Staff Development in California

Public and Personal Investments, Program Patterns, and Policy Choices

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December 1987

The Staff Development Policy Study is a joint project of Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). The study was funded by the California Postsecondary Education Commission. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the commission.

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Acknowledgments

Assembling a portrait of staff development activity and investment in California has been a substantial task. The work of the study team was made both stimulating and feasible by the contributions of hundreds of others in schools, district and county offices, professional associations, universities, state agencies, and legislative offices.

The mosaic of staff development activity was painstakingly assembled from the work sessions we spent with nearly 400 district and school administrators or specialists in 32 districts. The word "interview" does not begin to capture the hours they devoted to helping us understand the letter and spirit of their undertakings or the work they did in preparing materials for us. Our grasp of local staff development was made still firmer by the surveys completed by administrators in nearly 300 additional districts. On many of the surveys, lengthy handwritten notes were a tribute to the care with which people approached the topic of professional development.

The views and experiences of individual teachers and administrators are easily lost in a study of this magnitude, especially one intended to inform decision making at the state level. This study has been enriched by the contributions of more than 1,000 teachers and administrators who took the time to complete surveys or participate in telephone interviews. The teacher who appended a three-page letter to a survey is just one of many who made the effort to say more than could be communicated on a questionnaire. We learned from all of them.

The contributions of the study's advisory group were unprecedented in our experience. A diverse group of legislative staff, state-level decision makers, practitioners, and representatives of professional associations combined their knowledge and experience to help shape the study's design and interpret the study's conclusions as they emerged. During four day-long meetings spread over a year, the group gave close scrutiny to the study's basic questions, methods, and findings. Discussions were lively and debate sometimes heated, but each gathering moved the study forward.

Our team of data collectors brought to the study a lively intellectual curiosity matched by discipline and organization. They met a grueling schedule and still managed to preserve their good sense and good humor. The words of this text are the product of its authors; many of its observations and insights we owe to Nanci Anderson, Juan Arriola, Helen Cagampang, Carolyn Cogan, Colleen Conaway, Julia Koppich, Vince Laura, Donna Kay LeCzel, Nancy Merino, Kathy Phillips, Fran Powell, René Verdin, Dorothy Walters, and Linda Ziegahn. Special thanks to Dan Zalles, who handled all of the data processing, and to Julia Koppich, who read and critiqued numerous drafts of the report.

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Over a period of one year, detailed accounts of staff development activities have evolved into a portrait of staff development in California. We are thankful to the report's many contributors, all of whom share a stake in improving the quality of teaching and learning in California. However, we retain full responsibility for the conclusions presented here and for whatever errors of fact or flaws in interpretation might remain.

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Policy Analysis for California Education

Policy Analysis for California Education, PACE, is a university-based research center focusing on issues of state educational policy and practice. PACE is located in the Schools of Education at the University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University. It is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and directed jointly by James W. Guthrie and Michael W. Kirst. PACE operates satellite centers in Sacramento and Southern California. These are directed by Gerald C. Hayward (Sacramento) and Allan R. Odden (University of Southern California).

PACE efforts center on five tasks: (1) collecting and distributing objective information about the conditions of education in California, (2) analyzing state educational policy issues and the policy environment, (3) evaluating school reforms and state educational practices, (4) providing technical support to policy makers, and (5) facilitating discussion of educational issues.

The PACE research agenda is developed in consultation with public officials and staff. In this way, PACE endeavors to address policy issues of immediate concern and to fill the short-term needs of decision makers for information and analysis.

PACE publications include Policy Papers, which report research findings; the Policy Forum, which presents views of notable individuals; and Update, an annotated list of all PACE papers completed and in progress.

Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development

Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development is a public, nonprofit agency established in 1966 under Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Laboratory is located in San Francisco's Mission District. Since its inception, the Laboratory's principal goal has been to help individuals of all ages obtain more and better learning opportunities as a result of its research, development, dissemination, evaluation, and technical assistance activities.

The Laboratory is governed by a board of directors whose 31 members represent private and public education, business, and community in a service region that includes Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. Under the leadership of the Laboratory's director, program work is organized within four Centers:

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Teaching and Learning	Carolyn S. Cates, Director
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Organizational Development	Lynn Jenks, Director
Educational Improvement and Policy Support	Robert Peterson, Director

An extensive program of regional services is sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education. This program includes a collaborative partnership with the California State University, based on the Northridge campus. Other major program activities have been funded by the California State Department of Education, California State University, California Postsecondary Education Commission, U.S. Department of Education National Science Foundation, private foundations, and other state and local education agencies.

The Laboratory issues a quarterly newsletter, *Resources and Practice*, as well as periodic *Research Briefs* and *Policy Briefs*. A catalogue of publications and products is available free of charge.

Summary of Findings and Overview of the Study

The California Staff Development Policy Study was initiated by the legislature and governor in response to a steady escalation in the number and costs of staff development programs. Results of the study will be used to assess the possibilities and limitations of staff development as an instrument of state and local policy intended to improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning.

For purposes of this study, staff development is defined as

> ...any activity that is intended partly or primarily to prepare paid staff members for improved performance in present or future roles in the school district.... The term staff member is limited in scope [to include] all certificated personnel and teachers' aides.

The study was designed to aid policy makers by answering four basic questions:

1. What is the total California taxpayer investment in staff development and what forms do the investments take?

2. How are staff development activities administered, organized, delivered, and evaluated; and by what approaches do these activities achieve their goals?

3. How do teachers and administrators judge the quality and effectiveness of the staff development activities in which they participate?

4. What policy and program options might the state pursue in order to improve the classroom benefit associated with staff development?

