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Site-Based Leadership: Extrapolating From Small Business to Charter Schools

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Site-Based Leadership: Extrapolating From Small Business to Charter Schools

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Joan Arbisi Little

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
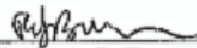
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We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

Dissertation Committee

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Dr. Robert J. Brown, Ph.D., Committee Chair

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Dr. Tom King, Ph.D., Committee Member

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Dr. Dave W. Peterson, Ph.D., Committee Member

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Final Approval Date

Acknowledgement

Abstract

Using a participant-observer perspective, this comparative case study sought to identify similarities between business and education to contribute to charter school training, leadership development, and school reform. 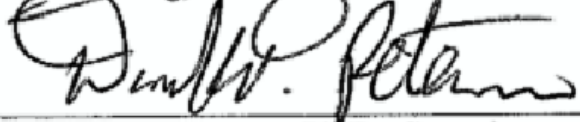 This inquiry is a qualitative comparative case study using a participant observer perspective presented in a scholarly personal narrative (Charmaz, 2006; Nash, 2004; Yin, 2009). The researcher draws inferences from experiences and interviews in an independent, family-owned business and from the study of leadership styles at a Minnesota charter public school. Leadership themes and community relationships are explored to understand the characteristics that lead to and sustain success. Utilizing the business leadership theories of Collins (2001), the charter school leadership findings of Hamm (2008), and the researcher's life experience in a family-owned small business as a lens, common characteristics of small business and charter school leadership are discovered. Themes are identified that coalesce around passion, community engagement, and teambuilding as characteristics that lead to successful leadership in a small business and a charter public school. Using the themes as a base, community leaders identify future trends in charter school organizational structure and leadership. Leaders contemplating opening or redirecting a charter school can consider this comparison as they create their own leadership training and professional development.

Keywords: Charter school leadership, School reform, Site-based leadership, Small business leadership

Dedication

I dedicate this work to those who have supported and guided me through this dissertation, my husband Clinton Little, my six children and their families, my parents and my in-laws, teachers, colleagues, and dear friends who cross the boundaries between each of these groups. Friends so loving they have become family, teachers so dear they have become my parents, and family so close they are my friends. Thank you all.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This research identifies shared key themes of successful leaders in small business and charter public education. Findings indicate that these successful leaders possess the passion to pursue a vision, the ability to initiate and maintain relationships with community stakeholders, and the skill to build and lead a staff. Previous findings of Collins (2001), Hamm (2008), and Nathan and Plotz (2008) identify successful leadership characteristics in business and in education. This study examines those characteristics in the context of a small business leader and those of a charter school leader to explore the leadership implications of small business and whether or not charter school leadership should use small business processes as a role model for greater success. Further, it shows that charter schools and small businesses are analogous in terms of what they need from leadership to succeed.

For purposes of this research, the term "charter school" is meant to include Minnesota, charter public schools, independent of charter management governance. In addition, the term "small business" is meant to include independent businesses, free from any franchise or any outside management. For more detailed definitions, refer to the Definitions of Terms section, page 4.

The guiding principle of this research is that if one approaches charter school leadership with a small business perspective, one will have greater success than if one approaches it from a big business or traditional large school district approach. To exemplify this idea the following quotes from a moment in the day of a charter school leader and a small business leader are presented:

We need a person who will oversee the lease and the building maintenance. They will need to organize the communications system and be a liaison to the web designer. This

person would oversee the office staff and generally ensure smooth operations of the site

in all ways. Their competencies would include negotiation as well as maintenance.

(Charter public school leader, personal communication, September, 2010)

The landlord is not being proactive with the necessary repairs to the roof. The upstairs

tenant is being difficult and trying to draw us into a triangular relationship with the

landlord. I just want the repairs done so that we can move on. (Small business leader,

personal communication, September, 2010)

These leaders are responsible for the daily management and long range planning needs in their

unique work environments. This study focuses on the similarities and autonomous nature of the

work of these leaders and is based on the premise that independent, charter public school

leadership correlates to independent small business leadership.

This research began by examining charter schools that had closed, with a search for

commonalities and gaps in public policy that were conducive to failure. During an interview

with national charter school leader, Joe Nathan, about schools that had closed, the researcher

questioned whether there were flaws in charter school policies that needed to be identified and

changed. In that interview Nathan made the connection between running a business and leading

a charter school (J. Nathan, personal communication, June, 2008). From that interview and

further research, Table 1 was created.

Table 1

Organizational Leadership Relationships Between Businesses and Public Education

Site Structure	Business	Public School
Multi-site with a centralized leadership location	Big brand, chain store	Large district public school
One site with an on-site leader	Independent small business	Site managed charter school

Chubb, Finn, Hill, Hoxby, Osberg, Peterson, Smith, and Torinus, (Hill, 2006) reviewed charter school law, policy, history, and the influence of charter schools on public education. Chubb (2006) connects charter school leadership with business management using the term "cottage industry," as in a small Mom and Pop company possibly run out of a home (2006, p. 128). Chubb (2006) stated that these cottage industries could be replicated in a chain store fashion in the same way that a franchise of stores can be created and overseen by a larger managing agency. Chubb (2006) believed that combining charter schools into a larger group of schools would be superior to the smaller independently run schools because they could rely on the managing agency for administrative needs. This idea challenged what the researcher was learning about charter school leadership and reminded her about the importance of community support in the success of a small business.

This inquiry is a qualitative comparative case study using a participant observer perspective presented in a scholarly personal narrative (Charmaz, 2006; Nash, 2004; Yin, 2009). Nash (2004) defines scholarly personal narrative as a postmodern scholarly writing style that takes an anthological approach utilizing the lived experience of the researcher's personal lens. By telling the story of why this is important to the researcher, connections are made to the reader that link personal understanding to universal application (2004).

  Through charter school policy research, this researcher has used what social theorist Kathy Charmaz (2006) refers to as a grounded theory, or a "method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on creating conceptual frameworks or theories through building inductive analysis from the data" (p. 187). With the findings of Collins' (2001) good to great research of successful corporate leaders as an initial framework, this research builds on the work of Hamm (2008) who used Collin's good to great framework to identify characteristics and behaviors of successful urban charter school leaders. Current research, theories, and the researcher's personal school reform experience are explained in Chapter Two as they relate to concepts and outcomes in the study. A historical background of school reform is recounted to illustrate the policies and trends that led to charter schools.

Definition of Terms

Authorizer. An approved entity that is granted the "charter" by the state. The charter enables a
  group to plan and create a charter public school. The authorizer oversees the ongoing
  performance of the school.

Bohemian. Often a writer or an artist. Commonly used to describe an alternative fashion and
  lifestyle that was popular before Hippies.

Charismatic Leadership. Leading with charm and a sense of authority that attracts and bonds a
  group together.

Charter Management Organizations (CMO). Nonprofit entities that start and manage charter
  schools. They provide various functions and resources in a centralized model aimed at
  providing administrative and support services to charter schools for a lower cost.

Closure Rates. The percentage of charter schools that are being closed during a specified period of time.

Desegregation Laws. 1964 Civil Rights Act that denied federal funds to any program that discriminated on the basis of race, sex, color, or national origin.

Educational Management Organizations (EMO). For-profit entities that start and manage charter and district K-12 and post secondary schools. EMOs provide various functions and resources in a centralized model aimed at providing administrative and support services to schools for a lower cost while providing a profit for shareholders.

Educational Reform. The implementation of a change in methodology with the goal of improving education.

Independent Business Leader. A person who owns and operates a small or independent business.

Independent Charter School. School that is independent from larger managing agencies or traditional school districts.

Lifestyle Store. A retail store that sells items that reflect a particular style or set of values.

Magnet School. A specialized public school that draws students from a larger geographic area to typically make adjustments to racial balance and create racial integration across a district.

Q-comp. The 2005 State of Minnesota funded financial reward system for teachers based on quality measures pertaining to career development and standards based teaching goals.

School Voucher. A certificate issued by the state government used to pay part or all of the tuition for a private school.

Site-based management. Management that is done at the store or school, rather than in a central district or corporate office.

Small or Independent Business. A privately owned one-of-a-kind company.

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that helps

others to advance to a higher level or mastery.

Problem Statement

In 2008 researchers claimed that 20 percent of Minnesota's charter schools were closing

compared to a national average of 12 percent (Allen, Beaman, & Hornung, 2006). One reason

was that Minnesota had the most comprehensive charter school laws in the country (The Center

for Education Reform, 2008). These laws allowed the Minnesota Department of Education to

close schools that were not performing well (M. Brown, personal communication, June 9, 2008).

Likewise, states with weaker laws do not have the ability to close schools that are being

mismanaged or are under-performing. Minnesota charter laws do not require a specific licensure

or uniform leadership training for school leaders (Laws of Minnesota 1991, chapter 256, article

9, section 3). This lack of preparation exemplified itself through misappropriated funds, poor

marketing, and ultimately a drop in enrollment numbers, which resulted in school closings

(Arbisi Little, 2008; M. Brown, personal communication, June 9, 2008; K. Shea, personal

communication, July 2, 2008).

This study compares the leadership perspective and management style of a successful

independent small business leader to that of a successful charter school leader in Minnesota.

Leaders contemplating the opening or redirecting of a charter school can consider this

comparison as they create their own leadership training and professional development.

Historical Background of School Reform and Charter Schools

This overview is intended to act as a guide to the educational reform movement of the last 50 years, highlighting some of the significant leaders and pivotal events that led to the creation of charter public school leadership policy. This background is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to describe some of the circumstances that shaped the current charter public school model. Ember Reichgott Junge, the Minnesota state senator who authored Minnesota's charter school legislation, described the legislative environment of 1991 as a "perfect storm" (personal communication, November, 2011). At the end of a legislative session, bipartisan groups came together allowing chartering to move forward and become a vehicle for needed change. Although this legislation made history, some would say that chartering was the beginning of the demise of U.S. public education (Ravitch, 2010).

Reasons charter schools started.

The concept of charter schools was part of an educational reform movement that began over the last half of the 20th century. Ignited by several significant public education proceedings, most notably in 1954 with *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the desegregation laws that followed, charter schools were a response to changes in demand and philosophy. This shift in how Americans looked at public education prompted fundamental change, as conversations about rights and access became as important as discussions about curriculum and achievement. At about the same time, global competition brought to the forefront new methodology, heightened criticism of the status quo, and conversations about assessment and standards (Coleman, 1981; Ravitch, 2010). Not only was the U.S. wrestling with the idea that we were not able to adequately educate the nation's poor, especially African American children, but leaders also struggled with the realization that our top students could not compete in a global market (Coleman, 1981; Ravitch, 2010).

Fueled by the rising anti-establishment culture of the 1960s and by efforts to embrace diversity, educational leaders and parents began to open alternative schools across the country. In Minnesota, St. Paul Public Schools supported the creation of one of the first outcome based, experiential learning schools in the country. In 1971, alternative school leader Wayne Jennings and an active group of parents founded the St. Paul Open School, located in an old warehouse in an industrial area of the city. The school embraced the open classroom methodology and abandoned much of the traditional teacher-led model and curriculum. The successful use of mixed-aged classes, off campus learning, and thematic units rather than prescribed curriculum, brought interest and replication from school leaders around the world (Cuban, 2004). Known now as a pre-magnet school model, this idea aided racial integration by allowing students from all over the district to attend. Meanwhile, traditional district schools were using forced busing to racially integrate their schools. Throughout the United States, schools like St. Paul Open School were exposing students and families to alternative and experimental learning environments (Cuban, 2004).

Coons and Sugarman (1978) made three significant points about alternative school choice and the future of education policy in the following statement:

First, small-scale examples of family choice in education exist and can be observed; these "experiments" hint at the feasibility and promise of choice, but by no means tell us enough about the effects of broad experimentation. Second, outside of education, social intervention in children's lives seems increasingly to rely on the family as the decider; the overall trend threatens to make education policy an anachronism. Finally, we suggest that family as primary protector of children ought to be considered for broad support in every aspect of children's policy. (Coons & Sugarman, 1978, p. 212)

Coons began the discussion of the commoditization of public education that gained popularity in public scholarships or voucher programs. Vouchers were seen as "policies that would destroy the public school system" (Coleman, para. 1, 1981). School vouchers are a tax-funded transferable coupon given to parents valued at what the state would pay the nearby public school to educate their child. If the parent wishes, a voucher can be taken to a private school to cover or subsidize the cost of the tuition. When vouchers are implemented, private schools maintain the right to refuse a student admission. Proponents of public education feared that the private schools would admit only successful students, leaving the struggling students in the public schools (Coleman, 1981; Ravitch, 2010).

During the 1980s, conservatives were promoting school choice via school vouchers. The urgency to fix public education increased with the publication of the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, which called for change in "content, expectations, time, and teaching" (U.S. Department of Education). After an extensive five-year study of U.S. public high schools, school reform leader Sizer (2004) identified a feeling of powerlessness and despair that was growing within the teaching profession. Sizer's 1984 observations challenged the status quo and bureaucratic systems of the factory style high school. Sizer (2004) pointed out the unintended consequences of our public school systems and the ethical and behavioral impact they have on the students, teachers, and administrators. He identified an attitude of "good enough," or a school environment that is so large and bureaucratic that the needs of teachers and students cannot be met and a lack of caring dominates the culture. From his research it was concluded that the solution would be to decentralize school management (2004). Sizer's report, *Horace's Compromise,* was recently updated with a preface titled *Abigail's Compromise* (2004), which draws parallels between school conditions of 1984 and 2004. In 1984 Sizer founded a non-profit

school reform organization, *The Coalition of Essential Schools*, which supports hundreds of small, personalized schools within its network (Coalition of Essential Schools, 2012). Sizer's 1984 critique of the existing bureaucratic system fueled the conversations about emotional well being and helped break the paradigm of traditional public education.

In the 1980s, global competition put added pressure on education policy as national leaders looked for causes and solutions to low performing U.S. public schools. Bipartisan citizen groups convened to address the urgent needs of public education. More money spent on education was not producing promised outcomes, and a national competition began to form that resulted in a polarization of opinions and reactions that dominated public discourse.

In 1988 the Minnesota Citizens League published a report calling for charter schools to be implemented (Citizens League School Structure Committee). The coalition of support included leaders such as education activist Joe Nathan; Minnesota State Senator, Ember Reichgott Junge; Minnesota State Representative, Ken Nelson; and businessman, John Rollwagen of Cray Research. The report described the hierarchical and organizational structure of charter schools, and suggested outcomes of this new policy. The Citizens League approved the report in November of 1988 (Kolderie, 2008), and with this document as a base, Senator Reichgott Junge wrote the original charter school bill (E. Reichgott Junge, personal communication, November, 2011).

Almost simultaneously in 1988, Albert Shanker, the President of the American Federation of Teachers, addressed the National Press Club and cited an idea from a little known article by Ray Budde (1988) as a possible solution to the growing concern for public education (Kahlenberg, 2007). A professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Dr. Budde, introduced the idea of districts chartering schools to teachers to give them curricular and

management powers (Kahlenberg, 2007). Shanker acted on feedback from teachers who

reported feeling helpless and unable to make meaningful change in the large bureaucratic school

systems that dominated public education (Kahlenberg, 2007). Budde's (1996) idea of teacher-

led schools, supported by Shanker's interest and attention, added to the national conversation

about decentralized management. By giving decision making power back to the teachers,

Shanker believed that teachers would be able to make decisions that were relevant to their

students and their schools (Kahlenberg, 2007).

In 1989, Minnesota innovation continued with the opening of the Saturn School of

Tomorrow, another St. Paul Public School initiative. Dr. Tom King, a research and development

administrator in St. Paul Public Schools, was inspired by a speech that Shanker made in a 1986

visit to Minnesota. Shanker called for a complete overhaul of teaching and learning and equated

his idea to the then revolutionary Saturn automobile company's restructuring of General Motors

manufacturing (Bennett & King, 1991). Saturn School existed within the school district and

explored alternative leadership structures, experiential learning, and the use of computers in the

classroom. The leadership structure was created with a team of teacher leaders who worked with

a parent advisory team, much like a charter school board. Saturn operated autonomously from

the St. Paul Public School system and drew attention from education leaders all over the U.S.

