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**The Rise and Fall of the Dream Schools: Equity and Local Politics
in the San Francisco Unified School District**

By

Matthew Merritt Livingston

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California at Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Heinrich Mintrop, Chair
Professor Richard Candida Smith
Professor David Stern

Spring 2011

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in the San Francisco Unified School District**

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By

Matthew Merritt Livingston

ABSTRACT

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Matthew Merritt Livingston

Doctor of Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Heinrich Mintrop, Chair

Comprehensive school reform initiatives in urban school districts frequently fail. This was no different with the San Francisco Unified School District's Dream Schools. Designed specifically to create an equitable education for San Francisco's marginalized African American and Latino communities, the district spent millions of dollars to create "private schools" in a public school setting. After just two years of implementation, the Dream School reform initiative was mired in political contestation that ended with the dissolution of the initiative and the resignation of the superintendent.

This study addresses how politics affects the adoption of policy, how policy creates a reform design, how the design influences the implementation plan, and how the process of the implementation plan is executed. Politics is an important part of the process. It is the sphere where constituents' interests can be articulated, and special interest groups can compete for scarce material resources and symbolic validations. However, politics does not always lend itself to creating and sustaining successful reform initiatives.

I applied these factors from theory and previous research to the case study of the Dream School reform initiative in the San Francisco Unified School District, in order to better understand how politicized governance and poor administrative implementation cause comprehensive reforms to fail as often as they do. In addition, conflict among coalitions, blaming adversaries, and pushing priorities to the brink are major themes derived from the oral history of the SFUSD Dream Schools, and useful for a better understanding of the action patterns that eventually led to failure.

Why did the Dream Schools implementation utterly fail? The Oral History of the Dream Schools seeks to answer this question by searching deeply into the memories of the people who were there, carefully distilling their experiences, and synthesizing their stories into an account of the reform initiative. Twenty-four participants shared their perspectives and explained their motives. Their interactions in the particular historical context of local school reform brought forth the rise and dramatic fall of the Dream Schools initiative. In the end, who owns the problem and who owns the solution in urban equity-oriented school reform?

DEDICATION PAGE

This dissertation is dedicated to my amazing wife Blair Morgan-Livingston, whose tremendous love has supported me throughout this incredible journey. And to my parents Robert and Jannis Livingston, who have always believed in me, and what I might one day accomplish. And in remembrance of my great friend, Kevin Restani, who will always be an inspiration.

**The Rise and Fall of the Dream Schools: Equity and Local Politics
in the San Francisco Unified School District**

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PREFACE

As the son of two teachers, going into education was not a huge surprise. My career began at 23 years of age, as an 8th Grade Pre-Algebra teacher at Aptos Middle School in San Francisco, CA. In my classroom, I taught African American and Latino students, identifying their areas of strength and challenges, and committing myself to helping them achieve. I had a cordial relationship with the administration, and had several friends on the teaching staff. In truth, I had very little interaction with the adults in the building, for my world was the 13 and 14 year olds that came to my class each day to learn.

I fell into administration more by accident than anything else. I had completed my administrative credential and interviewed for administration positions to see what opportunities existed beyond the classroom. After six or seven interviews, an elementary school finally picked me up. One thing led to another, and I got promoted to be the principal of the Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academy Dream School. Up until that time, I was completely oblivious to the political nature of urban school districts. As a teacher, I had relative autonomy in my classroom, developing my curriculum, and engaging my students. As the principal of a small elementary school, I was off the district's radar. My school was highly collegial and we decided together how we wanted things done there. Once I entered the stage of the Dream Schools, I realized that the game was much bigger than my little classroom, or my little elementary school.

During my two years at the Dream School, I felt every possible emotion a relatively new principal can have. Excitement does not begin to describe the era of the opening of the schools in August 2004. As the politics around the Dream Schools began to inundate the media, I was confused why there was such negativity around such an important mission of providing an equitable education for disadvantaged students. As the political battles continued, implementation of the model at the school became more difficult, and I began to doubt that anybody really wanted the schools to exist at all. But I was in the maelstrom. At the end of a very difficult school year, in a blink, I was called down to the superintendent's office and told that I was being removed from being the principal of the Dream Schools and transferred to another school. The next few weeks were full of anger, tears, frustration, and hopeless puzzlement. I was never given an explanation for my change in jobs, or for the drastic crumbling of the Dream School reform. I simply did not understand what was going on, and why it was happening to me.

The years that followed were healthy, as my new administrative assignment was very challenging and rewarding. However, there would be times when an old wound would open, and I would flashback to my hurtful memories of the Dream School. It amazed me in a way, that even though so much time had passed I still harbored the residual frustrations and pain from my experience. I had never really processed them. During July of 2008, I was with my wife in Kauai, watching the waves on the beach. We were talking about my dissertation and how I needed to find a topic that I truly cared about. Naturally, she said, "Why don't you do the

Dream Schools?" Dumbfounded, it had actually never occurred to me. Not only was that what I should do, it was what I needed to do. I pledged to myself that day that I would finally understand why the Dream Schools failed. My wife gives very good advice.

Looking back now, as I read the oral history of the Dream Schools, it occurs to me that I was not the only one who needed to process residual emotions. Many of my interviews felt like therapy sessions, during which people were honestly sharing their deepest emotions and hurt feelings that were still flowing from their experiences with the Dream Schools. For myself, I feel relieved now that I have reflected on my adventure, and I have gained a deep understanding of the political nature of urban school districts. I have learned a lot since my beginning days teaching math in a cool little classroom. Yet, there is no doubt that there is still much to learn about politics, power, and what it takes to not let either get in the way of an equitable education for all students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the members of my committee who guided my work over the years. To my advisor and committee chair, Heinrich Mintrop, thank you for helping me grow through this doctoral program, and for supporting me throughout. There were many times where your belief in me literally made the difference. Thank you for giving me this chance to achieve more than I ever have before. To David Stern, for your encouraging insight and critical feedback which helped me improve the model of my research. And to Richard Candida Smith, for helping me understand what oral history is truly all about, and for giving me the courage to tell the story.

I also wish to thank the incredible group of interviewees, who opened their hearts, minds, and even their homes to help me tell this story. Your willingness to share your passion, your heartbreak, and your honest criticisms is what has made this oral history possible. Without your priceless contributions, this story simply could not be told. Thank you for trusting me, and believing in me to do this work.

I would also like to acknowledge my past teachers, tutors, mentors, coaches, friends and colleagues who have helped me along the way on this incredible academic journey. I would especially like to thank Coach Jane Stern, for the years of guidance and support, and to the incredible staff at International Studies Academy, whose hard work and dedication inspires me every day. To all the educators who fight the good fight, the future of our children gains new luster by your work.

Lastly, a huge loving thank you to my family, for helping to raise me, and guide me for all of these years. To my sister Rachel for being there for me, no matter what our adventures entailed. To my nephew Kieran, watching you grow up is such a pleasure, and I cannot wait to see who you will become. I take great pride in being your uncle. To the wonderful Morgan family, for welcoming me as one of your own. And to all the rest of the family, the ones who have passed, and the ones who are on the way, this is for you.

VITA

EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley

Ed. D in Leadership in Education Equity, Spring 2011

- Dissertation focus: Why do comprehensive school reform efforts frequently fail?

San Francisco State University

Masters and Credential in Educational Administration, 2004

- “Distinguished Achievement Award for Academic Excellence”, College of Education, 2004

Clear Single Subject Teaching Credential in Mathematics, 2001

University of California, San Diego

Bachelor of Science, Management Science, 1997

- NCAA Athlete, Baseball

EXPERIENCE

International Studies Academy ~ High School, San Francisco Unified School District 2006 - 2011

Principal

- Made significant measurable progress in a diverse underperforming high school, marked by: Academic Performance Index (API), Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), California High School Exit Exam passing rates, graduation and attendance rates, and grade point averages
- Instructional leader of the school, responsible for evaluations and faculty support, including individual support plans for teachers, and systemic informal classroom observations
- Built a strong professional development plan for the staff; identifying critical and targeted strategies to support student learning, differentiating for the different needs and skills of the staff
- Ongoing staff training on implementing benchmark assessments based on the California core curriculum, and used the data to drive instruction
- Implemented school-wide behavior management plan and safety plan, successfully decreasing the number of expulsions, suspensions, and classroom referrals by 35%
- Created and institutionalized several critical instructional programs, including the International Expedition Program, which allows 75 students and 10 teachers to travel abroad annually
- Selected to participate in the Stanford University Principal’s Fellowship Program, and nominated for the San Francisco Mayor’s Principal of the Year in 2010

University of California, Berkeley

2008 - 2011

Instructor

- Teach current principals and assistant principals in the Leadership Support Program, a part of the Administrative Credentialing Program.
- Facilitate analyses of leadership strategies, goal setting, and time management techniques.
- Support current administrators in their challenging daily experiences, and develop plans to improve their practice.

- San Francisco State University** **2005 – 2008**
Instructor
- Instructor of the Masters level “Curriculum Development” class in the Education Administration Program
 - Taught teachers who were aspiring to be site administrators, and received high evaluations
 - Member of the SFSU Advisory Council for the Education Administration Program
- Gloria R. Davis ~ Middle School, San Francisco Unified School District** **2004 – 2006**
Principal
- Implemented the Dream School Reform Initiative in the low socio-economic Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco
 - Traveled to Harlem, New York to observe the Frederick Douglas Academy, was trained on the Dr. Lorraine Monroe school reform model, and returned to San Francisco to successfully implement the program
 - Established rigorous academic instruction in a school that previously had sub-par instruction, by modeling lessons, coaching and evaluating teachers
 - Significantly increased the academic achievements of the student body, both in grade point average and standardized state assessments; 47 points on the API
 - Implemented an effective school-wide classroom management plan, significantly reducing referrals and suspensions by 50%
 - Created interventions, a tutorial structure, a strategic Test Prep program, and Saturday School, specifically targeting students and addressing their specific focus areas in reading and mathematics
 - Increased outreach to the parent community, hosting several community events, regular parent meetings, parent workshops, and consistent communication between school and home
- Charles R. Drew ~ Elementary School, San Francisco Unified School District** **2003 – 2004**
Principal
- Redirected an underperforming school to a focus on rigorous instruction
 - Designed and facilitated professional development meetings to increase the skill level of the teachers
 - Established an effective school-wide behavior management plan
 - Increased parent community involvement through communication and school events
 - Raised the level of effectiveness in instruction through class observations and professional development
 - Established high expectations with underperforming students and ineffective teachers
- Aptos ~ Middle School, San Francisco Unified School District** **1999 – 2002**
Mathematics Teacher
- 8th grade pre-Algebra teacher, educating a diverse student body, including ethnicity, socioeconomic level, and academic capabilities
 - Differentiated rigorous instruction and improved student standardized test scores

Chapter I

Introduction

Historically, in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), the lowest performing subgroup is the African American student population. Even through years of deliberate intervention, including the 1983 Consent Decree between the NAACP and the school district, decades of court oversight, and targeted reconstitution of underperforming schools in the 1980's and 90's, the California Standards Test scores of the African American population continued to remain the lowest performing subgroup. In 1999, SFUSD hired its first African American woman as superintendent in part to address this perennial concern. In the spring of 2004, the Superintendent designed a proposal for the Board of Education to implement a new comprehensive school reform initiative in San Francisco. The reform plan was intended to transform three of the lowest performing schools in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood into *Dream Schools*.

Modeled after Lorraine Monroe's successful Frederick Douglass Academy in Harlem, N.Y., the program promised to equalize the educational opportunities of the African American students in Bayview Hunters Point to the level given to the Asian American and white students of San Francisco. The Dream Schools program was to be the reform that made up for years of inequities experienced by the African American community. The Dream Schools were envisioned as being private schools in a public school setting.

The Board of Education passed the proposal to implement the Dream School reform initiative on March 9, 2004. Three schools in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood volunteered to participate in the initiative. The plan characterized these schools as "private schools" in a public setting, including a mandatory uniform policy, longer school days, parent contracts, and college preparatory classes. The initial three schools began with student test scores that were consistently the lowest in the district.

One of the key controversial components of the Dream School initiative was the staffing policy. Superintendent Ackerman proposed that all staff that worked at each of the sites be required to interview to maintain their position at the school. This request created an immediate opposition with the United Educators of San Francisco teacher union. The union had objected to Superintendent Ackerman's Dream Schools, arguing that forcing staffers to reapply would stigmatize those who were not rehired and were made to transfer. However, after weeks of negotiations, the union agreed to a compromise that made staff members at the three Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood schools reapply for their jobs as part of the district's attempt to overhaul the low-performing schools.

When the doors of the three Dream Schools opened on August 30, 2004, there were celebrations, and a cheerful aura permeated throughout the Bayview Hunters Point community. The media, Superintendent, and San Francisco Mayor visited each site to participate in the opening day ceremonies. Within the first month of implementation of the Dream School reform initiative, the superintendent announced her plan to expand the Dream School program to five additional

neighborhoods. Immediately, major stumbling blocks were encountered and extreme contestation among the superintendent, board members, teacher union, staff, and parents began to affect the plan. The media affixed itself to every negative comment and broadcast the daily struggles and discontent in the newspapers and on television. The *dream* was becoming a nightmare. In September 2005, Superintendent Ackerman resigned from her position in SFUSD.

In education, we are constantly dealing with comprehensive school reform efforts that fail. The Dream School reform initiative was no exception. In 2004, the SFUSD Board of Education, superintendent, and school communities all supported the reform. Yet, in 2006, the Dream Schools were derailed and halted, the superintendent resigned, and teachers' union and school communities stridently quarreled with each other and with the school district. Answering an urgent need for educational improvements in its most challenged communities, the district poured significant funding in hopes of providing a fresh start for these schools. But hopes were dashed and collaboration turned into utter contestation over the course of just two years. The Dream Schools rose steeply and fell fast. What were the causes of these dramatic changes?

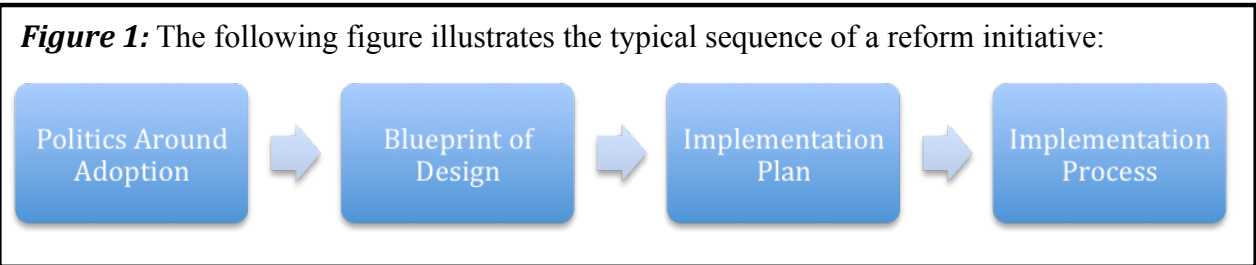
Purpose of the Research

Why do comprehensive school reform efforts frequently fail? There is ample literature on this question on which this study draws. The purpose of this study is to understand one case in the specific context of one urban school district. What is intriguing about the Dream School initiative is the dramatic shift from rise to fall. Countless resources, material and human, went into it. High hopes were attached to it. Deeply seated grievances and yearnings for justice were addressed by it. And yet, in the end it amounted to so little. Having been a committed teacher and principal in San Francisco for many years, it is my purpose with this study to help the San Francisco public education community better understand why their initiatives and strivings were frustrated in this case. These understandings may be valuable to the San Francisco Unified School District, as it designs future district reform initiatives, in hopes that it will not make the same mistakes. I will focus on the experiences of the District leadership, Board of Education, teacher union leadership, and individuals in SFUSD who were involved in the design and implementation phases of the Dream School reform initiative. I will specifically focus on these people because their decisions played a significant role in how the reform initiative was executed. With a better understanding of these experiences, I intend to reveal and resolve which factors influenced the creation, and dissolution, of the Dream Schools.

I conducted an in depth oral history case study of the design and implementation of the Dream School reform initiative in the San Francisco Unified School District. In essence, this study is a historical interpretation of the events and interactions that took place during the birth of the design plan, and the sequence of incidents that followed. My data collection included interviews from strategic participants, relevant documents and reports, and newspaper articles. I analyzed the different perspectives and drew conclusions that applied to my bounded case.

The Conceptual Framework

I begin conceptualizing my study on the basis of the sequence of steps that are typically undertaken when a reform is tried. The sequence begins with the politics around the adoption of the reform initiative. The adoption process leads to the blueprint of the reform design. After the design is conceived, the implementation plan is created, and resources are aligned to support the reform. Lastly, the implementation process takes place, and the reform implementation plan is carried out. Each of these elements can serve as a potential factor in the creation, and ultimate dissolution, of a comprehensive reform initiative.



When policymakers deliberate which reform initiatives will be designed and implemented within school districts, politics plays a major role in the picture. Local policymakers are primarily board members who are elected to their positions by their constituents. Therefore, there is an inherent desire for policymakers to keep their constituents satisfied with the policies they create, in hopes of being elected again (Hess, 1999). There are many interests at stake, including the policymakers' desire to be reelected, the constituents desire to influence policy adoption, the school administrators' desire to receive a plausible design and implementation plan, and the teachers' desire to receive the resources necessary to effectively implement the plan (Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988; Hess, 1999; Datnow, 2000). The constituents influence the policymakers to create policy that benefits their special interest group.

This influence on policy making is the definition of politics, and has a great effect on which reform initiatives are adopted. Policies affect which structures are put in place, which programs are procured, and how resources are allocated in a school district. The existence of politics and its effect on policymaking does not always lend itself to effective efforts to reform school districts, partly because of the fact that contestation and compromise do not necessarily lead to the best design (Hess, 1999), and that so much of politics is symbolic grandstanding. In fact, there is a considerable amount of politics that is simply symbolic in nature, designed solely to give the impression that political leaders are making decisions in the best interest of their constituencies (Edelman, 1970). Often under these circumstances, policymakers give priority to their constituents, misdiagnose the district's problems and needs and opt for inadequate implementation (Cuban, 1990).

As local politics shapes designs, often not for the better, the design itself directly influences the effectiveness of the reform implementation (Datnow, 2000; Smylie, 1996; Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 2001). By definition, the design of the reform initiative is the blueprint of how the adopted policy will be enacted in schools. As stated above, due to the politics involved in the policymaking process, many designs are a compromise intended to satisfy different interest groups (Hess, 1999). If the design adequately addresses an identified problem and is tailored to the context and resources of a given district, there is a higher chance that reform implementation will succeed. If the design is fractured and/or ill-conceived, the chance of successfully implementing the reform is significantly lower (Cuban, 1990; Datnow, 2000). The development of the reform design is also important, because it can directly affect a stakeholder's willingness to commit to a reform initiative. A combination of a top-down and bottom-up systemic reform design encourages participation from stakeholders and has proven effective over time at fostering a higher level of implementation (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Reform implementation plans deal with the action steps a district or school takes to put the adopted policies and design into action. This may include decisions about the reform model structure, the allocation of resources, regulatory requirements, staff development, negotiations with labor unions, and the extent of Central Office support. The implementation plan determines which programs will be implemented, which schools will implement the reform, and which students will be participating in the reform. Reforms that endure over time tend to entail three crucial attributes: new structures, powerful constituencies, and easily-accessible evidence of compliance (Kirst and Meister, 1985). Reform implementation efforts require time, accommodation, and tolerance for error (Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988). To the degree that the implementation plan is consistent with the adopted policy, and the blueprint of the design, there is a higher chance that the reform will be implemented well.

The implementation process is the execution of the reform implementation plan. As a reform is put into action, the micro-politics among the district bureaucracy, school administrators, teachers, and special interest groups that try to influence implementation, flourishes. Each of these groups has its own interests, values, and beliefs that may, or may not, be reflected in the implementation plan (Malen, 2005; Datnow, 2000). Often political coalitions among local political actors may shift and the reform initiative may no longer be supported in the same manner (Hess, 1999). Consensus and compromise may hold together throughout the implementation process, or they may break down and cause the reform to be disjointed (Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988). At this point, reforms are typically redesigned, continued as planned, or abandoned (Cuban, 1990).

Thus, my conceptual framework addresses the sequence of how politics affects the adoption of policy, how policy creates a reform design, how the design influences the implementation plan, and how the process of the implementation plan is executed. Politics is an important part of the process. It is the sphere where constituents' interests can be articulated, and special interest groups can compete for scarce material resources and symbolic validations. However, politics does not always lend itself to creating and sustaining successful reform initiatives. I will

apply these factors from theory and previous research to the case study of the Dream School reform initiative in the San Francisco Unified School District, in order to better understand why comprehensive reforms fail as often as they do.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. After this introductory chapter, I conduct a review of the literature around relevant research knowledge and theory around politics and policy-making, symbolic politics, reform design scenarios, design selection processes, and effective reform designs in Chapter II. In Chapter III, I describe and discuss the methodology of oral history and the data collection methods I used.

In Chapter IV, I have divided my findings into two parts. Chapter IV-A is the narrative account of the oral history of the Dream Schools, told through the perspectives of 24 participants. The oral history focuses on the politics around the adoption of the reform in 2003, and ends with the reform implementation process in 2006. In Chapter IV-B, I distill from the narrative account interpretations and themes that identify some of the underlying forces or dynamics that make the unfolding of the events understandable. In Chapter V, I discuss the conclusions and implications of my study. I discuss how the oral history of the Dream Schools can be used as a lesson for the public education community in future reforms.

Chapter II

Consulting the Knowledge Base - The Politics of School Reform

School districts nation-wide focus on comprehensive school reform to increase student achievement. Yet, even when millions of dollars are spent to improve instruction and raise student achievement, the status quo is often not touched in many urban school systems. Currently, schools and districts across the nation are implementing reform initiatives that fail to reach their goals, either initially or over the long term (Cuban, 1983). Why is such failure so pervasive?

As school districts enter the planning, design, and implementation phases of comprehensive school reform efforts, politics is a force affecting many of these processes. This review of literature examines first, how school reform plays out with regards to politics and policy, politics and power, and symbolic politics. Second, I explore how the reform design affects a reform's success or failure by looking at design scenarios, design selection processes, and a look at effective designs. Throughout this review of the knowledge base, one key question will be held in focus, "Why do attempts at comprehensive school reform in urban school districts frequently fail?"

The Politics of School Reform

The politics of school reform is not a new phenomenon (Hess, 1999; Cuban, 1983; Datnow, 2000; Tyack and Cuban, 1995). The term politics is defined as the networks of individuals and groups within and surrounding schools, which compete for scarce resources, including power (Lindle, 1999). Schools are the focus of community aspirations and development. Though public schools have always been important in their communities, the expectations for reform make schools and their communities more political (Lindle, 1999; Peterson, 1985).

Research on school reform suggests that reforms fail because of inadequate implementation, planning and coordination. The presumption is that more reform, and many different kinds of reform implemented at the same time, improve schooling (Hess, 1999). Urban school reformers everywhere must deal with public opinion, the media, state education agencies, business interests, teacher unions, organized labor, political parties, taxpayer groups, neighborhood interest, discrimination and ethnic conflict, and the core educational issues of curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment, accountability, and management effectiveness (McAdams, 2000). The following sections will take a deeper look into how politics is embedded into the formation of school district policy, how stakeholders establish and exercise their power, and how symbolic reform can deteriorate authentic progress.

Politics and Policy

School reform is primarily the consequence of district policymakers' attempts to operate in a political environment. Many factors influence the behaviors of district policymakers, including political realities, practitioner wisdom, and research. Accountability and pressures from the community have a great influence on educational policy decisions. Urban school system policymakers are highly sensitive to community and professional pressures, making reform efforts more heavily influenced by politics than by educational considerations (Hess, 1999). As a consequence, policies and reforms often fall apart when they encounter the challenges of daily life in the classrooms (Cuban, 1983; Hess, 1999).

Politics have a tremendous effect on the implementation of policies. This includes how actors navigate power positions, lobby for their own personal agendas, and strategize to either secure a favorable policy, or the dismantling of a policy. Policies tend to be adopted and implemented through political processes that reflect the relative power of actors/groups, more than the effectiveness of the policy (Malen, 2005). Politics is ever present in policy-making and a pervasive force in the adoption and implementation of policy.