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Presumably, staff development affects students' current learning and future opportunities by contributing to *teachers'*

- up-to-date knowledge of curriculum content

- range of teaching methods

- ability to diagnose student learning and evaluate student progress
- commitment to and enthusiasm for teaching
- ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own teaching

Similarly, staff development may affect students' learning by contributing to *administrators'*

- ability to plan and organize staff development consistent with schoolwide goals and problems
- ability to organize adequate support for the daily work of teaching
- ability to evaluate teaching

Sources of Data

Four main data sources form the basis of this report:

1. Description of Local Patterns of Staff Development. The heart of the study is a description of local policies and practices of staff development, derived from a scientifically selected sample of 30 districts. The sample districts range in enrollment from less than 400 students to more than 50,000 and from large urban districts to rural districts remote from sources of professional development activity. Data were collected on more than 800 discrete staff development activities and on the responsibilities of district- and school-level staff development leaders. Hours of interview time were logged with 280 district staff developers and nearly 100 principals. Extensive telephone interviews were completed with over 460 teachers in the 30 districts. In addition to the data collected from the 30-district probability sample, the study also obtained interviews and materials from district administrators, site administrators, and teachers in Los Angeles and San Diego.

2. Teacher and Administrator Surveys. Individual teachers and administrators contributed their views of the content, format, and value of various staff development opportunities. Altogether, more than 1,300 school professionals provided their views of the current array of staff development options. Mail surveys were conducted of teachers

(N=749) and administrators (N=117), supplemented where appropriate by examples provided by the teachers interviewed by telephone (N=460).

3. Survey of Districts and Counties. Districts and schools are both providers and consumers of staff development services. A statewide survey of all districts and counties elicited information about program and policy choices, funding sources, and costs. This survey completed the broad picture of how staff development resources are used and ensured that all districts would have an opportunity to contribute to the study's findings. The district survey was completed by 265 of the state's 1,026 districts (26%) and by 30 of the state's 58 counties (52%). Enrollments in the 265 districts ranged from less than 10 to Los Angeles's enrollment of more than 600,000. The responding counties ranged from the largest urban to the most isolated rural counties. Survey data from district and site administrators were used to describe local levels of confidence in specific staff development agencies and types of staff development leadership.

4. State-Level Program Descriptions and Program Evaluations. Documents supplied by the State Department of Education provided the legislative authorization, program regulations, program history, and current status of more than 20 state-funded or state-administered federal programs. The inventory included programs specifically intended for staff development, as well as categorical programs or general school improvement programs for which staff development was one component.

Limitations of the Study

The California Staff Development Policy Study is a descriptive inventory of the policy and program choices reflected in local staff development, based on detailed, comprehensive program and cost data on actual staff development activities. *It is not an evaluation, nor is it designed to trace the impact of staff development initiatives into the classroom.*

However, the study approaches the issue of "effectiveness" in two oblique ways. First, it draws upon consumers' own appraisals of staff development, collected as part of this study. Although self-report data are an inadequate guarantor of effectiveness, they do assist in distinguishing those approaches for which support is strongly established from those for which teachers and administrators reserve their strongest criticism.

Second, the study estimates probable effectiveness by appraising common local configurations against a standard established by the available research literature in staff development. For some approaches, such as skill training, the research record is reasonably informative. For other approaches, such as regional service centers, mentors,

or direct monetary subsidies of teachers, there is less guidance in the research literature. Further, there simply is no established body of staff development research that connects staff development models with student outcomes. At best, judgments of effectiveness can be made on the basis of whether a program affects the intermediate objectives of enhanced knowledge, skill, commitment, and apparent classroom practice among teachers.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

This year-long examination of staff development in California yields eight main conclusions. This summary of conclusions and the text that follows employ the logic and language of *investment.* In doing so, it is important to acknowledge that any dollar spent on staff development is a dollar not spent on other educational purposes, including instruction. However, the investment orientation also permits policy makers to take a future-oriented view toward the value of current staff development. It positions them to address the problem of return on investment and to judge staff development resources by their prospects (or demonstrated ability) to improve the capacities and commitments of California's educators.

Finding #1. Staff development programs and services for teachers and administrators consume approximately 1.8 percent of California's education funding, a total of $366 million during a one-year period.

- Taxpayers' contribution to the "direct costs" of staff development programs and services consists of five parts: (1) approximately $88 million in state funds appropriated specifically for staff development, (2) an estimated $34 million for staff development linked to other state categorical aid programs, (3) an estimated $34 million for staff development associated with federal categorical aid programs administered by the state, (4) approximately $70 million in the costs of public university graduate instruction not covered by student fees, and (5) approximately $140 million in allocations from local district and county general fund budgets.

- The average annual "direct" expenditure for local staff development activities (excluding university courses) is approximately $1,360 per teacher and $1,800 per administrator. (When the taxpayer subsidy for graduate-level university instruction is included, the total average investment per certificated employee is slightly over $1,700). Of the total investment in teachers, 90 percent ($1,229) is controlled at the district level. Of that amount, $912 or 70 percent of the non-university total consists of monetary outlay in support of programs. The remaining $317 is a figure calculated to represent reallocated instructional time.

- Public dollars spent directly on staff development activities at the district level amount to $912 per teacher. An average of $430 per teacher supports teachers' participation by paying for substitutes, stipends, facilities, materials, and travel. The salaries of district specialists who plan and lead staff development services account for about $400 per teacher. External consultants and presenters account for an additional $82 per teacher.

- Governmental spending on staff development is supplemented by participants' private contributions of time and money. For every dollar that districts spend on staff development activities, participants contribute another 60 cents in uncompensated time.

- The largest share of staff development programs and services is managed directly by districts and schools through the local administration of state categorical programs, policies governing release time of teachers and other conditions of professional development, and collectively bargained agreements regarding teacher salary advances.