When President George H. W. Bush visited Saturn School on May 22, 1991, he used his visit as

a podium for his reelection education goals (Bush Library, para. 4, 2012).

Reform groups worked together in bipartisan efforts to pass the charter legislation. Both

conservatives and liberals agreed, charters were a way to improve public education and offer

increased school options to families. Minnesota's innovative educational leaders Ted Kolderie;

Joe Nathan; Jon Schroeder: Democratic senator, Ember Reichgott Junge; and Republican

senator, Gen Olson all applauded this concept because it was a change in power from bureaucratic districts to teachers. The concept was discussed nationally by policy makers who worked to implement chartering in their own states (Reichgott Junge, 2012).

Teachers unions, once supporters of chartering (Kahlenberg, 2007), became concerned that charters would draw students out of the district schools. Teachers unions not only fought charters, but also threatened potential sponsors and authorizers. For example, "a university in Minnesota was told that if they backed charters the union would make sure that none of their teaching students would find work in the community" (Nathan, 1996, p. 108). In 1991 Minnesota's Republican Governor, Arne Carlson, and Democratic Senator, Ember Reichgott Junge, passed the first charter school law making Minnesota the first state in the country to offer legislation allowing the creation of charter schools (Reichgott Junge, 2012; J. Schroeder, personal communication, April, 2012).

A policy experiment.

In the early 1990s, different constituents saw different flaws in public education and chartering public schools was seen as a way to correct those flaws. Around the country, Republican leaders continued to push for vouchers (D. Durenberger, personal communication, April, 2012). Minnesota's U.S. Republican Senator, Dave Durenberger, and Connecticut U.S. Democratic Senator, Joseph Lieberman, worked together on federal legislation and charter school start-up funding. Lieberman and Durenberger were interested in revealing the hidden costs of district schools and saw chartering as a way for schools to have more control over spending (D. Durenberger, personal communication, April, 2012). Nationally, charters were adopted as "an acceptable alternative to vouchers" (Nathan, 1996, p. 116), keeping public money out of private education. Teachers were in favor of charters so that control of the management of

the school would be put into the hands of the teachers. Parents were in favor of charters because it allowed more opportunity for school choice (D. Durenberger, personal communication, April, 2012). Policy makers were in favor of chartering because they saw it as a bipartisan solution (Reichgott Junge, 2012).

Meanwhile in Washington D.C., Republican president, George H. W. Bush, and Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, surprised educational historian Diane Ravitch, a Democrat, with an invitation to serve as the Secretary in charge of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Ravitch took the position and served for two years, assisting with curriculum and standards. The Bush administration was committed to standards and choice, and Ravitch was interested in standards, and while in this position, learned to embrace choice during this rapidly evolving era (Ravitch, 2010). This was a time of bipartisan agreement about the need for school reform. Both parties were not always in agreement about how to improve schools, but the common goal kept them working together.

Kolderie (1990) discussed the experimentation of charter school policy when he looked at using charters to create new service and purchasing systems by withdrawing the exclusive franchise that public district schools created. District schools had exclusive rights over the students and the operations in their regional territory. Kolderie saw it as a two-step process, citing Minnesota's school choice policy as a first strategy that created a competitive market. For the second strategy, he urged states to create policies that allowed diversification and new public organizations as sponsors. Kolderie's perspective was one of the charter movement's founding documents (J. Nathan, personal communication, July, 2011) and helps us understand how charters were a shift in power that kept the conversations about reform going.

Loose laws.

Senator Ember Reichgott Junge (2012) reflecting on the 1991 legislative session and the passing of the bill states, "Chartering supporters…and I were deeply disappointed. All of us believed the compromises in the final bill would severely limit the creation of any new chartered schools at all." (p.162). After several attempts, Minnesota passed the first law in the country to allow the creation of charter public schools. Initially referred to in the law as "outcome-based schools," the driving force behind charter schools was the promise of educational accountability and improved student learning. Six loose objectives were included in the law: improved learning, innovative methods, the creation of new learning outcomes, measures, and accountability, and opportunities for teachers to be responsible for the learning as well as the operations of the school (Laws of Minnesota 1991, chapter 256, article 9, section 3).

In this new legislation, teachers were no longer under the jurisdiction of the union, and because charters created a new district, parents no longer needed to pay attention to district decisions; however, the commissioner held the authority to allow or deny a charter. In the subsections that followed, specific leadership experience at the school was not addressed. The law appears to have been written as a mechanism that would free school leaders from regulation and oversight, allowing each school to create its own unique structure while discarding the traditional management structure of public education.

The lack of charter school leadership legislation in Minnesota allowed creative implementation of alternative leadership models building on the decentralization conversation of the 1980s (Reichgott Junge, 2012). In 1993, Doug Thomas, who was working with Joe Nathan at the University of Minnesota, Center for School Change, founded an educational reform group of his own, EdVisions (Thomas, 2007). EdVisions worked with teachers and parents to start a teacher-led school in Henderson, Minnesota, a city 90 miles southwest of Minneapolis.

Minnesota New Country School is a charter public school described as a "flat management system or democratic management" (P. Menne, personal communication, May, 2012). Teachers make decisions as a staff, and the board has a teacher majority. For human resources and benefits, Thomas started EdVisions Cooperative, a teacher cooperative that now includes 15 charter schools across the state. The cooperative allows the smaller charter schools to have some of the health and life insurance benefits of a large district and also serves as a resource for technical assistance at the schools (A. Grimm, personal communication, February, 2012).

By 1999, new charter public schools and new ideas about curriculum and pedagogy began improving graduation rates and closing the achievement gap (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2008). Philanthropic organizations were beginning to support charter schools, and in 2000, The Gates Foundation gave EdVisions $4.3 millions dollars to replicate all across the country what they had done at Minnesota New Country School (Thomas, 2007). With those goals, Avalon School in St. Paul was granted a charter and opened in the fall of 2001. Avalon uses Minnesota New Country School's teacher-led democratic system and incorporates many of the same methodologies implemented at St. Paul Open and Saturn schools. In other parts of the country, charters began to develop in a variety of ways utilizing a wide array of leadership models (National Alliance for Charter Schools, 2008). In contrast to Avalon and New Country School, the very successful KIPP and YESPrep schools in Texas, and Noble Academy in Chicago, operate with a school principal top-down leadership model.

Since 1991, charter schools faced many obstacles and attacks as school leaders were required to take on responsibilities, such as business manager and human resources officer. While charter school leaders and parent and teacher member boards learned to maneuver lease negotiations and purchasing contracts, Charter Management Organizations (CMO) were created.

CMOs can be viewed as a threat to the small independent scale of most charter schools, while

others, especially those invested in CMOs, see their services as a way to support a need in the

market and claim that opponents of CMOs are opponents of charter schools (Chubb in Hill,

2006). Some critics mistakenly see management organizations as an indicator that all charter

schools are for profit and that charter commoditization has destroyed public education (Hill,

2010; Ravitch, 2010). Senator Reichgott Junge and national school reform leader, Joe Nathan,

suggest that teachers unions, once rallied by Shanker as supporters of charter schools, started

seeing charters as a threat to the union and public education (J. Nathan, personal communication,

July 2011; Reichgott Junge, 2012).

Closed schools.

The number of charter schools increased rapidly and, because of a lack of legislative

oversight, examples of financial mismanagement became known and publicized in the media. In

Minnesota, laws tightened and schools closed as unethical leadership was revealed. In some

instances, the reasons for closing were as obvious, as a director using school funds for personal

reasons, or as vague as perceived preferential treatment when relatives were hired over well-

qualified candidates or contractors (C. Lavorato, personal communication, June, 2008).

Minnesota policy makers revisited the law many times to update and revise the language.

The research shows that the original relaxed leadership policy has led to school closures, wasted

public money, and increased educational chaos for families (Minnesota Office of the Legislative

Auditor, 2008). After preliminary research of charter school closings in Minnesota and a review

of reports from across the country, financial management was the most common reason that

charter schools were closed (M. Brown, personal communication, June 9, 2008; Consoletti,

December, 2011). In Consoletti's (2011) national report published recently by The Center for

Education Reform, 41.7 percent of charter school closures resulted from financial difficulties. In

a 2008 interview with Minnesota Assistant Commissioner of Education Morgan Brown, he

explained that financial difficulties are one of six reasons that the state will close a school. In a

discussion about charter school closures, Brown stated that the biggest problems were "weak

board governance and financial mismanagement" (June 9, 2008).

According to data provided by the Minnesota Department of Education public records,

(S. Holker, personal communication, June 5, 2008) thirty Minnesota Charter schools closed

between 1991 and 2008. Of those thirty, twenty-one indicated financial difficulties and

irregularities as a reason for the closure. Specific examples include Dakota Charter closed in

1998, due to very low enrollment, which affected their budget and caused closure for "financial

and management problems" (M. Brown, personal communication, June 9, 2008). Also in 1998,

the Mexico Multicultural charter school was never able to open because the enrollment was too

low. Minnesota Business Academy took on excessive debt and closed in 2006 after struggling

for years to pay for a building it could not afford (M. Brown, personal communication, June 9,

2008; J. Nathan, personal communication, July, 2011).

School closings were serious because the education of students was disrupted, jobs were

lost, and tax dollars were wasted as education policy and reform learned to navigate a new path

(M. Brown, personal communication, June 9, 2008). The scandals and the lost public money

prompted public investigations, and in 2003 the Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor's

(MN OLA) report, *Charter School Financial Accountability,* suggested increasing the financial

accountability, especially in the start up and training stages of Minnesota charter schools. In MN

OLA's 2008 evaluation report, *Charter Schools*, two of the key recommendations were for

additional training for both the sponsors and for the charter school board as the polices continued to become more specific.

Minnesota's charter school law has been revised twenty-two times in the twenty-one years since its inception. The most recent revision was in 2012, with added language about board training, expanding initial contracts from three to five years, clarifications of financial reporting and eleven other charter school specific points (Laws of Minnesota 2012, chapter 239). Charter law continues to be interpreted differently by different groups, as the once experimental model is now in its twenty first year.

Nationally the conversation continues, and in many ways, the U.S has not come very far in creating and maintaining effective charter public schools. With the onset of the 2001 No Child Left Behind push for testing, teachers have become exhausted as their craft becomes a rote task. Students of color continue to perform worse than white students on standardized testing and in graduation rates, while "morale amongst teachers is at a 20 year low" (Met Life, 2012, p. 5). Meanwhile, legislators are looking for ways to cut education funding as the public tires of continued spending without results. Curriculum has become test-oriented, and discussions about experiential learning are overshadowed by discussions of four-day school weeks and test scores (B. Collins, 2012).

The conversation has grown to be controversial and polarized. For example, as the Obama administration supports charter schools with new federal charter school funding (The White House, para. 7, 2009), former assistant secretary of education, Diane Ravitch, reversed her stand on charters, arguing that the competition charter schools create is killing district schools (Ravitch, 2010).

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Topical Literature

In this section the theoretical framework is defined and relevant literature is examined. Creswell (2007) and Nash (2004) emphasize the reflective personal biography of the researcher. By examining assumptions, worldviews, biographies, and theoretical frameworks along with the data, the researcher provides greater meaning and application to the study (Creswell, 2007). Utilizing Creswell's theoretical lens format (2007), the theoretical framework for this study began with the good to great research of Collins (2001) and Hamm (2008) in the researcher's pilot study (Arbisi Little, 2008), where the similarities of small business and charter school stakeholders were identified.

Guided by grounded theory research methods, the researcher has "conducted the literature review after developing an independent analysis" (Charmaz, 2007, p. 6). The literature subsections: *To Nurture, To Organize,* and *To Lead* were created after the data were collected for this study. These subsections emphasize current research and literature relevant to emerging themes.

Public School Reform Personal Narrative

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, I lived in a unique community populated with an unusually high percentage of well-educated and open-minded professionals. The neighborhood was adjacent to a university campus and many of our neighbors were employed there as faculty and staff. My own mother, a slightly bohemian single parent, ran a gift shop on the main street where I spent most of my time growing up. Railroad tracks, highways, the university, and state fairgrounds geographically isolated our neighborhood, providing a strong sense of community that kept families involved and active in the nearby schools. Reflecting back, I see that our parents were concerned that educational opportunities in our schools lacked multiculturalism and

rigor, while we, the students, became impatient with growing class sizes and a dry, lecture-style curriculum. In 1967 a small percentage of students were bused into the neighborhood from across town because forced busing was implemented to integrate black and white children. I imagine that teachers were just beginning to embrace the cultural conflict related to the Draft, antiwar peace rallies, and other anti-establishment causes. It was a time of opportunity because people were asking difficult questions about education, forming grassroots organizations, and doing things to make their children's lives better. It was that opportunity and ability to act that inspired me and became a foundation of my personal analytical lens.

In the summer of 1971, I became one of the first 500 students enrolled in an experimental K-12 district school modeled after an international open school trend, a school without classrooms, where students chose what they wanted to learn and moved freely from one area to another (Cuban, 2004). In St. Paul, our Open School was the predecessor to magnet schools that brought students together from all over the city. Our school, and the magnets that followed, served as integration experiments with the goals of racial balance and innovative methodology. This experiment was also the beginning of site-based school leadership, outcome based instruction, and experiential learning. The same pioneering parents and teachers who came together to create and direct the Open School went on to become national leaders who helped form education policy in the 1980s and lay the groundwork for charter schools (J. Nathan, personal communications, July, 2011).

These life experiences created for me a theoretical framework and a lens for analysis. I learned at an impressionable stage in development that change is a constant and that leadership for the greater good was part of the citizenship expectations in my community. Grounded theory validates the ethical and political lens for analysis (Creswell, 2007).

Pilot Study and Emerging Themes

If a charter school is like a small independent business, then charter school leaders are like small business leaders. Therefore, the guiding purpose of this study is to discover if successful small business leadership techniques could positively benefit charter school leaders.

For this research, I looked at overlapping in the areas of leadership needs and the skills to meet those needs in small business and charter schools, and then revisited my pilot study. In that study, I interviewed several successful small business leaders to identify similarities that might transfer to charter school leadership. I asked small business leaders several questions, a few of which included: "How did your business become a success?" and "What did you do to make this so successful?" From those questions and my personal interest in how an idea moves from concept to successful implementation, themes began to appear around conceptualizing something new, fostering an opportunity, and developing a leadership style. In the following subsections, I group theoretical literature around the themes *To Nurture, To Organize*, and *To Lead,* to create a framework of understanding as I analyze the leadership of a small business and a charter school.

To Nurture.

When a leader starts something, such as a business or school, there is an internal motivation that pushes them past the obstacles that arise. Their ideas take on a life of their own and are nurtured and cared for, from idea to implementation. Moral theorist Nel Noddings' (1984) "ethic of care" can be used to define this drive as we explore the instinct to start something new, especially something that will contribute to our community and to the needs of others. Noddings (1984) has developed the theory of ethical caring as a way to describe why we care and ultimately act to support someone or something that we are not required to. Her belief is that inside of us is an impulse or internal motivation that makes us care. This drives a person

to do something, or act, rather than to stand by and watch. Noddings (1984) believes that a

person who possesses the moral ethic of caring is a person who acts out of care for others. She

describes it as a feeling that embraces the "I must" rather than the "I ought" (p.82). "I must"

evokes a drive or impulse that cannot be quieted, whereas "I ought" can be left for others to care

for. We see this in society when we examine those who tend to the needs of the homeless as

others walk past and say, "Someone ought to do something."

More recently, Noddings (2002) explores the idea of moral caring and describes the

consciousness of care as the instinctive passion in the creative artist or scientist when each feels

that something speaks to them. This inner drive to care, or to act, gets at the core of creating and

caring for something outside of oneself. Noddings (2002) acknowledges that care is often seen

as a feminine characteristic and argues that it transfers to both genders and all service oriented

careers. The moral caring or ethics of care is a theoretical framework that fits my premise

because at the core of education and small business is a service-oriented practice.

