

School Improvement In Action

**Building Shared Responsibility
for Student Success**

Cynthia Lewis

Helen Raham, Editor

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SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF Excellence in Education

2 School Improvement in Action

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The stories of these schools are important to share with other educators and with the broader public. Despite many challenges outside their control, they remained focused on learners and learning. They developed their capacity to adapt and respond to the needs of their communities through hard work, lots of extra time and especially courage. These schools applied for these grants and stayed the course throughout the two-year period of the grant and beyond because they wish to make a difference to the life chances of the students with whom they work. Both students and educators learned much from these efforts, and we are privileged as readers and colleagues to be able to share in these learnings.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cynthia Lewis is recently retired from the Surrey School District in British Columbia and continues to be involved in several educational research projects. Over the course of her career in public schools, Dr. Lewis has worked as a teacher at the elementary and secondary levels, a principal, Director of Instruction and Assistant Superintendent. She has also worked at Simon Fraser University in pre-service, in-service and postgraduate education. Her research interests include second language teaching and learning theory and practice, teacher development, learning communities and multi-literacies. She recently returned from Africa where she worked with research teams of educators on early literacy and AIDS education studies, and is currently involved in preparing professional materials about second language literacy. Her experience has afforded her the opportunity to work with many teachers and schools as they pursue improved achievement in the best interests of students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary /7

1 Introduction / **11**

2 Literature Review / **19**

3 Alexander Elementary School / **31**

4 Heath Elementary School / **41**

5 Khowhemun Elementary School / **51**

6 Morley Elementary School / **63**

7 Ruth King Elementary School / **75**

8 West Heights Elementary School / **85**

9 Observations and Recommendations / **95**

References / **109**

Appendices / **113**

A - Educator Self-assessment Survey / **113**

B - District Superintendents Survey / **116**

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 3.1 Assessment Schedule /35
- Table 3.2 FSA Results, Grade 4–6 Percent Meeting or Exceeding, 2003–2007 /37
- Table 4.1 CTBS Results for Primary Grades, 2005–2007 /46
- Table 5.1 School-based Reading Results by Cohort, 2005–2007 /56
- Table 5.2 Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding, 2006/07 /56
- Table 5.3 Fall–Spring Comparisons by Group /56
- Table 5.4 FSA Reading Results, Grade 4, Percent Meeting or Exceeding /57
- Table 6.1 FSA Reading Results, Grades 4/7, Percent Meeting or Exceeding /67
- Table 7.1 BC Performance Standards, Percent Meeting or Exceeding in Reading /76
- Table 7.2 FSA Results, Grade 4, Percent Meeting or Exceeding /78
- Table 7.3 Grades 4–6 Reading Assessment Results /79
- Table 7.4 STAR Assessment Results /80
- Table 8.1 DART, Grades 3–7, Percent Meeting or Exceeding /89
- Table 8.2 FSA Reading Comprehension, Percent Meeting or Exceeding /89

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1.1 Educator Self-Assessment Survey Questions /16
- Figure 3.1 Composite Reading Growth, Grades 1–6, 2006/07 /36
- Figure 3.2 Reading Growth by Grade, Sept. 2006–June 2007 /37
- Figure 4.1 Grade 4 FSA Reading Results, 2001–2007 /45
- Figure 6.1 Progress in Instructional Comprehension, 2005–2007 /67
- Figure 6.2 Progress in Independent Comprehension, 2005–2007 /68
- Figure 9.1 Conditions for Sustaining School Improvement /95

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the case studies of six projects in the School Improvement Grants Program (SIGP) which supports action research in BC schools serving challenging student populations. Launched in 2001 by the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education (SAEE)¹ the program was designed to add to the emerging knowledge base on school improvement through action research.

Each of the schools, selected through an application process, received \$20,000 from the SAEE matched by \$5,000 from other sources to carry out a two-year research-based intervention to improve literacy outcomes. The terms of the grant required that the interventions be developed in consultation with all school partners, involve 50% or more of the students and staff in the school, and have measurable results. Schools mostly spent their funds on professional collaborative time, teaching materials and resources, and assessment and diagnostic services. Schools provided baseline data and specified in advance the indicators and tools by which progress and outcomes would be measured.