- The current direct public investment in teachers' and administrators' professional development appears to be a modest one by private sector corporate standards. While comprehensive data are not available on corporate staff development, examples provided informally suggest that it is not uncommon for corporations to invest more than $1,500-$2,000 per year on staff with professional or managerial responsibilities.

Finding #2. The future financial obligation for salary advances that teachers accrue as a result of advanced university courses or salary credits awarded by the district is taxpayers' largest investment in staff development.

- The bulk of taxpayer investment in teachers' professional development—nearly $600 million during a one-year period—is in the form of future salary obligations made to teachers who accrue credits by enrolling in university course work or by attending district-sponsored activities outside the salaried workday. When future salary increments are added to current "direct costs," monetary and nonmonetary expenditures, the total taxpayer investment exceeds four percent of total education funding and approaches $1 billion per year.

- Linking continuing education to salary advances by the use of uniform salary schedules is a widespread feature of American school governance. In California, the present value to a teacher of future salary increments resulting from an additional semester unit is approximately $1,400; the average annual increment received by an individual teacher is $84 per unit. Local policy makers exert control

over this expenditure insofar as they establish criteria and procedures to regulate the award of credits that teachers apply toward salary increases.

Finding #3. California teachers and administrators demonstrate a firm commitment to improving their own knowledge and practice.

- For every dollar spent by districts and schools directly on formal staff development activities, individual teachers personally contribute 60 cents in volunteer time, with no present or future financial compensation.

- Despite the relative absence of extrinsic incentives or rewards for improving professional performance, the vast majority of teachers desire more, not less, staff development opportunities. They list "access to new ideas" as their number one motivation for attending conferences or workshops.

- Among teachers, consistent supporters of staff development activities outnumber consistent critics six to one. The consistent supporters are more likely to be employed in schools that make professional development an accepted part of daily work, schools in which teachers and administrators together play a major role in deciding, planning, arranging, or leading staff development.

Finding #4. Local school district capacity to organize and deliver staff development has grown steadily.

- District administrators and staff developers display considerable sophistication about the preferred design of staff development activities. They favor activities closely linked to major district or school priorities, measured in days, not hours, with an appropriate combination of content and methods and accompanied by classroom-based consultation.

- Compared to the involvement, influence, and sophistication of central office personnel, teachers have remained relatively uninvolved, uninfluential, and unsophisticated about options for professional development purpose, content, and form. Less than 10 percent of all participant hours in staff development activity is a direct result of teachers' planning and leadership.

- Staff development is a relatively centralized activity within medium-sized and large districts, planned and delivered by district specialists, administrators, and external presenters or consultants. At the local level, the largest expenditure for staff development programs is "leader time"—the salary cost of the specialists and administrators who plan and lead staff development activities.

- In the absence of any comprehensive and cost-effective strategy for overcoming problems of distance, teachers and administrators in the state's vast rural areas enjoy fewer professional development opportunities than their counterparts who have easier geographic access to staff development providers.

- Noteworthy examples of staff development exist in districts, county offices of education, and universities. The main features of these programs can be identified and thus might be supported on a larger scale.

Finding #5. Selected staff development activities have sound prospects for favorably influencing classroom performance and the overall quality of school programs. On the whole, however, the current array of staff development activities and incentives is unlikely to yield substantial change in the thinking or performance of California's classroom teachers.

- Teachers describe worthwhile staff development in terms that are consistent with prior research: effective staff development is closely tied to current instructional assignments and circumstances and permits intensive study by pursuing one or two key topics over a period of weeks or months.

- Despite the knowledge, intentions, and preferences of most district staff developers, relatively few staff development activities are linked to a well established school support system, and relatively few teachers believe they are accountable for using (or at least testing) what they learn. Intellectual content is often thin.

- Classroom and school reinforcement, or follow-up, appears to be effective in ensuring that staff development translates to classroom effectiveness, but it occurs infrequently. Few teachers (less than 10 percent) devoted 50 or more hours to follow-up from staff development in a one-year period, but those few teachers were four times more likely to report large classroom effects than were teachers who devoted less than 10 hours to follow-up.

- The quality of staff development is constrained by the sheer number of demands on teachers' time. When the salaried workday and work year provide teachers with relatively little out-of-classroom time, teachers' opportunities for productive staff development dwindle and their commitments to professional improvement are compromised.

development dwindle and their commitments to professional improvement are compromised.

Finding #6. California's staff development resources are deployed in ways that generally reinforce existing patterns of teaching, conventional structures of schools, and long-standing traditions of the teaching occupation.

- Staff development is largely market driven; that is, it consists of a lengthy menu of discrete offerings available on a sign-up basis to individual teachers who "receive" information or materials from paid presenters. The training "industry" has dominated local district conceptions of staff development, and most professional development opportunities take the form of skills-oriented or materials-oriented workshops.

- Staff development does little to alter the isolated and isolating character of classroom teaching or to engage teachers themselves in an intellectually rigorous examination of curriculum and teaching methods. It occurs on the periphery of school and classroom life, a situation exacerbated and perpetuated by funding patterns, by a marketplace glutted with short-term skill training, and by a daily and yearly schedule that squeezes staff development into widely separated days or hours.

- Individual examples confirm that staff development can be structured to support a more professionalized teaching force and to support schools that improve steadily. Nonetheless, the study revealed few intensive, long-term involvements planned and carried out by groups of teachers with common instructional assignments, using resources under their own control. A few aggressive attempts to parlay the mentor role into a faculty leadership position, or to exploit leadership roles already in place (department chairs, for example) were found. However, teachers were rarely involved in shaping the content and form of staff development or involved in evaluating its impact.