Essentially, politics play the ultimate role of determining which policies are adopted, implemented, and by whom. The actors within the political arena vie for policy influence by trying to obtain formal power, mainly at the level of school board politics and at the upper echelons of the district bureaucracy. In order to do this, these actors strategize to influence potential partisans (i.e. government officials, board members, school administrators, teachers, parents, students, community groups, mayors, corporations). Actors seek to promote and protect their vested material and ideological interests. Strategies are designed to gain access to influential players and keep this access from others. Much of politicking at the local level results in either stalemate or policy churn (Hess 1999; Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988). Implementation is crucial to the effectiveness of any organizational reform. However, attention to implementation is short-changed because of the institutional and professional pressures that shape school district policymaking. This political pressure can shift the focus from student achievement results to simply satisfying a certain stakeholder in the policy-making process. Rather than trying to depoliticize education, some reformers of public schooling seek political incentives that encourage the system leadership to focus on performance and long-term progress rather than public relations and short-term elixirs (Boyd, 2000; Hess, 1999).

Inherently, politics are embedded in the structural makeup of a school district, and this structure is responsible for creating and implementing the reform policies of the organization as Hess aptly summarizes,

“Individual school reform initiatives are not necessarily bad ideas, and school policymakers have entirely honorable intentions when proposing them. It is entirely possible that any given reform will enhance school performance if properly implemented. The cruel paradox is that the same impulses that drive education policymakers to adopt reform ensure that they will do so in conditions that make

large-scale successes highly unlikely. Problems with urban school reform are symptoms of the institutional structure of urban school districts. Until those larger constraints are addressed, attempts to improve schooling through any reform – no matter how well designed – are likely to prove futile and waste resources (Hess, 1999).”

The challenge then remains for school districts to operate under these conditions, yet navigate through the murky waters and find success. All too often, the challenge has proven too difficult to overcome.

As policies are created and approved, over time they disappear and reappear within district reform efforts. Political winds, changing economic circumstances, and shifting demographics often take a toll on educational policy, making it difficult to sustain a single vision of reform. The reoccurrence of school reforms suggest that reforms failed to remove the problems they were intended to solve. Reforms return because policymakers were unable to accurately diagnose problems and promote sustainable solutions. Lastly, reforms return because decision makers seldom seek reliable, properly conducted evaluations of program effectiveness before putting a program into practice (Cuban, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 2001).

Policymakers are affected by special interest lobby groups, financial resources, and their own ability to make decisions. People who have the expertise to make effective decisions usually exist only on the periphery of the decision-making body. Many policy decisions about instruction are made without the personnel who possess the most relevant content knowledge. Those who are most likely to have content expertise tend to be peripheral to content decision-making authority and those with decision-making authority do not necessarily have content expertise (Coburn, 2008). In these cases, politics play a role in influencing the policy decision makers, instead of the experts on the issue. To some extent, a better balance is needed with respect to influences on policy-makers.

Politics is an undeniable force to be considered during policy-making and reform. This does not imply that the effect of politics is always a negative one, but rather that it is a significant factor that has a considerable impact on policy. Promising comprehensive policies combine the respective strengths of government, market, and civil society, and improve and revitalize public schools and the communities they serve (Boyd, 2000). When we revisit the question of why comprehensive school reform attempts frequently fail, it becomes evident how politics can play a major role in influencing behaviors of board members and superintendents, creating silos and hierarchies, and determining policy. These political influences gravitate closely to another dynamic, that of politics and power.

Politics and Power

In any organization, one or more entities must ultimately hold the power to control the decision-making of the organization. These stakeholders leverage politics to support their ability to remain in the power position, and flex their power to influence decisions. Entities establish control as they demonstrate their capacity to achieve results, and then align resources to maintain this control over time.

When policymakers consider reform initiatives, this power variable becomes influential in the decision-making process (Stone, 2006). Politics are not accidental, but rather derive directly from the people who have power to make decisions.

If a policy does not satisfy the coalition in power, the reform is not likely to be supported (Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988; Hess, 1999). This lens offers acknowledgement of the role of power, yet execution of this power, according to Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) has sometimes resulted in reasonably successful policies, and does not automatically imply that power causes policies to fail.

The SFUSD is a case in point. In 1983, a court decision in San Francisco created a consent decree, which required the implementation of desegregation efforts in the San Francisco Unified School District. Over the next 20 years, some SFUSD superintendents enforced the consent decree, and others did not. There were clear indicators that the SFUSD Board of Education influenced the decisions made by the incumbent superintendent. Depending on the superintendent, the support for the decree was either apparent or absent in the schools (Fraga, 2005). The relationships between these powers determined what decisions were made and how policies were implemented.

The courts clearly wrote a *Consent Decree* to focus efforts on supporting the African American students in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhoods. But it was ultimately the San Francisco Board of Education that determined whether or not it was going to respect and implement this *Decree*. Fraga (2005) showed that the shifting coalitions and alliances in school board politics mainly around labor and ethnic political cleavages either supported or contradicted equity-oriented directives issued by federal courts (Fraga, 2005).

Another example is Chicago. The Chicago Public Schools experienced several political initiatives in the past 20 years. In 1988, a coalition of ethnic leaders and the mayor pushed through a dramatic de-centralization effort. In 1995, in another dramatic shift in political power, a new highly centralized authority was resurrected (Shipp, 1999). However, fragments of the decentralized decision-making authority that was created in the 1988 reform remained in place. Therefore, the two reforms co-existed, even though in principle they were opposed to each other. The politics in this situation was extreme, and competing interests created adversarial relationships that eventually would influence school reform.

In Houston, political forces were in full swing, influencing decisions that formed policies within the school districts. McAdams (2000) recounts the story of this district. In the 1990's, the Houston Independent School District encountered political power struggles between the superintendent and Board of Education over policy, vision, and reform initiatives. Both entities desired command over HISD, and control of the public constituency. Progress ensued when HISD had a superintendent and a Board majority who shared a common vision and worked together for an extended amount of time. A unanimous Board, and complete agreement between Board and superintendent, is not always possible or necessary. However, a working majority of the Board must have a clear vision of what systemic reform should be focused on, and have a like-minded superintendent at the helm for several years (McAdams, 2000). McAdams claims that HISD showed student growth

over several years because the Board consistently worked with the superintendent through “thick and thin” and tried to build public support for the reform program.

Orr (1999) examines the case of Baltimore. In Baltimore, race relations were the volatile issue. The black constituency believed that their educational needs were not being met, and that their voices were not heard by the school district or the mayor’s office. The community leaders recognized that the mayor’s office was the critical leverage point in their struggle for equity. The Baltimore mayor’s high profile involvement and willingness to apply the political weight of his office allowed the challenges facing the city’s schools to remain high on the agenda (Orr, 1999). When black social capital was combined with black political empowerment, African Americans were in a better position to use governmental institutions to advance their causes and influence policy changes.

Board members and superintendents possess the power to influence special interest groups, community leaders, and school district policy. This notion is true in each case study of the San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, and Baltimore school districts. Power can directly influence whether a comprehensive school reform initiative fails or not. In the last two sections, I have looked at how politics affects policy and power, in an effort to affect change in a school district. However, there are times when the entity in power is satisfied with the status quo and promotes policies that simply give the appearance that they intend to make changes. This concept leads us to our next section of symbolic school reform.

Symbolic School Reform

There is a considerable amount of politics, and the resultant policies, that are simply symbolic in nature, designed solely to give the impression that political leaders are making decisions in the best interest of their constituencies (Edelman, 1970; Hess, 1999). Many reforms are not serious attempts to change teaching and learning in the classroom, but instead are intended to bolster the stature of the district policymakers. As political leaders focus on their individual agendas, their careers and public image become the priority over actual outcomes in the classroom (Edelman, 1970). This is a difficult issue to resolve.

The demands of political leadership and professional behavior generally make it more politically profitable to innovate without risking the costs of real change. Leaders focus on symbolic reform when the organization has little accountability, lack of control, intense public scrutiny, and the leader’s perception that performance will have little relation to their effectiveness (Edelman, 1970; Hess, 1999). When policymakers use reform as a tactic to ease political tension and address political demands, symbolic reform often ensues (Hannaway, 1989; Hess, 1999).

During a time of urgency and crisis in America’s public schools, it is unacceptable for district leaders to watch from afar as the school-site staffs struggle with daily issues. Inaction is the worst possible sin for a public official facing a crisis (Hess, 1999). Therefore, even symbolic actions by the superintendent, or the board of education, win points with those in the educational trenches. Symbolic politics flourish when the incumbent can continue indefinitely to convey the impression of

knowing what is to be done (Edelman, 1970). Although there is a distinction between substance and symbolism, this is not always clear to school communities or political constituencies.

School boards and superintendents play a pivotal role in mobilizing limited resources. The allocation of resources gives legitimacy to a reform effort and facilitates the interplay between central office and school site that is often crucial for implementation success and failure (Cuban, 1983). Hess contends that reducing the prevalence of symbolic school reform cannot alone turn around urban school systems. However, until steps are taken to address symbolic reform, urban school reform continues to be a dead-end route to educational improvement (Hess, 1999). Reform must be genuine, and be driven by the commitment of stakeholders, not just the entity in control of policy.

But the use of symbols is not always detrimental to education policy. At times, symbols are used effectively to mobilize special interests and lobbying groups without sacrificing what is best for the school sites. Alternatively, as was pointed out above, symbols are used to simply create a smokescreen and an appearance of policy, when in reality there is nothing. Symbolic reforms can enhance a superintendent's resumé, benefiting them individually at the expense of the school district and student achievement. This style of management makes effective implementation of any comprehensive school reform initiative highly unlikely.

Politics plays a very important role in influencing school district policy, power, and symbolic reform. Each of these three concepts affects comprehensive school reform initiatives and can ultimately contribute to a reform's success or failure. Along with politics, the design of the reform initiative is another integral part of any school reform. The following sections will explore design issues.

Designing School Reforms

The design of the reform initiative is integral to the outcomes of the reform. Many reforms are successful over time with positive effects on student achievement. In these cases, decision-making often resulted in designs that produced positive implementation results. In the following sections, I will explore the literature around design scenarios, design selection processes, and effective designs.

Design Scenarios

Reform designs may be introduced to a school district or school site in certain ways that can ultimately determine their longevity and effectiveness. Datnow (2000) distinguishes among three distinct scenarios. In the first scenario, schools are given an option to choose among a series of district-sanctioned reforms. Second, a district may promote a single reform as opposed to a series of reforms and make the design mandatory. Finally, in some schools, principals may bring the reform initiative to the staff without the intervention from the district (Datnow, 2000). Power relations, politics, and differing perspectives operate in all of these processes.

When a superintendent pushes an agenda of school reform, principals feel the need to adopt a reform at their school sites whether they need to reform or not (Datnow, 2000). Simply put, if the superintendent is recommending something to the district, all schools are expected to comply. Datnow writes, “The power of the superintendent as a promoter of reform influenced educators to adopt reforms that they were not committed to, knew little about, or were simply those that allowed them to display participation in reform, but not really change much at their schools (Datnow, 2000).” Upper level managers are sometimes unaware of many of the issues and uncertainties that are percolating below. They do not seem to put much effort into reaching down into the organization, probably because they do not place a high value on what those in lower levels have to say (Hannaway, 1989). Therefore, teachers are seldom provided the opportunity to make informed choices about reforms. This design strategy is not particularly conducive to motivating teachers, who are ultimately the people who will implement the reform.

In the above-mentioned scenarios, if superintendent or upper-level managers mandate that a school participate in a reform, there is often an issue with buy-in. Datnow found that many times principals impressed upon their staff that they needed to select a reform model in order to comply with district demands, fearing that if they did not volunteer to participate in a reform, they would be mandated to do so (Datnow, 2000). In this scenario, teachers usually give a symbolic effort to implement the reform, but do not actually participate with fidelity. Teachers may be willing to use part of the reform in their classrooms, or only some classes will implement the reform while others will not at all.

The very introduction of a school reform initiative can have a strong effect on whether or not it will be implemented well. Mandated reforms from the top often foster reluctance on the part of school site staff and can potentially cause the reform to fail. Pressure on principals and teachers can create compliance, but rarely authentic buy-in. Datnow found (Datnow and Castellano, 2000; Stringfield, Datnow and Ross, 1998) that when the opinions of principals and teachers were solicited and respected, reform designs had an increased probability of being effectively implemented.

The selection of a reform model is a delicate point in the school reform process, and giving the ground-level implementers a voice in the process is extremely important (Datnow and Castellano, 2000; Stringfield, Datnow and Ross, 1998). The very process of how a reform is selected has a great influence on whether reform implementation takes off and the initiative ultimately achieves its intended goals.

Effective Reform Designs

Although many reforms fail, there are some reform efforts that are successful at leaving a long-term deposit at the school level. Lasting reforms usually promote change in organizational structure, pupil classifications, legislative changes in certification, or they establish compensatory rights and procedures. Such reforms entail three crucial attributes: new structures, powerful constituencies, and easily accessible evidence of compliance (Kirst and Meister, 1985). Reforms that create

new structures at the district or site level have a tendency to be maintained through cutbacks or elimination. Examples of these organizational reforms are the creation of English Language Learner classes, Gifted and Talented Programs, and Individualized Education Programs for Special Education students. These programs subsequently create a lobby of teachers with specialist credentials, and furnish accessible evidence of compliance, which increases the likelihood of their persistence (Kirst and Meister, 1985).

By contrast, reforms that call for new skills or added effort on the part of existing teaching staff are less persistent. Even well designed participative structures are not likely to achieve their anticipated outcomes if they are not put in place formally, implemented over a substantial period of time, or provided adequate resources and political support from school and district administration (Smylie, 1996; Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 2001). Reforms that do not survive are often those that mainly focus on pedagogy, teaching methods, or classroom strategies (Kirst and Meister, 1985). Such reforms tend to disappear from practice because they lack a supportive constituency, require no change in organizational structures, or they display no telltale signs by which compliance can be monitored. Specifically, reforms that are imposed on teachers from a central authority, or top-down mandates from states to districts and teachers, are most likely to fail unless they have attributes of organizational distinctiveness, compliance monitoring, and political lobbying.

Ultimately, schools are the way they are because we, the stakeholders, make them that way. Changing the current status of schooling requires invention, commitment, and learning from failure. Research and experience provide suggestions on how to create effective reform designs. However, these efforts require time, accommodation, and tolerance for error (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988). Although reforms frequently fail, there are concrete examples of effective reform and it behooves district actors to learn from their success or failure.

Synthesis of the Knowledge Base

Why do attempts at comprehensive school reform in urban school districts frequently fail? We first explored the knowledge base on the politics of school reform. We then explored the knowledge base on reform designs. We learn from this literature that politics, power, and symbolism have an enormous influence on design and adoption of reforms. The quality of designs and the process with which they are introduced are crucial for subsequent implementation.

On the negative side, politics within school districts exist in multiple layers and takes place among many different stakeholders. Boardrooms turn into battlefields as lobby groups and special interest factions express their demands to decision-makers, trying to influence behaviors to control district policies. Superintendents flex their power to achieve the results that favor themselves, many times at the expense of principals and teachers. Symbolic measures saturate districts, giving the illusion that reform work is being done, while superintendents are actually just addressing special interest concerns, and padding their résumés.

On the positive side, the political process does on occasion issue coalitions and designs that address pressing issues of a given district within a sustained time horizon. According to the reviewed literature, conditions of success are enduring political coalitions, designs that are tailored to local problems, selection processes that balance top-down and bottom-up approaches, on-going implementation support, and an extended time horizon held by the key actors involved.

This exploration into the knowledge base around politicized school reform and reform designs has laid the groundwork for creating the oral history of the Dream Schools. On the surface, the Dream School reform initiative was introduced into a highly charged arena. Politics of power and policy were at play during the general introduction of the Dream Schools to the school district. The knowledge base on politics and power sheds some light on the possible motives the Dream Schools actors may have had as they exercised their power. The design of the Dream Schools adoption process was at times collaborative and bottom-up, yet at other times mandated in a top-down manner. The knowledge base on designs helps us understand the potential consequences of the different adoption strategies. Altogether, the categories explored in the knowledge base help us figure out the deeper mechanisms at play during the Dream School reform.

Chapter III

Research Design and Methods

The Dream Schools was a reform initiative of the past. By the time I conducted my study, its heyday had passed by several years. Given this situation, I used oral history as my method of study. Since I was looking for explanations of why SFUSD actors made the decisions that they made during a time period in the past and how these decisions affected the flow of events, oral history was the most suitable research method for my study.

Methodological Discussion

By definition, oral history is the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral form (Yow, 2005). An oral history is a collection of the participants' experiences and stories that will be documented and analyzed. Memory is the core of oral history, from which meaning can be extracted and preserved (Ritchie, 2003). Oral history includes both memory of experience and memory of explanation. The memory of experience deals with the facts that are remembered by the interviewee. The memory of explanations deals with the way the interviewee interprets and analyzes these facts. Although memory can fade over time, recollections are a powerful source of information. Memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings (Perks and Thomson, 2006). To reveal the meanings of lived experience is the great task of qualitative research and specifically oral history interviews (Yow, 2005).

Oral history is the systematic collection of living people's testimony about their own experiences. Oral history is not folklore, gossip, hearsay, or rumor. Oral historians believe that the everyday memories of everyday people, not just the rich and famous, have historical importance. Oral history research thus becomes crucial to obtaining a more comprehensive picture of society because the viewpoints of the non-elite who do not leave memoirs or have biographers are presented (Yow, 2005). If we do not collect and preserve these memories or stories, then one day the opportunity to learn from the Dream Schools initiative may be lost.

In oral history projects, an interviewee recalls an event for an interviewer who records the recollections and creates a historical record. These projects depend upon human memory and the spoken word, and the accurate capturing of these thoughts and feelings (Frisch, 1990). An oral history is a specific form of the traditional case study research method design. According to Yin, the five main research design methods are experiment, survey, archival analysis, history, and case study (Yin, 2009). Each of these methods has a unique position on the type of research question posed, the extent of control that an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009). In addition, case studies are bounded by time and activity (Creswell, 2009).

Given that this is a study of a historical case, it is bounded by the timeline within which the Dream Schools reform initiative existed. We know how the case unfolded. It has a beginning and an end. Historians approach these studies mainly by collecting as much relevant written content as possible, and then collecting appropriate witness accounts to complement the data set. For my study on the Dream Schools, the document inventory was limited due to the relatively short lifespan of the reform initiative and a tradition of largely oral communication in local school politics. Therefore, my interviews were an integral part of my data collection. Thus, the most suitable methodological approach for my purpose was a case study design centering on oral history.

This study was focused on *why* the Dream School Reform Initiative failed. With that focus question in mind, I gathered data through interviews and historical documents. Interviews in the vein of oral history are distinguished from other forms of interviews by their content and degree of depth. Oral history interviews seek an in-depth account of personal experience and reflections, with sufficient time allowed for the narrators to give their story the fullness they desire. Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did. Oral sources may not add much to what we know happened, but they tell us a good deal about actors' motives, feelings, hopes, dreams, and rationalizations. It is impossible to exhaust the entire memory of a single informant. Historical research with oral sources therefore always has the unfinished nature of a work in progress. (Perks and Thomson, 2006).

The content of oral history interviews is grounded in reflections on the past as opposed to commentary on purely contemporary events (Charlton, 2006). Instead of studying a reform that is currently playing out, I deliberately chose one that is set in a historical context. Through a historical lens, we can understand the changes around the Dream Schools as they unfolded. The strength in this hindsight is that the course of events is known to everyone. This lends itself to thorough reflection. The challenges with oral history are predominantly around the accuracy of the participants' memory, whether it is potentially selective, biased, or simply incomplete. Oral history deals directly with these challenges, with a clear and steady focus on the memory of participants' experiences and explanations. By reminding the interviewees of important incidents or experiences, the interviewer assists them in recalling a more accurate account. In their rememberings are their truths (Frisch, 1990).

Historians use oral history techniques to invite a participant in sharing information about their experiences, like whether a particular meeting took place, or if they were part of a specific team. Once a certain level of comfort and trust is established, the interviewer progresses into questions about how the participant felt at certain times, or how the participant might explain different events. Oral history interviews are often conducted years after the event, when memories have grown imprecise, but they have the advantage of being conducted by an interviewer who can raise questions and challenge dubious answers. Knowing that with age most people find it difficult to recall names and dates, oral historians conduct preparatory research to assist interviewees, give some context and structure to the dialogue through their questions, and mutually address any seeming misstatements

and contradictions in the testimony (Ritchie, 2003). Since there was a considerable time lag between the dissolution of the Dream Schools and this study, I made sure that I had reconstructed from documents some of the basic facts that could scaffold my questioning and the participants' memory constructions.

When creating an oral history project, the four main genres are subject-oriented oral histories, life histories, community history, and family history. For this project, the most appropriate genre is a subject-oriented oral history focused on the Dream School reform initiative. Subject-oriented research is focused, with a relatively clear conceived agenda. In addition, subject-oriented oral histories should address a problem that significantly contributes not only to informing its own context, but also to parallel other problems (Charlton, 2006). Oral history is de facto a kind of public history (Perks and Thomson, 2006). By researching the demise of the Dream Schools, I am now able to speak to comprehensive reform efforts in other contexts, thus satisfying the criteria for a subject-oriented oral history.

My study was particularly challenging for me due to peoples' natural biases. The literature on interview strategy and technique remains primarily concerned with maximizing the flow of valid, reliable information while minimizing distortions of what the respondent knows. The interview conversation is thus framed as a potential source of bias, error, misunderstanding, or misdirection, and a persistent set of problems to be minimized (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). Personally, as a participant in the Dream School reform initiative, I have my own recollections, deep feelings, viewpoints, prejudices, and residual frustrations caused by my experiences. It was extremely important that I understood my biases, reflected on them, and compartmentalized them, so that they did not adversely affect the results of my study.

In addition to my biases, there are the biases of each of my interviewees. Each of these participants holds their own retrospection on the historical events around the Dream Schools (Charlton, 2006). Over time, some people tend to rationalize their experiences, or they justify, reframe, or reinterpret events of the past. Other people tend with the passage of time to be more, rather than less, candid. When a career is in progress, there is much to lose by an untoward admission. Near the end of a life, there is a need to look at things as honestly as possible to make sense of experiences over a lifetime (Yow, 2005). It was necessary for me to be cognizant of these tendencies and guard against them by listening carefully, asking poignant questions, and triangulating the responses. My interviewees were essentially informants, who helped to explain the events during the implementation of the Dream School reform initiative.

My research on the Dream School reform initiative has a conceptual framework that guided my research. As I collected my data, my frame of reference was guided by my conceptual framework, but not limited or dictated by it. I was always prepared to abandon my carefully prepared questions and follow the interviewee down unexpected paths, always helping the interviewee by questioning, guiding, coaxing, and challenging (Ritchie, 2003). My in-depth interviews enabled me to give the subject leeway to answer as he or she chose, to attribute meanings to the experiences under discussion, and to interject topics. In this way, new hypotheses may be generated (Yow, 2005). Both parties in the interview are

necessarily and unavoidably active in meaning-making work (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). Ultimately, the research design of my historical project was a conceptually guided, subject-oriented oral history case study. In essence, this study was a historical account of the events and interactions that took place during the birth of the Dream School design plan and the sequence of incidents that followed.

Case Selection

The case selection of this oral history case study was bounded to the Dream School reform initiative in the San Francisco Unified School District. More specifically, the case focused on the politics that influenced the adoption and design of the reform, and the political influences on the implementation of the reform. The selection of the participants was strictly based on their professional proximity to the policy adoption and implementation of the Dream School reform initiative. The participants included the superintendent, Central Office personnel, Board of Education members, teacher union leadership, consultants, community members, reporters, and administrators. The list of participants deliberately does not include teachers, parents, or students, as the focus of the oral history case study is on the political aspects of policy adoption and implementation. The interviews and data collection remained focused on the parts of the process where the concept of the Dream Schools was first introduced, when the policy and design was sketched and proposed to the Board of Education, until the superintendent resigned from her position. Ultimately, I followed the timeline of the Dream Schools reform initiative from adoption to its demise in the political-administrative sphere.