Methodology

In order to document the efforts and outcomes of the schools receiving the grants, SAEE contracted Dr. Cynthia Lewis to visit each school two to three times per year. She assisted schools with their data collection plans and monitored progress reports and data provided by the schools.

The qualitative data collected consisted of the evaluator's field notes, teacher journal entries, anecdotal evidence and one-on-one interviews with teachers and students, and focus groups conducted with teachers and administrators on three separate occasions over a two-year period. A pre-and-post project survey of teachers and districts involved documented growth in aspects of the professional learning communities at work in these schools. Quantitative student achievement data was collected from measures such as the provincial Foundation Skills Assessment, the Canadian Test of Basic Skills, BC Performance Standards based tools such as the DART, and assorted school-based assessment instruments.

The case studies are referenced in large part to this data and summarize project strengths and challenges, as well as what can be learned from each. The researcher then performed a cross-case analysis, linked her findings to the school improvement literature, and drafted a set of observations and recommendations intended to inform future improvement projects.

The Case Studies

The set of schools chosen for Cycle 3 includes Heath Elementary in Delta, West Heights Elementary in Mission, Morley Elementary in Burnaby, Ruth King Elementary in Sooke, and two Duncan elementary schools, Alexander and Khowhemun. All six sites serve children of diverse backgrounds from predominantly lower income families, many of whom are transient, single-parent, recent

¹ SAEE is a non-profit education research agency focusing on K-12 improvement. For more information, see www.sae.ca.

8 School Improvement in Action

immigrants to Canada, Aboriginal, and whose first language in the home is neither English nor French. Literacy achievement in these schools as measured on annual provincial and district assessments was consistently below expectations. With enrolments varying between 200–400 students, their SIGP projects collectively involved over 1800 children and 50 educators. Each school adopted a different intervention to address achievement gaps.

Findings

Student achievement results are reported longitudinally by school from 2005 to 2007. Progress varied considerably across schools and among cohorts within schools. Schools reported gains in cohort based groups and individual student profiles from year to year. Trends in FSA results were inconclusive. From a staff development and school capacity building perspective, the researchers found many positive elements associated with the six improvement projects, as well as some significant challenges, mainly to do with high numbers of transient families and high rates of absenteeism for the most vulnerable students.

Focus on Instruction

All projects were characterized by the emphasis they placed on enhancing literacy instruction, improving teacher communication about curriculum and expectations across the grades, and using assessment as a guide to instructional planning and practice as well as a tool for engaging students in their own learning.

Professional Growth

The program provided much-coveted release time for staff to work together to share instructional approaches, learn about promising practices from one another, plan and evaluate progress, level reading materials, and order resources. The vast majority of the teachers involved indicated that through increased professional development opportunities targeted to the focus of their projects, they experienced positive changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes about literacy and student needs.

Increased Collaboration

The schools also experienced far greater collaboration among staff, especially between classroom teachers and resource and reading teachers. Teachers had more time to plan instructional strategies, examine evidence, improve their own instructional competencies, and focus on the needs of struggling students.

Decisions Informed by Data

All school staffs placed a strong emphasis on data collection and undertook activities that allowed them to assemble a broad array of data related to instructional practices and student performance. The most promising practices were in the area of tracking individual student profiles and sharing assessment FOR learning practices with students.

Major Challenges

In light of the fact that school-wide improvement initiatives were a new experience for all schools,

it was not surprising some project elements were less successful than others or that, during implementation, staffs were at times confronted with various difficulties. The most important of these were: a lack of focus in projects with multiple components; limited research expertise – particularly with respect to design and measurement; uneven results – partly due to the early implementation dip common when attempting new approaches; the huge demands on teacher time; high student mobility rates; and significant staff turnover which impacted project leadership, continuity and undermined their investments in staff training.