- Selected state initiatives are consistent with forces of professionalization in teaching. The *Mentor Teacher Program* has evolved steadily; mentors are far less likely to spend their time developing curriculum on their own and far more likely to work directly with other teachers. In conception, the *Classroom Teacher Instructional Improvement Program* rewarded teacher initiative and required a plan that would yield benefit in the classroom. The *Cal Writing Project* has demonstrated that a teacher-driven model of professional development, built on university-school collaboration and fixed firmly on student learning, can be both effective and efficient. The *California School Leadership Academy* was inspired by developments in school research, with its vivid descriptions of effective school leadership, and by the implementation demands associated with state reforms

(especially the Model Curriculum Standards). These state-sponsored programs are in various states of maturity. Each has its favorable features and each has its flaws. Each is premised on assumptions that deserve—and often elicit—discussion and debate. As a group, however, they exemplify the state's attempt to develop or support staff development that advances the professionalization of teaching and of the school as an institution.

Finding #7. California's staff development activities are largely unevaluated.

- Staff development activities are evaluated regularly on a session-by-session basis that assists trainers in refining their activities; the most extensive evaluation efforts are intended to improve discrete staff development activities.

- Staff development is rarely evaluated for the importance or coherence of its overall program goals, for the relationship between staff development goals and other school improvement goals, or for the match between goals and strategies (ends and means). (There are instructive exceptions to this rule, such as the evaluation portfolio assembled by the California Writing Project and the two-year evaluation of district professional development assembled by one California district.)

- The consequences of staff development are almost never tested at the classroom level. Program evaluations are dominated by user participation rates and other process measures; summative measures of classroom effectiveness are fewer and methodologically weaker.

- The impact of some of the most innovative, potentially promising, and costly state-funded initiatives, such as the Mentor Teacher Program, is largely unknown. Resources for program evaluation are rarely sufficient to gauge progress in program development or to assess the merit of particular strategies as they mature.

- Staff development is generally *disconnected* from personnel evaluation. Teachers and district administrators advocate rethinking this arrangement.

Finding #8. The state annually appropriates staff development funds for teachers, schools, districts, counties, and universities, but it lacks a comprehensive or consistent policy orientation toward staff development or toward institutions that provide it.

- State-supported staff development is an activity in the service of other educational purposes. In principle, staff development provides the content knowledge and pedagogical skill essential for curricular or instructional reforms. It enhances teachers' success with the state's diverse student population. It enriches the supply

pedagogical skill essential for curricular or instructional reforms. It enhances teachers' success with the state's diverse student population. It enriches the supply of rewards and incentives that influence teachers' long-term commitment to teaching. It enables schools to tackle more demanding school improvement agendas. That is, it serves multiple goals.

- Despite the multiplicity of staff development purposes evident in the inventory of state-funded programs, there appears to be no clear view of the relationship between any one purpose and the institution(s) best equipped to pursue it. The proportion of funds allocated to teachers, schools, districts, counties or regional agencies, and universities reflects a combination of deliberate strategy and historical accident.

- The growth in state-supported staff development activity has been accompanied by a proliferation of new agencies, outside the mainstream institutions. The rise of new staff development providers (mostly regional services housed in county education offices) contrasts with the relative lack of change in basic structures for organizing teachers' or administrators' work and their preparation for that work.

Policy Issues and Alternatives

The state's interest in the quality of teachers and administrators is expressed in three ways. First, the state regulates membership in the teaching profession and in the administrative ranks through certification requirements and, following certification, through policies governing job security (tenure) or personnel evaluation. Second, the state establishes obligations for continuing education and supplies funds for activities that satisfy those obligations; the professional growth requirement, specially designated staff development funds, and the general fund apportionment to districts all provide incentives and support for continuing education. Finally, the state supports recruitment and retention of capable educators to the extent that it assists districts to establish competitive salary schedules, attractive working conditions, and career options within education.

In the discussion that follows, we examine policy issues and alternatives related to the second of the state's three strategies for affecting the quality of teaching and learning: formal support for staff development. The underlying thesis is that Californians should view education staff development as an important investment in human resources which, if pursued in a systematic, sustained, coherent manner, could return long-run benefits to students and the state generally.

Human resources development policy has at least two purposes, both of which are directed at increasing individual and organizational productivity. One is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and motivation of individual employees. The other is to ensure that employees are knowledgeable about and committed to the goals of the organization in which they work. Such purposes cannot be fully satisfied by the hiring process, no matter how well prepared the candidates. Further, these purposes cannot be achieved by one-time "fixes." Where they exist in education and industry, human resource development plans reflect the need for continued, systemic, coherent attention to both the training needs of individual employees and the employing organization.

THE EVOLUTION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT AS A STATE CONCERN

Staff development in education formerly rested almost exclusively with individual educators and the local districts that employed them. Today, it is increasingly a matter for state-level consideration.

Prior to the advent of large-scale federally sponsored categorical aid programs in the mid 1960s, little was heard about formal programs of staff development in education. A sweeping national campaign of inclusion initiated in the mid 1960s rendered teacher retraining a high priority. Low income, non-English-speaking, handicapped, and migrant

students were now being brought under the mantle of public schools, and many teachers were inexperienced in instructing such youngsters. Additionally, court-ordered and voluntary racial desegregation programs in thousands of school districts underscored the necessity of exposing teachers to new ideas about instruction and insights about cultures other than their own. Federal programs recognized training deficiencies among teachers, and local school districts began to take advantage of federal funds to offer their teaching staff added preparation.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, local school districts gradually assumed the major responsibility for providing staff development services. The absence of a statewide human resources development strategy was not particularly troublesome because education had not yet assumed intense statewide significance. Overlapping responsibility for inservice education among public and private universities, county offices of education, local school districts, and private-sector entrepreneurs was simply a fact. Enabling individual teachers to select from a market-driven menu of inservice course offerings was a natural outgrowth of the varied categorical programs. With the development of collective bargaining, salary schedule credit for added numbers of courses and district inservice preparation programs became a fixed point of reference in the constellation of local district collective bargaining activities.