Hinds (2007) explores the phenomenon of taking an idea from inception to

implementation, going beyond the need to act to nurturing and caring about an idea until it

becomes a reality. Hinds (2007) researched ten urban leaders, including a charter school

director, and identified five key themes for successfully moving an idea to realization:

Theme 1: Implementing the Idea was the Realization of the Vision,

Theme 2: Engaging Others in Pursuit of the Vision,

Theme 3: Modifying Processes and Plans to Achieve the Vision,

Theme 4: Believing in Possibilities for the Vision,

Theme 5: Reflecting Positively on the Experience of Achieving the Vision.

Her findings and her organizational development approach suggest to leaders that success comes when leaders focus on the idea rather than the resources needed for implementation. Hinds' research explores the journey from concept to realization and applies to my case study research because starting a small business or charter school includes that same realization of a vision.

Hinds' (2007) second theme, Engaging Others in Pursuit of Vision, encapsulates the relationships between nurturing and organizing. She identifies a theme I discovered in my earlier work with successful business leaders, which is that successful leadership cannot be done alone. A successful small business or charter school is nurtured first by the visionary and then by the community (Hinds, 2007).

To Organize.

I use "To Organize" to define engagement with community. For a vision to flourish, the community must do more than support it. The needs of the community must be a part of the vision (Boyte, 2008). More complicated than the 1989 voice in the movie *Field of Dreams*, "If you build it, they will come," the community needs to feel an involvement that is commonly described as ownership. This ownership is cultivated through a democratic process of collaboration and community engagement (Boyte, 2008).

Boyte's (2008) approach to community and grass roots organizing defines the process of moving a new idea from concept to a purposeful part of a community. Boyte (2008) uses the term "Citizen Professional" to describe a person who uses collaboration and recognizes "that solving complex problems requires many sources and kinds of knowledge" (p. 144), an individual who organizes for community engagement. This is in contrast to the outside expert coming in and fixing what is wrong in the community. This method of collaborative community

work, widely known as a democratic process, is different when starting a business; a business is a non-public enterprise. A successful small business grows from a need in the community and is shaped by the community members (Freese, personal conversation, November 2010) in the same way that a successful school comes from a public need.

McKnight and Block (2010) suggest organizing communities around the idea of already presented attributes. They frame their argument around the idea that listening to needs, rather than coming in from the outside to fix or cure, is the ideal way to organize and ultimately lead a community. These leaders describe how using community "Listening Tables" (p. 101), can better shape public policy. For example, going into the community and hearing from the people, not just the spokesperson for the community, creates a space for successful planning. The primary focus of McKnight and Block's ideas pertain to social services. Their ideas apply to charter schools and small business because at the core of their work is the importance of listening to the needs of the community, rather than coming in and implementing something that is merely new, and not necessary.

The term "entrepreneur" elicits images of people who start businesses on their own, but small business experts claim that to achieve success there needs to be organized, thoughtful community engagement (R. Freese, personal communication, November, 2010; J. Lucke Hendrikson, personal communication, September, 2008; D. Schuster, personal communication, May, 2011; J. Sommers, personal communication, September, 2008). These small business leaders have observed and participated in neighborhood business associations that recognize the power of the collective and set aside self-interest. The organizations focus on a goal of community success, involvement, and sustainability for all of the businesses.

Social entrepreneur Bill Drayton, founder of the non-profit organization Ashoka, was highly influenced by the teachings of Gandhi as a young man. Drayton defines social entrepreneurship as, "individuals who combine the pragmatic and results-oriented methods of a business entrepreneur with the goals of a social reformer" (Hsu, para. 3, 2005). Ashoka supports social entrepreneurs around the world who are working in significant ways to better society. Drayton uses the fish metaphor for charity work and says that some want to "give a starving person a fish, and others will teach him or her to fish. A social entrepreneur will discover a new way to fish" (Goldberg, 2012). Ashoka fellows work in civic engineering, economic development, education, human rights, environment, and many other humanitarian fields to promote this cause.

In a video interview with Mark Goldberg from the U.N. Dispatch (2012), Drayton explains a technique for teaching empathy that one of the Ashoka fellows created. Drayton, who embraces nonviolence education, describes how an Ashoka fellow created an empathy curriculum that focuses on regular visits by very young babies to classrooms. The baby is referred to as "the professor" and inspires a dialog with the children about what the baby needs or is trying to express. Drayton states that "every child and adult needs to master empathy." Drayton is a transformational leader who believes that it is everyone's responsibility to do something that quietly changes the world (Goldberg, 2012).

To Lead.

The first charter school was created in 1991. Thus, since the development of charter schools are so recent, studies pertaining to charter school leadership are somewhat limited. Alternately, there is an abundance of literature regarding small business leadership that could be synthesized and recommended for charter school leadership considerations. Brown, Cornwall

(2000) and Macke (2003) used the term "entrepreneur" to describe the person who starts a charter school. A term traditionally reserved for discussions of starting a business, their use of entrepreneur in an education context strengthens the premise that small business leadership characteristics overlap those of charter school leaders.

Brown and Cornwall (2008) believe that "Entrepreneurship is a way of managing…what someone does, not what they are like" (p.8). They focus on the outside factors faced by school leaders and provide suggestions for leadership. Their book is filled with tools especially relevant to starting a new school and creating the plans for implementation, aiding in the realization of a vision. They describe a sequential process for identifying a new idea and moving it forward. Their perspective is similar to the focus of this research and serves as a resource manual filled with strategies for the educator who is working in an autonomous leadership role where he or she is the primary decision maker (Brown & Cornwall, 2008).

Macke (2003) draws on his experience as a businessman-turned-educator to define educational entrepreneurship. He uses a case method approach to examine individuals and non-profit organizations that are entrepreneurs in education. In his dissertation, Macke (2003) is transformed from a skeptic of alternative education to a proponent. He brings his business background and his interest in alternative education together and calls for more research of alternative education models. His research provides detailed case studies of entrepreneurial education leaders, and how they used the entrepreneurial spirit to create innovative change within public school systems. The individuals Macke includes are educational pioneers, community leaders, and school reform leaders. Macke (2003) presents a business to educator perspective, again supporting the entrepreneur similarities between small business and charter school leadership.

Focusing more specifically on charter schools, Hamm (2009) conducted a multiple case study in Ohio that examined the common characteristics and behaviors that are unique to charter school leadership. Her work is intended to help shape charter school leadership training and contribute to school reform and student achievement. Hamm's theoretical framework is based on House and Mitchell's "path-goal" theory (p.6). In this model, leaders serve as coaches, modifying their style based on the perceived needs of the constituents. Hamm (2009) believes that charter school leadership training needs further development to better prepare leaders for the unique demands of today's charter schools. Hamm (2009) notes that "the amount of effort and expertise to achieve success for inner-city charter schools would look much different than that of traditional leaders because of the unique challenges these charter school leaders face" (p. 148).

Hamm utilized the business to school leadership research of Gray and Streshly (2009) as she discovered seven themes for successful urban charter school leadership. These themes were not present in her comparison group and she suggests using these themes in charter school leadership selection. Hamm's recommendations include further research of charter schools, especially the inner workings of leadership in urban schools (Hamm, 2009).

Slade (2010) uses the term "Complexity Leadership" to describe the responsibilities of charter school leadership in her case study dissertation. Her research showed that "professional development, not organizational development," is needed to understand the complexities of the demands of charter school leadership (Slade, 2010, p.128). She recommends that communities and governments need to assist with the educational challenges in today's schools. She draws on transformational and transactional leadership theory to analyze her findings.

Nathan and Plotz (2008) created a report that highlighted the mentorship programs they developed for public school principals and directors at the University of Minnesota Center for

School Change (CSC). CSC has developed a unique mentorship program that partners an

education mentor and a business mentor with a school leader. School leaders find the demands

of school leadership to be much broader than the educational leadership resources they are

provided in traditional school leadership programs. Nathan and Plotz (2008) were seeking

support for alternative and charter school leaders and surveyed their mentors. Nathan and

Plotz's (2008) summary of interviews includes ideas from 24 business leaders about their work,

their successes and mistakes, what they have done to promote innovation, and what they believe

is important for educators to know about leadership. The Nathan and Plotz (2008) report is

similar in some ways to this research, but the subjects in Nathan and Plotz include large

corporations and are not purely from small independent businesses and charter schools. Nathan

and Plotz (2008) used an approach similar to the one in the bestselling book, *Good to Great*

(2001), by Jim Collins. Both Collins (2001) and Nathan and Plotz (2008) looked at the traits of

leaders in successful businesses and sought similarities and key lessons.

Collins (2001) identifies the sequence of good to great strategies that have become large

business best practice for successful leadership in the last decade. *Good to Great*'s Level Five

Leadership, the "First who…Then what" framework, aligns with the beliefs of small business

leadership (R. Freese, personal communication, November, 2010; Q. Huang and E. Skauradchun,

personal communication, August, 2008; J. Sommers, personal communication, September,

2008). Collin's (2001) Level Five Leadership begins with the team, and then follows through to

the work. Collins refers to establishing a successful team, as making sure you have the right

people "on the bus." Collins puts this into three simple truths:

> First, if you begin with the 'who,' rather than 'what,' you can more easily adapt to a
>
> changing world. If people join the bus primarily because of where it is going, what

happens if you get ten miles down the road and you need to change direction? …if

people are on the bus because of who else is on the bus, then it's much easier to change

direction. … Second, if you have the right people on the bus… they will be self-

motivated by the inner drive to produce the best results and to be part of creating

something great. Third, if you have the wrong people, it doesn't matter whether you

discover the right direction; you still won't have a great company. Great vision without

great people is irrelevant. (p.42).

He believes that a successful team is a group of people who work well together and cautions

against a team comprised merely of individuals that have a common goal (J. Collins, 2001).

A small business entrepreneur begins with a core ideology and builds from there. Collins

(2001) discovered greater success if you "instill core values (essential and enduring tenets) and

core purpose (fundamental reason for being beyond just making money) as principles to guide

decisions and inspire people throughout the organization over a long period of time" (p.198).

This core ideology keeps the momentum of the organization growing, and according to Collin's

research, this is what makes the difference between good and great. In a small business, the core

ideology permeates all aspects of the work of the organization (R. Freese, personal

communication, November, 2010; Q. Huang and E. Skauradchun, personal communication,

August, 2008; D. Schuster, personal communication, May, 2011; J. Sommers, personal

communication, September, 2008).

Summary

As the framework was constructed for this research, the researcher focused on the goal of

assisting charter school leaders to move their school from good to great (J. Collins, 2001; Hamm,

2008) utilizing small business leadership methodology and practice (R. Freese, personal

communication, November, 2010; Q. Huang and E. Skauradchun, personal communication,

August, 2008; D. Schuster, personal communication, May, 2011; J. Sommers, personal

communication, September, 2008). The themes to nurture, organize, and lead arose from the

initial grounded theory investigation and create a framework for continued analysis.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This research highlights data collected while the researcher was working in two distinct positions during 2010 and the beginning of 2011. The first position was as an executive assistant to the founder and chief executive officer of a small independent retail business. The second position was as an assistant to the principal in a charter public high school. The site selection was an offshoot of the fieldwork project findings from the earlier pilot study (Arbisi Little, 2008). The sites served as a research source to better understand the relationship between small business and charter school leadership.

Qualitative Case Study

This research is a qualitative case study comparison of a charter school and a small business. Creswell (2007) defines qualitative case study research as, "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) …over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information…and reports a case description and case-based themes" (p.73). This means that the researcher is submersed into the culture of the location that is being studied. Artifacts are gathered so that analysis can be made using as much information about the social environment and the internal culture as possible (Creswell, 2007).

Qualitative research suits this comparison because of the dissimilarity between the two cases. As such, each case's internal measures are not comparable. For example, comparing sales to attendance has no meaning. Qualitative research provides a framework to compare experiences and culture through the analysis of themes derived from artifacts and observation notes (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007).

As a participant-observer in the role as a researcher, an ethnographic narrative was created. Creswell (2007) defines ethnography as "the study of an intact culture or social group based on primary observations and a prolonged period of time spent by the researcher in the field" (p.242). This allowed the researcher to gather in-depth knowledge, share in the struggles, and rejoice in the successes alongside the people at the site. The researcher gained understanding of the unique culture and examined nuances of the system in which the school and business operated to be successful.

The study of success is phenomenological because success is a phenomenon. Creswell (2007) states that the purpose of a phenomenological study is to "reduce individual experiences within a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence" (p.58). This study has a phenomenological approach because it examined successful site-based leadership (in both small business and charter schools) for the case study comparison.

Case Study Sources

The selected business was the environment where the researcher spent her career as an assistant to the founder and chief executive officer. The charter school was selected because of the researcher's access to and experience working at the school. The small business and charter school were comparable organizations. Both were independent of an outside management agency. Both had leaders who were intricately involved in creating the philosophical and organizational structure during the founding years.

The subjects were based on the following three criteria:

1. Access as a participant-observer.

2. Successful history with a leader who participated in the founding years.

3. Location in Minnesota because it has a high percentage of independently run charter
   schools.

Charter school participation-observation.

The selection of the charter school was purposeful. The researcher was looking for a
charter school to use as a place to observe for dissertation research while getting pre-licensure
experience as an administrative intern or dean. Three school leaders were contacted and asked in
an email to respond if they were interested in a research and an internship arrangement (see
Appendix C).

The chosen school was located in one building that served approximately 325 students
from grades six to 12. As a college preparatory environment, the school is committed to
developing students into productive citizens. Per the research practicum agreement the
participation and observation of the leader occurred during the preopening in-service weeks and
the fall quarter of 2010, primarily in the high school, but observations included interactions with
the entire staff and all of the students each day.

Small business participation-observation.

This subsection is presented in a scholarly personal narrative following the format
suggested by Nash (2004).

My mother's business has been a part of my life since I was very young. I learned early
on that if I wanted to be with my mom, I would work at her store, and it was there, behind a sales
counter, where I learned most of what I know about people, life, and business. My mother
opened the shop just as my parent's marriage was deteriorating. My father had a hand in
bringing the idea to form, but it was my mother who saw it through and raised it from a little gift
shop to the five-site, 46-year-old, retail gift business that it is today.

As I approached this project, my pilot study steered me back home to her business. There was so much I had to gain from viewing my mother's business through this analytical lens. As the boss's daughter during my childhood, I filled several roles for the store. At different times, I was the director of operations, buyer, board member, director of marketing, and several other roles. This site-based leadership experience gave me an intuitive knowledge about the day-to-day organizational and relational responsibilities of charter school leadership during my fieldwork project.

Guiding Research Questions

To frame the ideas about the similarities between small business and charter school leadership and further explore the findings and thematic clusters from earlier research, the following research questions were created:

1. During the founding years, how did the vision become a reality?

2. In what ways did the community contribute to the eventual success?

3. What was the leadership style and characteristics that made the organization successful?

Common themes emerged from the small business and charter school that were used to answers the questions. The synthesized themes then develop key ways in which to strengthen the start-up process of charter schools, attract leaders who are well suited for the position, and ultimately strengthen the education of the students who attend.

Validity, Limitations and Generalizability

To check validity, a peer review process was organized to confirm coding techniques. The peers were doctoral colleagues, who were presented with the coding methods used for the analysis. The doctoral peers approved the coding because they aligned with the standards of the

program and noted the coding work as "thorough" and "exhaustive" (S. Bertrand & J. Foote-Witte, personal communications, April, 2012).

I acknowledge the limitations that my position as a lifetime member of the small business community creates. It could be argued that I am too close to the culture to be able to clearly analyze it. I believe that my gradual separation from the company, beginning in 1990 when I became increasingly involved in education, provides me with the necessary perspective for this research. In addition, I also acknowledge that the charter school laws and conditions that I address in this research are specific to Minnesota charter schools.

In order to generalize, I conducted extensive interviews with community leaders, some that are documented in the pilot study, *Field Work Report: The Small Business of Charter Schools* (2008) (see Appendices A & B), and others who were interviewed for this project (Appendix E). Building on my professional relationships with small business and charter school leaders, I solicited via email four volunteers, two business leaders and two charter school leaders, to serve as readers (Appendix D). The solicitation to leaders was sent to two groups of about 20 leaders, totaling 40 leaders. In addition, I interviewed six community and education leaders for historical information, reactions to my study, and their ideas about school leadership and reform. According to a program evaluation macro formula, with a population of 46 and a sample size of 10, the confidence level is 99% with an error rate of 5%.