Schools generally remained positive about their efforts and successes with vulnerable students but found student transience and high absenteeism the biggest barrier to helping those who need help the most. These students continue to fall through the cracks.

Recommendations

Lewis concludes the report with four recommendations for schools, districts and the province, intended to increase the success of future school improvement initiatives:

1. Government agencies responsible for health, welfare, and children and families need to work with the education system to improve wrap-around services for families at risk. The school needs to be the hub of such support.
- 2 To support improvement efforts with our most vulnerable students, schools, principals and districts need to provide flexible resources for sustaining collaborative professional learning and action.
3. Beyond the focus on teaching key skills and strategies, literacy interventions and assessment FOR learning, practices for vulnerable students need to be robust and engaging, responding to students' backgrounds and personal abilities in the primary, middle and secondary years. Classroom assessment which engages students in understanding their own learning has been linked to improved achievement.
4. More examples need to be shared about what effective teachers and schools do to build resilience and community with vulnerable students.

1. Introduction

In recent years, educational researchers and policymakers have observed anew the benefits of action research in school improvement initiatives. Broadly defined, action research is a method of investigation “conducted by and for those taking the action.”²

The School Improvement Grants Program (SIGP) was founded in 2001 by the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education (SAEE) to support action research in schools serving challenging student populations. Because of its empowering nature, this strategy was adopted to assist teachers and principals build capacity as learning communities to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes in their schools. Out of some 80 applications received since the inception of the program, 18 schools in three separate cycles have received SIGP grants and research support to undertake their chosen two-year interventions.

This report documents the journeys of six public schools in British Columbia who received School Improvement Program grants during 2004-2006. Building on the foundational account of the first two sets of schools³, this report provides six new case studies, an overview of the school improvement literature, some continued insights into strategies and structures for improved student learning, and lessons at-large for building capacity for shared responsibility for student success.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The School Improvement Grants Program was designed to add to the emerging international knowledge base on the dynamics of school improvement through site-based action research and to provide field-based Canadian evidence from which lessons may be learned.

The specific goals of the SIGP program are to:

- Improve the literacy and numeracy skills of children who face challenges and barriers to achievement;
- Support public schools striving to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes that are below

2 Sagor, R. (2000). *Guiding School Improvement with Action Research*, Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, p.4.

3 Fleming, T. & Raptis, H. (2004). *School Improvement in Action: Case Studies from British Columbia*. SAEE. Kelowna and Lewis, C. (2006) *School Improvement in Action: Lessons in Sustainability*. SAEE. Kelowna.

12 School Improvement in Action

- expectations; and,
- Document these innovations to share with other schools facing similar challenges.

The program was open to all public schools working with vulnerable and low-achieving populations. Qualifying schools were invited to submit applications to SAEE stating the nature of the challenges, the achievement area they wished to address, and their proposed approach. Planning grants were awarded to the most promising projects, followed by implementation grants for the schools selected. Each school in the program received \$25,000 over 2.5 years, from planning to completion stage. Cycle 3 schools raised \$5000 of this amount through successful applications to their district or other sources.

The terms of the grants required that the projects be designed to improve achievement in literacy or numeracy, be research-based, developed in consultation with all school partners, involve 50% or more of the students and staff in the school, and have measurable results. The funds could be spent in a variety of ways to support the project's goals: professional development, teaching materials and resources, administration, teaching and planning time, assessment and diagnostic services, and performance data analysis and management. For the most part, schools allocated funds to professional resources for staff development, student resources to complement existing materials and augment the number of levelled books available to students, and assessment tools, as well as TOC time to release teachers for collaborative work. Schools provided baseline data and specified in advance the indicators and tools by which progress and outcomes will be measured.

For a more detailed description of the School Improvement Grants program, see <http://www.sae.ca/grants.php>.