Organizational Context

Reforms in the San Francisco Unified School District have been constant, as each past superintendent brought with them their own 5-year plan to increase student achievement. The previous superintendent who was so instrumental in the Dream School Initiative has left at the time of this writing, and the five remaining, officially designated Dream Schools are recipients of additional funding, but the dream of the reform model has faded. Currently, SFUSD is embarking on another major reform initiative under the new superintendent. How can the district learn from the experiences of the Dream Schools to not make similar mistakes again? Institutional memory can be an asset since many of the current upper-level managers were around for the Dream Schools era. However, if the managers do not learn from the Dream Schools reform initiative, then the new initiative is likely to produce the same ineffective results.

Limitations

The Oral History of the San Francisco Unified School District has several limitations to consider. First, the scope of the study is bounded by the Dream School reform initiative, a single reform effort in the city of San Francisco. The study was intended to conduct an in depth analysis of the experiences of the Superintendent,

Board of Education members, UESF leadership, SFUSD Central Office members, community leaders, and the media, all in relation to the Dream Schools. To this task, the study has a high level of confirmability, as the oral history and findings are grounded in the data, triangulated for accuracy, and validated through member checking. This study is limited to the scope of these interviewees and their memories of the Dream School reform. Thus it is focused on the SFUSD Dream Schools as a single case. To the degree that it confirmed theories that I originally consulted, the study's findings may generalize to other cases, but generalizable conclusions are not intended. The strength of this study is to help local actors to see more clearly and to learn from past efforts how to make things better in present and future initiatives.

Another limitation is related to my information sources. The Dream School implementation took place from 2003-2006, and my interviews took place in 2010. Therefore, when my interviewees recollected their memories, they were going into the past at least four years, and in some cases much further. Understandably, our memories are subject to change over time, therefore, influencing our views of what happened. Subjectively, we tend to remember partial details of our past as they relate to our present views. Equally so, our biases, whether acknowledged or not, seep into our collective memory of the past. Although I triangulated my data, these issues of memory are a definite limitation to my study. In addition, I only interviewed the political leaders in San Francisco, but I did not interview any teachers, parents, or students. It is without a doubt that such interviews would have added important perspectives to the oral history.

Throughout this study there was the potential for an advocacy bias on my part. It is important that I acknowledge that I was the principal of the Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academy, one of the Phase I Dream Schools. Therefore, I experienced first hand the excitement and the political drama of the Dream Schools. As I conducted my study, I made deliberate attempts to remain neutral in my interviews. I kept an open mind to allow for memories and opinions that differed from my own. I checked my bias by ensuring that these differing opinions were included in the oral history narrative, with an honest and fair representation. My participation as an actor in the Dream Schools was known by all of my interviewees, as I made every effort to be upfront and candid about my personal and professional experiences. Truthfully, I believe that my participation in the Dream Schools gave me better access to my interviewees, and created relationships where my interviewees were willing to share openly about their memories. Nevertheless, my personal involvement in the Dream School reform initiative is a bias, and limits my objectivity to some degree. Without a doubt, this must be considered a limitation for my study.

Data and Data Collection Strategies

The types of data that I collected throughout this case study included interviews with participants, and the collection of documents, reports, and media articles. Many of the anticipated participants of this oral history case study were still employed by the San Francisco Unified School District, and were relatively easy

to contact. There were several participants who at the time of data collection lived on the east coast, and I needed to expend some effort obtaining information to contact them. For a few of the participants, I needed to dedicate expansive effort to locate their contact information and establish communication. I was able to converse with all 24 people who I sought to interview. By triangulating all of the data I collected, I interpreted what each participant's experience was with regards to the Dream Schools.

In order to accumulate the documents related to the design of the Dream School Reform Initiative, I contacted Central Office personnel, Dream School administrators, consultants, the SFUSD media office, the SFUSD Board of Education, the SFUSD website, newspaper companies, the UESF teacher union office, and I assembled my personal collection of items. As I conducted the case study, additional documents and materials were incorporated into the collection. These documents, as well as the series of interviews, provided the majority of the data used for the qualitative research.

Instruments and Protocols

The interviews began with certain initial questions to gather general information about the Dream School reform initiative. The interview protocol included the phases of the reform, including the politics of the adoption process, the quality of the design, the implementation plan, the politics of the actual implementation, the implementation process and the outcome. This interview protocol was used with every participant. Due to the locations of the participants, some of these interviews needed to be on the phone instead of in person. Once my preliminary interviews had been completed, I conducted follow-up interviews with selected participants. There were 24 initial interviews, and 4 follow-up interviews. These second interviews served to clarify commentary, ask follow-up questions to deepen the understanding of topics, triangulate information, and address any conflicting statements that had been made. During all interviews, I took into consideration the slippery slope of memory, where details and facts may have become lost or skewed over time.

Documents were collected to serve as historical timepieces that memorialized action items, policies, decisions, meetings, and events. For the purpose of this oral history, these documents included Board of Education meeting agendas, Central Office planning minutes, Dream School policy papers, photographs, newsletters, brochures, emails, test score data, and newspaper articles. These documents helped establish the historical context of the Dream School reform initiative, as well as provided a foundation of information on which to base the interview questions. Documents alone did not contribute to the rigor of a historical study. However, they served as the historical backdrop of which to ask general and pointed questions that dug deeper into the research question.

Interview Cycles

The first interview cycle began in May 2010. I began by contacting all of the potential participants, and setting up a schedule for the first round of interviews. The order of the interviews was not particularly important for the first cycle. Each of the interviewees was deliberately chosen based on their proximity to the Dream School design and implementation sequence of events. All of these people were directly involved in, or intimately observed, at least one of the phases I laid out in the conceptual framework: the politics around the adoption, the blueprint of the design, the implementation plan, and/or the implementation process. I expected that each initial interview would shed some light on the details of at least one phase, identifying key politically powerful players, significant decisions, critical incidents, and important motives for action.

Table 1: Title of interview participants and the number in each category

TITLE	QUANTITY
Superintendent	One
Central Office Administrators Associate Superintendent Assistant Superintendent	Ten
Board of Education Members	Four
School Site Administrator	Three
Teacher Union President	Two
Consultant	Two
Community Member	One
Journalist	One

Based on the data collected through my first round of interviews, I chose specific interviewees to participate in the second interview cycle. This second interview was intentionally focused on filling in any gaps in the sequence of the phases, sifting through conflicting accounts, and triangulating information in order to draw reliable conclusions. The protocol for the second interview was based on the data collected through the first cycle of interviews. Therefore, precise interview questions could not be determined before data collection started.

Data Analysis

As I approached the historical nature of this case study, I first focused on establishing a sequence of events. Since an oral history is a collection of memories, combining the recollections of all participants into a coherent timeline was a critical first step. Once the timeline was established, I produced a valid interpretation of the data. By processing all of the interviews and documents, I derived consistent themes and pivotal moments during the Dream School design phase. Finally, through my interpretation, I developed an explanation for why there was a high

level of contestation during the implementation of the Dream School reform initiative.

When analyzing the historical data, I focused on two areas that are commonly used by historians to establish a high level of rigor in oral history case study research. These two areas are confirmability and dependability. I approached confirmability with the frame that I would begin interviews with general questions to establish a baseline of data, and then ask deliberate targeted questions that would uncover deeper emotions (Charlton, 2006). These pointed questions were used to connect events with the emotions that were uncovered. In order to ensure that confirmability was established, I triangulated different data sources to justify common themes that were created. It is important to note that one cannot expect answers on one occasion to replicate those on another, because they emerge from different circumstances of production. Similarly, the validity of answers derives not from their correspondence to meanings held within the respondent, but from their ability to convey situated experiential realities in terms that are locally comprehensible (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995).

This triangulation of data was also critical to address the inherent bias of retrospection on the part of the interviewees. I used member checking to determine the accuracy of my qualitative findings by sharing my reports with my participants. I used rich and thick description to convey findings and make the results richer and more realistic. Thick description, a term coined by ethnographer Clifford Geertz, is not a single view of the experience, but a large enough number of testimonies that great variety in detail is obtained. I clarified my bias that I brought to the study, by writing an open and honest narrative and deep self-reflection. Lastly, I addressed rival explanations and discrepant information that ran counter to the themes that I had established, making the case study more realistic and more valid (Creswell, 2009).

Through the historical method lens, it was critical that I used my data effectively to establish the historical context of events, while understanding the limitations of a participant's recollection. There is never absolute certainty about any event, about any fact, no matter what sources are used. No single source or combination of them can ever give a picture of the total complexity of the reality. We cannot reconstruct a past event, no matter how recent, in its entirety (Yow, 2005).

For my research project, the initial goal was to design an oral history case study that had a high degree of confirmability, making it credible and applicable within the bounds of the case. Through my thick description, another researcher may determine that my interpretive conclusions serve as a starting place for their own research in a different case. However, being able to transfer my results to other school districts is not a direct purpose, or intention, of my oral history case study. All theory and data analysis is solely limited to my case. This oral history case study is deliberately designed to establish trustworthiness with the reader, whereby the narrative rings true and resonates with people who have encountered similar situations (Charlton, 2006). Traditionally, authors have developed theory by combining observations from previous literature, common sense, and experience (Huberman and Miles, 2002). To the degree that findings from my case confirm the conceptual framework that I initially generated from theories of educational politics

and policy implementation, my case may bolster the fruitfulness of these theories for further inquiry.

Dependability demonstrates that the operations of a case study can be repeated with the same results (Yin, 2009). The goal of dependability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study. In order to maintain dependability in my study, I documented the step-by-step procedures of my oral history case study. I checked my transcripts to ensure that there are no obvious mistakes during transcription. I focused on my analytical codes to make sure there was not a drift in the definition of the codes. In addition, I developed a case study protocol to document procedures around data collection, and created a case study database, which organized and documented the data that I collected. Through these steps, I intended to establish a high degree of dependability, whereas if others chose to reanalyze my data, they will arrive at similar conclusions.

Coding the Data

Throughout my data collection, I paid particular attention to the data in terms of the four phases of my conceptual framework. Specifically, all of the data was coded into one of four categories: the politics around the adoption, the blueprint of the design, the implementation plan, and/or the implementation process. The sequence of these four phases is the foundation of the Dream Schools, therefore all interview questions were posed to understand and explain how the participants experienced each of these phases, and how they influenced one another during these respective phases. The following table will explain the coding process in more detail.

Table 2: Initial Coding Process with Descriptions

PHASE	CODE	DESCRIPTION
Politics around Adoption	PA	Comments dealing with how the Dream Schools concept was originally created, how it was chosen to be adopted, and how politics influenced people to adopt it.
Blueprint of the Design	BD	Comments that describe what the Dream Schools were originally designed to look like, and specifics around who advocated for which types of design.
Implementation Plan	IP1	Comments about how the Dream School design was intended to be rolled out at the school sites, who influenced decisions, and how the decisions were made.
Implementation Process	IP2	Comments about how the implementation plan was actually put into action, who influenced decisions, and how the decisions were made.

In addition to these four main categories, five subcategories arose throughout the two rounds of data collection.

Table 3: Subcategories of Coding Process with Descriptions

Subcategory	CODE	DESCRIPTION
Starting with the Community	SC	Comments dealing with how the Dream Schools concept was originally communicated to the school communities in Phase I and Phase II.
Strategic Planning vs. Urgency	PU	Comments that describe the dilemma of needing time to create good strategic plans, yet wanting to start reforming immediately.
Residual Emotions	RE	Comments about how interviewees still held on to painful memories of the past.
Contestation between the superintendent, board members, and teacher union.	CO	Comments about the political battles between the superintendent, school board members, and the president of the teacher union.
Breaking Point	BP	Comments that described the politics that caused the superintendent to resign.

These subcategories served to deeper understand the decisions that were made within the four phases of the Dream Schools reform initiative, the interactions between the participants, the motives behind certain decisions, and the micro-politics involved in the outcomes. They also assisted in acknowledging the slippery slope of memory, and whether participants are remembering facts, or their interpretation of the facts.

Timelines

Once I began the data collection phase of my study, all interviews were conducted within a three-month period. Throughout the data collection process, I continuously labeled, categorized, and organized the data so that they were easily found for future analysis. Once the interviews were completed, I took two months to code the data and analyze the information. After the data was completely coded, analyzed, and interpreted, I began the final phase of writing down my analysis and conclusions. This writing phase took 6 months. In all, the data collection, analysis, and write-up took a total of 11 months.

Commitments of Study Participants

For each participant in this study, the commitment was a minimum of one interview, with the possibility of follow-up interviews. If a particular participants' role was more informative about the key issues regarding my research question, then a follow up interview was more likely. On the contrary, if an interviewee simply provided some basic foundational information that was limited, it was likely

that the one interview would suffice. I made the interviews most convenient for the interviewees, in the location that they preferred, and at their most optimal time. Most interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes, yet five interviews were over 90 minutes, depending on the quality of the questions/responses, and the willingness of the interviewee to continue.

Chapter IV

As was explained earlier, I present my findings in two steps. First I produce a narrative of unfolding events, critical incidents, and the decisions and motives that compelled interviewees to act in this way or that. Secondly, I distill from the material themes that represent the more deep-seated forces that make the flurry of day-to-day events intelligible.

A. The Narrative

The oral history of the SFUSD Dream Schools is the story of a controversial school reform model, riveted by political warfare, replete with power struggles and racial tension. I initially proposed to begin the oral history in 2004, with the grand opening of the first three Dream Schools. However, after many interviews, my sources directed me far further back than the reform initiative being researched. The policy churn that culminated with the Dream Schools actually began in 1983, with the introduction of the Consent Decree, required by the federal courts in order to desegregate the District's schools. Given the importance of these previous years, and their influence on the Dream School reform initiative, I will begin this chapter with a "historical context" section, summarizing this history from 1983-2003.

I have compiled the narrative with two purposes in mind: First of all, I wanted to distill a sequence of events by establishing consistency among my varied and at times conflicting sources. Secondly, I wanted to understand how contextual conditions, personal motives of the acting protagonists, and emergent processes not intended by anybody, but nevertheless powerful, propelled the story forward.

The narrative covers November 2003-June 2006. In an effort to better digest the content and themes of the oral history, I have divided this time period into episodes or phases, each with its own characteristic flavor and flow of critical incidents. The phases are:

1983-2003:	Historical Context
November 2003 – May 2004:	Initiation and Adoption of Design
June – July 2004:	The Final Preparations
August 2004:	The Dream has Arrived
September – December 2004:	The Rise of the Resistance
January – July 2005:	The Dream Becomes a Nightmare
August 2005 – June 2006:	The Final Year

The oral history is predominantly a chronology of events, sequencing the significant events, conflicts, and motives of my sources. During my data collection, there were several moments where different sources shared their perspectives around the same issue, and the information conflicted. These inconsistencies in the story are represented in the oral history, and are deliberately inserted to highlight the differing points of view of my sources. Overall, the oral history that is told here is the prevailing view amongst my sources and is my attempt to share the story of the San Francisco Unified School District Dream Schools.

1983-2003 ≈ Historical Context

The United States Supreme Court decided in 1954 that African American students should be allowed to attend the same schools as all other students in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Since this court decision, the African American students in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) have been consistently underperforming when compared to their white and Asian peers. Schools in SFUSD have experienced de facto segregation, especially in the Bayview Hunters Point and Mission neighborhoods. These schools were the epitome of dysfunction and disadvantage, and according to many, had been disregarded by the school district. In short, they had been permitted to underachieve academically.

On June 30, 1978, the San Francisco chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a class action lawsuit against SFUSD that represented every student in the school district. The complaint by the NAACP alleged that SFUSD had engaged in discriminatory practices and maintained a segregated school system in the City and County of San Francisco in violation of the constitutions and laws of the United States and the State of California.¹ A Settlement Team was established and by 1983, a formal *Consent Decree* settlement was written, which was enforced by the courts, and held SFUSD responsible for desegregating all public schools in San Francisco and increasing the academic achievement of all African American and Hispanic students.

Implementation of the Consent Decree began in 1983, and the initial schools included three elementary schools (Carver, Drake, and Drew), two middle schools (King and Mann), and one high school (Burton). SFUSD radically shifted the enrollment of Carver, Drake, Drew and Mann so they could satisfy the new student desegregation guidelines, which mandated that no racial/ethnic group could make up more than 45% of the student body. King and Burton were brand new schools, created through the Consent Decree, so their initial enrollment was required to also satisfy the student desegregation guidelines. In order to meet the established enrollment targets, many African American students were bussed across town to reduce the percentage of African American students in the Consent Decree schools. In addition to the students being shifted around between schools, the entire faculties and staffs of the Consent Decree schools were reconstituted. The intent of reconstitution was to replace the entire faculty and administration, with the expectation that the incoming staff would be a more effective entity in improving academic achievement. Teachers and administrators were forced to leave the Consent Decree school sites and were transferred to other district schools, in an effort to give each of the Consent Decree school communities a clean slate to launch their reform.

The Consent Decree schools redefined themselves as academic magnet schools with particular curricular foci, and each had a comprehensive plan for

¹ Consent Decree, *San Francisco NAACP, et al. Plaintiffs vs. San Francisco Unified School District, et al. Defendants*, (Civil No. C-78-1445 WHO, 1983).

increasing student achievement, providing professional development for staff, extra-curricular activities for students, and parent participation. The court monitored the implementation of the Consent Decree to ensure that all of the criteria were being met. An annual report was submitted to the court to provide updates on enrollment data and student achievement scores. The report also documented if the hundreds of millions of extra dollars, provided by the state and local budgets and stipulated to support the Consent Decree, were being spent appropriately.

Over the course of the next 17 years, SFUSD would experience a turbulent and tumultuous rollercoaster of failed Consent Decree phases, court ordered reconstitutions, and superintendent turnover. Superintendent Robert Alioto handed over the keys to the District in 1985 to Carlos Cornejo as acting superintendent, who subsequently was replaced by Ramon Cortines in 1986. The initial Consent Decree phase of six schools was deemed a success by the court. On this basis, the District created additional phases so that the Consent Decree would improve more schools. The original group of schools (Burton, Carver, Drake, Drew, King, and Mann) was therefore referred to as the Consent Decree Phase 1 schools. Each subsequent group of Consent Decree schools was identified by the phase they were a part of, ranging from Phase 2 to Phase 4.

In 1992, supervising Judge William H. Orrick established a Committee of Experts to perform an in depth analysis of the current conditions of SFUSD and the Consent Decree schools. The Committee acknowledged the Decree as being “possibly one of the most extensive educational reform efforts that have been carried out in the last generation in an urban school district.”² The Committee of Experts found that SFUSD had largely achieved the Decree’s desegregation goals, yet had not realized its goals for academic achievement for the overwhelming majority of African American and Hispanic students.

Specifically, the Committee of Experts found that Phase 1 had worked, by reconstituting the staff, developing a school philosophy and plan, and staying committed to the goals of the Consent Decree. The report, however, asserted that the subsequent Phases 2-4 were negotiated between the parties without any clear educational plans and without replacing the old school staffs, and produced no significant overall gains. The Decree became simply another funding source. The Committee surmised that “there was no proof in San Francisco that the provision of large budgets to fund school level plans, without the reconstitution and staff development that distinguished Phase 1, would produce any academic benefits for the victims of segregation.”³

Just after the Committee’s Report came out, SFUSD elected its new Superintendent, Waldemar Rojas, in 1992. As Rojas took office, the Committee was

² Gary Orfield, *Desegregation and Educational Change in San Francisco, Findings and Recommendations on Consent Decree Implementation*, (Committee of Experts Report to Judge William H. Orrick and the U.S. District Court, July 1992).

³ Ibid.

sharing its findings with SFUSD. The Committee was convinced that a major factor in the success of the Phase 1 schools was that they were each reconstituted. According to the Committee, “The result was the replacement of many burned-out teachers who wanted to leave those schools with teachers chosen for their commitment to the new plan, and the provision of the funds for retraining, supporting staff, and equipment.”⁴ In an effort to address the ineffectiveness of Phases 2-4, the Committee suggested that the District should initiate reconstitution of at least three schools each year, beginning with those that have achieved no gains after receiving Consent Decree funds. If a school refused to reconstitute, the recommendation was that the school no longer receive the additional funding. This rededication to the reconstitution strategy of school improvement was to continue, “until the task was completed.”⁵ In closing, the Committee of Experts stressed the high level of urgency around the need to act immediately to support the most underserved and underperforming students in San Francisco. Over the next seven years under Rojas, hundreds of teachers would be removed from their school sites through the reconstitution process.

In 1999, Superintendent Rojas was under investigation for fraud, and SFUSD began its search for new leadership. School Board Commissioner Jill Wynns and United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) Teacher Union President Kent Mitchell began a collaborative search for a new superintendent. Typically, the teacher union is not included in the search for a new superintendent. However, Wynns and Mitchell had a very collaborative working relationship, so the collaborative search was a natural process.⁶ Together, they recruited the then superintendent of Washington D.C., Dr. Arlene Ackerman. In 2000, Dr. Ackerman headed to the west coast to become the San Francisco Unified School District’s first woman and first African American superintendent.⁷

From the beginning of her tenure in 2000, Dr. Ackerman enjoyed the positive collaborative nature of her working relationship with UESF and the majority of the School Board (Jill Wynns, Dr. Dan Kelly, Eddie Chin, and Heather Hiles). Ackerman addressed the corrupt activities of Rojas, resulting in millions of dollars recaptured by the District, and several criminal arrests.⁸ The superintendent wrote her 5-year plan, *Excellence for All*, which was specifically designed to address the achievement gap that existed throughout SFUSD. The African American and Hispanic students

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ United Educators of San Francisco Teacher Union President Kent Mitchell, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 30, 2010; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Jill Wynns, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 16, 2010.

⁷ Luis Ricardo Fraga, Nick Rodriguez, and Bari Anhalt Erlichson, *Besieged – School Boards and the Future of Education Politics*. (Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 102-128.

⁸ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Wynns, 2010, *see note 6 above*.

remained underperforming when compared to their white and Asian peers, and the superintendent had every intention of changing that.⁹ To support this endeavor, Dr. Ackerman hired three of her former colleagues, Chief Academic Officer Elois Brooks, Deputy Superintendent Myong Leigh, and Budget Analyst Nancy Waymack, who joined the leadership team in SFUSD. In addition, Dr. Ackerman lobbied to have the Consent Decree extended past its 2002 expiration date. Certainly, having significant extra funds would endow more promising opportunities for SFUSD students to achieve. The courts saw enough logic and promise in Ackerman's 5-year plan that they extended the Consent Decree expiration date, and changed it to Dec 31, 2005.

According to Chief Academic Officer Elois Brooks, Dr. Ackerman and she analyzed the performance of different schools in SFUSD, concluding that better support was needed for the most underperforming schools. They found that these schools, predominantly in the Bayview Hunters Point (BVHP) and Mission neighborhoods of San Francisco, had a vast majority of African American and Hispanic students. After a year of planning, in 2002, Dr. Ackerman unveiled the Students and Teachers Achieving Results (STAR) Program, which would provide strategic additional personnel, and \$500 per student in additional funding, to certain underperforming schools in an effort to create a stronger foundation for student academic achievement.¹⁰ In just its first year of implementation, Assistant Superintendent Christine Hiroshima recalled that, "many STAR schools showed growth for both their African American and Hispanic student populations. There were still some schools that were not achieving and Arlene was really concerned about that. She felt a high level of urgency to support these schools and the children within them."¹¹

As 2003 began on the heels of the implementation of the STAR Program, the UESF leadership election was beginning to heat up. The incumbent president Kent Mitchell was under fire from challenger Dennis Kelly, who claimed that Mitchell was "a weak leader, and did not represent the best interests of all teachers in SFUSD. Teachers did not appreciate that he worked well with Ackerman and were not

⁹ San Francisco Unified School District, *Excellence for All: A Five-Year Comprehensive Plan to Achieve Educational Equity in the San Francisco Unified School District*, (San Francisco Unified School District, Adopted by the Board of Education, April 2001).

¹⁰ SFUSD Chief Academic Officer Elois Brooks, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 19, 2010; SFUSD Administrator Dee Dee Desmond, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 19, 2010; SFUSD Deputy Superintendent Myong Leigh, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 27, 2010. SFUSD distributed a STAR Schools brochure that identified the specifics of the program, as well as the schools that would receive the STAR resources.

¹¹ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Christine Hiroshima and Deborah Sims, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 15, 2010.

pleased with the direction things were going.”¹² In response, Mitchell drafted a myriad of examples of how he frequently challenged Superintendent Rojas, and always held a strong position of supporting UESF constituents. In May of 2003, Dennis Kelly was elected the new president of the United Educators of San Francisco.¹³ For Kent Mitchell, his 6 years as UESF president had abruptly come to an end. For Superintendent Ackerman, her ally and collaborative partner in UESF had been replaced.

