as March would argue, organizations need time to learn.⁴⁰

The current policy of funding decile one schools for three years assumes that whatever problems decile one schools face, those problems will go away after three years. However, as long as decile one schools continue to serve predominantly poor, non-English speaking, minority students half of whose parents do not have high school education, the problem will persist. In many of these schools, HP funds are used to purchase supplemental services like tutoring, time for collaboration and planning, teacher support, and the like. These are ongoing needs that persist beyond the three years of funding that schools are given.

Redefine the problem. The recommendations in this paper focus on marginal changes in the implementation and overall effectiveness of the HPSG program as a state strategy for improving low-performing schools. However, the major impediments to change among decile one schools are factors that are not readily amenable to policy manipulation. Policy cannot compel commitment, cannot mandate organizational stability and continuity, and cannot enforce program coherence. Years of policy efforts to reform schools have shown that many of the important components of organizational culture lie beyond the reach of standard policy instruments. For this reason, policy makers need to rethink their current approach to fixing low-performing schools. Some argue that the current structure of HPSGP simply rewards failing schools. Critics argue that there are many schools and districts in the state that serve similar populations of students as the HPSGP schools, but have higher levels of student achievement and, therefore, receive no

⁴⁰ James G. March. *The Pursuit of Organizational Intelligence*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Business. 1999

additional funds. Program proponents argue that decile one schools have been consistently under-funded and, therefore, need the additional resources.

One recommendation is to shift attention from decile one or low-performing schools to schools that serve student populations that mirror those of decile one schools— a high percentage of low SES students. This group of schools represents a unique set of policy problems: the schools face greater challenges and need more assistance than the average school. In addition to just financial and human resources, they need technical assistance and mentorship.

The demographics of decile one schools are pronouncedly different from the average school in the state. These differences will not go away after three years. To serve those students well, schools need more resources and more support than the average school. Consequently, state strategies to improve low-performing schools needs to go beyond just fixing the HPSG program to how schools like the decile one schools should be funded and supported. The important policy question that needs to be addressed is not how to fix low-performing schools, but how state policy can do for schools that serve large numbers of educationally and economically disadvantaged students. It is a more complex and politically difficult problem than making adjustments around the edges of the current program. Its solution touches upon the structure of the system of school finance and the system of governance. But in the long run, it is a problem that needs to be addressed.

REFERENCES

- Betts, J. R., Rueben, K. S., & Danenberg, A. (2000). *Equal Resources, Equal Outcomes? The Distribution of School Resources and Student Achievement in California*. San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California
- Bidwell, C. (1965) "The School as A Formal Organization" in James G. March (Ed.) *The Handbook of Organizations*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally
- Brown, B. W., & Saks, D. H. (1987). The Microeconomics of the Allocation of Teachers' Time and Student Learning. *Economics of Education Review*, 6(4), 319-332.
- Bryk, A.S. & Schneider, B. (2002) *Trust in Schools: A course Resource for Improvement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation
- Carnoy, M., Elmore, R., & Siskin, L., eds. (2003). *The New Accountability: High Schools and High-Stakes Testing*. New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, D.K. & Ball, D.L (1999). Instruction, Capacity, and Improvement. Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.
- Coleman, J.S. (1988). "Social Capital and the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* 94:95-120.
- Deal, T., & Peterson D. K.(1999), "Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Dolton, P., & Vignoles, A. (2000). The effects of school quality on pupil outcomes: an overview. In H. Heijke & J. Muijs (Eds.), *Education, Training and Employment in the Knowledge Based Economy*. England: AEA Macmillan.
- Ferguson, R. F., & Ladd, H. (1996). How and why money matters: an analysis of Alabama schools. In H. Ladd (Ed.), *Holding Schools Accountable. Performance Based Reform in Education*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute.
- Goe, L. (2004) "An Evaluation of California's Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) in Middle Schools." Doctoral dissertation, School of Education, UC Berkeley (2004).
- Grissmer, D., Flanagan, A., & Williamson, S. (1997). Does Money Matter for Minority and Disadvantaged Students? Assessing the New Empirical Evidence, *Developments in School Finance 1997*.
- Grubb, W. N. (2006) "What Should Be Equalized? Litigation, Equity, and the 'Improved School Finance.'" Paper prepared for the Earl Warren Institute on Race,

Ethnicity, and Diversity Project on "Rethinking *Rodriguez*: Education as A Fundamental Right. University of California, Berkeley.

Grubb, W. N., & Huerta, L. (2000). *Straw Into Gold, Resources Into Results: Spinning Out The Implications Of The "New" School Finance*. Unpublished manuscript, Berkeley, CA.

Hanushek, E. A. (1989). The impact of differential expenditures on school performance. *Educational Researcher*, 18(4), 45-51.

Hanushek, E. A. (1996). School Resources and Student Performance. In G. T. Burtless (Ed.), *Does Money Matter? The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement and Adult Success* (pp. xvi, 296). Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (1997). Understanding the twentieth-century growth in US school spending. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 32(1), 35-68.

Harr, J., Parrish, T., Socias, M., Gubbins, P., & Spain, A. (2006). Evaluation Study of California's High Priority Schools Grant Program: Year 1. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research

Kirp, D. (1986) "Introduction: The Fourth R," in D. Kirp and D. Jensen (Eds) *School Days, Rule Days*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press.

Lampert, M. (1991). *Teaching Problems and the Problems of Teaching*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Levin, H. Levin, H. (1995). Raising Educational Productivity. In M. Carnoy (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Economics of Education* (2nd ed., pp. 283-291). New York: Pergamon/Elsevier.

March, James. G. (1999) *The Pursuit of Organizational Intelligence*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Business.

Miles, K. H., & Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Rethinking the Allocation of Teaching Resources: Some Lessons from High-Performing Schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 20(1), 9-29.

Newmann, F. M., Smith, B., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A.S. (2001) Instructional Program Coherence: What It Is And Why It Should Guide School Improvement Policy. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 23(4):297-321.

Nyhan, R. C., & Alkadry, M. G. (1999). The impact of school resources on student achievement test scores. *Journal of Education Finance*, 25(2), 211-228.

O'Day, J., and Bitter, C. (2003). Evaluation Study of the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program and the High Achieving/Improving Schools Program of the Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research

Odden, A., & Archibald, S. (2001). *Reallocating Resources: How to Boost Student Achievement Without Asking for More* (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Scott, R. (1992) *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, 3rd ed., New Jersey, A Simon & Schuster Company.

Spillane, J., Halvorson, R., & Diamond, J. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: a distributed perspective. *Educational Researcher* 30(3): 23-28.

Wirt, F. & M. Kirst (2001). *The Political Dynamics of American Education*. Richmond, CA: McCutchan Publishing

Yudof, M., D.Kirp, B..Levin & R. Moran (1992) *Educational Policy and the Law*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group/Thompson Learning. p. 699.