CYCLE THREE SCHOOLS

The six schools profiled in this report conducted their action research between April 2004 and June 2007. They were selected through a committee adjudication process from 38 applications from across the province. The criteria for selection included:

- Clear articulation of the circumstances and the academic needs of the students involved;
- Evidence of the commitment of at least 50% of the staff;
- Clearly defined and measurable objectives;
- A coherent research base for the project;
- A coherent plan for the introduction of instructional and organizational interventions;
- A commitment to the in-service and staff development necessary to be successful;
- Community and/or district support;
- A sound plan for the assessment and tracking of student progress over time;
- An identified leadership team; and,
- A budget plan linked to the above.

The set of schools chosen for Cycle 3 includes Heath Elementary in Delta, West Heights Elementary in Mission, Morley Elementary in Burnaby, Ruth King Elementary in Sooke, and two Duncan

elementary schools, Alexander and Khowhemun. All six sites serve children of diverse backgrounds from predominantly lower income families, many of whom are transient, single-parent, recent immigrants to Canada, Aboriginal, and whose first language in the home is neither English nor French. Literacy achievement in these schools as measured on annual provincial and district assessments was consistently below expectations. With enrolments varying between 200 -400 students, their SIGP projects collectively involved over 1800 children and 50 educators.

The schools developed their detailed proposals in the spring of 2004, and carried out their literacy interventions in the 2005/06 and 2006/07 school years.

METHODOLOGY

The School Improvement Grants Program was designed with a research component in order to document the efforts and outcomes of the schools receiving the grants. The key question addressed in this report is, “How do schools in challenging circumstances, when afforded extra resources through the SAEE grant program, engage in the process of building capacity for sustained improved student achievement?”

The author was contracted by the SAEE to serve as a research associate and adviser to the schools, and to compile the school case studies in order to expand the benefits of lessons learned to other sites. School visits took place in the fall and spring of each year of the grant, in order to meet with the leadership teams of the projects, visit classrooms to observe interventions in action, and consult with the teams regarding data collection and the preparation of the school reports.

My role has been two-fold. First, as research associate, I provided methodological assistance to school committees implementing the projects. The Society recognized that the schools participating in the improvement initiatives were already labouring in challenging educational contexts, that their work lives were busy, and that their understandings and experience with action research was in development. The schools were also required at the outset to engage with a local research partner, so that they would have ongoing assistance and feedback. Several successful partnerships took place, such as the collaboration between Malaspina College and Khowhemun Elementary.

The second part of my role has been to undertake an overall evaluation of the six projects and to report the findings to the Society. For the purpose of the evaluation, I constructed a conceptual framework based on key factors which have been identified in the recent literature around the conditions necessary for schools to build learning communities with the capacity to sustain improved student achievement. In the call for applications, emphasis was placed on improvement initiatives conceived, planned, based, and implemented at the school level that enjoyed staff support. This emphasis allowed school staffs considerable latitude in determining the nature of their projects and in deciding the objectives they wished to reach.

In the spirit of supporting an ‘action research’ approach to school improvement, my role was one of

collaboration and support rather than judgment. I tried to ask the ‘right’ questions, and sometimes the ‘tough’ questions, in order to help schools clarify their thinking and their direction. At the end of Year One, recommendations were made to each school which were, for the most part, addressed in plans for Year Two. Most school staffs encountered a steep but positive learning curve during their participation in the program. Organizing and providing resources for students and teachers as well as organizing and tracking data took considerable amounts of time, but the vast majority of educators involved reported that the return in staff professional learning and student progress was well worth the effort.

Both similarities and differences existed in the approaches to improvement and the objectives that characterized the various initiatives. Participating schools variously chose to focus their improvement efforts on all grade levels or particular grade groupings in order to build common understandings, capacity and sustainability of ‘school-wide’ initiatives. Numerous commonalities and promising practices have emerged across the six case studies.