The fall semester of 2003 began, Assistant Superintendent Deborah Sims recounted that, “Dr. Ackerman began to brainstorm strategies to address the failing STAR schools. Along with Elois Brooks, she recruited Assistant Superintendent Christine Hiroshima and myself to join her in the think tank on the 3rd floor of 555 Franklin Street. We focused on the urgent need to transform the failing schools.”¹⁴ After several weeks of researching, planning, and discussing, an idea was born. Ackerman shared,

“86% of the STAR schools did well, but there was a group of schools that persistently seemed to, no matter what we did, no matter how many resources we put into those schools, it did not seem to matter. They didn’t seem to get better. My thought was if they needed a radical overhaul and a radical overhaul meant not just changing the staff and putting new principals in place, but actually doing something different. Doing something different to me was putting in place in those schools the kinds of opportunities that young people in private schools or rich school systems get everyday.”¹⁵

Superintendent Arlene Ackerman had secured the Consent Decree funding, and although she lost a reliable ally in ex-UESF President Kent Mitchell, she still had a coalition of School Board members that she could count on for support. This coalition was led by Commissioner Jill Wynn, and included Dr. Dan Kelly, Eddie Chin, and Heather Hiles, who consistently followed Wynn’s lead. After weeks of planning, brainstorming, creating, organizing, and developing, Dr. Ackerman told her cabinet that things were about to change in San Francisco in a dramatic fashion. The time had come to serve the underperforming students in SFUSD like they had never been served before. The time had come for a private school education in the public schools, in the most challenging neighborhoods full of poverty, drugs, and

¹² United Educators of San Francisco Teacher Union President Dennis Kelly, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 23, 2010.

¹³ UESF Teacher Union President Mitchell, 2010, *see note 6 above*.

¹⁴ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

¹⁵ SFUSD Superintendent Dr. Arlene Ackerman, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, August 6, 2010.

violence. As she stood before her cabinet, Ackerman said, it was time to “create the *Dream Schools*.”¹⁶

November 2003 – May 2004 ≈ Initiation and Adoption of Design

The Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco was home to several of the STAR schools that did not show increased student achievement from the additional resources. Dr. Ackerman calendared community meetings in BVHP, where she asked the parents to dream about the school they would want for their children, and made promises of making those dreams come true. Ackerman reached out to the local clergy, and shared her passion for change with them, and hundreds of people came to the community meetings to hear about the new possibilities for their children.

Dr. Ackerman connected with her colleague Dr. Lorraine Monroe, a renowned African American leader in education, and founding principal of the highly successful Frederick Douglass Academy in Harlem, New York. Dr. Monroe took a school infamous for violence, low achievement and poor attendance and turned it into a scholastic powerhouse.¹⁷ Ackerman’s motive was to rally political support for reforming the BVHP schools by sending some community members to Harlem to visit the Frederick Douglass Academy. She felt that before she could formally propose the Dream School concept to the Board, and before schools could be picked, she needed to harness the commitment of the parents of the future Dream School scholars.¹⁸

As the community meetings continued, Dr. Ackerman invited all of the schools in Bayview Hunters Point to consider becoming a Dream School. She heard editorials and testimonials from parents, community members, teachers, and students. At one community meeting, Dr. Ackerman invited a delegation of clergy members, administrators, teachers, and parents to participate on a fully funded trip to visit Dr. Monroe’s school in Harlem. Ackerman said, “If you would like to go to New York and see these schools, Dr. Monroe invited you, and maybe that’s what you should do, and come back and talk to principals and parents.”¹⁹ The new calendar year had begun, and Dr. Ackerman had drafted veteran SFUSD administrator Dr. Tony Anderson to lead the delegation to New York to observe first hand the Dr. Lorraine Monroe model in action. Anderson was well known in the African-American community, from his years as a principal in SFUSD, and in his outreach to

¹⁶ SFUSD Administrator Tony Anderson, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 22, 2010; SFUSD Chief Academic Officer Brooks, 2010, *see note 10 above*; SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

¹⁷ Arlene Ackerman, *Making the Grade*, (San Francisco Unified School District, April 2004).

¹⁸ SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

¹⁹ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

the community. Anderson was joined by Assistant Superintendent Deborah Sims, and notable community leaders Reverend Amos C. Brown of the 3rd Baptist Church, Christopher Muhammad from the Nation of Islam, and Minister Roland Gordon of Ingleside. Just weeks later, in December 2003, their plane landed in New York.²⁰

Reverend Brown remembered that it was a “mixed delegation of business people, ministers, black chamber, parents, and educators in search of a panacea.”²¹ Dr. Anderson recalled that he was responsible for leading the delegation to New York, where they were, “specifically to address, as a priority, the needs of the African American community in terms of closing the achievement gap.”²² They were supposed to make their observations, and to come back and report in community meetings, and to the School Board. Reverend Brown added that the visiting group was “impressed by the schools they saw, and were convinced that the Lorraine Monroe model of school reform could have the same level of success back in Bayview Hunters Point.”²³ The blueprint for the Dream Schools model was beginning to take form.

When they returned, the New York delegation shared details about Dr. Monroe’s schools with the Bayview Hunters Point community. They told of the hallways full of students in collared shirts and ties, college pennants adorning every door, kids going from Latin class to tennis lessons, academic language in the air, and committed adults in every class. The delegation told of the mirrors in the entryways, so the students could ensure that they were “dressed for success” as they entered the school.²⁴ The ministers told the community of the creed the students would recite each morning, and the rituals they had learned to focus their energy on their learning. Bayview Hunters Point was excited, and parents began to advocate for the superintendent to bring these Dream Schools to their community.²⁵ It appears that Superintendent Ackerman’s motive was to leverage the African American leaders to rally the African American community, in an effort to support the Dream School initiative in the predominantly African American schools.

Arlene Ackerman had received the positive debrief from the New York delegation, and continued to strategize how to get the Dream School reform

²⁰ SFUSD Administrator Anderson, 2010, *see note 16 above*; SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

²¹ 3rd Baptist Church Reverend Amos C. Brown, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 4, 2010; SFUSD Administrator Anderson, 2010, *see note 16 above*.

²² SFUSD Administrator Anderson, 2010, *see note 16 above*.

²³ 3rd Baptist Church Reverend Brown, 2010, *see note 21 above*.

²⁴ The mirrors in the entryway of the Dream Schools had the question, “Are you dressed for success?” next to the mirrors.

²⁵ SFUSD Administrator Anderson, 2010, *see note 16 above*; SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

initiative adopted by the SFUSD Board of Education. Assistant Superintendent Sims recalled that, “Ackerman sought support from local arts providers, in hopes of establishing a comprehensive arts curriculum and extracurricular opportunities for the future Dream School scholars. The excitement of the Dream Schools was a magnet for support, and soon the San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Symphony, and Carol Shorenstein Hays of *Lion King* fame, were on board to support the Dream Schools.”²⁶ They pledged to provide donations, free tickets to performances, private tours of their facilities, and marching band uniforms. As the arts providers committed their support to Dr. Ackerman, the Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco ex-Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, and San Francisco District 10 Supervisor Sophie Maxwell also pledged their support. Further support came from the Bill Gates Foundation and Wells Fargo Bank, who pledged \$135,000 and \$150,000 respectively, to enhance the Dream School program.²⁷

Back in the think tank on the 3rd Floor of 555 Franklin Street, Brooks, Sims and Hiroshima were continuing to design the blueprint of the Dream School reform initiative.²⁸ They considered the essential components of the Lorraine Monroe model, and discussed the appropriateness and relevance of these components to the Bayview Hunters Point community. The think tank was essentially a planning room, where the superintendent, deputy and assistant superintendents, chief academic officer, and other central office specialists held discussions about school uniforms, parent contracts, creeds, rituals, routines, college going culture, extended days, foreign languages, arts, sports, curriculum, the Black Board Configuration, non-negotiable rules, Saturday School, professional development, enrollment applications, and the reconstitution of staffs. After several weeks of planning, designing, and refining the Dream School components, Sims recalls that “an official draft was written, and a PowerPoint presentation was created for the purposes of informing and educating the community, and soliciting support.”²⁹

Meanwhile, Superintendent Ackerman was visiting the BVHP school communities, hosting conversations and continuing to spread her passion about the Dream School reform proposal. By January 2004, she had formal commitments from parents and teachers from the school communities of Dr. Charles R. Drew Elementary, 21st Century Academy, and Gloria R. Davis Middle School. George Washington Carver Elementary School, Bret Harte Elementary School, and Malcolm X Academy (formerly Sir Francis Drake Elementary) had opted out of becoming a

²⁶ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

²⁷ Heather Knight, “Bank Giving \$150,000 to Dream Schools,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 12, 2004.

²⁸ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

²⁹ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

Dream School.³⁰ The identification of these three schools aligned the school communities around the reform initiative, and the blueprint of the Dream School design that they would implement.

On January 21, 2004, SFUSD Superintendent Arlene Ackerman gave her “State of the Schools” address to the School Board, unveiling her plan to bring components of private schools to the public schools.³¹ The Dream Schools were to be defined by their academic rigor and high expectations, the nurturing of potential, and encouragement of success of students and teachers. Drew, 21st Century, and Davis would be called college preparatory academies, to symbolize their commitment to educating scholars. To sustain the ongoing support for these Dream School scholars, the three schools would have an alternative grade configuration to allow for a Pre-K through 12th grade continuum. Specifically, Dr. Charles R. Drew College Preparatory Academy would serve Pre-K through 3rd grade, 21st Century College Preparatory Academy would serve grades 4-6, and Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academy would serve grades 7-12. The official Dream Schools brochure defined them by their seven core components of “academic achievement, instructional models and student support systems, varied learning experiences, college connections, career opportunities, parent empowerment, and a safe, friendly, learning environment.”³²

By February 2004, the school communities had seen the PowerPoint presentation of the Dream School components, and were privy to the opportunities that were now available to their community. There was a tremendous level of support from the African American community and black clergy to make the Dream Schools a reality. Assistant Superintendent Christine Hiroshima recalled, “Ackerman did a lot of political mapping in her head, and that’s why she worked with the community so well.”³³ Ackerman leveraged this support from the African American community, and announced that her Dream School plan “would help accomplish the goals of the landmark 1954 case *Brown v. Board of Education*, finally addressing the issue of separate but unequal.”³⁴ Although the politicking to create the Dream Schools had already begun in SFUSD, the reform had not yet been officially discussed by the Board of Education.³⁵

³⁰ SFUSD Administrator Anderson, 2010, *see note 16 above*; SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

³¹ Heather Knight, “Dream Schools’ plan angers union, Superintendent wants teachers, aides to reapply for their jobs,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 6, 2004.

³² Dream School Phase I Brochure, *San Francisco Unified School District*, 2004.

³³ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

³⁴ Sara Zaske, “Youths want say in Dream Schools,” *San Francisco Examiner*, February 24, 2004.

³⁵ Sara Zaske, “Dreams on the agenda,” *San Francisco Examiner*, February 12, 2004.

One Dream School issue that began to loom larger and larger, was the fact that all teachers and administrators at the current Dream School sites would need to reapply for their jobs to remain at the sites. The Superintendent's motives were clear. In order for the Dream Schools to be effective, she needed to control who worked at the schools. Dr. Ackerman vehemently advocated for this process, claiming that "in order for the Dream Schools to be successful, they had to ensure that every person that worked at the sites were committed to goals and the vision of the schools."³⁶ Aware of the heart-wrenching reconstitution battles of the previous decade, Assistant Superintendent Jeannie Pon remembered that Ackerman "carefully used the phrase 'reapplying for their jobs' instead of the emotionally driven term of reconstitution."³⁷ Nonetheless, UESF Vice President Linda Plack argued passionately that "the teachers are not the problem, and that replacing them would be a slap in the face to all the dedicated people who go to those schools day in and day out and do a wonderful job."³⁸

The implementation planning process for the Dream School reform initiative had begun, and the first major hurdle was getting approval to turn over the staffs. The stigma of the reconstitution era of the Consent Decree still resonated with many SFUSD employees. SFUSD Board of Education members Mark Sanchez and Eric Mar were directly impacted by the Consent Decree reconstitutions. In 1995, Sanchez was part of the incoming staff at Edison Elementary School, while Mar's wife was part of the outgoing staff at Rafael Weill Elementary. Commissioner Sanchez felt that both of these experiences "held significant residual emotions that clearly biased them against any further reconstitution efforts."³⁹ Along with Sanchez and Mar, UESF President Dennis Kelly was a strong teacher advocate during the 1990's, and personally saw many colleagues get reconstituted, "be unfairly scrutinized and stigmatized as an ineffective teacher, and have to conduct multiple interviews at other district schools to obtain a new teaching position."⁴⁰

As the Dream School reapplication process was proposed and discussed, Sanchez, Mar, and Kelly were highly motivated to take opposition. All three stated that they supported the underperforming students in Bayview Hunters Point, yet all were adamantly opposed to the Dream School reapplication process.⁴¹ Negotiations

³⁶ SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

³⁷ SFUSD Assistant Superintendent Jeannie Pon, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 28, 2010.

³⁸ Heather Knight, February 6, 2004, *see note 31 above*.

³⁹ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mark Sanchez, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, May 27, 2010.

⁴⁰ Sara Zaske, "Union won't stop Dream Schools," San Francisco, CA, *San Francisco Examiner*, February 13, 2004; UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*.

⁴¹ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Eric Mar, interview by author, July 22, 2010; UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*; SFUSD Board of Education

began between UESF and SFUSD, searching for a compromise that would allow teachers to exit future Dream Schools, and maintain their professional dignity. The African American community leaders got wind of this opposition and ripped into UESF officials for fighting a plan intended to improve Bayview Hunters Point schools.⁴² In early February 2004, a compromise was reached between UESF and SFUSD, which said that teachers who were not hired back to a Dream School would have first chance at open positions in the district without being interviewed.⁴³ With that agreement, many teachers at Drew, 21st Century, and Davis would be transferred, leaving a significant number of vacancies to be filled by new teachers, and a tight timeline of five months to do so.

Alongside the Dream Schools, another educational debate was occurring between the superintendent and the Board minority coalition, made up of Mark Sanchez, Eric Mar, and Sarah Lipson. Commissioner Sanchez recognized the urgency to support the underperforming African American students, and proposed to Commissioner Mar that they consider the Small Schools Initiative. The Small Schools approach was a reform design intended to create small schools to focus attention on serving students, and provide additional services to help them succeed. Sanchez recalled,

“In 2002, I had proposed to Eric Mar the whole Small Schools proposal policy. It was a pretty exhaustive policy initiative that people spent about a year creating. I brought it to the Board to try to get buy-in from other Board Members. With Arlene, we brought it to them and literally, we had a series of meetings and it was a packed audience of African American leaders saying we’re racist because we didn’t consult them. It was amazing, like this whole coordinated effort to derail this initiative. Arlene particularly wanted to bridge the achievement gap. She was struggling, so were we, and we came up with an initiative before she did, basically, the small schools model, which she did not like. She didn’t think high schools should be broken up and personalized. She thought that was wrong, and so it got derailed. And one of her avenues to derail it was to bring together the folks that she brought together when she got here. And even though I thought she was going about it the wrong way, I do not think she had any ill intent with what she was trying to do, at all. I think she really wanted the best, but clearly I felt that’s not the way to go about it.”⁴⁴

Commissioner Sanchez, 2010, *see note 39 above*; Zaske, February 12, 2004, *see note 35 above*.

⁴² Heather Knight, “Union won’t resist ‘dream’ plan at 3 schools in SF, teachers will reapply for jobs,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 12, 2004.

⁴³ Zaske, February 13, 2004, *see note 40 above*.

⁴⁴ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Sanchez, 2010, *see note 39 above*.

Ackerman recalled the Small Schools Policy as well, recognizing that she and the Board both acknowledged the urgency to support African American students, they just disagreed on how. Ackerman said, "I think some of my Board Members felt like that instead of creating the Dream School initiative, we should upgrade the schools and do the Small Schools Initiative and leave the teachers there. It was just a disagreement on how we get there. They were upset with me because I did not think that Small Schools was the answer."⁴⁵ The division between Ackerman and the Board minority coalition began to widen because of the Small Schools disagreement. In addition, the divide between Ackerman and the teacher union was widening over the reconstitution of the Dream Schools. Ackerman surmised that, "They both disagreed with me, but on different issues. Where they came together is that they both disagreed with me. They became the unholy alliance."⁴⁶

The political forces began to take shape as the adoption of the Dream Schools was finally placed on the agenda of the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education on March 9, 2004. The Board chamber was filled with members of the African American community, black clergy, educators, media, parents and students. These witnesses heard the first reading of the resolution to support the Dream Schools. Traditionally, the first reading of a resolution was done at the end of a Board meeting, sent to a committee for discussion, and voted upon weeks later. Advocates for the Dream School reform initiative called loudly for a vote to take place immediately.⁴⁷

Reverend Amos C. Brown referenced the *Brown v. Board* court decision and shared that "we are 50 years behind, and that is why I am so passionate about the Dream Schools."⁴⁸ Reverend Carolyn Habersham demanded that the Board approve the superintendent's plan. Nation of Islam Minister Christopher Muhammad claimed that if the Board did not support the Dream School initiative, then they were part of a "conspiracy to destroy black children." Muhammad said, "If somebody comes into the emergency room with a gunshot wound, you do not send them into the waiting room with an aspirin."⁴⁹ Superintendent Ackerman added that, "the urgency to act in the Bayview was paramount, and that continuing to talk about the issues was not enough."⁵⁰ Board Member Eric Mar acknowledged the racial tension in the room, saying,

⁴⁵ SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

⁴⁷ Heather Knight, "Education board OK's Dream Schools plan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10, 2004.

⁴⁸ Sara Zaske, "Dream School debate spurs black activism," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 11, 2004.

⁴⁹ Knight, March 10, 2004, *see note 47 above*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

“I recall that different African American ministers were clearly lined up by Arlene and others to support the Dream Schools. But even just to ask questions is to show a kind of criticism is something like you’re not a team player. That is the impression I got, not just from Reverend Brown, but it was clearly coming from him, but also others that were part of the African American ministers leadership as well. The fact that you have questions about it means that you are not supportive.”⁵¹

The African American community’s presence in the Board Room, and support for Superintendent Ackerman and the Dream Schools was acknowledged by Assistant Superintendent Deborah Sims and Budget Analyst Nancy Waymack. Sims recalled, “In a lot of ways, they really became the buffer. Arlene built that African American task force, and sent them to New York, and she told them she needed them to be here, and they were. They were at the Board Meeting.”⁵² Waymack remembered, “Arlene would accuse Commissioner Mar of being racist. He would say things and then you would get Reverend Brown and company coming down, adding fuel to the fire.”⁵³

On March 9, 2004, the SFUSD Board of Education voted unanimously 7-0 to approve the Dream Schools reform initiative.⁵⁴ Although the resolution was passed, Board Commissioner Sanchez articulated that he supported what was going to happen at the Dream Schools, but that he did not support “race-baiting in policy-making decisions.”⁵⁵ The African American community had successfully assembled its political clout and by filling the Board Room, they influenced the SFUSD Board of Education to vote favorably in support of the Dream School initiative. UESF President Dennis Kelly felt that “when Ackerman would call for support of the Dream Schools, you would find Amos with a microphone with an essentially African American crowd filling the Board Room.”⁵⁶ Dr. Ackerman had begun her work by amassing support in the African American community of Bayview Hunters Point, gathering loyal constituents from the black clergy and Chamber of Commerce, accumulating political support from the mayor and supervisors, and on March 9, 2004, her politicking paid off, and her Dream School initiative was adopted.

⁵¹ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mar, 2010, *see note 41 above*.

⁵² SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

⁵³ SFUSD Budget Department Nancy Waymack, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 28, 2010.

⁵⁴ Knight, March 10, 2004, *see note 47 above*; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Sanchez, 2010, *see note 39 above*; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Wynns, 2010, *see note 6 above*.

⁵⁵ Zaske, March 11, 2004, *see note 48 above*.

⁵⁶ UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*.

The blueprint of the Dream School design was relatively completed, and the plan for implementation began. Unlike the Consent Decree of 1983, the SFUSD Dream Schools were not designed to desegregate the schools, but rather to solely be focused on high academic achievement for the students who went to school there.⁵⁷ Therefore, the students who were at the Dream School sites in the year prior would remain there. SFUSD Administrator Hoover Liddell emphasized, “Only the adults were reconstituted, not the children.”⁵⁸

Given the quantity of action items that lay ahead, especially the hiring of highly qualified teachers, Dr. Ackerman acquired more personnel to ensure that the Dream Schools opened by their projected date of August 2004. In April 2004, Ackerman hired Tamitrice Rice-Mitchell as Project Manager of the Dream School initiative. Rice-Mitchell recalled that, “Together with Elois Brooks, Deborah Sims, and Chris Hiroshima, I began to recruit teachers, schedule interviews, organize classroom demonstrations and observations, and began hiring teaching staff for the three new Dream Schools.”⁵⁹ By the end of April, 400 teachers had applied for the 100 open teaching positions at the SFUSD Dream Schools, with decisions due by the beginning of June.⁶⁰ The SFUSD Human Resources Department listed the criteria for a teacher to qualify for a Dream School teaching position. They were “a valid California teaching credential, at least three years of successful teaching experience with underperforming students, a letter of intent addressing how the applicant’s instructional philosophy relates to the Dream Schools’ expectations, and three references.”⁶¹ Hiroshima recalled, “Sometimes, if a candidate only had one or two years experience, we would still hire them if the principal really wanted them. It was on a case by case basis.”⁶² Regardless, many positions remained vacant, as the opening of schools loomed closer.

⁵⁷ Consent Decree Monitor Stuart Biegel, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, August 13, 2010; Stuart Biegel, *Court-Mandated Education Reform: The San Francisco Experience and the Shaping of Educational Policy after Seattle-Louisville and Ho v. SFUSD*, (Stanford Journal of Civil Rights & Civil Liberties, October 2008); SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*; SFUSD Chief Academic Officer Brooks, 2010, *see note 10 above*.

⁵⁸ SFUSD Administrator Hoover Liddell, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 24, 2010.

⁵⁹ SFUSD Dream School Administrator Tamitrice Rice-Mitchell, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 7, 2010.

⁶⁰ Heather Knight, “Applicants begin lining up for Dream Schools positions,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 30, 2004.

⁶¹ SFUSD Human Resources Job Description in WAD, February 18, 2004.

⁶² SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

By the end of April, a second delegation was onboard a plane to New York to see the Dr. Lorraine Monroe schools in action. This time, Dr. Anderson brought Tamitrice Rice-Mitchell, two hired Dream School administrators, handfuls of newly hired Dream School teachers, parents, and community leaders. Dr. Anderson remembered, "This delegation was as equally impressed as the first, but more importantly, they could witness and experience the very reform model they would soon be accountable for implementing."⁶³ Dr. Lorraine Monroe gave a personal tour of her schools, sharing her experiences, and the video of when the Frederick Douglass Academy was highlighted on "60 Minutes." Similar to the December delegation, they too saw the scholars in uniforms with ties, the mirrors in the entryway, the rigor in the classrooms, the extended school day, the recitation of the student creed, and the overwhelming commitment of everyone who worked there.⁶⁴

Dr. Ackerman's motive to acquaint the future Dream School leaders to Monroe's schools had been a success. The next strategy was to capitalize on Monroe's expertise and enthusiasm by having her come to San Francisco to train the new Dream School staffs. Dr. Lorraine Monroe remembered that she "picked up the phone when Dr. Arlene Ackerman called her, inviting her to come to San Francisco to personally train the newly hired staffs of the Dream Schools."⁶⁵ The details were worked out, Monroe and SFUSD signed a \$150,000 consulting contract, and dates were set for the June 2004 professional development of the Dream School staffs.⁶⁶

June – July 2004 ≈ The Final Preparations

On June 14, 2004, the library at Thurgood Marshall Academic High School was full of the newly hired Dream School teachers, site administrators, Superintendent Ackerman, and other central office leaders for the Dream School Summer Institute. Ackerman had sent each person a personal letter, inviting them to the institute, and commenting that they were about to embark on a special journey, initiated by a week of professional development with Dr. Lorraine Monroe and her consulting team.⁶⁷ This was the formal introduction for the staffs on the Lorraine Monroe model of school reform. Dream School Administrator Tareyton Russ recalled that, "After a grand introduction by Superintendent Ackerman, Dr. Lorraine Monroe told stories of becoming a teacher 50 years earlier, and her leadership experiences of changing children's' lives. The audience felt her

⁶³ SFUSD Administrator Anderson, 2010, *see note 16 above*.