The context for much of this local decision making has now changed. *On many important dimensions, California now has a state system of public schooling.* Judicial findings that a student's education should not be based upon the property wealth of his or her local district, combined with passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, resulted in increased centralization of school funding at the state level. Annual statewide spending for public schools has risen to more than $20 billion, and the state itself is the overwhelming senior partner in the financial side of this undertaking. It is also the case that elected officials increasingly look to the schools to assist the state in creating and sustaining a productive economy and civil society. Thus, the state determines the level of available school revenues, specifies high school graduation requirements, provides direction on curriculum content for students and teachers, and measures student outcomes through a large scale assessment program and performance review process.

Despite the increasing prominence of the state, the individual student and teacher are the ultimate implementors and consumers of education policy and, as such, remain at the heart of the process. Similarly, schools, districts and intermediate organizations and institutions play a vital role in ensuring the effective delivery of education to California's more than 4 million students. Within this context, staff development policy questions assume an enlarged significance.

ELEMENTS OF A STATE STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

A comprehensive state vision and policy orientation for staff development should include elements such as (1) principles to guide funding decisions, (2) purposes that deserve or require support from the state, (3) governance structures and decision points based upon purpose, (4) providers of services based upon expertise, (5) effective incentives, and (6) mechanisms of quality assurance and effectiveness. The following discussion is intended to assist state and local policy makers and public school professionals in improving current arrangements and arriving at a new vision of human resource development for educators.

Guiding Principles Derived from Research and Experience

One of this study's fundamental conclusions is that present-day, state-sponsored staff development programs have grown by accretion and, for the most part, are unexamined as to their overall goals, modes of delivery, scale of investment, and outcomes. The following principles and guidelines address this condition and apply to the development of a statewide strategic vision for K-12 staff development.

1. *Importance.* The major state investment in the quality of education is in the salary and other support provided to educators. By supporting formal staff development, the state ensures continued return on its personnel investment. That is, staff development is not a luxury but an essential element of state support for education. Viewed from this perspective, an investment of less than two percent in categorical staff development funding is modest.

2. *Link to Student Benefit.* The ultimate test of public supported staff development activities is the performance of pupils. Intermediate goals, such as improvements in teachers' knowledge, skill, or commitment, should be plausibly related to benefits for students. The requirement for demonstrating the relationship between investment and benefit can be satisfied by standards for proposals, annual plans, program evaluations, and policy-related research. At the local level, justification for content and form of staff development might rest more surely on proposed benefits to students.

3. *Multiple Purposes.* Staff development is not an end in itself; it occurs in the service of other important educational purposes. A comprehensive state strategy will acknowledge the multiple goals that staff development serves and will link funding to an assessment of the "big picture": what is the goal, how is it related to other goals, by what other means is it being pursued, and what priority does it deserve at this time?

4. *Locus of Control.* The burden of improvement is felt most at the classroom and school level; the predisposition in staff development funding should be in favor of discretionary decision making close to the classroom. The choice to place decision making responsibility at levels above the school should be determined by the purpose for the staff development and appropriate economies of scale for its delivery. Locus of control should reflect the distinctive interests and needs of individual teachers, schools, districts, and the state.

5. *Developmental Capital Supplied by the State.* Such capital should support the evolution of staff development content and strategy that taps the best of current research and practice and that makes it available in a cost-effective manner. Free-market forces are unlikely to anticipate staff development needs fully; therefore, public investment in developing selected staff development offerings will be needed. Universities, professional associations, and regional agencies may be in a position to undertake the developmental work that is beyond the capacity of most individual districts. Appropriate levels of competition among a variety of staff development providers is desirable.

6. *Access to High Quality Staff Development Services.* Access to services should not be unfairly determined by a school district's geographic location. Regional agencies, intermediate between the state and the local school district, are likely to be useful in planning for staff development, undertaking developmental work, maintaining rigorous standards, and taking advantage of economies of scale in acquiring and delivering services.

7. *Evaluation.* Staff development programs should be operated in a manner consistent with a continuum of good practices ranging from appropriate program design, through classroom reinforcement for the individual participant, to eventual program evaluation. Program evaluation considerations should be included from the design stage forward in order to build a body of knowledge about the cost effectiveness of alternative staff development activities.

These principles permit a state orientation that consolidates staff development with other crucial educational aims, achieves a level of integration, consistency, and rigor now absent, yet preserves flexibility where needed.

Education poses a particularly complex setting for staff development. Educators view themselves as professionals, implying a high degree of personal and collegial responsibility for continued improvement in knowledge and skill. On the other hand, most are employed in bureaucratic settings characterized by hierarchical decision making, where organizational priorities and norms are most frequently established above the classroom level. Thus, the challenge is to define a staff development strategy which appropriately reconciles the priorities of both the individual professional and the organization in which he or she works. These tensions are made even more complex by the presence of multiple

levels of authority in education. Depending upon the issue and one's perspective, the state, the school district, and the school can all be seen as the employing organization.

Multiple Goals for Staff Development

Staff development achieves its impact on students by affecting the knowledge, skill, confidence, and commitments of teachers and administrators and by helping to alter the institutions in which they work. The state can examine its portfolio of funded initiatives with an eye toward judging the probable contribution that each component makes to the quality of teaching, learning, and school management. As a group, funded initiatives might be expected to reflect attention to all of the following goal areas.