The realities of schools in action shaped the nature of my support as research associate. All six schools were engaged in one form or another of implementing what is referred to in research as a balanced literacy approach.⁴ Each school in each unique context found its own pathway. This is the reality of real schools in action. It is most informative to investigate the manner in which each of the projects sought to bring about school improvements and to identify elements that distinguished each of their approaches. Each case study will document to what extent each project met the objectives staff had set out, the things that worked well, the strengths of each project, the particular challenges or difficulties they faced, and what staff members learned from these experiences. The common lessons will then be discussed in the context of the components of the ecology of school improvement—instruction and assessment, professional learning, family and community relationships, and shared leadership.

Limitations

Schools in Cycle 3, like all British Columbia schools, operate within a provincial accountability model initiated five years ago. Every school must develop a School Plan requiring goals and objectives, strategies and structures, and provincial, district based and school based data required to be tracked over time for the school as a whole and for certain groups of interest, such as grade cohorts and students at risk. In all cases, the SIGP plan was an amplification of this required School Plan. Every district had participated in at least one round of the provincial District Review process as well⁵. This meant that these schools were becoming more sophisticated in their assessment and data gathering practices throughout the period of their grant, mirroring a provincial learning curve.

For several reasons, it is not possible to conclude with certainty which outcomes from the interventions undertaken by the schools are solely attributable to the SIGP grants. Each school identified its own sources of school-based data, using various diagnostic tools depending on what they were interested

⁴ Balanced literacy is a term used to refer to an approach comprised of the instructional components of oral language development, direct instruction in phonemic awareness and spelling, guided reading, independent reading and writing. Schools researched the literature on balanced literacy when compiling their applications.

⁵ See www.bced.gov.bc.ca/review/

in learning about their interventions. Many projects contained multiple interventions, making it impossible to establish causal relationships, illustrating how school communities must strive to make sense of the various factors at play in any school plan. The form and degree of district support of the projects was another variable. In Delta, for example, the SAEE grant was further supported by two district grants for associated components. The Sooke School District's Literacy Coach became closely involved with the Ruth King project in Year Two.

Although this complexity adds limitations to the generalizability of the action research results, the important part of the process for schools lies in the interpretation of the data which they collect and the impetus for change which is taken from that interpretation.

Data Collection

Throughout the project, both the schools and the researcher collected qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data consisted of the researcher's and the schools' ongoing field notes, notes from meetings with leadership teams and representative staff members, classroom observations, and in some instances, surveys conducted with staff, students and parents. The researcher visited schools on four separate occasions over a two-year period to monitor changes in teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes over time.

Quantitative data included student achievement results on provincial criterion referenced tests such as the Ministry of Education Foundation Skills Assessment. Schools also used school and classroom-based formative assessment tools based on the Ministry of Education Performance Standards, and assorted district-designed assessment instruments. Diagnostic literacy assessment tools that were used included Benchmarks, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), the DART, Words Their Way assessments, STAR assessments, and the CTBS. Schools learned to look at composite assessments over time for individual students.

A pre- and post-intervention self-assessment tool was developed to assist school staffs in appreciating and recording the full range of effects associated with the various improvement projects. The survey's framework emerged from discussions with teachers and principals and from the most recent literature on professional learning communities and student achievement. The format and content was inspired from Jensen's study (2004) of an elementary school in the Surrey School District as an evolving learning community. This survey was presented and discussed with the leadership teams in the schools at the beginning of Year One. Schools administered the survey to staff at that time and again at the end of project.

The survey asks the educators involved to assess the effect of their action research on several key indicators as summarized in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Educator Self-Assessment Survey Questions and Scale