⁶⁴ SFUSD Administrator Rice-Mitchell, 2010, *see note 59 above*.

⁶⁵ Dr. Lorraine Monroe, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 30, 2010.

⁶⁶ Bonnie Eslinger, "Lessons for adults in Dream Schools," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 3, 2005.

⁶⁷ June 11, 2004 letter from Dr. Arlene Ackerman to all new Phase I Dream School staff members.

compassion, her desire to rescue kids from certain death in classrooms, and her willingness to do whatever it took to succeed at the Frederick Douglass Academy in Harlem.”⁶⁸

Just two days earlier, on a late Saturday night, the author himself had missed a call on his cell phone. He listened to the voicemail and was stunned to hear a message from Superintendent Ackerman. The message simply asked Livingston to call her back as soon as he could. After gathering his composure, he dialed the digits and within seconds he was on the line with the superintendent. Ackerman invited Livingston to attend a Dream School training at Thurgood Marshall Academic High School two days later, remaining vague on the details and her motive. Although unclear on the reason for the invite, Livingston accepted and told Ackerman that he would attend.⁶⁹

In the library at Marshall High, the teachers were released to take a 15-minute break. Dr. Ackerman called Livingston over for a side conversation. Ackerman proceeded to offer him the principalship of the Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academy Dream School. Without submitting an application or having been interviewed, Livingston was flabbergasted by the honor and humbly accepted the promotion from his supervisor. Livingston was ecstatic, yet completely naïve about the challenges or the turbulent future that lay in store.⁷⁰

After the break, Dr. Monroe introduced the educators to the core components of her reform model. The group became fluent in the Black Board Configuration (BBC), the Student Creed, the 10 Non-Negotiable Rules and Regulations, the Parent Contract, Test Taking Techniques, and Building Level Action Plans.⁷¹ By the end of the week, the school sites had spent considerable time establishing relationships, organizing their ideas, and developing their action plans for the year. Despite the powerful week of professional development, concerns were brewing that all three schools were only partially staffed, and opening day was a mere two months away.⁷²

After the Dream School Summer Institute, focus was placed on completing the staffing for the Dream Schools. Of the original staffs, 56% of the teachers chose

⁶⁸ SFUSD Administrator Tareyton Russ, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 26, 2010.

⁶⁹ In this paragraph, I deliberately insert myself, the author, as I was directly involved in the Dream Schools as the principal of Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academy. This section serves to shed some light on my conversation with Superintendent Ackerman, and how I was asked to become the principal of Davis.

⁷⁰ Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*; SFUSD Administrator Anderson, 2010, *see note 16 above*; SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*; Livingston as author.

⁷¹ Lorraine Monroe Leadership Institute Tools, www.lorrainemonroe.org.

⁷² SFUSD Administrator Rice-Mitchell, 2010, *see note 59 above*; SFUSD Administrator Russ, 2010, *see note 68 above*.

not to reapply for their jobs, and of those that did, 23% were not rehired. All told, 34% of the original staffs were rehired. In all cases, teachers who were not hired back to the converted school were given the option to go to another district campus.⁷³

Tamitrice Rice-Mitchell worked closely with Deborah Sims, Christine Hiroshima, and newly promoted Assistant Superintendent Jeannie Pon to fill the staffing vacancies. They marketed the vacancies throughout SFUSD, but received few applications from teachers already in the district. Hiroshima recalled the team plowed through “piles of resumes, watched hours of recorded teaching lessons, and spent scores of hours interviewing candidates.”⁷⁴ Hiroshima, Sims, and Rice-Mitchell felt very confident about the candidates they hired for Drew and 21st Century Academy.⁷⁵ By contrast, Jeannie Pon was feeling the stress and urgency around finding the right teachers for the vacancies at Gloria R. Davis, sharing that “We did not get the highly qualified teachers because we started too late. The train had left the station in terms of the best candidates.”⁷⁶ As July drew to a close, Drew and 21st Century were basically staffed, but Davis still needed handfuls of positions filled. The timeline was only weeks now until the start of school, and the urgency of completing the hiring process was peaking.

August 2004 ≈ The Dream Has Arrived

Just weeks before the opening of school, the school sites themselves were getting a facelift. Assistant Superintendent Sims remembered, “The walls were oppressively neglected, planter boxes were empty, windows were cracked, and some even had bullet holes. Superintendent Ackerman leveraged the Dream School initiative to corral the Building and Grounds department, place the Dream Schools at the top of the priority list, and ensure that their facelifts would be completed before the start of school.”⁷⁷ Within weeks, the buildings were painted and live plants were growing. Each school was adorned with a banner inscribing its reborn name as a *college preparatory academy* and the coined phrase “Where students’ dreams come

⁷³ Bonnie Eslinger, “Dream schools irk teachers,” *San Francisco Examiner*, October 20, 2004; Human Resources “Notice of Consolidation” letter to Phase I staffs.

⁷⁴ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*; SFUSD Assistant Superintendent Pon, 2010, *see note 37 above*; SFUSD Administrator Rice-Mitchell, 2010, *see note 59 above*.

⁷⁵ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*; SFUSD Administrator Rice-Mitchell, 2010, *see note 59 above*.

⁷⁶ SFUSD Assistant Superintendent Pon, 2010, *see note 37 above*.

⁷⁷ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

true.”⁷⁸ Rice-Mitchell felt that, “It was as symbolic as it was authentic. Not only did the schools need to feel different, they needed to look different, down to the fresh coat of paint.”⁷⁹

The Bayview Hunters Point community was signing up their children to become Dream School scholars. Nearly 800 families had enrolled into one of the three school sites. The superintendent was motivated to increase the community buy-in for her reform initiative, and mailed a personal letter to each family as they joined the Dream School family.⁸⁰ To introduce the BVHP community to the school staffs, a community barbeque was held on August 14, 2004 at the Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academy campus.⁸¹ Superintendent Ackerman gave praises to the community, and introduced the three Dream School administrators. The media was there interviewing administrators, parents, and the superintendent to better understand what it meant to be a Dream School.

The next weekend, each Dream School site held its Parent Orientation.⁸² Parents and scholars met the school administration, teachers, staff, and took a tour of the academic establishment. In addition, the school principals set the high expectations of the school, and informed the audience of the requirements of being a part of the Dream School family. The guests learned that they must wear a school uniform each day, consisting of black pants or skirt, a white collared shirt, a tie, and a burgundy sweater or blazer on special occasions. They learned that they must memorize a Student Creed, declaring their commitment to their own education. The parents signed a contract, dedicating themselves to supporting the school and their scholar. They analyzed the 10 Non-Negotiable Rules and Regulations, and discussed potential consequences for violating them. Most importantly, they heard about their opportunities to learn a foreign language, have comprehensive music and arts programs, organized sports, an emphasis on college and career planning, intensive tutoring, and lots of extra curricular activities.⁸³ The expectations were shared and the stage was set, only one more week to go.

⁷⁸ Each Dream School was given a banner that read, “Where students’ dreams come true.” The Dream School banners were mounted outside of the front doors of each school.

⁷⁹ SFUSD Administrator Rice-Mitchell, 2010, *see note 59 above*.

⁸⁰ June 21, 2004 letter from Dr. Arlene Ackerman to all Dream School parents and guardians.

⁸¹ Bonnie Eslinger, “Dream believer,” *San Francisco Examiner*, August 10, 2004; “SFUSD Dream Schools Family and Community Celebration” flyer.

⁸² “SFUSD Dream Schools First Mandatory Parent Meeting - Parent Orientation” flyer.

⁸³ Heather Knight, “Dream schools strive to raise bar for kids, innovative methods come to Bayview,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 30, 2004.

On August 30, 2004, the doors to the Dream Schools opened. An “entourage of who’s who in The City” toured the new Dream Schools, including Superintendent Ackerman, Mayor Gavin Newsom, Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, District Attorney Kamala Harris, and Police Chief Heather Fong.⁸⁴ In addition, Board Members Jill Wynns and Heather Hiles visited on opening day. Parents and students came in droves to get their schedules, meet their teachers, and begin their year of education. Several middle school boys showed up for the first day of school without ties, despite the uniform requirement, because uniform shops around the Bayview had run out.⁸⁵ Dream School Administrator Tareyton Russ recalled, “The students without ties were allowed to go into their classes. The implementation process had barely begun and somehow, in an instant, the non-negotiable rules were magically negotiable.”⁸⁶ Politicking had dominated the Dream School scene for 8 months, and now the time had come to focus on the nuts and bolts of the reform implementation.

September –December 2004 ≈ The Rise of the Resistance

The first month of implementation of the Dream School reform initiative included a myriad of emotions and reactions. The Bayview Hunters Point community had gotten its wish, and the Dream Schools focused on implementing the Lorraine Monroe model at their sites.⁸⁷ As excitement ran high, so did fatigue of the staffs, who had worked daily extended days from 8:00-5:00pm. Chief Academic Officer Elois Brooks felt that “the challenge of working in an underperforming school was setting in, as it takes extraordinary effort to turn the tide. The truth of the matter is you have to work harder with poor kids. It does not mean they are deficient in any way mentally, it’s the fact that they have not been exposed enough.”⁸⁸

Ever since Dr. Ackerman first announced the Dream School initiative eight months prior, she alluded to her motive to continue the school transformation into different San Francisco neighborhoods in subsequent years. On September 30, 2004, exactly one month after the opening of the Dream Schools, the superintendent held a “Meet and Confer of Dream Schools and State Sanctioned Schools” and announced

⁸⁴ Bonnie Eslinger, “Dream school debut, S.F. campuses show off extreme summer changes,” *San Francisco Examiner*, August 31, 2004.

⁸⁵ Heather Knight, “City’s Dream Schools open doors on a new era,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 31, 2004; Ruth’s Children Shoppe was the local store where many Dream School scholars purchased their school uniforms.

⁸⁶ SFUSD Administrator Russ, 2010, *see note 68 above*.

⁸⁷ The original brochures for the Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academy included pictures of Dream School scholars in their school uniforms.

⁸⁸ SFUSD Chief Academic Officer Brooks, 2010, *see note 10 above*.

that the next phase of the Dream Schools had been chosen.⁸⁹ Mirroring the language of the Consent Decree reform, “Dr. Ackerman chose to call the first three Dream Schools the *Phase I* schools, and the upcoming new group of Dream Schools, the *Phase II* schools.”⁹⁰ The Phase II Dream Schools slated for reform redesign were John O’Connell High School, Everett Middle School and Sanchez Elementary School in the Mission District, Treasure Island K-8 on Treasure Island, Enola D. Maxwell Middle School in Potrero Hill, Benjamin Franklin Middle School in the Western Addition, and Paul Revere K-8 in Bernal Heights.⁹¹

Contrary to the Phase I Dream Schools, the Phase II school communities did not vote to become Dream Schools. Board Member Wynns recollected, “Polar opposite to Phase I, Phase II was met with mixed emotions, hesitation, and resistance.”⁹² Assistant Superintendent Sims acknowledged the quick timeframe between Phase I and Phase II, stating, “You can say, if I had the gift of time, if I had two years of planning, you don’t because you have two years of these kids dying in these classrooms. There’s an urgency, and a constant give and take.”⁹³

Contestation heated up between the teachers’ union and the superintendent. Ackerman recognized the teacher union’s reluctance to create more Dream Schools. Ackerman said,

“There are some in the teachers’ union who would like to make this an issue because they have an issue with the Dream Schools concept period. I hope the union can come on board and make this a positive venture for our kids and stop fighting something that the parents and community want. For me, it’s almost zero sum game because the parents have everything to lose. The teachers have nothing to lose. Even if they lose their jobs, they get another job. Unless they want to be on the team and come back and work to make this school a better place, I just sort of figured out, I’m really not going to concern myself with the teachers’ or the principals’ thinking about this because this is really what’s good for kids. Now, they backed me into a different position the second year. I started with the teachers trying to convince them of the urgency and it just was such a struggle. So I do not know what to say other than I take these jobs because I do have a sense of urgency. I hope that other people do but when you decide that enough

⁸⁹ September 30, 2004 Agenda from “Meet and Confer on Dream Schools and State Sanctioned Schools.”

⁹⁰ SFUSD Administrator Liddell, 2010, *see note 58 above*.

⁹¹ Heather Knight, “Dream schools program to expand,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 1, 2004.

⁹² SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Wynns, 2010 *see note 6 above*.

⁹³ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

is enough, and that a decade or more of a school's failing meaning there's generations of young people who come through those schools and leave the school system ill-prepared, then it seems to me it's no choice."⁹⁴

At the moment when the Phase I Dream Schools needed support focusing on implementing the nuts and bolts of the reform, politicking resurged to the forefront. Kelly responded by inviting Superintendent Ackerman to appear before the UESF Executive Board on October 6, 2004 to discuss the Phase II Dream Schools. However, the superintendent declined the invitation.⁹⁵ Board Member Eric Mar recalled that, "After Kent Mitchell was defeated by Dennis Kelly, there were immediate efforts that Arlene made to try, I think, to marginalize and isolate the new union leadership and I don't think she was ever able to mend the fence at all."⁹⁶ Kelly recalled that, "Ackerman told me that she saw my election as a direct challenge to her."⁹⁷ Ackerman acknowledged the adversarial relationship between herself and the joint forces of UESF and the Board, referring to them as the "unholy alliance."⁹⁸ Through direct correspondence, and through use of the media, the superintendent and teacher union were creating political chasms between one another and derailing opportunities for collaboration.

The "Meet and Confer" session had spurred questions that UESF had regarding the Phase II Dream Schools. The teacher union had concerns about the process in which Phase II was proceeding, and felt that they were receiving very little information for their constituency. On October 6, 2004, UESF President Dennis Kelly drafted a letter to Labor Relations Director Tom Ruiz containing fourteen questions that UESF had about the Dream Schools, and emphasized that they wanted the answers within a month.⁹⁹ The following evening, Tom Ruiz attended a Dream School meeting at Phase II Dream School Paul Revere Elementary School. Upon entering the meeting, Ruiz received a flyer from a UESF representative that listed the fourteen questions that Dennis Kelly had asked Ruiz the day before, as

⁹⁴ Heather Knight, "Long days at Dream Schools," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 5, 2004; SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

⁹⁵ October 5, 2004 letter from Superintendent Arlene Ackerman to UESF President Dennis Kelly, declining his invitation to attend the October 6, 2004 UESF Executive Board meeting.

⁹⁶ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mar, 2010, *see note 41 above*.

⁹⁷ UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*.

⁹⁸ SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

⁹⁹ October 6, 2004 letter from UESF President Dennis Kelly to SFUSD Labor Relations Director Tom Ruiz regarding fourteen questions UESF had about Phase II Dream Schools.

well as a comment that Ruiz had not answered the questions yet. Ruiz in turn wrote a letter to Kelly, stating that “clearly, I cannot respond to a letter I have not received and I would appreciate such untrue innuendo not be communicated either intentionally or unintentionally.”¹⁰⁰ Ruiz continued by stating the District’s position of being willing to meet more frequently than once per month, and that he hoped “there will be no future misunderstandings as to the District’s willingness to meet with UESF on Dream School implementation and address any questions or concerns UESF might have.”¹⁰¹

Word spread to the Phase II staffs, highlighted by the reoccurring topic of reconstitution, and the possibility that each of them could lose their position at their site. On October 13, 2004, reconstitution became reality as SFUSD Human Resources sent out an official letter, drafting the guidelines and timelines of the reapplication process.¹⁰² Teachers sought support from their representatives at the United Educators of San Francisco, and UESF President Dennis Kelly obliged. He recalled teachers venting, “I’m not good enough? I am staying here doing what I can with these kids. What kind of resources? What kind of leadership are you showing me just to come around and tell me I’m not good enough anyway!”¹⁰³ Kelly began to gather union members, and initiated a campaign motto asking for Ackerman to ‘reform with respect’, and for teachers to ‘reject reconstitution.’¹⁰⁴

Although communication continued between UESF and SFUSD leadership, tension between the two entities remained. Dennis Kelly reached out to Superintendent Ackerman in an email on October 14, 2004, stating his desire for the superintendent to meet with Phase II Dream School teachers to clear the air about the program and her intentions.¹⁰⁵ He mentioned that he “still awaits the answers to the fourteen questions that UESF posed a week prior, and in addition, would like to officially meet weekly because of the importance of the Dream School reform effort that is now affecting ten schools.” Kelly also expressed his desire to,

“seek a positive course of action that we can jointly take. Our offer to aid you in the Dream School effort does not mean that the union will relinquish its role as a critic when we see things that are amiss. We

¹⁰⁰ October 8, 2004 letter from SFUSD Labor Relations Director Tom Ruiz to UESF President Dennis Kelly about false accusations.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² October 13, 2004 Human Resources Letter to Phase II staffs.

¹⁰³ UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*.

¹⁰⁴ UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*; SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*; SFUSD Chief Academic Officer Brooks, 2010, *see note 10 above*; UESF “Reform with Respect” Propaganda flyer.

¹⁰⁵ October 13, 2004 Agenda for Dream School Departmental Coordination Meeting.

wish to stand strongly beside you and join you in the improvement of our schools. We do not seek to embarrass you; we do not wish to show you any disrespect; we are not seeking to remove you from your position. We have offered questions about the methods of the Dream School effort, and we have stated our opposition to reconstitution as a discredited means of accomplishing the goals we share with you.”¹⁰⁶

Kelly had clearly stated the union’s position, and his personal motive to collaborate with the superintendent, yet also reach his goals which were in the union’s best interest. On October 21, 2004, 15 days after they were submitted, Tom Ruiz sent Dennis Kelly the answers to the fourteen questions that UESF had asked regarding the Phase II Dream Schools.¹⁰⁷

As the teacher union organized itself, the parents and community members of the Phase II Dream Schools began politicking as well by ramping up resistance towards the top-down decision to transform their schools. A community meeting at Everett Middle School was designed for the Assistant Superintendents to give their standard PowerPoint presentation, allowing them to inform the Mission community of the details of the Dream School reform model. The room was filled with future Phase II parents, students, teachers, and community members. Even though the audience was predominantly Spanish speaking, “there was no translation provided on the PowerPoint or simultaneously as people spoke. The crowd raised the concern that parents did not get to choose whether or not they wanted a Dream School at Everett.”¹⁰⁸ Some parents shared their disbelief that people in the Mission wanted to become Dream Schools at all. Other parents feared that “a longer school day would rob them of time with their children, since they were stay-at-home parents.”¹⁰⁹ The community meeting became contentious as union representatives, teachers and parents screamed about teachers having to reapply for their jobs.

Ackerman was surprised by the vehement resistance, insisting that “the expansion of the Dream School initiative reflected her commitment to do what is right for kids.”¹¹⁰ In comparing the Dream School support in the Bayview Hunters

¹⁰⁶ October 14, 2004 email from UESF President Dennis Kelly to Superintendent Ackerman.

¹⁰⁷ October 21, 2004 letter from SFUSD Labor Relations Director Tom Ruiz to UESF President Dennis Kelly regarding SFUSD’s responses to the fourteen questions UESF had submitted.

¹⁰⁸ October 6, 2004 communication from Jamestown Community Center Executive Director Claudia Jasin to UESF President Dennis Kelly regarding the October 5, 2004 community meeting at Everett Middle School, commenting on the concerns of the audience.

¹⁰⁹ Heather Knight, “Ackerman’s ‘dream’ ruffles some factions, forced to reapply for jobs, teachers say they are insulted,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 9, 2004.

¹¹⁰ SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

Point community to the resistance from the Mission District, School Board Commissioner Eric Mar felt that “the Bayview accepted the Dream School plan more readily because they did not feel the same ownership of their schools, whereas the Mission schools felt that they were already doing their jobs to improve the schools.”¹¹¹ Ackerman’s reform adoption strategy had certainly shifted from the community outreach of Phase I, to the top-down decision-making of Phase II. Ackerman recalled her motive, “There was a mistake I made in the second phase. It was I started in the school trying to convince the teachers and principals that they had too much to lose. So they then made it more difficult for me to convince the parents.”¹¹² Ackerman believed the teachers would in turn recruit the communities, however, the Phase II school communities in the Mission clearly communicated their anti-Dream School position.

Superintendent Ackerman’s motive was to push her Dream School agenda into the Mission District community. Dennis Kelly reflected, “Arlene felt like she could do anything. She had control over the media, the Mayor’s Office, and she even had gag orders so people could not talk to other administrators or Board Members about her policies.”¹¹³ Even Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims recalled, “Arlene always did whatever she wanted because she knew, somehow, we would make it happen for her. She always thought that anything was possible.”¹¹⁴ Ackerman’s confidence in her ability, and that of her assistants, made her believe that she could win over the Mission District and overcome the resistance to her Phase II Dream Schools.

Mixed emotions filled the Mission district as teachers reacted to the reconstitution requirement laid upon them. Even though some teachers were willing to reapply, they considered the process “an insult, and a slap in the face.”¹¹⁵ Chief Academic Officer Elois Brooks felt that, “They were offended that they had to interview for the jobs they currently held.”¹¹⁶ Dennis Kelly recollected that “teachers were bitter, and many did not reapply because they did not have a reason to buy in to the process, and felt it was entirely a sham.”¹¹⁷ Many teachers specifically said that “they would not reapply for a job they were already doing, and that they could go do it somewhere else.”¹¹⁸ Dream School administrator Tareyton

¹¹¹ Heather Knight, November 9, 2004, *see note 109 above*; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mar, 2010, *see note 41 above*.

¹¹² SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

¹¹³ UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*.

¹¹⁴ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

¹¹⁵ Heather Knight, November 9, 2004, *see note 109 above*.

¹¹⁶ SFUSD Chief Academic Officer Brooks, 2010, *see note 10 above*.

¹¹⁷ UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*.

¹¹⁸ SFUSD Administrator Rice-Mitchell, 2010, *see note 59 above*.

Russ shared different sentiments, that “people are never really interested in reapplying for their own job, but the quality teachers knew they would be able to make it through and be able to stay, and the ones that were not working out well knew it was going to be time for them to move on. People kind of faced it, and dealt with it.”¹¹⁹ There was a spectrum of teacher responses to the reconstitution requirement. While some teachers held feelings of disrespect, others understood the process differently and chose to participate in it.

The United Educators of San Francisco continued politicking and initiated a high-profile campaign against the reconstitution policy for the Phase II Dream Schools. Teachers wore t-shirts that read, “We are all Dream Schools,”¹²⁰ and had buttons that said, “No Reconstitution.”¹²¹ The fact that every teacher in the Phase II schools had to reapply for their jobs angered the union.¹²² The union “questioned reconstitution as a concept, and demonstrated at the slated Phase II schools and at the School Board.”¹²³

UESF President Dennis Kelly lived through the reconstitution years of Superintendent Rojas, and could never forget the stigma and the pain that the teachers suffered through. Kelly felt that “reconstitution promised improvement in the schools by removing the adults and keeping the student bodies. That experiment left no lasting successes, but created a legacy of bitterness and distrust.”¹²⁴ There were practical repercussions that permeated throughout SFUSD. Dennis Kelly said, “Teachers who were reconstituted were unofficially stigmatized as ineffective teachers, and the receiving school communities were not always receptive to absorbing them onto their staffs. As soon as they were reconstituted, there were schools that wouldn’t pick them up because there must be something wrong with them.”¹²⁵

SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Jill Wynns remembered,

“Rojas used reconstitution like a cudgel. The process was arbitrary and convoluted, and some schools were reconstituted without a clear

¹¹⁹ SFUSD Administrator Russ, 2010, *see note 68 above*.

¹²⁰ SFUSD Administrator Rice-Mitchell, 2010, *see note 59 above*.

¹²¹ UESF made “No Reconstitution” buttons for their membership to wear.

¹²² San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer Heather Knight, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 2, 2010.

¹²³ November 5, 2004 UESF Media Advisory “Teachers to Demonstration at Board of Ed”; UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mar, 2010, *see note 41 above*.

¹²⁴ Dennis Kelly, “Dream Schools: Can they solve achievement disparity?” *UESF San Francisco Educator*; UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*.