Subject Matter Knowledge. A teacher's choice about *what* to teach is a major determinant of quality in the classroom. The breadth and depth of subject matter treatment in the classroom is contingent on both the preparation of individual teachers and on the preparation of faculty groups (departments, grade levels) to make appropriate judgments about content emphases, materials, and the like. Staff development has typically concentrated on the former; it might fruitfully expand attention to the latter.

Pedagogical Sophistication. Teaching is much more difficult than it often appears to those whose only acquaintance with it has been as student or perhaps as parent, working one-on-one. For example, knowing how to solve a linear equation is quite a different matter from knowing how to help 30 adolescents learn to solve them, or maintaining an environment orderly enough to try. Classroom management, techniques for instructional planning and delivery, subject-specific pedagogy, and student evaluation all are areas in which teachers should acquire basic understandings during their university preparation and first few years of teaching. Staff development contributes to teachers' success by increasing the pace at which beginning teachers move beyond mere survival. Staff development has been heavily weighted toward "generic pedagogy"; it might fruitfully expand its attention to subject-matter pedagogy, including pedagogy appropriate to interdiscipinary study.

Organizational Capacity and Program Quality. Schools appear to thrive when teachers are prepared to be effective not only in the classroom but also as members of a school-level or districtwide faculty. The quality of student learning is arguably linked to the ability of an organization to establish values conducive to learning and to act on those values in coordinated and consistent ways. Staff development has been marketed largely to individuals; even many "school-based" offerings are simply small versions of district workshops in which individuals attend as autonomous individuals. Activities that have as their object the improvement of the organization range from "information" sessions that acquaint persons with rules to intense school improvement initiatives that strengthen

teachers' and administrators' capacities to make sound program choices. An effective state strategy might profitably foster more of the latter.

Professional Status and Commitments. The recent move to further professionalize the teaching occupation has implications for state-supported professional staff development. Teachers have been urged to assume greater responsibilities in inducting new teachers, assisting one another with classroom innovations, or sharing their accumulated knowledge and experience. They are given credibility in these roles by their classroom experience, but in many crucial ways classroom experience alone is inadequate preparation for cooperation with colleagues. A small share of the staff development investment can be productively devoted to preparing teachers for effective contributions to the district and the profession; as one consequence, a far greater share of the staff development dollar might be spent on staff development activities planned and led by teachers.

Decision Points: Who Controls What Staff Development?

Listed below is a continuum of decision makers, each of whom has a legitimate role in defining and controlling the contents of staff development.

The Individual Teacher or Administrator. The needs and interests of individual educators cannot fully be satisfied by the collective priorities established by a school faculty or district staff development programs. Individuals have a stake in preserving their latitude to make individual choices and to receive support or compensation for doing so. Individuals also have a stake in the quality and relevance of activities undertaken by a group or organization, using public resources and requiring an investment of teacher time and energy.

Individuals now make independent choices regarding staff development when they enroll in university courses, or when they elect some from among many available conferences or workshops. Presumably, they exert influence on larger program choices when they participate in needs assessments or in school-site planning. However, teachers and site administrators (the most common "learners") are underrepresented in the leadership of formal staff development. With the exception of their college or university graduate preparation, teachers' and administrators' personal interests also receive little direct public support.

From a state perspective, public funds now subsidize individual choices through the operation of the salary schedule and through support for graduate instruction in public universities. Assuming that those forms of support will remain stable for the indefinite future, the state might elect policy options that expand or limit individuals' decision making power. Unrestricted minigrants honor teachers' preferences while conveying the

expectation that money will be used directly for the improvement of instruction; restricted minigrants bind the projects more clearly to school- or district-level priorities or place other obligations on the recipients. Vouchers for purchase of staff development services leave teachers free to "vote with their feet," but serve to perpetuate the fragmented menu of activities with only uncertain connection to instructional assignments. A budget of discretionary release time granted to individuals or to groups of teachers retains decision making in the hands of the consumer but increases the probability that teachers might choose to spend the time working directly with colleagues.

Each of these options assumes the teacher to be the primary decision-making unit in the selection of staff development activities. It makes no assumptions about providers of staff development services or the possibility of requirements placed upon teachers regarding the nature of staff development. Such an arrangement neither mandates nor precludes teachers having to meet a minimum staff development requirement within a statutorily or contractually required period. Neither does it specify or preclude individual teachers being required to select all or a part of their staff development activities in keeping with a district- or state-specified objective. Finally, these options generally assume that the right to decide on staff development is vested equally in all teachers. An alternative, exemplified by the Mentor Teacher and Classroom Teacher Instructional Improvement Grants programs, is to commit special resources to those teachers who in some manner have qualified for them. Such a model is strengthened both instrumentally and politically by mechanisms that ensure that the activities of the few will yield benefits for many.

The School. The ideas, insights, or materials that compose the content of staff development come to life (or not) in the daily work of schools and classrooms. Schools are the operating component of education, where state policies are eventually translated by professional educators into services for students.

Individual schools must be assumed as the primary unit around which to build a strategic vision of staff development. Latitude for decision making and access to discretionary funds might reasonably come to schools in larger share than they now do in most districts. The planning and evaluation processes associated with the School Improvement Program (SIP) and School Site Staff Development (AB 551) are well grounded in research and experience. Though uneven in practice, they nonetheless continue to serve as reasonable models. A more uniform standard might be achieved.

The District as Policy Unit. District policies affect the quality and impact of staff development. They communicate the value attached to professional development by the resources they invest and by the policies they make governing release time, approved staff development content, staff development budgets and staffing at the school level or central office, out-of-district travel, and links between staff development and personnel evaluation. The governing board and the superintendent are the sources of policies and practices that promote or discourage effective staff development.