SIGP Educator Survey, Cycle 3			
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet	<input type="checkbox"/> Getting Started	<input type="checkbox"/> Steady Progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Achieved
<p>1. Student Achievement There is school-based evidence that student achievement has improved as a result of the interventions carried out throughout the project.</p>			
<p>2. Relationships with Students At our school, positive relationships and understandings about learning between students and staff have grown as a result of the work of the project.</p>			
<p>3. Relationships with Parents At our school, positive relationships and understandings about learning between staff and parents have grown as a result of the work of the project.</p>			
<p>4. Parental Involvement There is evidence that parents have become more involved and able to participate in their children’s learning as a result of the work of the project.</p>			
<p>5. Relationships among Staff At our school, positive relationships and understandings between staff have grown as a result of the work of the project.</p>			
<p>6. Data-driven Dialogue There is evidence that the staff is increasing its capacity to use meaningful student achievement data as a basis for collaborative discussion about teaching and learning.</p>			
<p>7. Instructional Interventions There is evidence that the staff is increasing its capacity to adapt and refine instruction based on information gleaned from meaningful assessment data.</p>			
<p>8. Sustainability There is evidence that the changes and interventions brought about by this project are sustainable as appropriate in the future.</p>			
<p>9. Structural and Philosophical Support There is structural and philosophical support in place for the success of this project.</p>			
<p>10. Challenges The staff is able to work through challenges which arose during the course of the project.</p>			
<p>11. Goals of the Project Overall, there is evidence that the goals of the project as stated in the initial project proposal have been met.</p>			
<p>12. If your school had the opportunity to participate in such a project again, would you support the application? Please comment on the reasons why or why not.</p>			

The results of these self-assessments are included in the case studies which follow. Schools also engaged in various means of assessing the perceptions of staff members about the progress of the interventions, and used various qualitative and anecdotal tools to document student, parent and staff perceptions and attitudes towards the goals. I considered the results of the surveys, the school reports and my own field notes to arrive at summary assessments of the strengths, challenges and lessons learned in each school's project. Superintendent's surveys were also administered in summer of 2007 to assess district level perceptions about the effectiveness of the SIGP process in enabling improved student achievement in the schools involved in their districts (see Appendix B).

Analysis and Interpretation

Yearly project reports submitted by the schools were cross-analyzed for evidence of student and teacher growth, significant elements in common, and lessons learned across the set of interventions. Over the summer of 2007, a review of the school improvement literature was completed and the findings in the schools related to this broader body of knowledge. Drafts of the individual case studies developed were vetted by the School Improvement Project committees at each school in the fall of 2007. The composite report thus prepared was then reviewed by an external panel which offered valuable feedback and advice prior to its publication.

Evidence about improvement in student achievement is triangulated through provincial, district and school-based data for all six schools in Cycle 3. Provincial and district information is useful as a "snapshot" of achievement for identifying trends over time, but sophisticated school-based data is essential for analyzing and guiding instruction of cohorts and groups of students with common characteristics, and for tailoring interventions to specific learning needs. The more diverse the students, the smaller the groupings become for the purposes of "assessment FOR learning" (Stiggins, 2002). In addition, quantitative data at the school level is well supplemented by qualitative data about the learning challenges and successes experienced by specific groups of students and teachers. Anecdotal narratives by students and teachers support the dialogue needed to interpret the data and set direction after the assessments. Results of the self-assessment surveys from all staff involved in the grant, when compared to my conclusions as the Research Associate for the project and the staff's reflections as a group about their learning, reveal the perceptions of each school's growth and capacity as a learning community.

OVERVIEW OF REPORT

The resulting report is divided into nine chapters. The Introduction defines the scope of the report and the methodology and data collection upon which it is based. The literature review contained in Chapter Two draws on emerging school improvement research which is pertinent to the work of the schools. Chapters Three to Eight provide case-study descriptions of the individual projects. These are referenced in large part to several sources: preliminary and final reports submitted by school personnel, the evaluator's field notes from school site visits, and the results of a self-assessment survey distributed to project participants. These case studies evaluate the data provided by the schools, and summarize project strengths, challenges and lessons learned. Finally, Chapter Nine presents

common trends across all projects and associated recommendations, thus contributing to the growing research literature about shared responsibility for student success in school improvement initiatives.

School improvement is hard and complex work. It is hoped that the experiences and efforts of the schools profiled in this report as they tackled significant barriers to learning will provide useful insights for other schools and for system leaders and policy makers who seek to build capacity in our most challenging schools.