¹²⁵ UESF President Kelly, 2010, *see note 12 above*.

explanation as to why, and certainly without equal representation. As a result, these teachers were branded with a ‘Scarlet R’ for reconstitution, rendering them victims of the persecuting views of their future colleagues. As teachers moved on to their new school sites, this persecution manifested itself deep inside these teachers, and remained there as residual scars of this process of degrading their very professional existence. It was so punitive.”¹²⁶

San Francisco Board of Education Commissioners Mark Sanchez and Eric Mar both had prior negative experiences with reconstitution, and had motives to eliminate reconstitution as an element of the Dream Schools. Sanchez was brought in as a part of the reform staff at Edison Elementary when it was reconstituted in 1995, and lived how it did not work. Sanchez said, “I experienced first hand the blood, sweat, and tears and the amount of effort people did to create something good, only to be scrutinized by Superintendent Rojas.”¹²⁷ Mar’s wife worked at Rafael Weill Elementary School when it was reconstituted in 1995, relocating her to another site. Weill was renamed Rosa Parks Elementary, and did not turn around like the model was supposed to follow, causing Mar to “question the reconstitution process of the Dream Schools.”¹²⁸ Sanchez opted to use the political process to advocate for the teachers. He drafted a resolution that supported the creation of the Phase II Dream Schools, but eliminated the reconstitution element, and presented it to the School Board.

The Board majority coalition of Commissioner Wynns, followed by Eddie Chin, Dr. Dan Kelly, and Heather Hiles, did not support Commissioner Sanchez’s resolution to eliminate the reconstitution element of the Dream Schools. Wynns reflected,

“We supported the reapplication process because the teachers got to choose whether they would stay or not, and they got to go first in the transfers. There was not going to be any sanction. You don’t have to do it. The school has to do it, but the individual does not have to. So we are going to facilitate you getting a new job in the district, if you do not want to do it. There was actually talk about a lot of people, due to their life circumstances would be unable to work in a school where they were required to work longer hours, and work more days. And some people just didn’t want to, but for some people it was impossible. So it wasn’t going to be that you are a bad person if you

¹²⁶ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Wynns, 2010, *see note 6 above*.

¹²⁷ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Sanchez, 2010, *see note 39 above*.

¹²⁸ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mar, 2010, *see note 41 above*.

don't want to do this. Nor was it going to be that you are a bad teacher."¹²⁹

As the Phase II political battles were being fought, focus on the nuts and bolts implementation process of the Phase I Dream Schools began to fade. In an effort to strengthen the Phase II politics around reform adoption, Assistant Superintendents Sims, Hiroshima, and Pon were all redirected by Superintendent Ackerman to get involved in the Phase II school communities, and try to motivate the parents, students, and teachers to support the reform. Sims and Hiroshima remembered,

“Just two months into implementation, the Phase I schools were experiencing teacher burnout, staffing misfits, disgruntled parents, and challenging student behaviors. As attention was placed on Phase II, the sustainability and capacity to support the three original Dream Schools became extremely difficult. It's like that with reform. The first group gets a lot of resources, and then as you start phasing in more schools...the same thing happened with the Consent Decree. The first schools were running really well, they were being successful, and then they added the next phase, and they could never replicate what they did with the first group. You have the same amount of resources, but you are trying to spread it over more schools. It does not work. I do wish we had been able to spend more time really getting the structure set for those first Dream Schools.”¹³⁰

November 2, 2004 was Election Day, and three Board of Education seats were on the ballot. Two of the running incumbents were Sanchez and Mar, who were well known opposition to Superintendent Ackerman and the reconstitution measures of the Phase II Dream Schools. The third running incumbent was African American Heather Hiles, a major Ackerman proponent and supporter of the Dream School initiative. Currently, the Board tended to vote according to the following allegiances, with Wynns, Kelly, Chin, and Hiles voting one way, and Mar, Sanchez, and Lipson voting another. In order for Superintendent Ackerman to maintain the majority of the School Board, Hiles needed to secure a victory. If Hiles lost to a newcomer, and Sanchez and Mar secured their seats, the will of the Board could swing in a different direction, and not support the desires of the superintendent. Sanchez said that, “Ackerman knew the stakes, and publicly supported Hiles for School Board, and helped her raise over \$200,000 for her campaign.”¹³¹ The future of the Dream Schools could be determined by this election. At the end of November 2, 2004, Sanchez and Mar had won enough votes to retain their seats on the School

¹²⁹ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Wynns, 2010, *see note 6 above*.

¹³⁰ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

¹³¹ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Sanchez, 2010, *see note 39 above*.

Board. Hiles did not come in the top three finishers, and lost her seat to newcomer Norman Yee.¹³² The actual Board transition would take place in January 2005, and the impact of Hiles' loss would soon be known.

After the election, politicking remained contentious between Superintendent Ackerman and the alliance formed between UESF and SFUSD Board members Mark Sanchez, Eric Mar, and Sarah Lipson. Mar reflected on the election, "I think Ackerman was banking on some of us would be gone in the 2004 election. But for the superintendent to be directly involved, and even indirectly involved, was something that I think soured the relationship too."¹³³ UESF President Dennis Kelly began to align his resources to provide future resistance to any measure that included reconstitution of school staffs.

Newly elected Board Member Norman Yee immediately noticed the political tension amongst the SFUSD Board of Education. He recalled,

"My sense was things were building up in terms of the tension, probably a little prior to the Dream Schools, and the Dream Schools sort of put it over the top, in terms of the tension. And so, by the time I got here, the focus of everybody seemed to be about the tension, rather than on the Dream Schools. Let's get rid of the superintendent, or lets save her. For at least a year, when I started, that was the whole dominant discussion. The Board Members all were not communicating for about a year and a half. In this environment you very easily get caught up into a group."¹³⁴

The allegiance between the Board factions had historical roots, which help to explain the motives of the Board Members. Reconstitution under Superintendent Rojas created a great deal of controversy in the district, which began to be reflected in increasing factionalism on the Board. Jill Wynns was the most adamant and was uniformly opposed to Rojas. However, Rojas was supported by a slim majority of the Board, which included Dan Kelly. When Rojas proposed to enter into a contract with the Edison Project, and take over Edison Elementary School, both Wynns and Dan Kelly were adamantly opposed. In fact, the Edison proposal was enough to turn Kelly away from Rojas. Dan Kelly stood with Jill Wynns on the Edison issue, and he ultimately became a part of the coalition against the superintendent. In 1998, newcomer Eddie Chin was elected to the School Board. Chin was an avowed opponent of the Edison contract and promised to rescind it once in office.¹³⁵ The

¹³² Heather Knight, "Dream plan ignites protest, forced to reapply for jobs, teachers hold spirited rally," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 1, 2004.

¹³³ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mar, 2010, *see note 41 above*.

¹³⁴ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Norman Yee, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 22, 2010.

¹³⁵ Fraga, Rodriguez, and Erlichson, *Besieged*, *see note 7 above*.

Edison issue was the catalyst that built the Board coalition of Jill Wynns, Dr. Dan Kelly, and Eddie Chin.

In 2000, Wynns was reelected and newcomer Board Members Eric Mar and Mark Sanchez were actually aligned with Wynns. However, new issues divided the Board, particularly those surrounding California's recently implemented high-stakes testing programs. Eric Mar and Mark Sanchez became outspoken opponents of Superintendent Ackerman over her support of these programs, and the 2002 election of another anti-testing member Sarah Lipson, created a coalition of three.¹³⁶ In addition, Mar, Sanchez, and Lipson were all members of the progressive Green Party, further solidifying their allegiance to each other.

As the political warfare dominated the daily media, Phase I Dream School Dr. Charles R. Drew College Preparatory Academy received a visit from famous comedian Bill Cosby. During his visit, Cosby said, "It's time for people to stop seeing themselves as so much the victim, so much in poverty, and to realize what education can do and to fight for it as if you were fighting for your life, because you are." Cosby touted Drew as he toured the school, saying, "Here is an example of what ought to be going on."¹³⁷

Commissioner Sanchez's resolution to remove the reconstitution element of the Phase II Dream School reform initiative was still on the SFUSD School Board agenda. At the December 14, 2004 Board of Education meeting, Board President Dr. Dan Kelly called for a vote on the resolution. The proposal was the subject of three committee meetings over the course of the fall. Superintendent Ackerman commented at the beginning of the meeting that poor and minority students could "not afford teachers that are just good enough."¹³⁸ Ackerman believed that "when you reconstitute a school, you don't just have to reconstitute it with people. You have to reconstitute the entire school and the community, and to come up with something, a framework that everybody can relate to."¹³⁹ The timing of this vote on Sanchez's resolution had become controversial, and the anti-Ackerman coalition felt that the vote should be made after January 2005, when new Board Member, Norman Yee, took over for exiting Heather Hiles. Board President Kelly's likely motive was to derail the resolution, so he vetoed the delay and called for the vote. Sanchez's resolution failed 4-3.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Bonnie Eslinger, "Cosby lauds Dream School," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 10, 2004.

¹³⁸ Bonnie Eslinger, "Dream School debate, Board of Ed won't fight rehiring policy," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 15, 2004.

¹³⁹ SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

¹⁴⁰ Heather Knight, "Teachers upset by jobs vote," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 15, 2004.

UESF President Dennis Kelly reacted strongly to the vote, stating that, “It’s particularly unfortunate in light of the changes that were made in the board in the last election. Dan is using this opportunity to assert his will over what appears to be the will of the people. The School Board Prez is up to shenanigans.”¹⁴¹ Board President Dan Kelly refuted, “The resolution has been discussed enough. The union can believe whatever they like to believe. We’re just trying to do this in a timely manner.”¹⁴² Commissioner Sanchez, who made the proposal, passionately objected to reconstituting the Phase II Dream Schools, and added that, “this issue should have been discussed before the first round of Dream School opened.”¹⁴³ In this very same Board Meeting, Sanchez added, “Superintendent Ackerman’s contract was approved, granting her a salary of \$250,000 per year, a \$2,000 housing allowance, and a \$375,000 severance package, even if she resigned from her post.”¹⁴⁴

In 1983, the Consent Decree mandated that SFUSD reconstitute underperforming schools. SFUSD veteran administrator Hoover Liddell remembered the Decree reconstitutions, saying, “It was less of an issue then because there was a federal court order, and the judge basically said that there was no discussion.”¹⁴⁵ However, in 2004, reconstitution was the topic of political warfare, with all sides weighing in and advocating for their beliefs. Assistant Superintendent Pon recollected that “the district felt that really hard measures needed to be taken, because the issues were so serious, and the need was so urgent that people needed to reapply for their positions.”¹⁴⁶ Assistant Superintendent Sims agreed with Pon, stating, “If you are really going to create the school of achievers, these Dream Schools, then you cannot do it with the people there. You are going to have to create a standard and decide who should be in those schools. We have to have people who are going to be committed, because they were going to have to go the extended hour, extended day schedule, you know, do everything but sleep there. It was imperative that we went out and interviewed everyone.”¹⁴⁷ Newly elected Board Member Norman Yee remembered, “The teacher union point of view was that the district was blaming teachers, instead of figuring out what infrastructure, administration, and leadership was needed.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Eslinger, December 15, 2004, *see note 138 above*.

¹⁴⁴ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Sanchez, 2010, *see note 39 above*.

¹⁴⁵ SFUSD Administrator Liddell, 2010, *see note 58 above*.

¹⁴⁶ SFUSD Assistant Superintendent Pon, 2010, *see note 37 above*.

¹⁴⁷ SFUSD Assistant Superintendents Hiroshima and Sims, 2010, *see note 11 above*.

¹⁴⁸ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Yee, 2010, *see note 134 above*.

Superintendent Ackerman was cognizant of the political resistance to reconstituting the Phase II Dream Schools, and reflected, “By taking on and challenging the resistance, I knew there could be serious political ramifications. If I had done the Dream Schools in my year one or two, we would have had, I think, a much more robust set of defenses for why that was important and rationale for why this was important.”¹⁴⁹ For the Phase I schools, Ackerman enjoyed the support from the school communities and the School Board majority coalition of Wynns, Kelly, Chin, and Hiles. At the time, UESF was against the reconstitution of the Phase I schools, but had not aligned its resources to implement a full-scale resistance. Ultimately, the Phase I schools transformed into Dream Schools with tremendous community support and only minor resistance. In contrast, the Phase II Dream Schools were full of opposition for Ackerman, from the school communities, UESF, and the School Board minority coalition of Mar, Sanchez, and Lipson. It appears that Ackerman had a decision to make. She could retract her Phase II ambitions and concede to her opposition, allowing her to focus solely on the Phase I Dream Schools. Her other option was to persevere through the adversity and maintain her commitment to the Phase II plan and her own core beliefs. This point where Ackerman had to choose whether or not to concede to her opposition, was the crux of her dilemma, and the breaking point of her superintendency. By reaching this point, she found herself in a place of which there was no return. After a year of advocating for the minority students of San Francisco, Dr. Arlene Ackerman lost control of the School Board, established an adversarial relationship with the teacher union leadership, and was left in the minority when it came to supporting the Phase II Dream Schools.

January – July 2005 ≈ The Dream Becomes a Nightmare

The early months of 2005 were personified by the Phase I Dream Schools continuing to implement the nuts and bolts of the Lorraine Monroe reform model, and by the Phase II Dream Schools trying to survive adversity. In January, the United Educators of San Francisco began to move their battle against reconstitution to the legal arena. After demonstrating at the Board of Education and at school sites, UESF had begun filing grievances, charges for unfair labor practices, and placed demands to bargain. The teachers union claimed, “the District imposed changes to employees’ terms of employment and working conditions and failed to negotiate such changes as required by law.”¹⁵⁰ The union also demanded that the District bargain over the designation of Dream Schools and its impact. Although UESF was very demonstrative with these actions, they did not prove fruitful in the legal arena.

In early March, Dr. Lorraine Monroe came back to San Francisco to visit the Phase I schools. She observed classrooms, held debriefs and planning sessions with

¹⁴⁹ SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

¹⁵⁰ January 2005 UESF Union Briefing, “Union moves reconstitution battle to legal arena.”

school leadership teams, and did individual check-ins with the three principals.¹⁵¹ In addition to the daytime school tours, she also held a nighttime workshop for Dream School parents. In her 2-hour lesson, Dr. Monroe encouraged parents to talk with their children, promote reading, and pay regular visits to their school. Superintendent Ackerman shared, "Getting the parents engaged is really hard in some of these neighborhoods because the families feel so alienated. We are still working on that."¹⁵²

During the March visit to San Francisco, Dr. Monroe caught wind of the turbulent politicking between UESF and the superintendent. Monroe sided with Ackerman, stating that she would "like to meet personally with any detractors of the initiative to give them a piece of her mind, which could not be printed in a family newspaper." Dr. Monroe added, "When they see what happens after a year of this rigor, this intensity, you will not have any more questions."¹⁵³ Dr. Monroe also acknowledged the concerns of Phase II parents about the longer schools days and Saturday classes. She simply responded by saying, "Their worries would ease if they realized how far their children had fallen behind, especially at the schools that give them assignments that aren't worth the paper they're printed on."¹⁵⁴ Dr. Monroe's enthusiasm for the Dream Schools, and praise for the Phase I students and teachers, were apparent. However, equally apparent was the controversy over Superintendent Arlene Ackerman's requirement that all teachers working at the Phase II Dream Schools reapply for their jobs.

Of the 200 Phase II teachers, only 71 actually reapplied for their position, a ratio of 35%. Interestingly, during the Phase I reapplication process, 35% of the original three staffs were rehired. Dr. Ackerman announced that over 400 applicants had submitted their resumes for the vacancies, however, there were many Phase II teachers who elected to leave their positions and go to other sites.¹⁵⁵ Superintendent Ackerman hired Greg John to take the reins of Treasure Island K-8, as it converted into a Phase II Dream School. John called the process a "ritual in which he was recommitting himself to the school." John elaborated that "he respects all staff members, but that a couple of teachers are not there for the kids."¹⁵⁶ For the Enola D. Maxwell Middle School principalship, Ackerman sought out Marcus Blacksher, who was the Assistant Principal at Mission High School. Blacksher heard rumors that he was on Ackerman's list, and he made authentic

¹⁵¹ SFUSD Administrator Russ, 2010, *see note 68 above*.

¹⁵² Eslinger, March 3, 2005, *see note 66 above*.

¹⁵³ Heather Knight, "Activist revisits 'Dream Schools' in Bayview-Hunters Point," San Francisco Chronicle, March 3, 2005.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁶ Eslinger, October 20, 2004, *see note 73 above*.

attempts to avoid talking to her. He remembered, “I had heard about the political warfare between the superintendent, UESF, and the Board of Education, and did not want to be subjected to the adversarial arena that had consumed the Phase II Dream Schools. After a couple weeks of coaxing, Ackerman convinced me to take the helm.”¹⁵⁷

The staffing of the Phase II Dream Schools was coming together, yet the reform model of the schools remained elusive. The Phase I schools were modeled after the Lorraine Monroe schools in New York, including the non-negotiable rules, uniforms, and student creed. The Phase II schools, however, did not have a cohesive plan that defined them all, or a package reform that they would try to emulate. Their only commonality was that their staffs would be reconstituted. Central Office Administrator Dee Dee Desmond recalled that “it was not entirely clear what the Phase II schools were, and what they were not.”¹⁵⁸

This search for identity affected the hiring process as well. As teachers were considering positions at the Phase II sites, they were unclear about what exactly their responsibilities would be, and what the vision and focus of the school was. Discussions about the Phase II reform models had been occurring since October 2004, and were to continue through December 2004.¹⁵⁹ The time frame clearly stated that the selection of the principals and staff would occur after the selection of the reform program models. In reality, the program model discussions extended into January 2005, so staffing actually began before the models were completely identified. UESF President Dennis Kelly wrote a letter to Superintendent Ackerman to this effect, expressing his proposal that “the timeline for the Dream Schools be altered so that the selection of a theme or model for the school antedates the selection of staff...so staff members can know the plan they are signing on to implement.”¹⁶⁰ The timeline was not altered and the hiring continued without the detailed descriptions of the reform models for each Phase II Dream School.

Even the Budget Department did not know how much to allocate for the Phase II schools. Naturally, the seven new Dream Schools would receive extra funding and additional personnel as they implemented the reform initiative, but the details of what was needed, and what the funding should provide was unknown. In the end, Myong Leigh and Nancy Waymack “collaborated to calculate an arbitrary sum of \$800 per Dream School scholar to be allocated to Dream School sites. This sum was in addition to the \$500 per student that was already allocated to all STAR school sites. Ultimately, all Dream Schools would receive a \$1300 differential for

¹⁵⁷ SFUSD Dream School Administrator Marcus Blacksher, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 8, 2010.

¹⁵⁸ SFUSD Administrator Desmond, 2010, *see note 10 above*.

¹⁵⁹ October 20, 2004 letter from Dream Schools Executive Director Dr. Mary Marin to Phase II educators regarding the timeframe for Dream School planning.

¹⁶⁰ October 27, 2004 letter from UESF President Dennis Kelly to Superintendent Arlene Ackerman regarding the alteration of the Phase II Dream School timeline.

each student.”¹⁶¹ The adoption process of the Phase II schools had survived, but the blueprint of the design and the implementation plans for the schools were all but non-existent.¹⁶²

By June 2005, the Phase I schools had completed their first year of implementation. When the California Standards Test results came in, and the new school API’s were calculated, Dr. Chares Drew had increased 26 points, 21st Century Academy had decreased 12 points, and Gloria R. Davis had increased by a mere 2 points.¹⁶³ The results were mediocre, especially after all of the money and support that had been pumped into the schools. On the other hand, two of the three schools increased in student achievement, which was certainly a goal of the Dream School initiative.

The most troubling data from Phase I was the number of teachers who were non-reelected after the first year. “Non-reelection” was the SFUSD term for the firing of a probationary teacher, who had not yet attained tenure, so the process of dismissing the teacher was relatively easy. Commissioner Sanchez remembered the non-reelections, “Over 10 teachers from the Phase I Dream Schools were non-reelected. So you just brought in your best and brightest and you’re getting rid of them! That to me was just ridiculous, and that proves that the reform you are doing is wrong.”¹⁶⁴ Even Ackerman’s avid supporter, Chief Academic Officer Elois Brooks, acknowledged that some of the Phase I teachers were not highly qualified for the job, “You can replace bad teachers, but we replaced them with teachers that are not noticeably better than the ones you got rid of.”¹⁶⁵ In retrospect, the politicking around having the Phase I staffs reapply for their jobs superseded the nuts and bolts of replacing these teachers with more effective ones.

Overall, the Phase I Dream Schools began the implementation of the Lorraine Monroe school reform model in San Francisco, and SFUSD geared up for the opening of the Phase II schools. By June, the SFUSD Board of Education had decided to close Benjamin Franklin Middle School due to low enrollment, so the official list of Phase II Dream Schools was reduced from seven down to six.

August 2005 – June 2006 ≈ The Final Year

On August 29, 2005, the Phase II Dream Schools opened their doors. These schools included O’Connell High School, Everett Middle School, and Sanchez Elementary School in the Mission District, Revere K-8 in Bernal Heights, Maxwell

¹⁶¹ SFUSD Budget Department Waymack, 2010, *see note 53 above*; SFUSD Deputy Superintendent Leigh, 2010, *see note 10 above*.

¹⁶² SFUSD Administrator Blacksher, 2010, *see note 157 above*.

¹⁶³ www.cde.ca.gov

¹⁶⁴ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Sanchez, 2010, *see note 39 above*.

¹⁶⁵ SFUSD Chief Academic Officer Brooks, 2010, *see note 10 above*.

Middle School in Potrero Hill, and Treasure Island K-8 on Treasure Island. The Phase II Dream Schools opened under mediocre fanfare, and the district itself was under tremendous fiscal stress and continued advising the Board on possible future school closures.¹⁶⁶ In an attempt to revive the excitement around the Dream Schools, 21st Century College Preparatory Academy was renamed after the popular San Francisco Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. Mayor Brown came to the unveiling of the new school signage, along with a life-size bust of his likeness.¹⁶⁷ Russ remembered that, “Brown had always supported Superintendent Ackerman when she initially proposed the Dream School idea, and he had financial capital that he offered to support the school.”¹⁶⁸

The politics had taken a toll on Superintendent Ackerman. For years now, there had been tension between Superintendent Ackerman, some School Board members, and UESF. Collaboration among these three entities had become a thing of the past.¹⁶⁹ Elois Brooks recalled that, “Conflict presided over meetings, emails, and even interactions when we were in the elevator together at 555 Franklin Street.”¹⁷⁰ Ackerman summarized,

“When Kent Mitchell lost his election, that’s when the union flipped. I was trying to do something drastic in my fifth year, when for most superintendents it’s hard for them to last five years. It was risky, but it was worth the risk. The alliance between the Board and union was created around the time we don’t want it to occur. Both thought, if we get rid of her, we will get our way. The union would not have any more Dream Schools, and the Board could create more Small Schools. I do not navigate the politics very well because the sense of urgency that I have around doing this work is I’d rather put it out there, trying to fight the fight with the status quo and the people who would rather resist it. With the first three, I started with the parents and community and then just worked backwards to the teachers. It just won’t work if you do it the other way. So I have not given up on the idea of the Dream School concept that, when a school has failed for a long time, we have more obligation to do something differently.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mar, 2010, *see note 41 above*.

¹⁶⁷ The Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. bust is in the lobby of the school.

¹⁶⁸ SFUSD Administrator Russ, 2010, *see note 68 above*.

¹⁶⁹ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Mar, 2010, *see note 41 above*; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Sanchez, 2010, *see note 39 above*.

¹⁷⁰ SFUSD Chief Academic Officer Brooks, 2010, *see note 10 above*.

¹⁷¹ SFUSD Superintendent Ackerman, 2010, *see note 15 above*.

On September 7, 2005 Arlene Ackerman announced her resignation as the Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District, to take effect in June 2006.

As 2005 was coming to a close, the reality of underperformance and shrinking student enrollment began to consume the Treasure Island Dream School. On December 16, 2005, the SFUSD Board of Education decided to close the Treasure Island K-8 immediately and permanently. The students and teachers were dispersed throughout the district, and the Phase II Dream Schools were now down to five. With Superintendent Ackerman resigning, and the Board majority and UESF in cahoots against the Dream Schools, Treasure Island faded away without much discussion or opposition.