Analysis

Yin (2009) has written extensively about case study analysis and descriptions from his work are used to describe my method of analyzing and reporting. This case study comparison was designed with a technique that Yin describes as "relying on theoretical propositions" (p. 130); using the proposition that charter school leadership is similar to small business leadership.

The analytical technique is what Yin describes as "pattern matching" (p. 136). Pattern matching compares an empirically based pattern with a predicted one. Simply stated, I used what I know about small business leadership to analyze charter school leadership.

The reporting format is a cross case analysis, organized by issue in a semi-structured sequence. Yin (2009) describes this as "writing where each section is devoted to a separate cross-case issue" (p. 172). Yin offers structured or unstructured sequence as two approaches. For purposes of this study, a hybrid semi-structured reporting format is used. Although it is true that each of subsections can stand alone, as in Yin's (2009) unstructured sequence, I believe they are strengthened by the order in which they are presented. A structured sequence is dependent on the order that the sections are presented.

For triangulation, multiple sources of evidence in a convergence format were used. Triangulation increases validity because it provides multiple measures of the same phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) describes convergence as "multiple sources of data" (p. 117) used to support observations. Convergence was used for this study with a combination of various artifacts, formal and informal interviews, and direct observations for data sources.

Ethics and Confidentiality

My involvement as a participant-observer was a privilege. I followed The University of St. Thomas' Institutional Review Board guidelines using pseudonyms and confidentiality agreements with care. My intention was to observe leadership practice and have the opportunity to reflect on its impact. The charter school community provided a space for that.

My participation at the charter school was at will and a relationship that could have been terminated at any time. Other than the obligations I have as a mandatory reporter in the State of Minnesota, because of my teaching and administrator's license, all conversations, access to

confidential files and reports, and personal conversations were held in strict confidence. No

confidential documents left the school at any time and all notes will be shredded one year after

completion of this research.

The data presented deal primarily with observations that pertain to positive issues. I

deliberately left negative issues out of this document for two distinct reasons. The small

business is a family business and it is common knowledge that families and family businesses

often have drama and discord. I chose to leave those conversations out because they are a non-

issue for this research. The school allowed me to enter as a participant-observer. Certainly there

were issues that could have been handled differently and perhaps better, but because of my short

appointment (five months), I felt that paying attention to those issues in this writing would be

disrespectful and possibly damaging to the culture of the school.

Summary

This research sought to examine and compare the leadership similarities between a small

business and a charter school. I used the theoretical framework of Collins (2001) and Hamm

(2008), findings from the pilot study, emerging themes (nurture, organize, lead), and my personal

experience as an analytical guide. The ethnographic notes, journal entries, artifacts, and

reflections collected during the research experiences provided the data in a scholarly personal

narrative (Nash, 2001).

Chapter Four: Data and Analysis

The following quote exemplifies the similarities between the leadership demands in the two environments in this study: "You know, it's really difficult to lead when all I do is manage" (Charter school leader, personal communication, September, 2010). During the research experience at the school, a journal, notes, and artifacts were collected and organized. The notes include interviews with the school director and the small business owner. This chapter contains significant data from those notes which describe the environment and highlight the observed themes. The chapter is organized into four sections. The first, "Two Worlds, Two Leaders" provides a brief introduction to the small business and charter school involved, and their leaders. The second and longest section is a cross case analysis in a narrative vignette format. The collection of vignettes was created from research notes and informal conversations during the study. The third section is an analysis of interviews with the two leaders, and the fourth is a summary of peer reactions and ideas about the future of school leadership and reform.

The vignettes are grouped by theme and titled, "Connecting Themes." The analytical techniques are described as "pattern matching" (Yin, 2009, p. 136). Pattern matching compares an empirically based pattern with a predicted one. The researcher used what she observed about small business leadership to analyze charter school leadership. The reporting format of the vignettes is a cross-case analysis organized by issue in a semi-structured sequence. Each of the subsections can stand alone in an unstructured sequence, but are strengthened by the order in which they are presented. They are not presented in calendar or sequential order. They were taken directly from the journals and regrouped by theme and serve as narrative evidence (Nash, 2007). Not all of the themes are clearly matched from one environment to the other and should

be viewed as pieces of a puzzle, rather than links in a chain. With these vignettes, an

environment is built for the reader to understand and explore the themes.

Two Worlds, Two Leaders

The small business leader and her business.

Beth, now in her seventies, founded her business in 1966. A talented visual artist, Beth

majored in Studio Arts. The business began with one location and now has five locations, with

approximately 80 full and part-time employees. The business is a gift shop and has the

distinction of being the first lifestyle store in the Midwest. The business mission statement is,

"Our mission at The Curio Shops is to provide excellent customer service, a respectful working

environment, and a distinctive collection of gifts and clothing" (2010, Curio employee manual).

The Curio Shops is a destination store. This means that people say, "Let's go to The

Curio" more often than just stopping by because they are walking past the door. This is

primarily because of the unique and often one-of-a-kind merchandise that the stores have carried

over the years. In addition, the stores are located in urban neighborhood retail centers rather than

shopping malls.

The stores are located in four distinctive neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. The

corporate offices are in a former duplex on a major neighborhood street near the largest store.

The web-sales and shipping and receiving facilities are located in the duplex. Beth now works at

the offices but she and her leadership team travel to each of the stores on a regular basis.

The charter school leader and her school.

Rose is in her sixties and has led the school since it opened in 1999. She has a Bachelor

of Arts degree in Elementary Education, and a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

The school began as a middle school and expanded to include a high school in 2006. Rose was

recruited by the founding board in 1999 and in 2006 led the opening of the high school under a

separate charter. Due to facility limitations in its early years, the high school was founded as a

separate school and maintains separate governance and accounting. In day-to-day

implementation, both operate as one school and are now housed in the same building in an urban

neighborhood in St. Paul.

> The following are the school mission statements:

> Our mission for Middle School is to develop productive citizens through a focus on

> academic rigor, leadership development and character building in partnerships with

> families and the community. College Academy is committed to enhancing the capacity

> of adolescents to develop their ability to lead in an ever-changing world.

And,

> Our mission for High School is to develop productive citizens through a focus on

> academic rigor and building character through partnerships with families and the

> community. College Academy High School is committed to enhancing the capacity of

> young adults to develop their ability to lead in an ever-changing world through

> academics, leadership development, and character building. (College Academy

> Handbook, 2010)

The mission statements are posted in the school, included in manuals, and are available for

review on the school website.

> The schools are two of the first college preparatory charter schools in the state. They

draw their 325 students from neighborhoods in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and surrounding suburbs.

The two schools are located in a traditional school building that was previously a catholic school.

College Academy (CA) uses a traditional direct instruction format in a highly structured

environment that requires both students and staff wear uniforms. Teachers lead the classes, and students are seated in desks that are in rows.

Although the school and the business are quite different, both are independent from larger managing agencies and the leaders, Beth and Rose, enjoy a great deal of autonomy with decision-making and leadership. Both women work with a leadership team, but they are at the center of the vision and they have the last word with major decisions.

Connecting Themes

This section is a collection of vignettes written from journal entries, reflective notes, and two emails to Beth in a scholarly personal narrative form (Nash, 2001). The vignettes are reflections of research experiences while working at both The Curio and College Academy charter school organized into three subsections by themes: Community, Vision, and Daily Work. The three themes are closely related to each other and share key ideas about working with staff and building a strong leadership team.

The first vignette provides a historical background about Beth's business and her theory about the secret to her success. In the story it is revealed that community and a leader's interaction with it builds important relationships. *The secret to her success* is a subsection of the theme *Community*, and shares a variety of ways in which community plays an important role in the success of both the business and the school. The next subsection of vignettes, *Vision,* describes the world of the leaders. On the surface, these stories about Vision illustrate the differences between a small business and a charter school. With deeper analysis the leaders' passion for their work is revealed. The last and largest section titled *Daily Work*, addresses the thoughtful and hard work behind exceptional leadership.

      Community.

The secret to her success.

My mother started her tiny Curio Shop in 1966. Newly divorced with three young children, she knew she needed to find work to support her young family. She and my father were artists, bohemians of the 1950s who embraced design, art history, and crafts. She had always wanted to open an art gallery, but knew that she would not be able to make enough money selling art, so she decided to open a gift shop.

In those days women could not take out a loan at a bank without a man cosigning, so my newly retired grandfather agreed to cosign on a $10,000 loan so that my mother could get started. He had confidence in her vision and although not a small businessman himself, both of his parents came from entrepreneurial families. His mother had owned a hat shop in Chicago and his father's family ran a small department store in Rockford, Illinois. My father was also from a family of small business owners, and although their marriage was ending, he supported my mother's idea and helped in the initial stages.

She used her artistic eye, a belief in herself, and money from the bank loan to find unique and beautiful gift items to fill the store. She displayed them with her own personal style and the neighborhood loved it. The store was a success and paid the bills as she raised my two brothers and me.

By the mid-80s, the business was thriving, and a team of us helped her open a second location. It was an immediate success, and her growing reputation as a business leader helped me realize that she had something special. People would ask her what the secret to her success was, and she would often say, "Luck!" People would press on for the real secret and eventually she noticed a formula that she then used to open up two more locations.

She determined that it was the neighborhood and the neighboring businesses. The first

store was located near a bakery, a restaurant, a bank and a drug store. She felt that the

neighborhood village or town center supported all of the businesses. The adage, "Location,

location, location," rang true with her theory of her store's success, but she knew it was more

than that. People loved the store and would make it a place to visit even if they moved out of the

neighborhood. She decorated the outside of the shop with lush flowerpots, tiny white decorative

lights, and made it an experience for the customers. Regular customers would often exclaim, "I

love this store!" and awards for "Best gift shop in town" began to hang on the walls in the

backroom.

The community embraced the business and she embraced the community. The loyal

customers often became loyal employees. The relationships and trust she fostered in the

communities where her stores were located earned her awards and recognition in the growing

small business community. Today, she freely gives credit to her customers, staff, and the

neighborhoods where the stores are located for the success of her business.

First impressions at the school.

College Academy (CA) opened in 1999 by founding leaders who sought a college

preparatory charter public middle school in their urban community. After receiving the charter

from the state and acquiring a building that was once a parochial school, they recruited and hired

Rose as the director and principal. Rose led the implementation of an academically rigorous

leadership and character building curriculum that soon earned the school high statewide scores

and national recognition. Seven years later Rose led the founding and creation of College

Academy High School. The high school was a continuum of the college preparatory curriculum

offering Advanced Placement courses, off campus Post Secondary Enrollment Options, while embracing community leadership learning opportunities.

Rose implemented a variety of successful and innovative techniques to involve parents in the learning of the students. Utilizing a covenant contract, every new student and their parents promised to follow the rules in the handbook, including strict uniform guidelines and homework expectations. The covenant requires parents to serve as a volunteer for a minimum of 50 hours per year and to attend parent teacher conferences and all parent meetings. These tools kept parents and students actively engaged in the mission of the school.

The first day I met Rose was also my first time at the school. I knew very little about the background, community, and location. On July 15, 2010, I drove up the long hill that approached the school and saw a beautiful church at the top. The church was adjacent to a former parochial school, now the charter school where I hoped to work and do my research. Many charter schools rent their school buildings from the archdiocese because the previously very popular catholic school system in our city has seen a sharp decline in enrollment over the last twenty years. When a charter rents the building, this is a benefit to the church by offsetting costs with the rental income. District schools own their own buildings and are able to draw on levies to fund their building expenses. Charters receive lease aid from the state to try to offset the cost of rent.

As I parked my car I saw a flowerpot carefully planted with fresh flowers welcoming me at the door. I walked over to the entrance and noticed that there was no playground and that the building and entry were quite humble. The front door was locked so I pressed a doorbell. While I waited for a response I heard pigeons cooing from the top of the church. Suddenly a woman's

voice came across the speaker: "Hello?" I introduced myself, and the click of the door unlocking

signaled me to enter.

I walked in and was in a stairway. A door was open directly in front of me, and a woman

seated at the desk said, "Hello." I told her I was there to meet with the director, and she gestured

to come in and sit down. It was the middle of summer and the heat was rising outside. In the

little office, a loud air-conditioner was churning in the window, almost chugging, as it worked at

what sounded like full blast to cool the surrounding area. I sat down and waited.

The woman at the desk was friendly and smiled. I asked her about her role and she told

me she was a teacher who also worked in a variety of ways to support the director. She went on

to say that in the summer she answered phones and assisted with new student registrations. A

few moments later Rose walked in and introduced herself.

She escorted me down the hall to her office. As I entered the room I imagined how the

space was used before it was Rose's office and what it may have been designed for. It was not

the traditional principal's office, but it was spacious and had a window looking out to the parking

lot and church. She gestured for me to sit down at the table near the windows and we began

chatting. We quickly connected life stories and values; she worked in retail many years ago.

After teaching for a while, she was a buyer at Dayton's, an iconic department store in Minnesota.

After that she returned to education as a school principal and worked for several years in a

suburban school district.

She told me she needed an assistant principal but that there was no funding to cover the

salary. She said that last year they had an assistant principal and because of budgets and a

decline in enrollment, she needed to let him go. She justified the decision by telling me that she

felt strongly that when budget cuts need to be made, they should be done in areas that do not

directly impact instruction, as in the assistant principal position, rather than to things that do impact instruction, such as teachers and instructional supplies.

This made sense to me, and I thought about decisions we made at the store that were focused on the sales floor and the customer rather than making the backroom more efficient or the staff more comfortable. I liked her pragmatic thinking, and I liked that I had skills to offer her that were needed. We began talking about a schedule and when I would start as an administrative intern, researcher, and participant observer.

As I walked out the door and looked again at the parking lot and the church, I recalled how important the community was to my mother's shop, and I wondered how the community interacted with the school and where the students lived who attended. As I drove back down the hill I saw children playing in front yards and wondered if they were CA students or if most of the students came from other neighborhoods.

In-service days and the open house.

I arrived at the parking lot and had a sense of excitement and ownership. How would I help support the school and what would the students and teachers be like? I entered the building and threw myself into my new responsibilities.

The first days flew by filled with new faces and new but familiar experiences. I was struck by the familiarity of an Open House event. It was as though I was using all the same skills that I used as a store manager but now as an assistant to the principal. It was a hot night at the end of August just days before school started, the night that students came to meet their teachers and get their schedules. Teachers were excited to meet the new parents and students, while welcoming back returning families. The classrooms were freshened up and the floors were

shined. Everyone was ready to start a new year. My job was to stand by the office, welcome families and help them find their classrooms.

I was excited by the work. It reminded me of the years I spent standing at the front door of the store, greeting customers. Only this time it was slightly different: "Can I help you?" "Hello" and "Welcome to College Academy." Parents would stop and ask me who I was and I would share my story. They nodded and affirmed that I would have a good internship under Rose's direction. As a researcher I began to inquire about what brought the families here and what brought them back. As I chatted casually with the parents, they explained.

"My child was lost at her previous school. There were so many kids…I don't think the teachers knew what was going on" (Parent 1, personal communication, August, 2010).

"Her older brother got into so much trouble there. When it was time to find a high school, we knew we needed to find something different for her" (Parent 2, personal communication, August, 2010).

"My friend told me about CA (College Academy) and after my child visited, we switched schools" (Parent 3, personal communication, August, 2010).

Each story was a little different but the theme was that they were not happy where they were, and they seemed happy now. That satisfaction interested me. As a newcomer I had already seen the charisma of the leader, and now that I was beginning to work alongside the team of teachers, I saw talent and enthusiasm for kids and for learning. Tonight I was seeing the commitment of the families, much like the loyal customers at my mother's shop.

As the hours passed and the heat of the late summer day continued to seep into the building, the volume of the voices seemed to rise. Parents were looking for various permission and enrollment forms, kids were lingering as the teachers and parents discussed how the summer

had been and if there was anything new. I directed people to classrooms, uniform pick up rooms, and restrooms. Children darted past me, and then it clicked. There was water flowing out of the boy's restroom. I had just seen a boy run out of the restroom and another laughing, but until I saw the water, I had not realized what was happening. I went into the boy's restroom and there was what appeared to be a small fountain gushing out of a urinal and the entire floor was covered in an inch or more of water. Other than Rose and the teachers, there was no one to call for help. The custodians only worked a morning shift, so I knew I would have to take care of it.

