THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Sustaining an Effective Educational Program

By

Gloria E. Dickerson

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

In

Educational Administration

APPROVED:

Dr. Stephen R. Parson, Chairman
Dr. Jennifer Sughrue
Dr. Christina M. Dawson
Dr. Cecelia Krill
Dr. Virgie Binford

December 2001

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Parent Involvement, School-Community Partnerships, Follow Through
The purpose of this study was to examine the key factors associated with sustaining an effective educational program. The primary research question was: How did the Bright Beginnings: Fantastic Follow Through program sustain itself for more than 25 years? The secondary research questions asked in this study were: (a) what role did the school context play in sustaining the program; (b) what role did leadership play in sustaining the program; (c) how did the school culture affect sustaining the program; (d) how did the implementation, continuation, and evaluation phases of the change effort affect sustaining the program; and (e) what effect, if any, did external factors have on sustaining the program?

This study was a descriptive case study of one exemplary program in an urban elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state. A naturalistic, responsive inquiry approach was employed through in-depth interviews, combined with document reviews as data sources. The key participants included local school administrators, teachers, parents, and the central administrative liaison to the program. The participants were interviewed in-person for approximately 30-60 minutes in length.

Materials gathered during the in-depth interviews were transcribed and analyzed after the interviews were completed. First the researcher read the transcribed interviews and hand-coded the consistencies and emerging themes onto a large chart. Second, a matrix was made of the hand-coded data using a word processor. Third, the researcher
identified themes, common patterns and important stories shared by the participants regarding the elements essential to the institutionalization of an educational program. Discussion of the summary, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research are provided in Chapter Five.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I must honor and give thanks for the Infinite Intelligence and Wisdom, God, who dwells within me. God and I are co-creators. Therefore, I am able to do all things through God, who strengthens me.

I am very grateful to the many people who have given generously of their time, prayers, and words of encouragement as I traveled on this journey. May Spirit bless each of you with limitless good.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Dr. Stephen Parson for agreeing to be my advisor, for his unlimited patience, understanding, and encouragement throughout this process.

Special thanks are extended to Dr. David Parks, who forced me to focus, and to become very clear about what I really wanted to research. He also provided me with the nurturing I needed to develop my topic and my writing abilities.

Sincere appreciation is also due to the other dissertation committee members: Dr. Jennifer Sughrue, Dr. Christina Dawson, and Dr. Cecelia Krill, who offered valuable recommendations and suggestions, which facilitated the completion of this study.

An extra “thank you” goes to Dr. Virgie Binford for helping me with gaining access to my site, arranging interviews, providing me with pertinent information for my study, and encouraging words when my spirit was low.

I also wish to thank Ms. Paulette Gardner, Blacksburg, Virginia, and Ms. Nancy Van Buren, Northern Virginia, for being so helpful and always assisting me in a timely and pleasant manner.

To my friends, Portia Etheridge, Denise Baltimore, Mary Grant, Robin Oliver, and Connie Spriggs, I wish to extend special words of appreciation. Thank you for listening when the challenges of life became too much. Thank you for the research and technical assistance. Thank you for the financial support. Each of you in your own special way encouraged me and believed that I would complete this task.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated with love and light to my daughter, Dawn, and to my grandson, Devin, age 2 years old.

It is also dedicated to the memory of my parents, George Oliver and Ruth Norma Smith, who came forth to remind me of my determination and perseverance, and to my aunt, Mrs. Bernice Jackson, the matriarch of our family.

This study is further dedicated to Reverend Agnes Tibbs, my spiritual mentor, friend, mother figure, who has helped me to know that my life is divinely guided and blessed in and through all experiences, circumstances, and situations.
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