On December 31, 2005, after 23 years of court ordered mandates to the San Francisco Unified School District, the Consent Decree expired. Judge Alsup, who replaced the late Judge Orrick, saw no reason to extend the court order, and made the official decision that the Decree would indeed sunset. With the superintendent and court funding leaving SFUSD, the future of the Dream Schools was looking bleak.

A couple of months later, there was a special Board Meeting at Everett Middle School. Fiscal solvency and school closures were the main topics, and schools on the cutting block filled the auditorium with teachers, parents, and students. Schools were discussed one at a time, each the subject of a 10-15 minute discussion. When Enola D. Maxwell Middle School came up for discussion, Principal Marcus Blacksher was in the audience. He recalled glancing down at a text on his cell phone, and “when I looked up, in the blink of an eye, my school had been closed.”¹⁷² Just like Treasure Island, no negative outcries, no racist commentary, just some financial savings to SFUSD, another school closed, and the Phase II Dream Schools were now down to four.

Commissioner Wynns summarized her feelings about the Dream Schools,

“I cannot think of anything that came from the Dream Schools...it’s not that I don’t think that the more time, and the enrichment, and the resources of the Dream Schools have not been valuable for the students, and the teachers, and the administrators, everybody, and the parents in those schools. But I think it’s been minimal. I do not think it has leveraged really deep foundational capacity to improve those schools, and I don’t think it has contributed to a big step in our school district. To be fair, there wasn’t follow-through on the district’s side either. I’m sort of surprised that we have never said, let’s look at the resources that we put in the Dream Schools, and what did we get out of that, and is that the right way to use that. We have never asked the Dream School principals, ok, what’s the relative benefit of these things, and where’s the data to back it up? Tell me why, convince me, we have never done that, and we should do that. We should reassess this all the time, and we have never reassessed it. My personal opinion

¹⁷² SFUSD Administrator Blacksher, 2010, *see note 157 above*.

is that, you know, the minute Arlene left, the people on the other side won. And they wanted not to be seen as killers. They wanted it to be that they did the right thing, so they totally pulled back from any reflective self-assessment at all. That includes the union, the board members, and the community people.”¹⁷³

In June 2006, Superintendent Arlene Ackerman left her post in San Francisco for good, and took with her a \$375,000 severance. Her next stop was a teaching position at Columbia University Teachers College, and she is currently the Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia. Since her departure, the Dream Schools have faded from any School Board agendas, Central Office discussions, and certainly the media. When the Spring 2006 California Standards Tests were made public, Dr. Charles R. Drew, Willie L. Brown, and Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academies all increased in their Academic Performance Index by 74, 64, and 38 points respectively.¹⁷⁴ In 2007, Gloria R. Davis College Preparatory Academy was closed, and in 2011, the Willie L. Brown College Preparatory Academy was closed. All told, the original ten Dream Schools are now down to five. These five continue to receive the Dream School differential in funding from the Budget Department, but the *dream* in San Francisco is certainly gone.¹⁷⁵

In 2003, Superintendent Ackerman had the unquestioned support from the majority of the members on the Board, and the United Educators of San Francisco. In two short years, the SFUSD School Board factions became polarized, souring relationships among the district leadership to the breaking point. Ackerman’s sense of urgency to create the Phase II Dream Schools preempted the District’s ability to produce an effective strategic plan, which would allow for sufficient community buy-in. Politicking between actors dominated the arena over the nuts and bolts of reform implementation. In addition, the residual emotions from the reconstitution era of Superintendent Rojas made the reapplication process of the Dream Schools a considerable problematic factor. The alliances formed between factions amongst the Board, the teacher union, and the superintendent gave rise to political contestation, which ultimately dominated SFUSD. These forces thrust Superintendent Ackerman past the breaking point, where her relationships with political adversaries could no longer be mended. By 2006, Board politics had evolved to remove the superintendent and seal the fate of the *Dream Schools*.

¹⁷³ SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner Wynns, 2010, *see note 6 above*.

¹⁷⁴ www.cde.ca.gov

¹⁷⁵ SFUSD Deputy Superintendent Leigh, 2010, *see note 10 above*; SFUSD Administrator Rice-Mitchell, 2010, *see note 59 above*; SFUSD Budget Department Waymack, 2010, *see note 53 above*.

B. Thematic Interpretations of the Narrative

In this section, I re-examine the empirical material that I presented in the previous section. The previous section was a narrative account of the Dream School initiative that followed the sequence of events. Here I approach this material with a more analytical focus. I ask what major themes or underlying structures the oral history material might reveal that could be used to illuminate the broad contours of the case and inform those who may want to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. The latter point will be addressed in Chapter V.

Using my literature review as a guide, I initially focused on urban school politics and reform policy designs as precursors of problematic implementation processes. As I conducted my interviews, and reviewed my historical documents, a number of additional themes emerged from the data. I triangulated these data in subsequent interviews to check the validity of my findings. In these interviews, I also tried to extract additional perspectives around emerging main themes. The themes on which I settled were consistent with my literature review, and in some cases, went beyond my initial theorizing. The literature that I initially reviewed (see Chapter II) illuminated political and organizational factors that impinge on districts embarking on comprehensive school reform initiatives. Drawing from this literature, I began my oral history with three hunches that would be key to the understanding of my case: (1) the politics of fragmented and shifting local coalitions, often organized around labor and ethnic issues; (2) symbolic politics, particularly around urgent but difficult policy issues such as racial equity; and (3) implementation shaped by the policy adoption process, and the disconnect between the district's governance and administrative follow-through. The Dream School narrative that I presented in the previous section illuminates the relevance of two of the three. Shifting political coalitions and disrupted implementation processes were indeed important aspects of the case.

Symbolic politics was surprisingly absent. The various factions that vied for influence or dominance during the Dream School phases were serious. The pro-Dream School coalition was determined and impatient, advocated for tangible improvements, became vociferous, and was willing to take risks. The anti-Dream School coalition was equally as serious. They saw things differently, wanted to protect their own equity-oriented initiatives, or protect their constituencies' interests. Both sides used public displays, posturing, passionate pleas and hyperbolic language, as means to prevail. But the bone of contention was for real: Who owns the problem and who owns the solution in urban equity-oriented school reform?

I arrived at four major themes that were highly consistent throughout my data collection, significant to the oral history of the SFUSD Dream Schools, and useful for a better understanding of the structures and action patterns that eventually led to failure. These themes are: *Contestation among Political Coalitions; Passion, Blame, and Residual Emotions; Politicized Governance and Neglect of Administrative Implementation; and Brinkmanship*. The following section will explore these themes in more detail.

Contestation among Political Coalitions

The literature is fairly comprehensive as to politics and power, and suggests that local politics can play a major role in influencing behaviors of school board members, superintendents, and union leaders. The literature describes how stakeholders leverage politics to attain or maintain power, and flex their power to influence decisions. Power politics did also play out in SFUSD around the Dream Schools reform initiative and ultimately led to the initiative's demise. As long as the main players acted in the spirit of compromise, problems could be addressed and important initiatives could be enacted. But once political collaboration around the district's *Excellence for All* goals gave way to contestation and conflict, the focus was no longer the 'problem' but maintaining power and control. In the case of the Dream Schools, it is dramatic how fast the spirit of compromise and collaboration shifted to one of political contestation and conflict in which the viability of certain actors were risked and ultimately vanquished.

Unlike other urban school districts, such as New York City or Chicago, where power is highly centralized, the San Francisco district is organized and governed in the traditional decentralized way amply described in the literature. In the decentralized pattern, the superintendent is ultimately dependent on a school board majority for his or her tenure. Organized local interests, such as unions or mobilized ethnic communities, can play a powerful role in the relatively low-stakes political environment of school board politics. The Superintendent with her district administration, the school board, the teacher union, and the leadership of various communities are the main entities that are at once interdependent and potentially in conflict with each other. In SFUSD, when these groups collaborated, three major reform initiatives (Weighted Student Formula, Diversity Index, and STAR Program) were created and implemented, and as of this writing have had a lasting effect for almost a decade in the school district. As Superintendent Ackerman pushed her Dream School agenda forward, conflicts among these four groups pivoted on the issue of reconstitution. When contestation reigned supreme, inflammatory rhetoric exacerbated the situation and made resolution of the problem elusive. All this played out in Board Meetings and in the press, as each entity was focused on maintaining its legitimacy and power position within the School District.

Issues of labor and ethnicity began to dominate local politics. The quest for social justice was a common goal that all parties espoused, yet each political entity had a different position on how to achieve it. Coalitions were formed with the intention of preserving the interests of each entity. Initially the superintendent could rely on a majority of the Board and was able to forge a powerful alliance with the leadership of the black community, probably facilitated by the ethnic affiliation she and her cabinet had with that community. The union was objecting, but fairly powerless in the face of this coalition despite support from a Board minority faction. But coalitions and power shifted when the superintendent failed to rally the Latino community in similar fashion allowing the coalition of union and board opposition to ascend in power. The actual Dream School initiative, and the educational problem it was to address, seemed to have become a mere secondary concern at that time,

with negative consequences for implementation quality and survival of the initiative.

Volatility is heightened by the sheer unpredictability of the various election cycles and their outcomes. Election cycles (as well as unpredictable resignations, hirings and firings) can cause sudden power shifts with drastic effects on the distribution of power in the school district.

The vagaries of election results dominated politics during both the Consent Decree and Dream School initiatives. During the early Consent Decree years, Superintendent Alioto faced detractors on the School Board who ultimately formed a faction led by then-Commissioner Myra Kopf. When Kopf was elected President of the School Board, a power shift occurred, and the Board ultimately fired Superintendent Alioto. During the Dream School reform, Superintendent Ackerman faced detractors on the School Board, led by Commissioners Mar and Sanchez. Once the superintendent 'lost' one commissioner in her column, and Mar was elected President of the School Board, a power shift was signaled to the superintendent and ultimately caused her to resign. Like Superintendent Alioto, Superintendent Ackerman initiated her reform with the support of the majority of the School Board. However, through the election of new Board Members, this support was lost. Facing the usual volatility of local election results, shifting political coalitions, and perennial conflicts around ethnicity and labor, superintendents may calculate that they can accomplish their agenda only with a good dose of risk taking and a gamble to prevail. Both Alioto and Ackerman lost this gamble, as do most superintendents in highly contested local school politics (more on this below).

Unpredictable personal loyalty among coalition members was also an important factor that shored up political clout and was decisive in shaping the political agenda of the district. With regards to the Board itself, Commissioners Mar and Sanchez were strongly aligned with Commissioner Sarah Lipson. The personal connection among these three Board members was partly based on their common critique of state accountability policies, namely high-stakes testing, and their common affiliation with the progressive Green Party. Hence, if Mar and Sanchez were voting against Superintendent Ackerman, Lipson could be counted on to do so as well. When it came to the Dream Schools and reconstitution, a negative vote from this faction was guaranteed. Likewise, the pro-Dream School faction consisting of Commissioners Jill Wynns, Dr. Dan Kelly, and Eddie Chin proved to be loyal to Superintendent Ackerman when they hired her to come to San Francisco, and stayed with her almost to the end of her tenure.

Apart from the changing cast of players (new union president, new board members, new board president), personal loyalties, and ethnic community affiliations, it was probably the hasty expansion from Phase I to Phase II of the Dream School initiative that doomed the initiative. When the district moved the controversial anti-labor strategy of reconstitution out of the politically 'safe' territory of the African-American community into an ethnic community that was far less aligned with the superintendent, new openings arose for the UESF union leadership. They could now delegitimize the equity credentials of the superintendent and align their opposition to reconstitution with resistance on the part of Latino parents. If Ackerman had prepared the community for Phase II the

way she did for the first phase and amassed the same level of trust, buy-in, and allies within the Latino community as she did in Phase I with the African American community, it is quite possible that the results would have been drastically different even with labor opposition.

Why do these political forces engage in virulent conflict when it seems clear that for the benefit of the equity-oriented reforms such as the Dream School initiative they need each other? A number of reasons seem to be indicated by my case. Cleavages along groups' self-interests, endemic volatility, personal loyalties, a good dose of political gamble, and the tendency of groups to project long-lasting problems onto the political adversary seem to create a mix that seems to make local district problem solving more the exception than the rule.

Passion, Blame, and Residual Emotions

The precipitous rise and fall of the Dream School initiative was accompanied by a flaring up of passions that the mere existence of contestation among political parties cannot explain. Even though the interviews took place years after the demise of the Dream School initiative, the people I interviewed were still passionate and recalled the events and their motives with strong emotions. What was at the core of this emotionality?

For the most part, the literature on urban school politics that I consulted assumes rational actors that calculate according to self-interest and use passions and emotions to symbolically enhance their standing and legitimacy. This is not the way the Dream School initiative played out. Here passions revolved around the powerful question of "Who is to blame" for intractable local inequities. In San Francisco, each set of actors carried historical baggage with regard to this question.

Who was to own the problem of failing schools in the most disadvantaged communities of the city? Was it the community itself, a presumably uncommitted teaching force, or the school district itself that should take the blame? That's the core of the emotionality and passion that surrounded the Dream Schools. Each group felt justified in placing blame on other local groups, yet data from the oral history suggests that each group did so with peculiar blindness about its own shortcomings. Avowed passion for equity permeated the district, but blame saturated the discourse.

The UESF teacher union felt aggrieved by the reconstitution component of the Dream Schools. Requiring teachers to reapply for their jobs, as had by then become routine and repetitive practice in SFUSD whenever school failure was diagnosed, unjustly blamed teachers for the underperformance of schools that served the most disadvantaged communities in the city, such as Bayview Hunters Point (BVHP). UESF President Dennis Kelly was professionally close to numerous teachers who were reconstituted under the previous Superintendent Rojas. Over the twenty or so years of repeated waves of reconstitution, he had witnessed the impact on teachers, who in many cases felt persecuted by the school district. Being reconstituted became a stigma of being inadequate and ineffective in the eyes of colleagues and administrators. But in very few instances did such reconstitutions actually improve the standing of the reconfigured schools or close the achievement

gap between rich and poor communities in San Francisco. Reconstitution, in the eyes of labor, was a tired instrument of the district to deflect blame from its own shortcomings. When the Dream School initiative required teachers to reapply for their jobs, this trauma resurfaced and created an alliance of resistance. For labor, Dream Schools meant another round of reconstitutions. Sure enough, the high number of newly-recruited teachers who were let go from the Dream Schools after the first year “proved” the unnecessary harshness of the remedy. Passions ran high. The teacher union blamed the superintendent for insulting the labor force and causing undue disruption to the schools.

Board members Eric Mar and Mark Sanchez were intimately involved in schools that were reconstituted under Superintendent Rojas in the 1990’s. Mar’s wife was part of the outgoing staff at Rafael Weill Elementary School when it was reconstituted as part of the Consent Decree Phase 3. Sanchez himself was brought in as part of the new teaching staff at Edison Elementary School, after it had been reconstituted as part of the Consent Decree Phase 4. Both Mar and Sanchez experienced the traumatic emotional effects that affected some of their colleagues as a result of the reconstitutions. This trauma resonated with them for years, and resurfaced when the Superintendent Ackerman announced that the Dream School staffs would have to reapply for their jobs. The personal and painful aspects of reconstitution were not easily forgotten. Feeling the passions of reconstitution, Mar and Sanchez were digging in their heels.

Even Ackerman’s allies felt a level of reservation around the reapplication process of the Dream Schools. Board Member Jill Wynns recalled the unfairness and pain that surrounded the reconstitutions of the Rojas era. The memories of reconstitution, and the accompanying emotions of the 1990’s stayed with Wynns. She was a loyal supporter of Superintendent Ackerman, yet the issue of reconstitution caused residual emotions to resurface in Wynns as well. She ultimately supported the reapplication process once SFUSD and UESF reached the compromise, allowing teachers to choose whether or not they would like to work at a Dream School, and giving them the chance to pursue opportunities at other school sites, without the negative label of being reconstituted.

Superintendent Ackerman believed that she was acting in the best interest of the children of San Francisco. She reasoned that the Monroe model, a private school setting in the midst of poverty, could not be had without radical renewal and fresh start. Ackerman passionately felt that replacing the staff was a critical component of reviving the schools. She needed to be ensured that every staff member was “a hundred percent committed to the vision,” and interviewing every potential staff member gave her that assurance.

For the Phase I Dream Schools, the superintendent and her team shared with the communities they were committed to serve a sense of historical grievance and neglect. Creating the Dream Schools was in line with a civil rights broader struggle and tapped into enormous frustrations among African-American leaders in the city that had seen waves of reform without too many results. Interestingly, while the lawsuit resulting in the Consent Decree some decades before was initiated by the community leadership against the *district*, by now community and district leadership were in affinity and directed their ire at teachers. This shared passion

and sentiment fostered tremendous buy-in from the African American community and, as we saw, carried the day when the School Board approved the Phase I Dream Schools.

But once this passion became hitched to the political conflict around reconstitution, blaming and finger pointing on the part of the pro-Dream School parties took hold that perhaps blinded them to the tremendous challenges of implementing the ambitious model. The Dream School narrative shows how much energy the district would have needed to commit to implementing the highly ambitious reform design and how much community support and involvement may have been required to anchor the model in the habits and norms of the BVHP community. When the Phase I Dream Schools were struggling with students who refused to wear their uniforms and with parents who violated the Parent Contract, both community and district were largely absent at the schools.

Incidentally, once Ackerman resigned from SFUSD, this district-community alliance was not sustained. According to Reverend Amos C. Brown, the African American community had simply grown tired of the politics and gave up. Ultimately, the new School Board majority easily closed two of the three Phase I Dream Schools without fanfare. At the end of Ackerman's superintendency, the delegation from the African-American community that was dispatched to New York only two years or so ago had diminished, and it was Reverend Brown who stood alone at the microphone at the Board of Education.

But how do any of the attributions of blame make sense? The answer to this question determines how one feels about reconstitution. There was on one hand an African American dominated district leadership that saw itself in the forefront of a civil rights struggle, in which the community is accepted as the aggrieved party, opposed to the teaching force as the obstacle to improvements. But did the African American community follow through on its commitment to making the Dream School initiative work, and what administrative follow-through on the part of the district was withheld from the schools to make the Dream School idea a reality? The anti-Dream School coalition was on the defensive, rejecting the implied blame of reconstitution for its constituencies, and blaming the district itself to be part of the problem rather than the solution. But what solutions did labor offer to attract the most experienced teachers into the BVHP schools?

The consequences of all of the passionate blame were dire. People in general feel morally impugned when being blamed for something that they adamantly feel is unjust. When this occurs, people are unforgiving to those who blame them, and they take with them certain memories and emotions that influence the future decisions they make. This theme was clearly evident with the Dream School initiative. Moral passion was a driving force for all political actors. When there was disagreement, or when policies failed, moral outrage corroded the collaborative nature of the district. "Blame" has caused residual emotions that last to this day.

Politicized Governance and Neglect of Administrative Implementation

The Dream School initiative, as the narrative account in the previous chapter revealed, was saturated with political power plays around adoption and design.

Factions and coalitions pursued their self-interests. Superintendent and School Board, the primary governing bodies of the district, were engulfed in conflict. As a result, governance for the Dream Schools specifically was highly politicized, much to the detriment of effective implementation. Attention and capacities of the main players were absorbed by highly emotionalized conflict, in the face of which issues of implementing the very ambitious and complex design faded into the background and were at times outright neglected.

As was discussed previously, the literature on reform implementation suggests that lasting designs have a powerful constituency that advocates for them. In these circumstances, the reform is not tied solely to a single superintendent, board member, or community. Rather it thrives when coalitions of multiple players sustain it over time. Second, the manner in which a reform is introduced to those responsible for implementing it has significant implications on how effective the reform will be. Together, these issues are probable answers to why so many urban reforms fail.

The Phase II Dream Schools were the epitome of disconnect between the district's political governance and the nuts and bolts of implementation. By implementing the Phase II schools in the year immediately following the Phase I schools, two significant implementation challenges occurred. First, the Phase II schools themselves did not have enough time to brainstorm, create, and implement an effective strategic reform plan at each school. In many cases, new staff was hired, not knowing what reform model they would be responsible for implementing. There was a clear void of educational substance in the Phase II plan.

Second, by creating Phase II so soon, the structural supports that were in place for the Phase I schools were reallocated to the Phase II schools. Specifically, the Chief Academic Officer and two Assistant Superintendents were redirected to support the hasty Phase II efforts. At this point, politicized governance began to clearly supersede any cohesive focus on the administrative implementation in the Phase I schools. There were significant staffing misfits, and the inexperienced administrators were not prepared or equipped for the challenge. This shift in focus and support from Phase I to Phase II left the overall Dream School program difficult to sustain.

The district closely worked with the African-American community during the adoption phase, but nowhere in the interviews did administrators reflect on the community work needed for implementation. During the politicized phase of Dream School adoption, the leadership of the community was mobilized. The Phase I Dream Schools opened amidst much fanfare and tremendous support from the district leadership and the African American community. The black clergy and community leaders actively supported the reform, demonstrated this support at local gatherings and Board Meetings, and helped neutralize adversaries. At its inception, the African American community demonstrated that they could exert sufficient advocacy, which if sustained, could have had the potential to maintain the Phase I Dream Schools. However, once the schools were opened and implementation began, community leadership support waned for the cultural shifts needed to make the schools work as "private schools" in the midst of poverty. This discrepancy between the community

support at the governance level and the missing community support at the site level was an issue that directly impacted the reform effort.

Ironically, the Dream School reform initiative mirrored the earlier Consent Decree efforts in several ways. Primarily, the first phase in each program was given substantial community and School Board support, and was the prioritized focus for the school district. Each program unveiled its second phase immediately after the first phase, but under different conditions. The Phase II Dream Schools did not have the community or lasting School Board support to be successful, and were not sustained over time. The Consent Decree Phases 2-4 included twenty additional schools, each struggling for community support, and few having the strategic implementation plan of the Phase 1 Consent Decree schools. The Consent Decree Phases might not have been sustained if not for the court order.

For both the Dream School and Consent Decree reforms, political tactics and governance issues prevailed over strategic planning around the nuts and bolts needed for successful implementation, especially after the first year of the reforms. The Dream School 'think tank' strategized the political adoption process, and thought that implementation could be left to the schools. They underestimated the need for oversight and overlooked the enormous capacity needs for effective implementation. Though well intended, the expansion of multiple phases proved beyond the District's capacity to manage. The disconnect between the fever-pitch politics and the tepid attention paid to administrative implementation, along with the inconsistent African American community support, negatively affected the chances of Phase I schools to be successful. The Phase I Dream Schools depended on hiring a complete highly qualified faculty and staff that shared the vision of the superintendent, was willing to implement the Lorraine Monroe model with fidelity, and had the endurance to not burn out from the extended day schedule. There were significant challenges with hiring the appropriate staff for the Phase I schools due to the time constraints. Ultimately, handfuls of these newly hired teachers were let go at the end of the first year.

The sporadic centralized support, and the adversarial position of UESF, made highly qualified teachers in SFUSD reluctant to apply for a Dream School position, making it challenging for the schools to build effective instructional teams. Overall, these issues of disconnect combined to create negative momentum around the Dream School reform initiative.

The literature on reform design also informs us that the manner in which a reform is introduced to those responsible for implementation is extremely important. When a reform is introduced to principals and teachers, and they are given ample time to ask questions, seek additional information, and modify and customize the program, the chances of attaining buy-in increases significantly. However, when a reform model is proposed by an authoritative figure in a top-down fashion, teachers may resist the reform, or symbolically implement its basic features to give the impression that they are in compliance. This literature on design scenarios is easily applied to the Dream School phases.

The data suggests that the district leadership was concerned about the academic achievement of African American and Latino students. Since other district efforts showed mixed results with these students, namely the Consent Decree and

STAR Program, a high level of urgency permeated the district. The Superintendent felt the urgency to do something explicit and substantial on behalf of those children, and developed an expedited course of action that assembled district and community leaders to draft the Phase I Dream School reform initiative plan. Though the timeline was short, by starting with the community, the Superintendent was able to amass enough buy-in to create the Phase I schools.