I could see that the flush mechanism was broken and paper towels were thrown into the drain. It looked intentional but at that point it did not matter. I needed to get the water turned off. I located Rose and she showed me where the water main was. A teacher started helping and climbed into the crawl space where the water main was located and turned it off. What was left was the cleanup. We only found one mop and the water was spreading fast.   People began slipping and we started using brooms to push the water towards a drain. I wondered which one of the boys darting in and out of the men's room had done this. I saw so many new faces that night I could not picture who it might have been. I helped find fans and extension cords as others continued to clean up the floor. Rose looked up and chuckled, "Well, you really got an administrative experience tonight."

Indeed I did. I was using flexibility, community relations, commitment to mission, and the ability to work with a team. In one evening, I supported the teachers while surveying the parents. Only as I left for the evening, thankful that no one was hurt falling in the puddle, did I realize that it was Rose's faith in me that kept me going past the fatigue of the long, hot day. I began to see the community that Rose fostered at College Academy.

Greeting at the door.

I knew that standing at the front door greeting parents and students was an important morning ritual for a school leader. The tone for the day is set as the student steps into the school in the morning. During my time at College Academy I supported Rose with this responsibility by standing either with her at the door, covering for her when she could not be there, or by standing at the car drop door while she stood at the bus door.

Most of the students arrived through the bus doors. There were six buses that would pull up on the south side of the building and come to a stop with the air brakes screeching. The bus doors would spring open and the students would spill out. As they exited, they would either come purposefully up the stairs or they would wait a moment for a friend to get off so that they could continue a conversation from the bus. I could hear only random words and phrases from the conversations as the students came up the steps toward the school, the volume of their voices increasing as they approached me until the students surrounded and passed me in the doorway.

During the first weeks of school, I stood with Rose at the door and followed her lead. We greeted each student by name as they went by us. When Rose was not there, it was not always possible to greet them by name because I was still learning who they were, but a warm smile and a "hello" or "how are you," seemed to make the student's first step into the school a welcomed step and they would look up and smile back or greet me.

Likewise, when I stood at the car drop door I welcomed students as they arrived, but I also had the chance to greet the parents. It was always interesting to me to see all of the different ways that the kids said good-bye to their parents and the parents to their kids. The letting go was telling. From my own experience as a mother I know that an adolescent's morning can sometimes be filled with emotion. As I waved at and welcomed students, it felt as though the

parent handed over and entrusted me with their child. I wondered who the customer was. Is it

the parent or the child? Or is it society as we work to educate a generation?

The experience of learning about the neighborhood around College Academy and the

students who walked through the doors reminded me of the relationships with the customers in

the community around the stores. The tone of the experience, much like the day at school or the

browsing on the sales floor, was set by the first interactions as they stepped in the door. A

mutually dependent relationship was created and fostered between the person inside and the

person stepping in the door. Often if my mother was not on the sales floor, customers would ask

for her and extend a greeting to be relayed. After regularly greeting students and parents at

College Academy, parents began to thank me for being there, and I became a part of their

community.

Loyal employees.

As the boss' daughter, I sometimes took for granted the skill and wisdom that my mother

used as she created the Curio environment and the team of talented and loyal employees that

support her work. Beth built meaningful relationships with her staff and cared about the things

that were important to them. In turn they respected and cared about her. Over the years she has

shared with me hundreds of stories about the lives of her staff. Recently she received these two

notes from former customers who are now employees. The notes reflect the devotion and

admiration they have for her.

The first quote is from a long time customer turned employee who was recently promoted

to a leadership position:

I first heard about the Curio when I started working at Children's Home Society as an

adoption social worker. Very quickly I learned that the social workers liked to go to the

Curio over the lunch hour for some "retail therapy"! It was always such a relaxing place

to shop and a nice change of pace from our schedules. As my husband and I (and baby)

had moved to St. Paul from Wisconsin, we were renting an apartment on Parkway and

Chatsworth until we bought a house. While we lived there, the Parkway store opened

and I would put my son (now almost 26 and 6' 4") in the stroller and walk down the street

to the Curio (he called it the "Coo coo"). I was excited about being able to shop at lunch

at work and again after I got home (although my husband was not very excited about that

opportunity)! …

        …I started as a seasonal staff stocking ornaments and fortunately a part-time

position was soon open. It was wonderful to be able to work evenings and weekends

when my husband was home so I could be at home with my boys during the day when

they were little.

        Over the years, I have been able to do many different things at the Curio: display,

Christmas gift, ornaments, stationery, SA and now, manager. I have really enjoyed the

chance to develop skills I might not have in another job. I have made many wonderful

friends there and I love the way I have been able to weave work and family and life

together.

        I want to thank you for your generosity over the years: the birthday flowers, gift

cards, elegant Christmas parties. I know that you also give back so much to our

community--more than most people know. I especially want to thank you for the

opportunity to be the Parkway manager. Your encouragement and faith in me has meant

a great deal.

        You definitely have been a pioneer in retail and as a businesswoman in the Twin

Cities…(Store manager, personal communication, February, 2012).

A second note from another longtime customer and now sales associate:

Thank you for acting on a dream and creating the Curio on Central…and then another

Curio…..and then another Curio….and then another Curio! What a wonderful and

necessary contribution you have given the neighborhoods in which the shops are

located…

…Thank you, also, for being a wonderful mentor, employer, and model of grace

and caring to all your staff. Throughout the good and not so good times, you have

provided a beautiful place for people to work. You have also been generous with

anniversary and holiday gifts and that means so much to people. The value is far greater

than monetary. It shows the staff you value them.

On a personal note, my husband and I lived in student housing for several years. I

remember the Curio was a destination of joy and support. I would walk into the shop and

this lady named Beth would greet me with a smile (even though I had a little one in

hand!) and visit and invite me to look around. ……probably knowing I would usually

leave with just a card or maybe only having just enjoyed the visit. Just think, I am

probably only one of many, many young, poor, lonely Moms you gave emotional support

to.

I am grateful, Beth, that we have shared some time and space in this life and have

walked together on life's path. Blessings today and always!" (Sales associate, personal

communication, February, 2012).

Beth attributes much of her success to her "amazing staff," her team (personal communication,

November, 2010). She models what she expects from them by being genuinely interested in her

customers, the young artists and families in the neighborhood. From the letters above and my observations throughout the years, I learned the importance of personal relationships with employees. By being genuinely interested in the staff, she fostered a sense of loyalty that strengthened the team and in turn the business.

Successfully assembling the right staff can sometimes be challenging in a district school where tenure and seniority hinder needed changes. In Minnesota, charter schools are free from union restrictions and are able to make leadership and team building decisions with a great deal of flexibility and discretion. Rose carefully built a staff that supports the vision of the school and works as a team under her leadership.

The school office.

In late August, the front office of the school was like a retail sales counter at Christmas time. Everyone worked as a team to prepare for the first day of school as they welcomed a flow of parents and students. Each family had an important need, whether it was to enroll, change a class, or ask about a uniform that was ordered and had not arrived. Each need was handled before anything else got done.

Joyce, the administrative assistant, was warm, calm, focused, and extremely knowledgeable. If she could not answer the question, she knew exactly who could. Sometimes Joyce had to step away from her desk or tend to another urgent need and she asked me to fill in. The phone would ring and someone would be delivering something while a student was standing there asking for help. I felt like an octopus with many hats. We called this "thinking on your feet" when I worked at the shop. It was exhausting and energizing all at once, and I found it very satisfying to help the families and students with a need or a question. The connections to the needs of the community were always present and were the over arching purpose of Joyce's work.

The office was directly across from the main entrance of the building, and Joyce's desk faced the door. If she was not at the desk, she was either close by or someone in her charge was watching the desk and the phone. We hated to have calls go to voicemail because often times it was a parent. The parents were either tending to the needs of their enrolled child, or they were calling to learn more about the school in hopes to enroll.

The office team ran things smoothly and everyone knew what to do. In the same ways that Beth's staff would be focusing on the customer, the office staff focused on the families. The days were long and we worked through breaks as we helped families and students settle into the first days of school. In both environments, I observed staff being heard and valued through leadership, and I believe that it strengthened the team's loyalty. The experience of helping someone and the helped person's expression of gratitude seemed to build a team momentum and solidarity. Beth and Rose fostered this by working alongside the team, acknowledging the rewards and the struggles.

Vision.

Unique to retail: Going to market.

Many years ago we shopped at The International Gift Show, an international wholesale market at The Jacob Javits Center in New York City. The Javits Center is immense, and the gift show filled the exhibit space. Beth, a colleague, and I would cover the 650,000 square feet (12 football fields!) of display booths over a three to four day period a couple of times a year in search of new and interesting items for the store. People came from all over the world to shop and sell at this show. Even though attending was very expensive, Beth knew it was an investment worth making. For all of us, the show was an amazing array of merchandise. From Faberge eggs, to Japanese handmade papers, there was something for everyone. It was Beth's

keen eye that was able to sift through everything to find the right items for our customers. My

coworker and I were along to help scout out new items, but it was Beth who made the final

decisions.

As her reputation grew, people would stop us at the show and introduce themselves to

her. Sales representatives from other parts of the country or crafts people whom she bought from

when they were just starting out would stop to say hello. Conversations were quick and focused,

"Did you see the new items in the row over there?" or "Have you found this yet?"

One day that I will always remember was when we placed a large order of carefully

selected items with a wholesaler and then went on to other booths and more shopping. Later on

we needed to return to the booth where we placed the large order to ask a question. The sales

representative was very flustered and excited all at once. Her associate saw that we had returned

to the booth and came over to us immediately. They told us that after we left the booth another

buyer from another business asked them to duplicate our order because they wanted everything

that Beth had selected. We were shocked! Her reputation for knowing what would sell had

grown far wider than I had ever imagined. In reflection, I see that she was carrying out her

vision and setting trends in the marketplace. This came naturally for her, and in her mind, all she

was doing was selecting items that she knew would please her customers, because she wanted

the best for them.

Unique to education: Saturday school.

During my research at the school, Rose frequently turned to me and shared her disbelief

with the lack of parent support she sometimes got. For example, in October, eight high school

students were told that they needed to be at Saturday School, a kind of detention offered at

school on Saturdays throughout the year. Students earn the detention by being late to school or

class, missing assignments, or failing to dress in full uniform. Each infraction carries a specified length of time required at Saturday School. The maximum is three hours.

Of the eight students who were notified about the October Saturday School, five arrived. Of the three who did not, Rose knew why one was not coming. After 30 minutes, she called the two other households and left messages. When she returned to me, she said, "These parents want us to support the kids, but then they don't support us." I reflected on my own naiveté as a parent and concluded that we needed to improve parent education. Yet, in defense of Rose and the College Academy policies, the parents sign a covenant stating their understanding of policy and a promise to support the school in various ways, including Saturday School and other discipline measures. This policy communicated the vision of the school to the community and created a bond that kept them working together to educate the students.

Working nights and on Saturday was worth it to Rose, because this was when she made important connections with parents about how significant they were to their child's education. When she saw students take on the responsibility of education, coming into Saturday School on their own for example, that was even more rewarding because she knew they "got it" and gained the motivation necessary to be successful. Rose is a relentless advocate for educating her students. She wants the best for them, no matter what.

Daily work.

The back room.

During the early years, Beth would receive packages at the back door of the shop and carry or drag them onto the floor of the backroom to be unpacked. At that time Beth and a handful of employees did everything in the tiny backroom. It served as a break area with cookies and tea, a coat closet for the staff, a storage area, a gift-wrapping counter, and an office for Beth,

a sort of multipurpose room. Although the space was tight, investing in the needs of the customers was more important than Beth's need for a private office. Fortunately the ceilings were high so that items that were seldom used, such as old display racks and oversized boxes, could be stored on high shelves until they were needed. Every inch of the space had a particular use. Filing cabinets were filled with orders and catalogs were piled on top.

The shipments came from all over the world, and when we opened them, a fragrance seemed to float up from inside the box. Each item was carefully wrapped in newspaper from that country and as a child I would be almost as interested in the newspapers as I was the items. The newspaper pictures and print told a story about the people who had made the items and packed the boxes. The scent of the new products, mixed with the many fragrant soaps and candles on the shelves in the shop, made a kind of unique Curio perfume that customers would ask for. Sometimes the fragrance of a new shipment was so strong we would open the back door to get some air.

Gradually, we rented adjoining spaces and opened new stores so that the receiving areas and the break areas could be separate. Beth skillfully negotiated lease and rental agreements with the landlords so that the expansions would happen after the busy Christmas season. As the business grew, she needed more and more space to receive merchandise and store back stock. Finally, as the business continued to grow and professionalize, Beth got her own office.

In some ways, her office has not changed much. She still has piles of trade magazines and catalogs waiting to be reviewed and new items or samples in need of inspection. The office is a charming second floor room in the old duplex that is now the Curio offices. Below Beth's office are the shipping and receiving area, home to the support team and that same fragrance of old and new floats up the stairs when a new shipment arrives.

The first month at the school.

A month passed between reflections. Notes were random, jotted down, not the reflective rich data bits that I had hoped I would have time to create. The participant observer role swept me into the work of the school at many levels. I provided a confidential sounding board for Rose, the director. I supported Joyce, the administrative assistant, and I was a participating team member supporting the entire staff. In this role, they came to depend on me and I on them.

Running an inner city school is hard work. CA was constantly pushing against what felt like the wave of society pulling the kids under with a tidal force. It felt as though it was our responsibility to keep the students' heads above the water, teach them how to swim, and let them know that they can do it. It is the hope of the College Academy staff that these students will not only swim, but also be able to rise above the water and help others stay afloat as well.

Leading through the unknown.

When it was time to bring computers into the business my mother was very cautious. I was working as a part-time administrative assistant for the company, helping out in a variety of ways on an informal basis. Computers were something that she was unsure of, a feeling magnified by a strange phenomenon called the 2000 bug. We had one or two computers in the bookkeeping office, but she understood that those were for maintaining the books. She could not picture how computers would help customers and sales.

As a staff we needed to wait until my mother was ready to say, "Go ahead, buy the computers," before we could network the business so that we could communicate inventory and sales numbers throughout buildings and across sites. At that time we did not have leadership teams or departments. We simply came up with ideas, brought them to Beth and if she liked it she would say, "go for it," and if she did not, she would quietly let you know. Generally she

liked new ideas and was enthusiastic when something was brought to her that made sense to her.

Sometimes the staff would frame things just the right way in hopes that she would think of the

idea that someone already had. Privately we would wonder, "How do we get her to think of it?"

She really did not understand the full scope of using computers to help organize things,

but she knew progressive retailers were moving in that direction and she wanted to be one of

them. Her intuitive leadership style had developed almost organically. The idea of using

computers to support what she created was beyond her imagination. Those of us who could

grasp the possibilities of computers were very excited to get started and begin shopping for a

system that would do all of the things we imagined. Finding that system was one of the hardest

things we ever did at The Curio, even harder than teaching everyone to use the system that we

eventually decided on.

We had a rough start with computers; Beth did not understand the potential, and that

made it harder to move the idea forward. Suddenly, as if overnight, she decided to invest in

something she really did not understand. She asked a buyer and a bookkeeper to find a system

that would be right for our way of running a business. They needed to find something that could

enhance the well-established workflow fondly known from within the business as "the Curio

way." The Curio way was how we described the processes we used for receiving, presenting and

selling merchandise. Whether it was the placement of a price tag or the knot on a bow, we had a

certain way that things needed to be done, and that was the Curio way.

The project seemed to be out of control. The farther down the road the process got, the

more divided the bookkeeper and the buyer became in their approaches to the ideal solution.

Pressure to shorten the timeline created tension amongst the staff. The amount of time and

money it was requiring was growing exponentially, but nothing was actually happening. I tried

to understand the challenges and help move the project forward. At the heart of the project was

an outside consultant, Robert Marshall. Marshall was sharp, attractive, a great conversationalist,

and he had what appeared to be an endless knowledge of systems, computers, and resources. We

were in awe. In actuality, he knew very little. We later found, as my mother said, that he was a

modern day "flim-flam man."