In many districts, centralized policy-making authority has been matched by centralized control over staff development funds, staff, and activities. Productive alternatives might be developed by adopting a stance described as "centralized troublemaking and decentralized problem solving."[1]

State Agencies. The assumption here is that public schooling is a plenary function of the state, and, thus, state interests must also be served by staff development activities. State legislative and executive branch officials decide what staff development activities are necessary to serve these interests and, through arrangements with providers and use of appropriate incentives, should see that such ends are met. For instance, in SB 813, the legislature directed the State Board of Education to adopt model curriculum standards and required local school districts to appraise their curriculum every three years against those standards. The board also adopts textbooks and frameworks consistent with the contents of the standards; the California Assessment Program (CAP) uses the standards in the development of its measures of student achievement. It thus seems only appropriate that the state provide teachers and administrators with the wherewithall to be knowledgeable about the standards and the contents of items such as the model curriculum.

Professional Organizations and Associations. Educators, and teachers in particular, are increasingly identifying with norms of professionalism, where the profession itself organizes to help induct, support, and police its membership. Through professional organizations, teachers and administrators have access to staff development which may not be a local priority but which may enhance an individual's capacity for good teaching or becoming a school-site leader.

The assumption here is that teachers cooperating through their professional organizations, and administrators operating similarly, should decide what staff development activities are in the profession's, and presumably schools', interest and arrange for the necessary provision of services.

Multiple purposes and decision points representing varied constituencies compose the demand side for staff development. What about the supply side? Who should provide staff development and what are the principles for its provision? What incentives should be brought to bear to encourage teachers to participate in staff development activities?

Providers of Services Based Upon Expertise

The range of institutions and individuals capable of providing staff development services is remarkably broad. Moreover, an individual or organization may fall into more

[1]Philip Schlechty, Gheens Professional Development Academy, Louisville Public Schools. Personal communication.

than one category of provider. Nevertheless, certain providers are better positioned to offer some services than others. It rests upon the state, the district, the school, and the individual teacher to be intelligent consumers of staff development.

Academic. This category is comprised primarily of publicly subsidized institutions of higher education.

Institutional. This is comprised of governmental agencies, local school districts, county agencies, specialized organizations (e.g., Administrator Training Centers), and endeavors directly sponsored by the State Department of Educations.

Professional. Staff development services are provided by professional associations such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), and the California Teachers Association (CTA).

Entrepreneurial. This category consists of individuals and organizations driven by market forces. They are providers only to the degree to which clients actively seek their services. Many private institutions of higher education fit into this category, as do a variety of private-sector companies and individual consultants.

Staff Development Incentives

There are six major incentives which policy makers can utilize for inducing educators to participate in staff development. Some will prove more effective than others; those that are effective are not necessarily more costly. Also, these incentives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Many can be combined.

1. *Personal and Professional Success and Satisfaction.* The test of professional development for teachers is greater success and satisfaction in daily work. Teachers are more likely to be attracted to staff development when they are convinced it will yield benefits in their work with students and parents.

2. *Financial Compensation.* Financial incentives are offered in two categories: current cash awards in the form of stipends or subsidies and future salary awards contingent upon accrual of added semester units of academic credit. Experienced teachers—especially those with more than 10 years' experience—look for stipends or other forms of compensation for attending formal inservice activities.

3. *Regulatory.* It is possible through statute and regulation to require staff development participation. Recently enacted state regulations regarding 150 inservice training hours for credential renewal illustrates the regulatory process. However, given

what we know about human motivation, the likelihood of incorporating staff development learning is much greater when intrinsic motivational opportunities are maximized over external regulation.

4. *Peer Pressure.* Either through formal peer review or through more subtle approval of ones peers, professionals can frequently be induced to upgrade their skills and knowledge.

5. *Performance Disclosure.* On an institutional level, collection and public distribution of information about school outcomes may induce professionals to engage in various kinds of improvement efforts, including staff development. Similarly, the increase in "public" attention to classroom performance that is attached to the mentor program and to some career ladder plans may stimulate individuals to improve their work.

6. *Market Forces.* Advocates of greater client choice in education, either through vouchers or choice within the public sector, often contend that under competitive arrangements faculties would be motivated to improve for fear of losing their customer base.

Policy makers should consider three key considerations in designing incentives for staff development:

First, given that access to new ideas is the chief motivator for staff development participation, teachers need time and resources both to design and participate in staff development within the salaried workday, without jeopardizing student learning. Supporters and critics of current staff development would value time spent visiting other classrooms and developing new lessons either alone or with others.

The quality of staff development is constrained by the sheer number of demands on teacher time. As long as the salaried work day and work year provide relatively little out-of-classroom time, the odds in favor of effective staff development are diminished. The system's large commitment to instructional time might be balanced by a reasonable commitment to out-of-classroom time devoted to program planning, evaluating, developing the program of study, and improving individual and organizational knowledge and skill.

Second, when teachers invest personal time and resources to complete coursework and advanced degrees, they do so with some promise of future gain. Statewide, teachers accumulated an average of two semester units during the year-long study period. The annual salary yield attached to a single unit is less than $90; the downstream costs of credits earned over the life of the teacher from one additional semester unit is approximately $1,400, which when aggregated across all teachers results in a $600 million annual investment. Although the cost may appear high in dollar terms, the fact remains that the return is quite small for individual teachers, and their salary increases are not "reallocable"

in the sense typically applied to categorical monies. Rather, the issue is whether the salary advances will be linked to professional development in a way that provides clear incentives for improving performance.