In Phase I, the district leadership balanced top down-bottom up approaches, though during the implementation phase, the 'bottom' was largely left alone. In Phase II, this balance was not maintained. Phase II was top-down and yielded immense resistance. Superintendent Ackerman was feeling tremendous urgency to create more Dream Schools in Phase II, because she was in the sixth year of her superintendency, and her governing with a Board majority was drawing to a close. Factions of Phase II educators, parents, and Board members questioned the reform, its fairness to teachers, and its appropriateness for Latino students. The district office underestimated the impact of the top-down approach on those who were expected to implement it. In sum, Superintendent Ackerman was well intentioned when she unveiled the Dream Schools reform initiative. But her administration neglected the nuts and bolts of implementation, was spread too thin in terms of administrative capacity, and was given too short a time frame to repeat the bottom up process of creating buy-in for subsequent adoption phases.

Brinkmanship

Brinkmanship is defined as the technique or practice of maneuvering a dangerous situation to the limits of tolerance or safety in order to secure the greatest advantage (for example in diplomacy). The literature on the role of political power in school districts suggests that politicking plays a role in influencing school board members, superintendents, and union leaders, and that the priority of political actors is to remain in power, and to influence decision-making. This literature does not directly discuss these power dynamics in the context of brinkmanship, or the gamble one is willing to take to remain in power. However, the oral history of the Dream Schools appears to illustrate a critical moment when Superintendent Ackerman's decision to open the Phase II Dream Schools was a significant gamble, and had serious ramifications for the school district and herself.

Superintendent Ackerman was cognizant of the political resistance to reconstituting the Phase II Dream Schools, as she contended with opposition from school communities, School Board factions, and UESF. It appears that Ackerman had a decision to make. She could have retracted her Phase II ambitions and conceded to her opposition, allowing her to focus solely on the Phase I Dream Schools. Serious implementation problems in the Phase I schools could have suggested such a course. Her other option was to persevere through the adversity and maintain her commitment to the Phase II plan, her own core beliefs, and her power position of the one being in control of the agenda, regardless of the consequences. This gamble, the point where Ackerman had to choose whether or not to concede to her opposition and compromise, was the crux of her dilemma.

Given the uncertainty of her situation, Superintendent Ackerman felt that she needed to gamble in order to accomplish any progress for the Dream Schools, but her gamble did not pay off. After a year of advocating for the minority students of San Francisco, Dr. Arlene Ackerman lost control of the School Board, established an adversarial relationship with the teacher union leadership, faced unsupportive Latino parents, and was left in the minority when it came to supporting the Phase II Dream Schools. In doing so, the future success of her reform program was jeopardized. Why would she risk everything instead of compromising?

Superintendent Ackerman saw herself as a superintendent in charge, morally right in her actions, and committed to pushing her Dream School agenda to support the underprivileged students in San Francisco. She felt tremendous urgency to fight for her policies. She believed that something radical needed to happen to disrupt the predictable failure of certain schools. For this, Dr. Ackerman was willing to take risks and gamble. Pivoting her agenda on highly contentious school reconstitution, she galvanized her opposition yet one more time.

The interviews are not entirely clear as to why she risked her superintendency on the Phase II Dream Schools. It is clear that she was the lone decision maker and player on the brink. Clearly, she felt morally in the right. But was this prudent risk taking? Theoretically, she could have accommodated her opposition by taking the sting of reconstitution out of the Phase II and perhaps gained new supporters on the Board. On the other hand, in a highly confrontational and politicized situation, compromise may spell defeat. Power within the school district would likely have shifted away from the superintendent, putting the School Board and UESF in a better position to drive policy-making. When a political actor loses allies or legitimacy, her adversaries are able to organize the more powerful bloc.

One thing seems clear from the interviews. The superintendent detected the divisiveness and the volatility of shifting factions in urban school politics. In such an environment, a leader's willingness to operate on the brink seems to be a necessity if she wants to gain and keep the initiative. The territory is extremely uncertain, and the problems require radical solutions for which the means are often not locally available. Therefore, advancing ambitious agendas may be more the result of happenstance than long-term planning of adoption and implementation, and a sustained alliance that would involve central office, the teacher union, and the low-income communities. Dr. Ackerman may have taken a risk because of her belief that she was the one in charge, she was spearheading an urgent call for social justice, and that remaining in charge of her agenda required her to try one more time to rally her own allies, rather than lose the initiative. Compromising was simply not an option. Gambles are made at one's peril. To the Superintendent, the risk of reaching the brink seems to have been worth it.

Reflections on the Interpretive Themes

The goal of this oral history study was to describe how the Dream School initiative started with much fanfare, ample financial support, and concentrated energy on the part of multiple actors, only to be abandoned and dismantled in a

short period of time. The initiative addressed one of the most pressing, but historically elusive, educational problems in San Francisco: how to create strong and effective schools for poor communities of color in this city. Given the urgency and ancestry of the initiative, it seemed even more surprising that the Dream Schools should have had such an ominous fate. It should be noted that the Dream School initiative exists as a funding stream in the district's budget to this day, but the *dream* of creating "private" college-going schools in the city's poorest neighborhoods has faded.

In the narrative section of this chapter, I recounted main events and described motives, actions, and interactions of the main actors that were involved: the superintendent and her cabinet, the administrative body of the district, the school board, the teacher union, and the leadership of various ethnic communities. I tried to identify the main decisions made by these actors that marked, and contributed to, the rise and fall of the initiative, whether intended or unintended. I also tried to identify events that shaped these decisions and the subsequent course of the initiative. Subsequently, I revisited and interpreted the narrative using four main themes.

My narrative discerned a number of critical decisions and events. Imagining and pushing for Dream Schools in Bayview-Hunters Point per se was a natural outflow of the superintendent's popular equity agenda. Perhaps, it would have been embraced by a grand coalition of well-meaning supporters, particularly if the superintendent had promised early on that the benefits accruing to the African-American community would be extended to the Latino community in short order. But the superintendent's decision to attach reconstitution to the remaking of the schools, and to wield her power with the black community to overcome opposition from the union and the board minority, set a dynamic in motion that tapped deeply into old wounds.

The superintendent could not know at the time that she would have at her side a union president who accomplished his election victory with the promise of being less cozy with the superintendent. She also could not know that she would lose the assured support of the majority of school board members given the outcome of school board elections. These are the vagaries of local school politics that involve multiple stakeholders with multiple and conflicting agendas entering and exiting the stage in various election cycles. A superintendent has to calculate with these uncertainties. They discourage careful planning and encourage risk taking and brinkmanship.

Throughout the entire Dream School initiative, it was the superintendent who set the agenda. It was she who was always a step ahead of all other actors. Their actions were in most instances reactive to her moves. But the contrast between Phase I and Phase II of the initiative was striking. In Phase I, she did not shy away from the conflict. She reactivated an old and entrenched labor policy issue that would mobilize her opposition, because she thought that radical renewal meant teacher transfers, but she could count on her connections to the African-American leadership to prevail. In Phase II, she tried the same pattern once more. She once more walked into the conflict and reactivated the old labor issue of reconstitution, but this time she was on far less secure ethnic territory, had lost board support, and

charged forward despite serious implementation deficiencies for both Phase I and Phase II schools. This time around, brinkmanship turned out badly for her. With her resignation, a new coalition of forces took ascendancy that showed no restraint in dismantling her signature schools.

When I interpreted this narrative, I could not help but think about my own experience as a principal in one of the Dream Schools. At the time, I was utterly oblivious to the political sphere of the district, but had experienced implementation difficulties and the eventual demise of the school as something very disappointing and futile. Was the failure of *my* dream, which was presumably also the district's dream, an inevitable outcome? Or could the course of events have unfolded differently? I engaged in musings on counterfactuals. The superintendent could have eschewed reconstitution the second time around, particularly given the fact that Phase I had shown how difficult it was to recruit first-rate teachers into the new schools. The superintendent could have delayed Phase II and concentrated on bolstering the struggling Phase I schools instead of spreading her administrative capacities too thin. The unions could have negotiated a compromise, or the Board could have fostered such compromising with shifting voting patterns. When I think about these counterfactuals, I must admit, probably because of my personal vantage point, that I find them more compelling than reality. Yet they did not happen. I distilled a number of themes from this narrative that I think may help illuminate why they did not. These themes do not suggest that the history of the Dream Schools was pre-ordained. Human history in general, and the interaction of political actors in a turbulent sphere in particular, is too contingent for that. But the themes help understand how an initiative such as the Dream Schools, that addressed a compelling and intractable issue of social justice in the city, did not last.

The governance of the San Francisco Unified School District was essentially a political arena in which factions and coalitions vied for power and control. During the Dream School reform initiative, relationships between these factions were frequently laced with conflict and contestation, making the overall dynamics of the school district volatile. Unpredictable and powerful election swings made lasting collaboration less unlikely. Politicians thrive on conflict as much as they thrive on compromise and accomplishment. Like many traditional urban school districts, SFUSD was designed to be governed by a board of education and the superintendent, yet both labor unions and community leadership had an important voice as well. As interest groups, they pursue their own agendas with the potential for persistent power struggles. These political battles come at the expense of the effectiveness of reform, the implementation at the school sites, and ultimately the children the adults are called to serve.

The Dream School initiative tapped into deeply emotional territory. On one hand were the sentiments of the black community and its leaders, who had felt neglected and unfairly treated by the district for years, and were impatient for radical solutions. On the other hand were teachers who in San Francisco had repeatedly been cleared out of the schools for the poor by their district with the implied assumption that they were the ones to be blamed for the low performance of the children. The district, as a local political entity, had but limited resources to close the achievement gap. When resources are scarce, politics thrives on simple

attributions. Power and legitimacy of one's own group is maintained when the problems can be rolled over, or projected onto, other actors. Finger pointing and assigning blame are common. District political leaders can no longer point the finger at ethnic communities, as they may have done during more racist historical periods. But if the management does not want to own the problem, and the customers are unimpeachable, the problem has to be carried by the employees.

In the case of reconstitutions, passions ran deep. Not unlike the Phase I pattern, the district's track record in using reconstitutions wisely as fresh beginnings for more effective schools was scant. Even though in many instances schools did not improve substantially after they were reconstituted, the district pulled that trigger continuously and repeatedly. To teachers, this smacked of unfairly punishing those who were willing to serve in these very challenging schools and communities, for the failings of the district. Reconstitution memories had left a permanent mark in the opposition because it was not a simple labor issue, but a moral issue.

Highly politicized governance of the district was disconnected from concerns for effective implementation in the administrative apparatus. When Phase II was adopted, Phase I was barely out of the pilot stage of implementation. Lessons from Phase I challenges could be applied to Phase II designs. Adopting Phase II so soon after the opening of the Phase I schools stretched the district's administrative capacity to the point that both phases were endangered. Moving from Phase I to Phase II so fast cannot be explained unless one imputes an utter disregard for effective implementation of reform initiatives. When politics sweeps the decision making at the cabinet level and ties between governance and mid-level administration are weak, implementation fades as a primary concern.

Political warfare and deeply resentful emotions are simply not the conducive conditions for the successful adoption and implementation of any reform. The battle trodden environment of power struggles and control all but destroy the authentic efforts to support children and empower their education. A well-thought out plan, which has lasting support from all stakeholders, with sustained leadership and political collaboration around effective implementation, will undoubtedly have a better chance of achieving the intended goals. Instead, superintendents feel compelled to gamble and reforms all too often are the result of successful brinkmanship.

Chapter V

Discussion and Implications

Providing an equitable education for all students is a social justice issue of historical proportions. It is critical that school districts focus specifically on marginalized communities, in order to allocate sufficient human and material resources to close the achievement gap. It is in the best interest of all, school board politicians, district leaders, teachers, and the marginalized communities alike, to address this burning equity issue. It seems that there is an inherent overlap of interests among all these groups. Creating an equitable education for all students benefits everyone: teachers gain job satisfaction, district leaders gain legitimacy, school board members gain votes, and community leaders gain the improvements that they are passionate about. Well crafted, equity approaches should come at the expense of none of these actors. Since equity is of such common interest, it ought to be possible to forge enduring commitments to do the right thing. Given the serious limitations of local government to tackle an issue that is caused nationally, local forces do not seem to have a chance to move the equity agenda forward if they do not pull in the same direction. Severe resource limitations plaguing our schools today require strong collaboration and unity among stakeholders, for without it, districts will hardly make a dent in the achievement gap.

Collaborating for Kids

Historically speaking in San Francisco, whenever stakeholders collaborated well, high-quality outcomes could be accomplished in the district. These admirable phases of district politics ranged from the Consent Decree Phase 1 schools of 1983, to Superintendent Ackerman's 2002 equity agenda, which included the STAR Program, Weighted Student Formula, and the Diversity Index. Obviously, with the Dream School reform initiative, collaboration was not sustained and the results were drastically different. We are always wiser in retrospect, and have the privilege to look back and judge based on knowing the results. As I narrated the oral history of the Dream Schools, many questions resonated with me about the collaboration, and ultimate contestation, surrounding the district's efforts to provide an equitable education to the marginal communities of San Francisco.

In hindsight, the San Francisco Unified School District recognized that something needed to be done to address the inequities in some of the lower socio-economic neighborhood schools. The district leadership advocated for renewal, and claimed that by providing a clean slate of teachers, who were driven by a common vision, the schools would turn around. The teacher union held resolute that the drastic reapplication process mirrored reconstitution, and was an unnecessary and stigmatizing tactic to improve the schools. From a neutral point of view, both sides made sense. The district felt that controlling the staffing would increase the effectiveness of classroom instruction. The teacher union made a credible case that so many times the district's fresh start efforts had failed in the past due to the district's neglect of implementation issues, and it was teachers who were left to take

the blame again and again. And as in so many reconstitution efforts before, the district failed again in its implementation of the Dream Schools, when it could not replace the outgoing staffs with highly qualified effective teachers. Reconstitution was the wedge that disrupted collaboration and gave way to conflict and power posturing. So the various stakeholders had a legitimate claim, but given how important the issue of equity for the city's poor neighborhoods has been, was the divisiveness necessary? Did it pay off and benefit the children?

Armed with the benefit of hindsight, I would argue that the contestation and strife created by the battling factions surrounding the Dream Schools was troublesome and unnecessary. It appears that the reform would have benefitted if both labor and the district administration had brainstormed how to create the Dream Schools together. In these hypothetical discussions, one possible collaborative idea might have been to design an incentive plan for the most experienced and effective teachers in the district to transfer to the Dream Schools. Instead, once the district became contentious, district teachers hardly applied, and young unproven teachers were hired from the outside. Was reconstitution the only solution? I believe things could have been worked out with a much softer strategy, if collaboration had been the means used.

Aside from collaboration, I am puzzled by the significantly high level of politics surrounding the Dream School reform. What if Superintendent Ackerman had not been so overwhelmed by politics? It is possible that if politics were kept at bay, that the school board and ethnic communities would have played much different roles in support of the reform initiative. Board meetings should have been focused on creating the best schools for the children of the Bayview Hunters Point and Mission neighborhoods. Instead, racial slurs, political agendas, and contestation marked the meetings. Had politics not consumed the Superintendent, she might not have felt so compelled to rush into the creation of the Phase II Dream Schools, in order to shore up her agenda setting. This change in course would have freed up precious administrative resources in the district that were sorely needed in support of the Phase I Dream School implementation process, and ultimately achieved better results. Clearly, the political polarization in San Francisco might have served individual actors, but did not serve the children in the Dream Schools.

Though collaboration and contestation have dominated this discussion thus far, it is important that we not lose sight of the issue of equitable education for low-income communities. While all stakeholders espoused to support improving efforts to close the achievement gap, the political battles saturating the Dream Schools were focused on adult issues rather than the children. Would the same battles have been fought if the students' best interests were kept front and center? What is it about reform that transfers the focal point away from the underserved youths? Implementing effective reform in a large urban school district is complicated, and deals with the self-interests of many people. What if all political stakeholders collaborated around the best interests of the students, and sustained that spotlight over time? Looking back, unity around the Dream Schools would have had much more influence on the achievement gap than the strident bickering and strife that persisted.

Local Democracy

The oral history of the Dream Schools conveys insight into the inner cogs of urban school district functioning. The San Francisco Unified School District is essentially a local democracy, where elected politicians serve at the will of the people, while exerting their own agendas upon their constituents. What the Dream Schools teaches us is that political leaders are driven by their power to make policy, influence decisions, and maintain control. Yet, when urban school districts are constructed around local democracy and with it, the inbuilt unpredictable election cycles, political power can shift momentarily. In San Francisco, these vagaries of shifting power became a distraction from the duty of the elected representatives to serve children, as these leaders were so easily consumed by adult contestation. If one takes this local democracy away, what does one replace it with? After all, politics exists for people to be able to articulate their interests. Yet, contestation at the local level makes forceful solutions for intractable problems all but impossible. This is the local democracy dilemma.

It is difficult to imagine a liberal city such as San Francisco relinquishing its local democracy, and embarking on anti-union regulation, or eliminating the school board in favor of mayoral control. Advocating for civil rights has been a part of the city's bedrock. San Franciscans flock to the polls each election and voice their beliefs, their hopes, and their prejudices. Given the high level of engagement in the electoral process, San Francisco politics shapes the direction of the city, the neighborhoods, and the schools. Between the biennial elections of the school board members and the teacher union leadership, change is constant, power shifts are customary, and reforms typically last as long as the incumbents.

Looking back across the Dream Schools, it is clearly imperative that sustainable structures are put in place to support the implementation of a reform, allowing it to withstand the given unpredictability in the district's governing bodies. Ultimately, the electoral process resulted in a shift in political leadership, causing chasms in the collaboration between the district and teacher union. Aside from avoiding ruinous conflict, the Dream Schools needed sustained guidance around professional development, teacher instruction, and a deeper understanding of the students' socio-emotional development. In addition, the marginalized community's inconsistent support left the schools insufficiently prepared to teach, discipline, and raise their kids. How can a local democracy maintain its freedom to elect new political leaders, and not sabotage reforms in mid-implementation? Until this question is answered, elections will continue to cause reforms to fail.

Final Thoughts

The San Francisco Unified School District needed a radical reform to disrupt the predictable power of demographics, and genuinely shift the focus of support to the ailing African American and Latino students. The fate of major school reform lies in the willingness of the political leaders to work together in collaboration. The Dream School reform initiative has given me clearer insight on the district's need to work in unison, rather than in silos. Local politics must avoid facile blaming of

factions and/or coalitions who share different perspectives or power positions. Also, the governing structure of the district must pay sufficient attention to the nuts and bolts of implementation throughout the life of a reform, maintaining support regardless of other factors. Furthermore, the local politics must deemphasize brinkmanship in favor of enduring politics of compromise, by being willing to work together on behalf of the students in the schools.

These insights also pertain to the individual actors in the oral history of the Dream Schools. For the superintendent, perhaps the gamble on the Phase II schools was unnecessary and should have been delayed or avoided. Clearly, the top-down mandate to create the new schools was not prudent or effective. The Board of Education was divisive with the superintendent, and amongst itself. It would have behooved them, when they were in a time of doubt, to support the superintendent for the duration of her contract. The teacher union leadership should have maintained a position of support of radical renewal, especially in the district's most underperforming schools, as long as the reform is fair to its membership. And as for the African American and Latino community leaders, there is a need to assume responsibilities that go beyond politicking in the Board Room. There is a dire need for leadership within the communities to support the schools on a daily basis, not just when it comes time to vote. But most of all, it is entirely essential that all political actors stop the traditional blaming and finger pointing, and reach out for a handshake across the aisle. No one group is to blame alone. When it comes to reform for equity, all actors must own their share of disregarding the best interests of the children in the schools.

In the end, the Dream School reform initiative is summed up as a financial, emotional, and political tragedy. Millions of dollars were spent on creating these schools, and getting the programs off the ground. After two years, the resources were disseminated to other schools, or simply squandered. Many teachers and administrators were transferred out of these schools when they were reconstituted, and then again when five of them were closed. The trust these educators might once have had in the district has since turned to skepticism. During implementation, the Dream Schools struggled to carry out their vision and mission statement of providing a private school experience for their students. Without the support of the political actors, full implementation was never realized. Ultimately, the political acrimony permeated the district, damaging relationships, and turning the Dream School reform into an enormous waste in material and human resources. All of this for what?

School reform is not a mystery. Research has already discovered what it takes to truly reform a school or a district. The irony is that reform is frequently considered a change the students will make, i.e. learn from new curriculum, or develop 21st century skills. In actuality, reform is more about whether or not the adults are willing to do something different. When reforms fail, it is usually the adults who have failed, but the children are the ones who feel the repercussions. With this hindsight, and an open mind, perhaps the sad history of the SFUSD Dream Schools will help others avoid such failure.

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Appendix A

Below is the list of primary interviews, newspaper articles, and documents accumulated to create the *Oral History of the SFUSD Dream Schools*:

Primary Interviews

Ackerman, Arlene; SFUSD Superintendent, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, August 6, 2010.

Anderson, Tony; SFUSD Administrator, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 22, 2010.

Biegel, Stuart; Consent Decree Monitor, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, August 13, 2010.

Blacksher, Marcus; SFUSD Dream School Administrator, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 8, 2010.

Brooks, Elois; SFUSD Chief Academic Officer, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 19, 2010.

Brown, Amos C.; Reverend at 3rd Baptist Church, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 4, 2010.

Desmond, Dee Dee; SFUSD Administrator, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 19, 2010.

Hiroshima, Christine; SFUSD Assistant Superintendent, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 15, 2010.

Kelly, Dennis; United Educators of San Francisco Teacher Union President, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 23, 2010.

Knight, Heather; San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 2, 2010.

Leigh, Myong; SFUSD Deputy Superintendent, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 27, 2010.

Liddell, Hoover; SFUSD Administrator, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 24, 2010.

Mar, Eric; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 22, 2010.

Mitchell, Kent; United Educators of San Francisco Teacher Union President, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 30, 2010.

Monroe, Lorraine; Consultant, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 30, 2010.

Pon, Jeannie; SFUSD Assistant Superintendent, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 28, 2010.

Rice-Mitchell, Tamitrice; SFUSD Dream School Administrator, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 7, 2010.

Russ, Tareyton; SFUSD Dream School Administrator, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 26, 2010.

Sanchez, Mark; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, May 27, 2010.

Sims, Deborah; SFUSD Assistant Superintendent, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 15, 2010.

Waymack, Nancy; SFUSD Budget Department, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 28, 2010.

Wynns, Jill; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 16, 2010.

Yee, Norman; SFUSD Board of Education Commissioner, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 22, 2010.

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Eslinger, Bonnie. "Dream school debut, S.F. campuses show off extreme summer changes," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 31, 2004.

Eslinger, Bonnie. "Dream schools irk teachers," *San Francisco Examiner*, October 20, 2004.

Eslinger, Bonnie. "Cosby lauds Dream School," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 10, 2004.

Eslinger, Bonnie. "Dream School debate, Board of Ed won't fight rehiring policy," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 15, 2004.

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Knight, Heather. "Union won't resist 'dream' plan at 3 schools in SF, teachers will reapply for jobs," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 12, 2004.

Knight, Heather. "Education board OK's Dream Schools plan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10, 2004.

Knight, Heather. "Bank Giving \$150,000 to Dream Schools," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 12, 2004.

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September 2004: Kelly, Dennis. "Dream Schools: Can they solve achievement disparity?" *UESF San Francisco Educator*.

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October 2004: UESF "Reform with Respect, Reject Reconstitution" Propaganda flyer.

October 6, 2004: Letter from UESF President Dennis Kelly to SFUSD Labor Relations Director Tom Ruiz regarding fourteen questions UESF had about Phase II Dream Schools.

October 6, 2004: Email communication from Jamestown Community Center Executive Director Claudia Jasin to UESF President Dennis Kelly regarding the October 5, 2004 community meeting at Everett Middle School, commenting on the concerns of the audience.

October 8, 2004: Letter from SFUSD Labor Relations Director Tom Ruiz to UESF President Dennis Kelly about false accusations.

October 13, 2004: Human Resources Letter to Phase II staffs.

October 13, 2004: Agenda for Dream School Departmental Coordination Meeting.

October 14, 2004: Email from UESF President Dennis Kelly to Superintendent Ackerman.

October 20, 2004: Letter from Dream Schools Executive Director Dr. Mary Marin to Phase II educators regarding the timeframe for Dream School planning.

October 21, 2004: Letter from SFUSD Labor Relations Director Tom Ruiz to UESF President Dennis Kelly regarding SFUSD's responses to the fourteen questions UESF had submitted.

October 27, 2004: Letter from UESF President Dennis Kelly to Superintendent Arlene Ackerman regarding the alteration of the Phase II Dream School timeline.

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