In the end, Marshall took us for about $20,000. To break the contract, we needed to pay

him off and figure out where to go next. Beth trusted me to sort out the many layers of promises

he made to staff, budget the money to pay for and deploy the 50 computers he bought with our

credit card, and begin to use the computers as cash registers. My next step was to find the

program to run on the computers.

Systems solutions are unique to the leadership of the business or organization for which

they are created. Because the business had grown successfully for about 34 years without a

documented system, work needed to be done before a computer system could be implemented.

That realization was one of the hardest parts of this process because we had never stopped to

document and systematize what we were doing and why we were doing it that way. Robert

Marshall kept promising that he could do whatever the buyers and the sales staff wanted. He

promised he would have a system that would work for the bookkeeping department as well as the

shipping and receiving department. However, he never made deadlines, he just kept asking for

more money. Fortunately, Beth began to see him for what he was, but unfortunately we were

drowning in an organizational mess.

With Beth's confidence in us, and her faith that we would be able to work through the

challenges we faced, we pulled through the crisis and began to slowly and carefully create a

custom-designed system that we naively thought we could sell to recover the costs.

Beth's leadership was challenged because she did not understand the possibilities of the project. In actuality, none of us did.   The company had grown very large very fast and we were completely dependent on Beth's leadership. The system we ultimately designed is a piece of her vision. It encompasses what Beth feels is essential to a well-run retail organization. Yet, we all thought it would just be an upgrade to our old cash registers.

Finding a new customer.

When College Academy (CA) expanded and opened a high school, they found that their assumptions about enrollment were too high. The board and Rose based their projections on the overwhelming success of the middle school. But to their surprise, not all of the eighth graders wanted to stay at CA. They had all kinds of reasons, from not wanting to wear a uniform to wanting a larger high school with more athletic team options. The bottom line was that initially there just were not the students they had expected. The implication here is that leaders needed to be flexible and stay tuned to the needs of the clients or customers.

Rose told me that it really took some time for the school to change its thinking about recruiting, and it was difficult to staff classrooms and make budget adjustments to make ends meet. I saw that the high school attracted three different groups of students. The first was the kids who had been successful in the middle school who wanted to stay with the program. The second group was the students who needed a school that felt like a private school with small class sizes and low tolerance for behavior problems. The third was the group that had tried all the other public schools and for one reason or another they had not worked out.

One of my saddest memories was a morning meeting with a young man and his grandfather. Rose and I met with them to discuss possible enrollment even though many of our classes were full. We listened to their story of how the young man had not done well and was

expelled for a behavior issue. Then Rose shared that although we would like to help, the grade

that he would join was full to capacity. The young man seemed relieved but the grandfather was

truly disappointed and that made me sad, as I remembered searching for the right environment

for my son when he was having problems in school. Rose offered suggestions and asked the

grandfather to contact her if he needed any assistance. After they left, Rose and I quickly

debriefed. I questioned what I had witnessed and she told me that CA could not enroll everyone.

Rose had learned that crowding classrooms to please one student at the cost of space and

attention to other students was not a solution. She focused on the needs of all of her students as

she made tough decisions in her daily work.

An introduction to her leadership.

Rose invited me to a board retreat during the first month of my research. She wanted to

introduce me to the board and have me observe part of the daylong activities. They met in a

room at a nearby college campus. She asked me to arrive an hour or two after they started so I

felt a little awkward walking in and finding a seat. A facilitator led a mission and vision exercise

and I quickly noticed that the 10 or 12 members of the board participated in varying degrees. As

they contributed to the conversation, I learned bits and pieces about the hopes and dreams of the

board and the school. I watched Rose. She was definitely in her element. When she spoke,

everyone listened and watched. I later understood that her warmth and wit created a leadership

style that I would describe as charismatic.

In a small business, this charisma is often what brings the customer back. There is a

feeling of warmth and excitement when you meet with a charismatic business owner. Their

charm is captivating and feels contagious. The vision of their business is closely aligned with

who they are, and that charisma fosters the growth of the business as it extends into everything they do.

Leading leaders.

Rose whispered something important to me once. She told me that she had a bad experience with some of her teachers regarding how they were addressing problems with specific students. The students were middle-schoolers and the teachers were doing a lot of talking, but according to Rose, it was all negative remarks. She addressed this with her staff as a group, and she told me that afterwards some of them came to her and privately thanked her for asking the others to stop.

Specifically what was happening was that some of the teachers were talking about behaviors as if it was the child's fault that they acted poorly. Rose believes that all kids want to do the right thing and can learn. She believes that we, as educators, need to find ways to help them do what is right and learn what they need to know to be successful. Drawing the line was a recurring theme as I observed Rose. Rose explained things to her staff thoroughly, so they understood. She drew in observations from outside evidence, media coverage, and whatever else she could to help her employees understand the big picture. She provides clear examples of her expectations and supports her ideas with relevant and current research. As I reflect on Rose's technique, I see it is as more than drawing a line; it is drawing a line and taking a stand. From my experience, especially in education, I see that drawing that line actually allows for more creativity within the group because teams will then know the boundaries of their role. When they know exactly where the leader stands, and they are free to be creative in their own space.

Multi tasking, multi leading.

Rose was able to function at so many levels simultaneously while keeping the needs of the children at the front of her mind. Managing their needs as well as the needs of the board, parents, and staff was no small task.

During one staff meeting at the beginning of an in-service day, Rose opened by referring to the list of topics printed on the white board. Ten topics were listed in no particular order. They varied from conflict resolution to auditing. We began with the conflict resolution and Rose opened with, "Who is seeing what?" In earlier conversations, she shared with me that she cannot be everywhere and she depends on certain key staff members to fill her in on what's happening around the building. I listened as teachers reported what they noticed, and I recorded the reactions from Rose.

Rose opened with, "I've noticed more kids are informing us that something has gone down or is going to happen…." Seemingly thinking about a cause for the student unrest, she emphatically states, "This is about community." Rose listened to the teachers and responded with, "I don't think society helps." Comments like these told me that Rose has the ability to stay in a "big picture" mindset while tending to immediate needs. She thinks about the motivations behind behavior and choices. Her staff meetings were always well run and purposeful.

In contrast, at The Curio, we gathered as a full staff very rarely. This was especially true as our hours began to extend into evenings and Sundays, because someone always had to be on the sales floor to help the customers. Eventually, a daily morning meeting would start each day at the shops. At the morning meetings we reviewed the schedule, discussed products, and shared events in the neighborhood and our involvement. New items were presented and described with great detail and a sense of fantasy about who might select this as a gift and for what occasion it would be appropriate. Beth stood back at these meetings and allowed the staff to lead.

Sometimes she comments enthusiastically about an upcoming partnership, the origins of an item, or a new business around the corner.

Rose and Beth depend on their staff for support and for knowledge about problems or issues that they may not know about. This attention to little things balanced with a big picture mindset keeps the school and the shops focused on exceptional quality and how each tiny detail contributes to the experience for the students or the customers.

Lunch duty.

My favorite time with Rose was lunch duty. It was not that we had time for long, heart to heart conversation as much as it was a time to be with the kids, be together, and do an essential task. For me, that companionship; interacting with the entire school population in 90 minutes was special.

Lunch duty at CA was very structured. There were three lunch periods, two for the middle school students and one for the high school. When it was almost time for lunch, the office assistant Joyce would either hand her desk over to another staff person, set up a volunteer, or simply make sure her voice mail was on, quickly dash down to the lunchroom to turn on the computer that kept the lunch database, and sit at the table outside the kitchen where the lunch trays were filled by two kitchen staff. Joyce was the person who kept track of who paid for their lunch and who owed money.

Joyce pushing away from her desk was my cue to stand outside the office at the top of the steps to greet students or slow them down as they rushed down the stairs to the lunchroom. The high school boys, one or two in particular, would move as fast as they could without running. They wanted to be at the front of the line every day. I would attempt to greet each student as they went past me and they would acknowledge me in their unique ways. The last few students

were often the same kids just as the first students were predictable. One or two would walk ever

so slowly knowing that the line would be long and there was no reason to hurry.

Once everyone was at lunch, I went down to perform "lunch duty." Rose would join me

as much as possible. We would start by walking between tables and greeting the students. The

students would go into the kitchen, get their trays of food, and Joyce would record it in the

computer. Then they would find a table with their friends, or sometimes by themselves. They

were usually happy and chatty, and they rarely complained about the food but they often

complained about each other.

I would resolve the issue, or summon Rose to the table to clarify and we would work it

out. Rose had the last word about most everything at the school, and that seemed to be okay

with all of us. The kids depended on her for that authority. So much so that on days when she

was out of the building for the rest of the day, the staff and I would not always reveal that detail.

I admired her ability to keep things in order. At times she appeared to be too firm with some of

her decisions, but she needed to be firm to keep us moving forward. Her expectations were high,

and we all rose to meet them.

At the end of lunch, we would dismiss the tables one by one. The students had to make

sure that the tables were cleared off and the floor around the tables was clear of any food or

trash. The students were expected to sit quietly and wait for their turn to be dismissed. The

room, filled with about 100 students, would fall silent. She would point to a table and they

would rise and walk upstairs. The moment they left the lunchroom the sounds of their voices

would build and follow them up the stairs and back to class.

What made this time special to me was the way that Rose maintained and nurtured an

orderly lunch for the entire school. We would have brief check-ins on the side about the

behavior issue of the day or the ongoing challenges with a particular group of students. Occasionally she would ask my advice about a staff issue or a resource for a problem she had. I felt useful, respected and appreciated in my role as assistant principal.

Nothing seemed more important than making sure lunch went well, and as I honed my ability to oversee the group, Rose appreciatively would go to her office or to a classroom to tend to another need. For me, her letting go and giving me the control seemed to make it all worth it. Rose's ability to compassionately lead while multitasking on a variety of demands was evident in all aspects of her work. Her respect for the abilities of her team and her devotion to the vision of her work allowed all of us to work together to guide the students through their education.

Vignette summary.

The Daily Work vignettes at both College Academy and The Curio illustrate the responsibility, charisma, and vision of these leaders. Beth led us through the computer project with confidence that we would find a solution even after the loss of time and money invested in the consultant wore us down. Rose demonstrated courage and vision when she sought my advice about negative remarks amongst the staff. The charismatic aura that surrounded Rose when she walked through the lunchroom or addressed the board exemplified the respect and responsibility that comes with leadership. The strength and passion of these leaders focused on a vision of excellence that carried them through each day.

The vignette section helps define the two environments and provides a glimpse into some of the connections made while working at College Academy. The arrangement of the vignettes offers a sense of stepping from the small business mindset into the school leader role. The key ideas that came from the vignettes were about working with staff and building a strong leadership team. Preliminary findings coalesced around opportunity, passion, and awareness of

the relationships with stakeholder community, and from there themes emerged in the vignettes that were identified as *Community, Vision* and *Daily Work.*

The idea that during the first impressions are where the tone of the experience is set was apparent in the emails from Beth's staff, when they retold their first experiences as young mothers and when I described greeting students and parents at the door of the school. This, combined with Rose and Beth's charismatic qualities, has enhanced the attraction of the communities they serve. However, it is not just about following a charismatic leader, it is also about embracing a vision that moves the leader. Rose and Beth feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to create something highly valued by others that is also deeply meaningful to them.

Conversations With Leadership

Revisiting guiding research questions.

This research began with specific questions for the business and school leader:

1. During the founding years, how did the vision become a reality?

2. In what ways did the community contribute to the eventual success?

3. What was the leadership style and characteristics that made the organization successful?

Founding years.

There was no real training. I learned from my customers—I still do. Curio actually caught on practically as soon as it opened its doors. Our neighbors really appreciated what we were doing and spread the word. (Beth, personal conversation, November 2010)

Beth continues to describe how the stores grew physically,

Our concept was really quite unique at that point. We started really in one small room, people came, I mean we built it and people came, which was a wonderful thing…So we

started one room and then we went up, and up and over and it was wonderful…and then

we opened a store on Parkway Avenue at Oakland (changed for anonymity), and

fortunately in both of those stores we could grow in the space and so we would start

small and grow bigger. (Beth, personal conversation, November 2010)

Rose describes the opportunity to lead through the founding years as molding a ball of clay. In

this interview she describes what that ball of clay means to her,

They had the charter, they had a building, and they had students, but that was about it. So

when I talk about the ball of clay, it is about having a philosophy or beliefs or values as it

pertains to education and you actually get to begin to shape and to model that. And I just

don't know how many people in a lifetime has [sic] that ability to be able to mold and

shape because typically what we have are cases of mortar and cement and it's very

difficult to change things once they're into place unless we end up with some kind of

erosion or catastrophe. So, just to be able to build something, and see it grow and change

yearly, is just pretty cool. And then to think that in the high school, you know, to have

had that opportunity a second time to do it again. (Rose, personal conversation,

December 2010)

In both of these excerpts, the natural passion behind the leadership begins to present itself.

Beth describes how she expresses her leadership through the selection of items to sell.

She gave an example of Palestinian olive oil, "Yes we do [carry the Palestinian oil], we are very

proud to have that. I think we need to go beyond this. It is made in a co-op in Palestine, I feel

very strongly about issues" (Beth, personal conversation, November 2010). Over the years Beth

has carried items that reflect her political and humanitarian values. She was one of the first local

retailers to offer attractive, recycled, and "green" products at the store. In these ways her own

personal values and passions are reflected in her product selection.

I asked Rose why she was the right person to lead CA and she talked about her passion

for school leadership.

I don't know what they saw. I think I may have told you that I was part of an educational

symposium. So it's hard to know what they (the founding leaders) saw. I don't know. I

would like to think that they saw or heard passion about what I do and whatever it is I do,

I do it well. And I just think that's who I am. So, and if you are of that mindset that or

believe that through passion people perform extremely well, they get results, then, I think

probably it was a good leap on their behalf. And I've had people tell me how passionate

I am about what I do. So I'd like to think it was maybe the passion and with passion,

there's certain guarantees that are automatic. But they never told me what specifically

they were looking for. I don't know that it was like, well, you know, you have to build

something and create. (Rose, personal conversation, December 2010)

Both of these leaders had a vision that was fueled by a passion for making it a reality.

Their career paths were different; Beth started the business herself, and Rose was asked to step in

at the foundation of the school, as it was taking shape. Both leaders are in positions that have a

great deal of flexibility and autonomy, allowing them to create an environment that encompassed

their vision. Freedom, combined with passion, warmth, and charisma, attracted interest and

fostered positive relationships with their clients and staff.

Community.

When I asked about community, Beth was clear, and Rose was not so clear. With Beth it

seems more geographic and with Rose it is more about the market and who wants a college

preparatory education. As I compare the small business and the charter school and reflect on our

conversations, I observed that these leaders focused on relationships with their community a

great deal.

Beth talked about balancing the needs of her customer with the vision she has for her

company in the following scenario:

The name of my shop means, depending on the dictionary, 'small art object' or 'precious

gift.' We have redefined the word for our customers many times throughout the years."

Beth put it in a customer-focused perspective when she said, "The great merchandise and

talented staff interacting with appreciative customers is what it's all about. We owe our

very existence to the supportive communities we serve. It's all good! (Beth, personal

conversation, November 2010)

Rose defines her job as maintaining relationships,

Well I think relationships in terms of, I think of it as, a big picture in that we all have to

sort of work together. Because even this ball of clay it's not so much my contribution,

it's a contribution of students, it's a contribution of parents and teachers. So when we

talk about bringing form and design, we're all doing that and I think that is through

collaborating and working together and through that it does require relationships. And

even when we see the success of our kids I think it's a different kind of relationship,

where unless we see kids differently I don't know that we maximize what we can do for

them. Because I think it just goes back to some fundamental things, sort of Maslow ('s

hierarchy), in terms of needs. It's amazing sometimes how simple things are, we always

have to think they have to be complex and they really aren't, they're just very basic. And

I think with our middle school kids and high school kids part of that relationship is this

incredible need to have someone be kind, to ask "How's your day?" or "Gee, that's a nice

smile," or "What can I do for you?" or words of confidence. And that's nothing to do

with academics. It has to deal with being humane and wanting to make a difference.