2. Literature Review

This chapter builds on the literature summarized in the Cycle One and Cycle Two reports. The first report examined cumulative learning from the history of school improvement. The review in the second report addressed the concept of sustainability, providing additional commentary on the literature regarding action research and teacher inquiry as approaches to improving student achievement, highlighting the professional learning communities research, the concept of assessment literacy, as well as recent commentary on the form of leadership required to promote “breakthrough” practices (Fullan, Hill and Crevola, 2006).

Elmore (2000) claims that the way forward to continuous improvement in the public school system requires systemic as well as school-based solutions focusing on learning for the students and for all the adults involved in the system.

Improvement requires fundamental changes in the way public schools and school systems are designed and in the ways they are led. It will require changes in the values and norms that shape how teachers and principals think about the purposes of their work, changes in how we think about who leaders are, where they are, and what they do, and changes in the knowledge and skill requirements of work in schools. In short, we must fundamentally re-design schools as places where both adults and young people learn (Elmore, 2000, p.35).

Re-designing and sustaining schools as places where adults and children learn every day requires the alignment of all facets of the system, and co-ordination with other segments of the community. The theme of this study of the Cycle Three schools is that of “shared responsibility for student success”. The literature reviewed in this volume will further amplify aspects of research related to the most salient observations from the Cycle Two and Three schools, connecting what has been learned in all eighteen schools involved in the SIGP program to research and case studies from other jurisdictions.

The literature reviewed here is not intended to point to prescriptions for practice based on “what research says”. Rather, it attempts to synthesize the broad principles and underlying conditions for success found in the literature for schools working with vulnerable populations. By providing a useful overview related to certain recurring themes, it is hoped that schools may actually be able to use this volume as a professional resource for discussion. In a recent article by Duffy and Kear (2007) dealing with the relationship between research and practice, we are reminded that effective

teachers are effective because they exercise “adaptive expertise” (Bransford et al, Snow et al, 1998). They modify their practices as situations change and they craft a special mix of instructional ingredients for every child. Duffy and Kerr call upon those in charge of pre-service and in-service education to promote teachers’ metacognitive and adaptive skills not by presenting closed “teacher proof” research edicts and systems, but rather by encouraging teachers to develop a moral compass, adapt research findings to suit the students whom they teach, engage in longitudinal “slow learning” (Hargeaves and Fink, 2006), work with specific case-based and problem based scenarios in real schools, and work collaboratively in learning communities to help each other develop collective knowledge and problem solving related to their students.

This review summarizes supporting literature on four themes: literacy instruction and assessment with vulnerable students, promising practices around family and community connections, deeper professional learning and sustainable leadership. These four themes provide a backdrop for the case studies which then follow.

LITERACY INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT WITH VULNERABLE STUDENTS

An in-depth review of the literature regarding literacy instruction is beyond the scope of this publication. A comprehensive synthesis of the supporting research for the “balanced literacy approach”, upon which most schools in the SIGP program based their interventions, may be found on the internet in the Ontario publication *Literacy for Learning: the Report of the Expert panel on Literacy in Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario (2004)*. Under the umbrella of balanced literacy, there are several recurring themes worthy of mention here, as they are evident in the work of the Cycle Two and Three schools and focused on vulnerable learners.

Reading Engagement and Reading Practice

Snow et al. (2005) have synthesized the current research on what we know about reading, with a view to uncovering certain myths about the needs of vulnerable students, and promoting the best that we know about instruction as appropriate for all students. Commonly held myths include:

- All students living in poverty are similarly affected
- Books in the home are the prime predictor of literacy outcomes
- Children with poor kindergarten skills will have poor reading outcomes
- Schools serving students living in poverty have an insurmountable task
- Students with reading problems need completely different reading instruction
- Phonological core deficits are the key challenge for disabled readers
- Interventions should substitute for instruction with special needs students
- Struggling adolescent readers need phonics and fluency instruction
- Motivation is the big challenge for adolescent readers, and
- Reading instruction should be finished by 3rd grade.