Third, the state and local school districts should consider a portfolio of incentives for teacher participation in staff development. A well conceived incentive package should be part of an overall staff development plan. Districts need to provide teachers with "access to new ideas," simultaneously recognizing that not all teachers want to assume leadership or "mentoring" responsibilities, nor do they wish to attend college and university courses.

Plan for Staff Development in California: An Illustrative Model

There is no "one best system" for providing staff development. Model staff development programs do not arrive on the education landscape fully functioning. They require a purposeful vision, leadership, sustained resources, and sufficient time to develop a mode of operation, gain feedback, and revise procedures.

What is needed is a policy vehicle and complementary set of operational arrangements that will accommodate the multiple purposes and users of staff development activities. What structures and regulations can permit education professionals, schools, and school districts to pursue their individual and collective staff development goals and coincidentally enable the state to achieve its overarching objectives for California education? Also, whatever this system, it must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to the constantly evolving purposes of schooling. Leadership and compromise may well be needed to design such a system, and almost assuredly it will have to be redesigned periodically.

A statewide staff development plan must make efficient use of scarce resources, yet meet a wide variety of individual teacher, school, district, and institutional needs. The plan must acknowledge multiple providers of staff development but provide some mechanism for coordination among them.

Importantly, the plan must be flexible, to permit education professionals, schools, and districts to pursue both individual and collective staff development goals and coincidentally enable the state to achieve its overarching objectives for students. Whatever the system, it will have to adapt to the constantly evolving purposes of schooling. However, the flexibility of its design should not require the formation of a new agency or institution for each new policy initiative.

The following illustrative model is a point of departure for discussion.

Schools: The Primary Decision Unit. Staff development might be brought closer to the classroom and the school by an increase in discretionary funds available directly to schools and a corresponding reduction in splintered categorical funding. A school-oriented strategy is also bolstered by programs that equip teachers to teach one another; a mentor program and a structured, team-based minigrant program both contribute to such an aim.

Regional Service Capacity. It is unusual among school districts and even more unusual for individual schools to possess sufficient expertise to be able to provide all of their own inservice education needs. In almost every instance, outside ideas and talents are needed. The state will also periodically seek to stimulate changes in school and classroom practices in keeping with statewide objectives. As with districts and schools, the state does not possess all the necessary resources for providing staff development to local agencies. The result is the need for regional agencies capable of undertaking developmental activities and serving local districts, schools, and teachers, and, where appropriate, conveying the state's interests.

A variety of characteristics are important in arriving at a decision about the nature of regional staff development service units. One approach to the formation of such centers would be for the state, in cooperation with school districts and professional organizations to compile a set of characteristics for regional service providers. These would be converted into a Request for Proposals (RFP) to encourage potential providers among county offices of education, institutions of higher education, local districts, and private-sector organizations, either singularly or in consortia, to bid. The winner of the bidding would agree to provide the services to a service area for a specified contractual period, e.g., five years, after which it could be rebid.

University-Based Curriculum Institutes: A Source of Statewide Leadership. There are education staff development dimensions that outstrip the ability of regional service centers to provide. Specifically, California is sufficiently large as a state to justify pioneering efforts in curriculum development. In part this is already underway in projects such as the California School Leadership Academy, the California Writing Project, and the California Mathematics Project. California's diverse student, teacher, and administrative population could benefit from state investment in similar projects in areas such as history, science, foreign language, and computer-assisted instruction.

Action Plans and Annual Reports. Each level of the education system should have an action plan and annual report for improvement. Each school should be responsible for the development and continual renewal of a strategic action plan. This plan would be a component of an annual report, at least a popular version of which was distributed to the school's primary clients, parents and pupils, each year. Annual reports would contain descriptions of the school, its faculty, facilities, administrative and other personnel,

curriculum, and mission. Annual reports would encompass a school's self evaluation, whatever honors or awards it had received, and it would reflect student achievement on statewide measures. The strategic action plan should have a five-year time horizon. Yearly modifications would result from an annual evaluation of the individual or organization's performance relative to its goals, as well as environmental conditions such as enrollment growth or decline, faculty retirements, funding alterations, and changes in district or state curriculum focus. Annual updates to the school action plan should devote attention and resources to staff development. The staff development component should be consistent with the school's five-year development strategy and incorporate teachers' individual plans, district goals, and state goals. If the district or state were initiating a staff development effort to further one of its objectives, this should be reflected in the school's annual strategic plan update. Schools could submit their action plan, or at least appropriate components, as a proposal to the state or district, or as partial evidence of compliance in receiving funding for staff development activities.

The school's strategic plan is a mechanism for encouraging teachers and administrators to think systematically about the future of their institution, take into accounts its current strengths and weaknesses, and plan for its future. In this process, they should incorporate the goals of higher levels of governments, the preferences of their clients, and their own professional judgment. No plan suffices for all time; thus, strategic planning should be a routine and continual process for school self-improvement.

Evaluation: A Feedback Loop to Shape the Future. Regardless of the structural means eventually employed to create and sustain a statewide strategic vision for staff development, a crucial component of that vision is the inclusion of requirements for appropriate evaluation. Eventually, it is important to know the most cost effective means for providing professional educators with the services that will benefit their students.

There are presently many occasions when it is difficult or impossible to specify direct benefits to students resulting from staff development participation. Given the diversity in student knowledge, ability, and interest in learning, school and district environments, and teacher learning, it is almost impossible to attribute particular student effects to teacher participation in staff development. Consequently, evaluation often must stop short of the ultimately desired objective and settle for measures of content and process which have been documented as related to teacher learning. However, over time, the state should give attention to the development of evaluation models which can concentrate more on measuring changes in teacher performance as a result of staff development. Eventually, it may be possible to have a better understanding of the linkage between staff development, teacher performance, and student achievement.