(Rose, personal conversation, December 2010)

In the following scenario, Rose described to me how she was recruited and learned about

charter schools and then told me that she feels a connection between customer, community, and

student needs:

Well I was in district 345, so I…when did, '99, did this open? So it had to be in '99.

Never heard of charter schools prior to that and was first introduced as a result of

someone hearing me be a part of a panel. I knew nothing about charter schools. And

what sold me was the mission of the school and the flexibility to run it. Huge. I do think

you know some of my success here has also been my background in business. I think,

you know, dealing with people, and marketing and finances and all of that, a lot of skills

that could be applied, if nothing more than looking at things differently, because actually,

I see this as a business. This is our store. And our product is what these kids take with

them and the scholarships they get. So you know we lose families, we lose clients and

we have to sustain because you know it's like Audi or Toyota, you know, you get a faulty

car or whatever and people go out and badmouth about how terrible this school is, it does

a lot of damage. Huge amount of damage. (Rose, personal conversation, December

2010)

In the vignette I titled, "Greeting students," I wondered who the customer is in a school. In the

interview quote above, Rose says that the students are the product, and cautions about the

damage that unhappy families can cause.

Rose believes the needs of the kids are primary and cautions not to make changes too quickly when things are not working.

> All decisions should be driven by the needs of kids. I find far too often decisions made today kids aren't factored into the ratio at all. Second one is, is it in the best interest of all kids, not just special groups with their special agendas? And I think the other is, is it equally what we do, what we believe, and I think the other part is accountability. I think those are the huge parts for me, looking back and reflecting on is it working, is it not working, are we true to our mission, are we true to what we said we would do? I think sometimes when challenges present themselves it's pretty easy to drop that ball and we just do to survive versus this is what we said we'd do. Do we change midstream or do we just continue to work at it, tweak it? Because I don't know if we ever discover how successful we are, if we're just changing things constantly. At least fundamentally, what it is that we want to do, I understand modify and adjust, but too often people want to dismount totally. I just think it's hard to know whether programs and things work, or not, because we're too quick to throw them out. We're a disposable society. If it doesn't work, let's get rid of it. (Rose, personal conversation, December 2010)

When she cautions about change she becomes passionate and focused. This is an example of passion and vision playing out in her leadership.

Leading in both business and education.

Giving credit to their staff was a common theme throughout the interviews and the observation experiences with Beth and Rose. Yet I see that it was the leader who made the decisions about hiring and creating the leadership teams. So, when the leader gives credit to the

team, I am cognizant of the fact that she created and trained the teams to carry out the vision in a

unified and results oriented way. Rose explains,

> I sort of like our uniqueness and I really don't think it can be duplicated. You know a lot
>
> of times people talk about how there's grants available to duplicate, but you know I think
>
> what people fail to understand it's not so much the programs or the buildings, it's the
>
> people. And you know we've been at [it] ten years trying to get the right people. And
>
> that takes time and it takes an investment. So it's not so much about the programs it's
>
> about the people that make the programs and the opportunities they provide for kids.
>
> (Rose, personal conversation, December 2010)

Beth is no longer unpacking boxes and serving customers from behind the sales counter. She

sees her role as more of a coach, "Now the satisfaction comes in watching the talented Curio

staff in action, encouraging them always, seeing growth and knowing our customers'

appreciation" (Beth, personal conversation, November 2010).

> Rose used the phrase "Consistency management" to describe how she and her staff work

with students to give a unified message about expectations.

> When I asked Rose what makes her school so successful she continued to focus on her

staff.

> I think getting the right people and celebrating what we do right with these people and
>
> giving them the kind of support that they need to be their very best... So, if you think
>
> about, we're building something, we all have to make contributions, so we make these
>
> contributions and we help one another and we all come to a consensus as to the quality of
>
> it, but there's also the… (pause), and you're committed to it. And I think as you
>
> experience that and if you look at what you can accomplish, I think it's like a snowball

effect, that you think, "Wow, let's do more, let's do more." But I think also a part of it is

I'm driven. (Rose, personal conversation, December 2010)

Peer Review

To gain insight to transferability, I recruited two business and two school leaders for

feedback on the vignette and interview analysis presented above. I drew from two pools of

leaders. The first was a group of charter school leaders participating in a corporate funded

program in which I was affiliated. The business leaders were from a group who volunteered to

assist public school leaders as mentors for a school year through a program I helped manage at

The Center for School Change. I asked the two groups in separate emails (Appendix D) if any of

them were interested in reading and providing feedback to the vignettes and leader interview

analysis subsections of this chapter. I took the first two volunteers from each group and sent

them the subsections. I told them I first wanted them to read and give me their reactions. I also

told them that I would follow up with a question. For validity, I chose to give them the question

after their first reading so that the initial response would be original thought, rather than the

result of a search for a response to my question. After they contacted me and gave me their

initial feedback, I asked, "Where else can we look, listen and learn in business to do a better job

leading a school to become successful?"

Discussion of peer reactions.

My sample group of successful small business and charter school leaders have worked in

their respective fields for at least 10 years and have each led teams of over 20 people. One of the

business leaders currently runs a small manufacturing company and the other ran a small retail

service company. I noted that the manufacturing leader's response to and analysis of the

vignettes was significantly different than the two responses from school leaders and from the

retail leader. During the interviews and email communications about their reactions, I was often overwhelmed by my own divergent thinking, energized by the reader's support, and somewhat challenged by the questions they had. I began to see the immensity of issues that relate to school reform.

Similarities in reactions.

Three of the readers, two from schools and one from business, were very positive about the themes of passion and customer service. They noted the vignettes where I specifically discussed the threshold of the school and the greeting of students and family. One business and one school leader expressly pointed out the importance of passion. The two business leaders cautioned me about the dangers of the charisma that I describe, citing how this can be disruptive and erode the team dynamics. I acknowledge that charismatic leadership can be dangerous, but I also observed the more positive transformational leadership style. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that helps others to advance to a higher level or mastery. Examples of transformational leadership can be seen for Beth in the vignette that contains the notes from her staff and for Rose in her interest in providing me a practicum experience.

Differences in reactions.

One of the school leaders relayed the multi-dimensional aspects of charter school leadership. She noted that the charter school leader is constantly drawing on many experiences. She went on to point out how different her work is from leaders at large district schools that have the support of the finance and facilities departments. She reacted to my writing with, "It was like reading my life – It was amazing, I could see myself" (Charter school leader, personal communication, April, 2012).

The other school leader was very intrigued by how the reward structure of a business might be utilized in a school. She wondered if pay bonuses would be an incentive for teaching staff. I asked her about Q-Comp (National Center on Performance Incentives, 2010), and she replied that that Q-Comp is "not enough" (Charter school leader, personal communication, April, 2012). She went on to state that she wished that schools could have a probationary period similar to businesses and feels that businesses can move people out easier than schools.

One of the business leaders was very negative and felt that my themes were too generic. He challenged that some of the most successful learning institutions are successful not because of passion or the ability to listen to their stakeholders, but because of their clear vision. He was interested in the negatives around the two leaders, wanting to know about their struggles rather than their successes. I explained to him that I intentionally left those examples out of this writing because it was important to not do any harm to my participants. Besides noting that the charismatic leader can have demoralizing effects on a community, he also stated that having the last word in decision-making is destructive. He criticized my identification of passion as a trait and summarized that he felt that the comparison was false "because at the end of the day the two leaders had two very different reasons for doing what they did" (Small business leader, personal communication, April, 2012). He believed that Rose worked as a director of a charter school because she is dedicated to her students, whereas Beth runs her store to make money. I understood what he meant, but both leaders were driven by a need to contribute to their community.

The other business leader was enthusiastic and was particularly drawn to my analytical themes. As we debriefed, he spent considerable time interpreting the themes and used them to reflect on his own career as a leader. He brought up the importance of high ethical standards in

successful leadership. This is something that I did not explore in the vignettes, but something that I did witness in both environments. The care and passion that Beth and Rose displayed was based on their "ethic of care" that I described in the *To Nurture* section in Chapter Two (Noddings, 2002). This business leader focused on customer service and the nuances of what that means. He stated that customer service does not always look the same in every situation because we all have different gifts that we use to communicate with customers and stakeholders. We discussed leading versus managing, and he explained to me that he feels "leadership is leading people, and management is working the organization" (Small business leader, personal communication, April, 2012).

The conversations were varied and extremely thought provoking. Although one leader responded negatively, he offered suggestions for possible further research. The process left me humbled by both the praise and the criticism of the research.

Community leader feedback.

During interviews with community leaders, I asked what the future holds in school leadership. In separate interviews with former Minnesota U.S. Senator, Dave Durenberger, and Jon Schroeder, Durenberger's former staffer now school reform leader, they both indicated that teachers are the school leaders of the future. Schroeder described this idea to me within the construct of doctors or lawyers. Professional teachers might get together, work in a partnership, and hire the support staff that is needed, similar to a law firm or doctor's office. The support staff is trained and skilled in the specific skills needed for operations, compliance, and reporting. In this model, leadership is a collective.

I mentioned this concept to Brad Blue (personal communication, May, 2012), Director at the Minnesota Guild of Charter Schools, the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers organization

that is authorizing charter schools in Minnesota. Blue agreed that big changes are happening and that he sees unions becoming involved in the staff development of charter school teachers. His vision for the future of schools is more charters, more site-based decision-making, and teacher leadership. He talked about the importance of getting the right people, "smart people who also have the soft skills" (Blue). He talked about looking at what works internationally and implementing it in Minnesota.

Blue (personal communication, May, 2012) also talked about the current structure that we as a society are promoting through standardized tests scores and direct instructional methods, and stated that these methods need to stop. He believes that creating what he called "white space" (Blue) for kids was essential. White space is the time of exploration. He wants to see learning shift so that listening to the teachers is only part of what the students' day involves. This idea would shift school leadership to a collaborative of teachers. Both Blue and Schroeder cited Avalon School in St. Paul as an exemplar. Schroeder because Avalon has a teacher-led democratic leadership model, and Blue because he sees it as one of the few schools in the community that is doing exactly what they say they are doing.

As teacher tenure and evaluation continued to be scrutinized throughout the country (Hawkins, 2012), a need for viewing teaching as a profession, not just a job, continues to build. This was the core message in my interview with Durenberger (personal communication, April, 2012) about the future of school leadership, he took me back to the original teacher. He spoke about the parent as the first and most important teacher. In our system of choice, he stated that it is the parents who have the power to choose what kind of education they want for their child depending on their values. He believes that the education system evolved because parents felt they were not qualified to be the teacher and sought a qualified expert to instruct their children.

Durenberger believes that the decisions about school reform and school leadership need to be made as close to the child and the community as possible. He would like to see the decisions about how schools are funded made by county commissioners because they know the culture and the needs of their community.

Durenberger's thoughts about communities making the decisions that affect the people who live there are reminiscent of the thinking of leaders in the *To Organize* vignette section above and supports the idea that by setting aside self interest and working for the collective will provide sustainability and benefit the community (R. Freese, personal communication, November, 2010; Goldberg, 2012; J. Lucke Hendrikson, personal communication, September, 2008; D. Schuster, personal communication, May 2011; J. Sommers, personal communication, September, 2008). Boyte (2008) claims that "worrisome trends become concrete and tangible when people organize to address them" (p. 50).

Summary

Data were collected for this study utilizing a variety of tools. Through participant observer data collection, initial themes emerged that confirmed the similarities between small business and charter school leadership. Small business and charter school leaders read and responded to the vignettes and interviews validating and adding to the data. Interviews with community leaders applied these concepts to school reform trends and future school leadership models. From there a new theme emerged, flexibility. Leaders in this study (see Appendix E) relayed life stories that embraced change in a flexible and open manner that reflected the ethical responsibilities of leadership.

Rose is quoted here in an afterthought during one of our interviews. She identifies the flexibility of a scout seeking what is best and the seriousness of her responsibility to her students.

You know… it's sort of frightening to think about the responsibility we have in educating kids today. I don't know how many people think about it, but it's sort of scary. Are they really going to be prepared? And you know, I always have that on my radar, and so part of my job is to be the little scout and to go out there and find out what's working, what isn't, what are the new ideas, what are the new opportunities and bring it back and then be a salesman, because that's what I need to do. And so, and yet, I think that's part of my personality where I don't like to be stagnant. I always have to see that there's progress. (Rose, personal conversation, December 2010)

Chapter Five: Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This research supports the idea that to be a successful site-based leader, people need to first have the passion and vision to bring the stakeholders together (J. Collins, 2001; Hamm, 2008; Hinds, 2007). Then, communication and relationship skills are necessary to move everyone in the same direction towards a shared vision (Hamm, 2008; Hinds, 2007). Lastly, people and strategies need to be constantly working and readjusting so that the movement does not go off course or get stagnate (B. Blue, personal communication, April, 2012; D. Durenberger, personal communication, April, 2012; J. Schroeder, personal communication, April, 2012). In this research, common leadership characteristics clustered around the themes of passion, community engagement, and teambuilding. Each theme is summarized below.

Findings

Theme 1: Passion.

These successful site-based leaders have a passion that permeates everything they do. They focus on the mission at all times with each decision they are making. This passion drives them to work long hours and stay flexible about unexpected demands on their time. The sacrifice of time, energy, and financial resources is irrelevant because the passion feeds an altruistic "ethic of care" (Noddings, 1983).

The observed passion was focused and flexible, allowing the ability to reassess while maintaining a consistent navigation (J. Collins, 2001; Hamm, 2008; Hinds, 2007). The passion created a following of stakeholders that saw the leader as a key to success. Leaders viewed their role as that of a caregiver, or a person who was nurturing a vision that helped others (Noddings, 2002).

Theme 2: Community engagement.

These successful site-based leaders listen to their community, customers, and clients. They use a variety of measures to learn about community and stakeholder feelings, but they stay tuned-in to the concerns and requests to guide them. In these site-based settings an unhappy stakeholder can influence many others around them if their needs are not addressed immediately. This need to be constantly involved with and monitoring the community is time consuming and often draws the leader away from the daily work of the organization, but it is essential. Effective site-based leaders balance internal and external demands.

The community involvement becomes a cost free marketing tool for the organization. The leader's involvement with community gatherings, or hosting events and inviting community members, engages the schools and businesses alike, with the potential for new families or new customers. The engagement allows for informal surveying of needs and helps the leader identify emerging trends or changes in the marketplace.

By being involved with the community, the leaders used techniques that McKnight and Block (2010) describe as "listening tables" and become "citizen professionals" (Boyte, 2008) as they contribute to the greater community and needs of their stakeholders.

Theme 3: Teambuilding.

These successful site-based leaders create a supportive team that work collectively to carry out their vision. Leaders use a variety of methods to engage and support their team, but the desired outcome is to create a team that clearly communicates the mission and vision of the school or small business to the stakeholders. The most successful methods involved working alongside the staff and allowing staff to take the lead with projects or meetings. Staff members who became leaders in this study exemplified Collins' (2001) theory about "having the right

people on the bus" (p.41). Leaders worked alongside staff to maintain and lead the culture

(Hamm, 2008) and transform team members into effective leaders of the organization.

Findings Compared to Theoretical Framework.

This research suggests that a combination of demonstrated passion, listening to the needs

of the community, and creating a supportive team are keys to successful site-based leadership.

The study began with the theoretical framework of Collins (2001), Nathan and Plotz (2008) and

Hamm (2008) as the research sought to identify common characteristics of successful small

business and charter school leaders. Collins (2001) created the Level Five leadership

characteristics of good to great leadership in business. Nathan and Plotz (2008) and Hamm

(2008) studied them further by applying them to school leadership. In Hamm's (2008) research,

she found that Collins' (2001) Level Five leadership characteristics were present in the

successful charter school leaders in her study but she also noted they possessed the ability to

work in an environment of poverty.

Leaders in this study possessed the Level Five leadership characteristics (J. Collins,

2001) but also exhibited resilience to trends and change. This resilience was identified as a

leadership characteristic by Hinds (2007) when she asserts that leaders need to focus on their

capacity for flexibility, tenacity, resourcefulness, and commitment.

Recommendations

Small business mentors for charter school leaders.

This research demonstrates that the site-based and autonomous leadership requirements

of a small business leader are closely aligned to that of a charter school leader. For that reason,

this research recommends small business leaders as a resource to charter school leaders. Ideally

these mentors would be members of the geographic community surrounding the charter school.

This proximity would enhance the relationship of community stakeholders with the school while providing the school leader with the insight and support needed.

Charter school authorizers could foster these kinds of relationships to ensure a good match and monitor them with periodic check-ins or meetings to ensure conversations are taking place that foster effective leadership, perhaps utilizing a list of suggested discussion topics or shadowing experiences. Not all leaders find mentoring relationships helpful, and sometimes they are not a good fit. A recommendation would be to make new leaders aware of the various mentoring and networking opportunities that are available. These vary in different communities. An area chamber of commerce would be a good starting resource for businesses that are interested in working with schools.

In areas where a mentoring network is not already established, community leaders could start them as part of a professional development network. Establishing a network of small business mentors for charter or district school leaders can satisfy multiple needs for both mentor and mentee by expanding resources, service, and community involvement opportunities. These types of partnerships that offer something as basic as a referral to a local expert or as broad as involvement with a community event strengthens the work of both organizations.

Policy changes to charter school leadership requirements.

Policy leaders interested in promoting small business and charter school relationships could revise charter school policy to require inclusion of small business leaders on charter school boards. By bringing small business leaders to board leadership, not only would the nuances of site-based management be a valuable resource to the school, but opportunities for community partnerships would be increased.

Additional legislation could be considered to require specific training for charter school leaders. As stated in the historical section of this study, Minnesota law does not require specific leadership training for charter school directors (Laws of Minnesota 2011, section, 124D.10). This research suggests reevaluation of that policy to ensure appropriate site-based leadership preparation. Comparing the leadership of a small business to that of a charter school illuminates similarities and characteristics that can be used as a foundation for charter school leadership development.

Alternative ideas for school leadership.

Community leaders (Appendix E) suggested looking to teachers as the school leaders and hiring a support staff for operational and clerical duties, in the same way that a group of doctors or lawyers run an office with support staff. In this model the leaders are a group of professionals that are highly skilled in teaching and curriculum and the support staff attend to facilities and record keeping.

Community leader response to questions about the future of school reform relayed a variety of leadership styles and hierarchical structures. The process of examining the different structures emulates the creative thinking of Duchamp and Lincoln (1989) and revealed some of the unique and varied constructs of current educational leadership models. This research affirms previous studies that reveal successful leadership is not defined by the systems and structure; it is created with the right people and strong relationships (Boyte, 2008; J. Collins, 2001; Hamm, 2008; Hinds, 2007; McKnight & Block, 2010).

Recommendations for further research.

Leadership characteristics.

Building on the similarities and differences between non-profit and charter school leadership in the areas of community relations, financial reporting, and board relations, this study could be extended by including specific non-profit organizations for comparison. Alternative comparative case sites would further explore the unique leadership characteristics and requirements of particular relevance to a charter school leaders' success. Extending this variation further, a comparison of the leadership characteristics of charter school leaders entering the field via previous training for and experience in other professions might be informative. Comparison between the professional backgrounds of successful charter school leaders and how their prior professional training affects and informs their leadership style could help in the evaluation of a candidates' suitability for the charter leader role as well as reveal predictors of success.

A comparative study of teacher-led and principal-led schools could further explore the success, strengths and weaknesses of leadership in these two organizational models. Comparing either Avalon or New Country School as a teacher-led model and a traditional principal-led charter school as the comparison, observations at major decision making meetings, possibly during in-service weeks, would inform academies and authorizers about the merits and shortcomings of these different hierarchal systems.

A study focused on replication leadership would provide helpful insight to charter school leaders contemplating expansion. A study that included pre and post interviews with leadership at a variety of expanding site-based organizations would help to guide school boards and leaders through the expansion of successful programs, and possibly help prevent expansion failures caused by faulty leadership planning.

Researching and identifying leadership techniques that enhance resiliency and flexibility would be a valuable contribution to the training of future leaders. Catastrophic change leadership can be valuable to a business or a school when economic or environmental misfortunes occur. Examples include following site-based leaders through a tornado clean up or the accidental death of a key stakeholder, to the experience of a sharp attendance or enrollment drop and economic depressions.

Researching successful continuing as well as failed programs after a charismatic founding leader's retirement would provide insight to the preplanning and management strategies required for successful leadership transition. A study that first identifies leadership style, and then follows leaders through the preannouncement, announcement, and separation would provide important guideposts for boards and avoid leadership floundering and missteps. The strategies could be organized around common leadership styles, identifying areas of concern or strength for charismatic, transformational, transactional, and other leadership characteristics.

Role of staff.

A companion study to this research could be done directly comparing the roles of members in the staff of a charter school to those of the staff in a small business. Along this same line, a study explicitly comparing leadership boards of small businesses to charter school boards would also be of interest. Examining multiple perspectives in observation of successful site-based leadership would provide an expanded view and potentially uncover secondary themes and new findings.

Founding leaders need to carefully identify and groom protégés as possible successors as they contemplate and plan for retirement. In many cases, these relationships do not flourish. In the extreme, a former key employee might start up a rival organization in the same market.

Competition from a former protégé can be an unplanned challenge to a site-based leader, especially if the leader has developed a unique concept or model. A study that investigates motivating factors that could encourage former staff to become rivals within the same market would help transition and expansion planning for charter school leaders and authorizers.

Broader and longitudinal.

A survey tool could expand this research by approaching hundreds of school and businesses leaders identified through professional organizations and social media. Providing an option to participate in a follow-up phone interview would create a focus pool for the researcher. This survey tool could be used to expand and test the findings of this research or to act on the recommendations for further research described above.

Periodically revisiting The Curio and College Academy for follow up investigations would enhance this research further. Likewise, interviews with former students from the various settings highlighted in the Historical Background section of this report would provide a large pool of information regarding site-based school leadership and the longitudinal effects of participation in alternative education.

Conclusion

This research examined the site-based leadership of a small business and a charter school to explore the application of small business leadership techniques to a charter school environment. Analysis of evidence collected from interviews and participant observer experiences produced three findings that apply to charter school leadership selection and training. The findings cannot be generalized and applied to all small businesses and charter schools, but illuminate an alternative approach. In this study, the research confirmed that small

business leadership informs charter school leadership because of the similarities present in site-based, decision-making environments.

Community leaders provided a school reform perspective that identified conditions which led to policy changes in school leadership. Interviews with community leaders elicited suggestions for change and ideas about future trends in school leadership structure. That perspective is a guide for education policy makers, school board members, and leadership trainers.

Charter schools were implemented to serve many purposes by addressing the needs of diverse constituents. As we consider the future of school leadership we remember that it is our responsibility as a community to create and support schools that foster the skills needed to become productive citizens. The leaders in this study serve as our beacon.

Epilogue

Rose retired this summer from College Academy and looks forward to spending more time in Chicago with her daughter and grandchildren. In 2011, she assisted the College Academy leadership team as they hired and trained a Director of Operations. This spring she assisted with the orientation of the new Director prior to her retirement.

Beth now works part time at The Curio. Although she is actively involved in the day-to-day needs of the business, she no longer draws a salary. Her transition has gradually shifted the most challenging needs of the business to her key staff members. Beth continues to build relationships with local artists and crafts people as she leads the selection of new and unique items for her stores.

The researcher is now working as a start-up school board member in partnership with a regional chamber of commerce to develop charter schools that focus on vocational and career readiness skills. She lives with her husband, a small business owner, and their teenaged daughter. During this research and her university studies, she received her state K-12 principal license and gained experience in nonprofit leadership. Through her activities she promotes school choice, social justice, and experiential learning. With the completion of this research she will be continuing to pursue work as a consultant, develop nonprofit organizations to support small business and charter school networking opportunities, school choice information to parents, and perform longitudinal studies to gain information about the effects of alternative education on learners.

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Appendices

Appendix A: 2008 Pilot Study Interviewee Information

Education.

Morgan Brown, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education

Lois Cuff, Freedom Area District Administrator, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Judith James, Education Consultant, Diversity Works

Cindy Jackson, School Choice Ombudsman, Minnesota Department of Education

Cindy Lavorato, Associate Professor and Program Director, Public Policy and Leadership,

Department of Leadership, Policy and Administration, University of St. Thomas

Joe Nathan, Director, Center for School Change

Eugene Piccolo, Executive Director, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools

Kathleen Shea, Director of Program Evaluation and Audit, Metropolitan Council

Small Business.

Roxana Freese, Owner, The Bibelot Shops, Inc

Qing Haung and Eric Skauradchun, Owners, Sunny Sky Asian Antiques and Gifts

Jaimee Lucke Hendrikson, Program Director, Grand Avenue Business Association

Clinton Little, Owner, Clintron X Corporation

David Schuster, Owner, The Lost And Found, Whittier Neighborhood Alliance Board Member

Jeff Sommers, Owner, Izzy's Ice Cream Cafe, Metro Independent Business Association,

Secretary of the Board of Directors

Appendix B: 2008 Pilot Study Literature (electronic sources updated 2012)

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Appendix C: Email, Looking for an Experience

Dear XXXX,

I am writing to ask you to create an experience for me.

As a part of my K-12 licensure program I spent most of the last school year at East Metro Integrated District (EMID) as an Administrative Intern. I led a new Saturday program for 4th and 5th graders in the ten EMID member districts. The program was a STEM program in partnership with the Science Museum of Minnesota. It was a great experience and it allowed me to work in EMID's two schools as an Administrative Intern during the week.

I will complete my licensure requirements in December. I am writing because I would like charter school experience at the high school level with: standardized testing, behavior interventions, special ed support, or logistical tasks such as busing and scheduling. Do you have an administrator who oversees those responsibilities that would be interested in taking on a part time intern for part or all of the fall semester?

I am particularly interested in working at XXXXXXXXXXX because of your excellent reputation in our community. I have heard great things about XXXXXXXXXX from many of your parents and my professors at St. Thomas. My compensation would be the experience.

I have attached my curriculum vitae for your review and two letters of recommendation that speak to my skills and competency.
Please let me know if this would be a possibility.

With kind regards,

Joan Little

Appendix D: Email, Looking for Readers

To Business Leaders:

Dear XXXXX Colleague,

I am writing to share some exciting news and give you my new contact information.

After a year at Macalester and The Center for School Change, I have decided to resign and finish my dissertation. This was not an easy decision, but because everyone has been so supportive, I know it is right.

My research focuses on the leadership similarities between small business and charter schools. I will need two small business leaders to read and react to one of the chapters in my dissertation. If you are interested in supporting me in this way, please write back and let me know. My Macalester email will soon become inactive. Please contact me at XXXXX

I look forward to the next time our paths cross.
Thank you for your kindness and support,
Joan

To Charter School Leaders:

Dear XXXX Colleague,

I am writing to share some exciting news and give you new XXXX contact information.

After a year at Macalester and The Center for School Change, I have decided to move on and finish my dissertation and doctorate. This was not an easy decision, but because everyone has been so supportive I know it is the right decision. I feel grateful on many levels. My research area is small business and charter school leadership. I may reach out to you in the next few weeks for a peer review engagement. I need two charter school leaders to read and react to one of the chapters in my dissertation. If you are interested in supporting me in that way, please write back and let me know. My Macalester email will stay active for a few weeks. After that, please contact me at XXXXX

New XXXX contact information:
(edited for confidentiality)

It has been a pleasure supporting and learning about your work. I look forward to the next time our paths cross.
Thank you for your kindness and support,
Joan

Appendix E: Interviewee Information

Carrie Bakken, Lead teacher, Avalon School

Brad Blue, Director, The Minnesota Guild of Charter Schools

Morgan Brown, Former Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education; Director
      of School Improvement, Charter School Partners

Dave Durenberger, Former U.S. Senator from Minnesota; National Institute of Health Policy

Roxana Freese, Owner, The Bibelot Shops

Aaron Grimm, Member of the Board of Directors, EdVisons Cooperative

Qing Haung and Eric Skauradchun, Owners, Sunny Sky Asian Antiques and Gifts

Jaimee Lucke Hendrikson, Former Program Director, Grand Avenue Business Association

Phillip Jemilita, Chief Financial Officer, Scanlan International

Ted Kolderie, Senior Associate, Education Evolving

Cindy Lavorato, Attorney, Booth & Lavorato, LLC

Ashley Leary, Academic Coordinator / Master, Partnership Academy

Paul Menne, Chief Financial Officer, EdVisions

Joe Nathan, Director, Center for School Change

Ethel Lee Norwood, Former Principal and Director, Friendship Academy of Fine Arts

Dan Parker, Former owner, White Way Cleaners

Ember Reichgott Junge, Former Minnesota State Senator

David Schuster, Owner, The Lost And Found; Former Whittier Neighborhood Alliance Board
      Member

Jon Schroeder, Senior Associate, Education Evolving

Kathleen Shea, Director of Program Evaluation and Audit, Metropolitan Council of the Twin

 Cities

Jeff Sommers, Owner, Izzy's Ice Cream Café; Former Secretary of the Board of Directors, Metro

 Independent Business Association,

Liz Wynne, Former Principal and Director, Twin Cities Academy and Twin Cities Academy

 High School

Appendix F: Internal Review Board Sample Consent Form

Consent Form
University of St. Thomas

Connecting small business and charter schools: Leadership in a changing world
<u>IRB#: # B10-233-02</u>

I am conducting a study about the leadership connections between a charter school and a small business. You were selected as a participant because you are in a leadership position at the school where I would like to do my research. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Joan Arbisi Little

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to identify leadership and management similarities between a charter school and a small business in an effort to support the ongoing improvement of public charter school education and leadership training.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
*   Allow me to observe you while you are working in your school.
*   Agree to a one-hour interview and an opportunity for follow up questions.
*   Access to manuals and meeting notes.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has no risk or benefit to the subject. If you would like, a copy of the interview transcript will be available to the interviewee within one month of the conclusion of the study.

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation for your participation. Your school will receive an in-kind gift of volunteer time during the research to provide me with participant-observer perspective.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any sort of report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or your school in any way.   The types of records I will create include **a** digital recording of our interview, transcripts from the interview, observation notes, and school manuals, memos and handouts. Each of these records will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. Within one year after completion of this study, all records will be destroyed through a

reputable document destruction agency. A professional transcriber, who has signed a confidentiality document approved by the IRB, will transcribe the digital recording of our interview.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of St. Thomas. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time up to and until Jan. 1, 2011. Should you decide to withdraw, you and I will meet so that you may determine exactly what I will or will not use in my study. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask in the interview.

Contacts and Questions

My name is Joan Arbisi Little. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me, or my advisor via phone or email at:

Joan Little 651-210-1860 JLLittle@stthomas.edu
Cindy Lavorato 651-962-4887 cllavorato@stthomas.edu

You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-5341 with any questions or concerns.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age. [If additional permissions are needed (e.g. audio or video recording, accessing private student or medical records), include these here.]

_____   _____
Signature of Study Participant   **Date**

_____
Print Name of Study Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   **Date**

Appendix G: Internal Review Board Approval

From: Roulis, Eleni
Sent: Friday, November 19, 2010 3:57:59 PM
To: Little, Joan L.; Lavorato, Cindy L.
Cc: Roulis, Eleni
Subject: IRB # B10-233-02 - Connecting Small Business and charter schools: site based leadership in a changing world - Expedited

UNIVERSITY of ST.THOMAS

Dear Joan,

Re: IRB # B10-233-02 - Connecting Small Business and charter schools: site based leadership in a changing world
Researcher: Joan L. Little
Advisor: Cindy Lavorato

Full Status Approval

Your application for your proposed research involving human subjects has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board of the University of St. Thomas and been given Full Approval Status. Your application has satisfied all of the criteria necessary for full status. This means that you may proceed with your research immediately. This is your official letter of approval.

Please place the IRB log number on all of your future correspondence regarding this protocol.

Please note that under IRB Policy principal investigators are required to report to the IRB for further review when changes in the research protocol increase the risks to the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in the study and /or I n the event of any adverse episode   (e.g. actual harm, breach of confidentiality) involving human subjects.

Thank you for all of your work.

Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Best wishes as you begin your research.

Eleni

Eleni Roulis,Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
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St. Paul, MN 55105
Aquinas 314A
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